

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 6 June 2017

(Extract from book 11)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 10 November 2016)

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Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, 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 — #Mr Barber, Mr Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #Mr Barber, #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Mulino, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Mr Somyurek, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, 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, Ms Garrett 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 O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan.

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

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 Patten, Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith, Ms Staley 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

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FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

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The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

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The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

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The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

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Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Mr G. BARBER

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Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	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	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ³	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Elasmarr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁶	Northern Victoria	ALP	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 ⁵	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	SFFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁶ Appointed 7 June 2017

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁴ Appointed 12 October 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;

DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;

LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;

SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; V1LJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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Tuesday, 6 June 2017

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 12.04 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.

TERRORIST ATTACKS

The PRESIDENT — Order! Members, I wish to make a couple of very brief remarks to put on record my thoughts and prayers, which are with those people who have been touched in the last few weeks by acts of terrorism. There have been a number of incidents involving the Coptic Christians in Egypt, the Manchester bombing, obviously the circumstances in London over the weekend and indeed acts possibly of terrorism involved in the Philippines, certainly in Afghanistan and of course last night here in Melbourne it would appear from the current stage of investigations into that matter.

Obviously our thoughts and prayers are with all of those people who have been touched by these incidents. They remind us of the importance of our robust democratic principles, our need to defend those principles, our need to pursue inclusion in our societies and our need to ensure wherever possible the safety of all of our citizens through our own vigilance and, certainly in our roles as leaders of the community, through the encouragement of tolerance of and respect and support for those people who have particular needs in our community.

At this time of year the Muslim community is celebrating Ramadan, which is a period of reflection and a period of engagement with friends, with family and indeed with strangers in a bid to come to a better understanding and appreciation of the values of others, and it is significant that these acts of terrorism have blemished the holy month of Ramadan and indeed have challenged many of us in our thinking and hopefully in establishing a position where we take a positive role of leadership in the community to ensure that these acts do not impact adversely on the activities, the lives and the

aspirations of Victorians, Australians and indeed so many people around the world who have been impacted by these incidents.

I understand that there is also a willingness on this occasion for leave of the house to be given for some brief statements to be made in relation to the death of Anthony Foster, who has been accorded a state funeral for some of his work in the community. On that basis I would call on the Leader of the Government.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — President, I join you in the solemn introduction to the parliamentary sitting week of noting the great tragedies that have befallen communities around the world and our recognition that no society is immune from the potential risk of terrorism, antisocial behaviour and abuse of the highest degree, and we should always be vigilant in our determination to prevent those issues from occurring. I join you, President, in your spirit of recognition of our role as part of the global citizenry to try to promote harmonious relationships around the world.

ANTHONY FOSTER

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (*By leave*) — In terms of another issue of solemnity this week, as you have indicated, President, the government has provided the Foster family with a state funeral to mark the passing of Anthony Foster. Through great tragedy he and his wife, Chrissie, have become household names in the Australian community as they have fought for justice for those who have been victims of child abuse and predatory behaviour in institutional settings, including faith-based and state institutions across Australia, and through the personal tragedy of their own dear daughters being subjected to this abuse, which had tragic consequences for Emma and Katie. They have been unswerving in their determination to seek justice and reparation on their behalf of their daughters but, importantly, on behalf other victims around this nation.

Indeed they have led the community to an appreciation of the dimensions of this issue and have been tireless in their advocacy and commitment to justice. They have played no small part in establishing royal commissions across this nation in relation to those matters and in relation to institutional care, and indeed they played a very prominent role leading to the parliamentary inquiry that was held by this Parliament.

As members of this chamber would be aware, when the report of that inquiry was tabled there was not only a great appreciation of the stories of victims and their

families, their loved ones, but of the quality of the duty of care that was demonstrated by members of Parliament who took and considered the evidence and provided this Parliament and our community with the appropriate depth of knowledge of the gravity of the issues involved. I note Ms Crozier's key role in terms of chairing the committee, and I expect that she may follow my contribution in paying due regard and respect to Anthony and Chrissie Foster, who have played such a prominent role in the eyes of everyone in the community who has been determined to obtain justice up to now and into the future.

A state funeral will be held tomorrow, where our community should give lasting regard and respect to Chrissie, Katie and Aimee, who will miss their husband and father dearly. Hopefully there will be an appropriate community recognition of their great contribution and their enduring legacy in relation to justice and trying to provide for that into the future. The Victorian government expresses our great sympathies to the family.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (*By leave*) — I am pleased to be able to follow on from Mr Jennings to make some remarks in tribute to Anthony Foster. Can I at the outset give my sympathies to Chrissie, Katie, Aimee and their extended families at this very sad time. So much has already been said about the life of Anthony Foster, described by many as a man of empathy, a man of courage and someone with a big heart. He was generous, determined, articulate, dignified and above all a family man. He was a man who defended his family, advocated to right the wrongs and the injustice bestowed on his beloved daughters, and for years since he had been advocating not only on behalf of Emma and Katie but also the thousands of others who suffered heinous child abuse by those who were entrusted with their care.

I had the great privilege to meet Anthony during the Victorian parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations. As chair of that inquiry it was the evidence given by Anthony, Chrissie and their youngest daughter, Aimee, that spoke not only of the shocking treatment they received from leaders in the church but of the horrific ongoing after-effects suffered by their family. It was powerful and moving, and I for one will never forget how I felt hearing the experience that this family had to endure — the emotion that was apparent amongst the committee as we sat and listened to the heartfelt testimonies from Anthony, from Chrissie and from Aimee, and the love and support they all gave Katie who sat next to Anthony. His love and care for her was very evident that day. I am sure those emotions

were also felt by those sitting in the gallery, by those listening to the hearing, by the media who were present and by the many staff of the Parliament who also were involved in that inquiry.

No-one could not have been moved by what we heard and the accounts of what Anthony and his family had to endure. The courageous pursuit of the Catholic Church's handling of child abuse by Anthony, together with Chrissie, I have no doubt gave hundreds of victims the confidence to come forward to either the Victorian inquiry or to speak with Taskforce Sano, which was set up as a result of the Victorian inquiry, about the abuse they themselves or their family members had suffered from a range of individuals within various organisations.

Those hundreds of victims in Victoria at the time of our inquiry has led to thousands across Australia having the courage to speak to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, victims that looked toward the leadership and strength of Anthony Foster, who became the public face and was relentless in wanting the truth to be exposed and to have the wrongs of the past acknowledged also through a royal commission.

So I was shocked to have received a phone call from Peter Fox, who told me about Anthony's accident and the very critical state that he was in at that time. I had met up with Peter just a week before at a victims of crime forum here in Melbourne where we had been speaking about the extraordinary efforts of Anthony and Chrissie throughout the royal commission and their input into the Victorian parliamentary inquiry.

At the time when I was with Peter I think he mentioned to me that he was going to be having lunch with them the next day. It reminded me of the last time I had seen both Anthony and Chrissie, which was in a small cafe in Murrumbidgee. I just happened to be walking in, and they were sitting there meeting with someone having a cup of coffee. We spoke about the Victorian parliamentary inquiry and the recommendations the committee had made, which included strengthening the criminal law to include compulsory reporting to police, a new child endangerment offence and a new grooming offence, making access to civil litigation easier for victims. Of course we spoke about the royal commission and its ongoing efforts. Well, that was quite some months ago, and so much has happened since then.

Throughout the proceedings of the royal commission, Anthony and Chrissie have been extraordinary in their support of others, as was acknowledged by the chair of

the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Justice Peter McClellan. He is reported to have said that Anthony and Chrissie:

... attended hundreds of days of public hearings and participated in many of our policy round tables.

And:

With a dignity and grace, Anthony and Chrissie generously supported countless survivors and their families whilst also managing their own grief.

Such is the strength of Anthony and Chrissie. If I can finally just add that at the conclusion of his evidence given to the Victorian parliamentary inquiry, Anthony said:

Thank you for listening to us, and I implore you to make the changes that are necessary. I implore you to ensure that the past victims are not forgotten. It is not over for them. The victims who have been put through the Catholic Church system need to be looked after much better than they have been, and we need to be sure, as best we can, that all the victims who are out there, who are on the edge now, do not fall over it. Thank you.

There are many, many Victorians and Australians who want to say, 'Thank you, Anthony Foster'. Thank you for all that you have done so that victims have been heard, legislative change has been made, victims are not forgotten and that all of us need to support those victims so that they do not fall any further than they already have. In this context, Anthony Foster's legacy will be remembered for many years to come.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) (*By leave*) — I first encountered the Fosters' story when I read the book *Hell on the Way to Heaven*. In reading that book, I was very shocked at not just the appalling abuse that their daughters had suffered but also the abuse that they had suffered at the hands of the church which was in complete denial about what had happened to their family and the ongoing abuse that they received from Cardinal Pell in just not being prepared to do anything about the situation.

I had the opportunity to meet with Anthony Foster several times in the lead-up to the inquiry, and the thing that struck me so much about him was that there was this determined dignity about him — that he was calm, that he was quiet and that he brought people together and allowed other victims and their families to have a voice. I think that was one of the most powerful things that Anthony was able to do, not just for his family but for so many other families.

Clearly he is going to be missed dreadfully by his own family but I think too by that family of survivors out there who he was the voice for. He gave them dignity

and he gave them hope that this would be out in the public and it would end.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (*By leave*) — I too would like to add my voice to the thousands of people expressing sorrow for the death of and praise for the life of child protection advocate Anthony Foster. History will show that both he and his wife, Chrissie, made one of the most outstanding contributions to child protection in Australia under probably the most difficult circumstances of all. Many people deal with their grief in a private and personal way and I am sure Anthony Foster did that as well, but by taking his grief into the public arena and refusing to accept the lies and deceit of the Catholic Church he became a modern martyr for child protection everywhere.

I first heard of the Fosters in 2000 when *Four Corners* broadcast a program about a clash between the Catholic Church and Australia's adult industry. My partner, Robbie Swan, and I had published a book called *Hypocrites*, which listed all of the paedophile priests who had been charged to that point. Archbishop Pell was interviewed alongside us. After the show, Chrissie Foster rang our office to tell us how Pell had treated them when they had approached him about their two daughters, Emma and Katie, being raped by Father Kevin O'Donnell. I will not forget her words. She said, 'He stood up from his big leather chair and glared at us and told us to get out, that O'Donnell was a nice man'. She said, 'At that moment, 20 years of faith just evaporated from my life'.

I am very pleased that the Premier has offered a state funeral for Anthony Foster. He and Chrissie personally supported hundreds of families and indirectly helped thousands. Without their tireless work and advocacy we would not have had a royal commission, victims would not have had the courage to come forward and families would have continued to suffer in silence — and they did this while mourning the loss of their two daughters. Now the state needs to make Pell and the church truly accountable for the way they have crushed the lives of the Foster family and many others like them.

I mourn the loss of Anthony Foster, but I also celebrate and stand in awe of his bravery and dignity. My heart goes out to Chrissie and daughters Aimee and Katie. Rest in peace, Anthony Foster.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It has been suggested that, given that this matter has come before the chamber, perhaps a minute's silence might be appropriate on this occasion. I ask members to stand in their places.

Honourable members stood in their places.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent on 30 May to Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Amendment (Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner) Act 2017.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Sunbury development

Legislative Council electronic petition:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the Jacksons Creek valley, Sunbury, Victoria, Australia, from Rupertswood mansion to the Emu Bottom wetlands, needs to be saved from being built on. This historical valley has 1000-year-old Aboriginal rings, our first European settlers came here. We have the state significant Canon Gully and many endangered fauna species. It is the same valley that Victoria's oldest homestead is located in. Sunbury has 19 000 homes planned and this valley has 406 planned. That is only 2 per cent of the total that needs to be stopped to ensure this beautiful historical valley is saved for all future generations of Victorians to enjoy.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the government to ensure no housing or other buildings other than a tourist/museum/education centre (not a school) in the Jacksons Creek valley from the Jacksons Creek at the rear of Rupertswood mansion to the boundary of the Emu Bottom wetlands across to Racecourse Road and 400 metres east of the well-defined ridge line that follows Jacksons Creek, Sunbury, and the green wedge and rural conservation zones to remain.

**By Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)
(690 signatures).**

Laid on table.

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

The PRESIDENT — Order! I just make the observation that this is actually the first e-petition to come before the house — and by Mr Finn, no less.

Mr Finn — Ahead of myself again! Leading the way again!

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Finn makes history. I just indicate as well at this point that Tim Swanson is in the gallery today. Tim works for the Department of Parliamentary Services here and was effectively the person who brought together the e-petitions facility that is, I think, going to be a very significant channel for communication with our voters going forward. We thank Tim. Today sees the very first petition presented under that new opportunity, and I am

sure we will see many into the future as a result of people having that opportunity to use technology to communicate with members of the house.

Kilmore bus services

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws attention of the Legislative Council and state government to the inadequate timetabling and route of the public bus service currently supplied for the Kilmore and district community.

The petitioners therefore request that the state government provide funding for, and services of, a bus that meets every train at Kilmore's railway station, including weekends and public holidays, and the bus route takes a circular route throughout Kilmore and most importantly services our hospital.

**By Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria)
(386 signatures).**

Laid on table.

Tatura police station

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the overwhelming concern of members of the Tatura district community about the reduced police presence in the township of Tatura.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria ensures that the Andrews government provides, as a matter of urgency, a significantly improved permanent police presence assigned to the Tatura police station, to service:

- a) the immediate township and community of Tatura, and
- b) the outlying and neighbouring communities.

**By Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria)
(405 signatures).**

Laid on table.

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

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 8

**Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan)
presented *Alert Digest No. 8* of 2017, including
appendices.**

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

INDEPENDENT BROAD-BASED ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Review of protected disclosures

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) presented report, including appendices, extracts from proceedings and minority report, together with transcripts of evidence.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be published.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In doing so I will make a few brief remarks. The December 2015 report of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee, *Strengthening Victoria's Key Anti-corruption Agencies?*, identified a number of issues with the whistleblower protection regime in this state. The committee decided to renew the regime and in particular the Protected Disclosure Act 2012, which provides protection for whistleblowers who expose improper conduct in the public sector.

Whistleblowers make a valuable contribution to democracy by helping to ensure honest, accountable and efficient public administration in Victoria. Specifically they play a vital role in the identification, investigation and prevention of corruption. However, it is well known that whistleblowers can suffer reprisals for making a disclosure about wrongdoing. The Protected Disclosure Act aims to protect whistleblowers by safeguarding their identity and by providing them with a range of remedies.

While in many respects the act meets best practice principles, in other areas we have found that it falls short. Although the act does not need to be repealed, the committee has found that it should be fine-tuned through targeted amendments. Overall, the committee recommends that the whistleblowing regime should be simplified, clarified and extended. For instance, the committee believes that it is too difficult to prove a reprisal under the current system, that the regime needs to cover all bodies who receive substantial public funds and that whistleblowers should not miss out on protection just because they have made a disclosure to the wrong body. The committee has therefore made a number of recommendations covering the law and processes on making, assessing and investigating disclosures; the protection of whistleblowers from

reprisals; and the provision of compensation and assistance to whistleblowers.

The committee also considers the act can be made easier to understand and navigate. This can be achieved by applying plain-language principles and making better use of notes, headings, summaries and examples. While the committee has emphasised the importance of improving the Protected Disclosure Act, it became clear that many Victorians depend more on information and education explaining the act than on the act itself. Although a number of public sector bodies already produce excellent plain-language information about the whistleblowing regime, the committee believes that online information can be enhanced so that more Victorians can become better informed about their rights and responsibilities if they make a disclosure about wrongdoing in the public sector.

In reviewing the act the committee drew on wideranging research, extensive evidence from stakeholders and interstate and international experience. It assessed the content and operation of the act by applying best practice principles. The committee is confident that the act can be fine-tuned to further encourage disclosures about wrongdoing in the public sector and to better protect, compensate and support Victorian whistleblowers.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee: Kim Wells, the chair; Marsha Thomson, the deputy chair; Sam Hibbins; Danny O'Brien; Tim Richardson; and Simon Ramsay. There were very constructive conversations on a very interesting topic. We all took a bipartisan approach to the report.

I would also like to thank the secretariat for their hard work, in particular Sandy Cook, the executive officer; Dr Stephen James, the research officer; and Justine Donohue, the administrative officer. Their expertise and hard work are very much appreciated, and they are an asset to this Parliament.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — Following the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee's report on Victoria's integrity system in 2015 the committee determined to review the state's whistleblower protection regime and in particular the Protected Disclosure Act 2012.

The committee heard evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, such as IBAC, the Victorian Ombudsman and whistleblowers, and it also benefited from interstate and international experience. The committee found that while the Protected Disclosure Act 2012 does not need to be repealed, it would benefit from a range of

improvements. The recommendations of the committee aim to make the regime simpler and to ensure that whistleblowers are adequately protected, compensated and assisted. The committee has recommended that the test a whistleblower has to meet to prove the reprisal has taken place be made less onerous. This recognises the difficulty of whistleblowers proving a reprisal under the present system and gaining access to a range of remedies, such as court-ordered damages under the act.

The committee has also recommended that whistleblowers be able to make disclosures of wrongdoing about any body that receives substantial public funds, such as not-for-profit organisations. This will ensure better accountability where there are overlaps between the public and private sectors, such as in the disability field. The committee received persuasive evidence, for example, that the present system for IBAC to refer protected disclosure complaints for investigation is too restrictive. The committee has therefore recommended that the Victorian Ombudsman, as a very experienced complaints-handling body, be given the power to refer complaints on to other appropriate bodies, provided whistleblowers are adequately protected.

While the committee considers that the present remedies for whistleblowers should be retained, it acknowledges that pursuing claims through the courts can often be costly, uncertain, time consuming and stressful. To assist whistleblowers, the committee has recommended that: courts generally not award costs against whistleblowers, provided their claim is not vexatious; the government establish a whistleblowing website to make legal information and services more accessible; and the government provide financial assistance to cover whistleblowers' reasonable legal and career transition costs.

Financial assistance to cover whistleblowers' reasonable career transition costs is particularly important. The committee received evidence that sometimes whistleblowers can no longer work in their chosen careers. The committee has therefore recommended that the government provide financial assistance to cover the reasonable costs of education, training and advice for whistleblowers to transition to a new career if necessary.

I too, like Ms Symes, would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues on the committee, and particularly I thank the secretariat: executive officer Ms Sandy Cook, research officer Dr Stephen James and administrative officer Ms Justine Donohue.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Rate capping policy

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade), pursuant to standing order 23.30, presented government response to third report.

Laid on table.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Domestic Animals Amendment (Puppy Farms and Pet Shops) Bill 2016

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture), pursuant to standing order 23.30, presented government response.

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 —

Minister's Order of 25 May 2017 giving approval to the granting of a lease at Albert Park.

Minister's Order of 2 June 2017 giving approval to the granting of a licence at Yarra Bend Park.

Health Services Act 1988 — Ministerial determination of intention to grant a licence pursuant to section 69AAE, Gazetted 1 June 2017.

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984 —

Notice pursuant to section 32(3) in relation to Statutory Rule No. 31.

Notice pursuant to section 32(4) in relation to Statutory Rule No. 28.

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 — Government response to the Accountability and Oversight Committee's Report into Victorian Oversight Agencies, 2015–16.

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

Ballarat Planning Scheme — Amendment C170.

Banyule Planning Scheme — Amendment C110.

Darebin Planning Scheme — Amendment C137.

East Gippsland Planning Scheme — Amendment C133.

Golden Plains Planning Scheme — Amendment C67 (Part 1).

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme — Amendment C341.

Hume Planning Scheme — Amendments C194 and C215.

Hume and Moreland Planning Schemes — Amendment GC63.

Melton Planning Scheme — Amendment C178.

Nillumbik Planning Scheme — Amendment C114.

Stonnington Planning Scheme — Amendment C238.

Surf Coast Planning Scheme — Amendments C116 and C117.

Victoria Planning Provisions — Amendment VC133.

Whitehorse Planning Scheme — Amendment C157 (Part 2).

Whittlesea Planning Scheme — Amendment C123.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Building Act 1993 — No. 31.

County Court Act 1958 — No. 36.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — No. 30.

Supreme Court Act 1986 — Nos. 32, 33 and 34.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 — No. 35.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 —

Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rules Nos. 29 to 35.

Legislative instruments and related documents under 16B in respect of — Financial Management Act 1994 — Order declaring a specified entity.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I advise the house that the preference of the Chair is that motions usually are limited to around 250 words and that they do not contain matters of debate but rather set out the proposal that the member brings to the chamber. Today we have had two motions that have exceeded that word limit. In both cases they were to establish effectively an inquiry — in Mr Rich-Phillips's case a select committee inquiry and in Mr Jennings's case a referral framework, if the house passes that motion, for the Speaker and me to pursue for the establishment of a new officer of the Parliament. Given that they were matters that provided reference and had a particular process that needed to be undertaken, it is from my

point of view always acceptable that the establishment of committees and the setting out of terms of reference are not bound by that 250-word process.

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, 7 June 2017:

- (1) notice of motion given this day by Mr Rich-Phillips in relation to the production of certain Country Fire Authority and Metropolitan Fire Brigade documents;
- (2) notice of motion given this day by Mr O'Donohue in relation to crime and police funding in Victoria;
- (3) notice of motion 384 standing in the name of Mr Barber in relation to the establishment of an independent parliamentary commissioner for standards;
- (4) order of the day 31, resumption of debate on Victoria's training system; and
- (5) notice of motion 404 standing in the name of Mr Barber seeking to revoke Yarra planning scheme amendment C240.

Motion agreed to.

Standing and sessional orders

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

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to the extent necessary to enable the sitting of the Council on Wednesday, 7 June 2017, to commence at 9.30 a.m. and the order of business be —

- (1) messages;
- (2) formal business;
- (3) ministers statements (up to 5 ministers);
- (4) members statements (up to 15 members);
- (5) general business;
- (6) at 12 noon questions;
- (7) answers to questions on notice;
- (8) general business (continues);
- (9) at 5.00 p.m. statements on reports and papers (30 minutes);
- (10) at 5.30 p.m. adjournment (up to 20 members).

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Government procurement policy

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — I was very disappointed to hear last week that the Labor government has not been awarding Shepparton law court contracts to local businesses. I have been contacted by local business The Curtain Room, which had registered interest for the blinds contract for the courthouse. Despite having regularly been in contact with the project team, they were recently advised that the works would not be going to tender but had already been awarded to a Melbourne-based company. This contract was estimated to be worth \$60 000, which is significant for a regional small business. Further, a local company would have been well placed to provide fast and economical ongoing service, as electronically controlled automated blinds will require ongoing maintenance. Not only has Labor's decision to use non-local contractors cost Shepparton a boost to the economy, but it could also result in delays and additional costs for the future servicing or maintenance of the blinds. It is all very well for the government to put out releases about creating jobs, but if contracts are not awarded locally then the local community is not benefiting.

Dreamtime at the G

Ms LOVELL — On Saturday, 27 May, I was proud to be at the MCG to watch Richmond annihilate Essendon in the annual Dreamtime at the G match as part of the Sir Doug Nicholls Indigenous round. It was my great pleasure to see my local Indigenous community represented and involved, with elder Uncle Alf 'Boydie' Turner tossing the coin at the commencement of the game. Uncle Boydie is the grandfather of Richmond player Nathan Drummond and the grandson of Sir William Cooper, a proud activist for Indigenous rights. It was a shame Nathan was not able to play in the round due to injury, but I look forward to his return to the team. He is an exciting young player who has a bright future ahead of him.

Advertising standards

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I rise today to speak about the failure of our advertising classification system and the Advertising Standards Bureau to protect our children. One of my constituents recently brought to my attention the front page of the *Wyndham Star Weekly* newspaper, dated 24 May 2017. At the bottom of this front page was a sizeable advertisement for Club X, a self-described 'health, sexuality and lifestyle' 'adult

superstore'. The ad promoted adult concepts and offered free entry to the blue-class movie preview lounge, which its website describes as 'showing the newest released hardcore movies'. It was the only advertisement to be printed on the front page and could be seen without needing to pick it up or even open the rest of the newspaper. As the *Wyndham Star Weekly* is a community newspaper that is delivered to many family homes across the Wyndham area, many children, like those of the constituent who contacted me, were able to look at this inappropriate ad.

Promoting 'free' access to pornography is not something we should be doing in sight of our children, and I am simply appalled that this ad was allowed to be printed on the front page. After contacting the general manager of the *Wyndham Star Weekly*, my constituent received the following response. They said:

It was an unfortunate situation which slipped through our usual checking process ...

There must be advertising standards, and they must be followed. As it currently stands, the Advertising Standards Bureau has no power to penalise advertisers who breach their code of ethics, or code for advertising and marketing communications to children. The self-regulatory system to meet community expectations, particularly in regard to advertising to children, has completely failed. Appropriate penalties for advertisers and media outlets that refuse to comply must be enforceable. This is not good enough. Our children deserve better.

Isabel and Judy Stephens

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) — It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to Benalla mother and daughter Isabel and Judy Stephens. Many will have heard the news reports that the two had been reported missing after enjoying a Sunday lunch together at the Tatong Tavern. It was almost a week later that the tragic discovery of the two women in Samaria just south of Benalla confirmed the worst fears of family and friends. My home town of Benalla is a tight-knit community, and Isabel and Judy were well-known, highly respected and much-loved members whose loss has shocked everyone and who will be missed dreadfully. To Barbara, Merran, Helen and your families, my heartfelt condolences for the sadness and pain that you are now experiencing in the wake of the loss of your mother and sister.

To the wonderful emergency services workers who searched the area over the course of the week, my thanks and my gratitude are with you, as are those, I am sure, of the rest of the community. You do difficult

work under challenging circumstances, sadly sometimes to the most tragic of conclusions. I know the entire community is grateful for your efforts in the search for Isabel and Judy.

World Oceans Day

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Tomorrow is World Oceans Day. This year's theme is 'Our Oceans, Our Future', with hundreds of events worldwide focusing on prevention of marine plastic pollution. Marine plastic pollution is a global problem, but this year's theme is particularly relevant to Victorians.

On Thursday the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning will report on the inquiry into my private members bill, the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags, Packaging and Microbeads) Bill 2016. The committee was presented with a clear evidence base on the problem of plastic pollution and a set of legislative measures to effectively address this problem. If implemented, these measures would establish Victoria as a leader within Australia on plastic pollution and put it on an equal footing with a number of jurisdictions internationally. Public demand for a ban on unnecessary plastic products has never been stronger, as evidenced by the more than 145 000 signatories to *The Project's* #BanTheBag campaign.

Victorians are demanding decisive leadership on this issue. We are hopeful that the committee's report will support this bill and in doing so take a vital step towards protecting our marine and land environments. What a fitting Victorian contribution to World Oceans Day that would be.

Tony Abbott

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — Yesterday on a crisp winter's morning in Ballarat's magnificent botanical gardens I was pleased to be joined by so many others at the unveiling of the bust of the Honourable Tony Abbott, our 28th Prime Minister. Mr Abbott's bust was sculpted by Ms Linda Klarfeld, who joined Mr Abbott and the mayor of Ballarat, Cr Samantha McIntosh, to unveil the Prime Ministers Avenue's latest bust. Although I am certainly no art critic, I believe that Ms Klarfeld's work is an excellent representation of both Mr Abbott's likeness and his character. Mr Abbott said during his speech at the unveiling, 'All prime ministers strive to make our country better', and this is certainly true of Mr Abbott's contribution to our nation.

Brighton incident

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — With the events in Brighton yesterday it is clear that the legal system is still in need of some reform. How someone with such a history of and links to extremism was on the streets on parole needs to be investigated, and changes must be made to adjust to the new level of threat to the community. Having said that, we should take a moment to reflect on the members of Victoria Police who bravely drove towards danger and took action to contain and subsequently end the situation, having three of their number injured in the process. The police and all our emergency services deserve our thanks for the work they do.

Terrorist attacks

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — Acts of terror continue to rage around the world: the United Kingdom has had its fair share, Egypt's Coptic Christians were attacked by ISIS, in Iraq a young Australian girl was murdered by the same extremists and last night in Melbourne an innocent person went to work and got killed and three of our police officers got injured doing their job.

These extremists should be condemned; they should be eradicated from the face of the earth as far as I am concerned. These people pretend to be Islamist, but I do not think Islam preaches violence and the killing of innocent people. They do not discriminate between Christians, Muslims or atheists. They are basically there to kill whoever.

I think it is our job to support our security forces around the world and particularly Victoria Police and the Australian security forces, who did a tremendous job last night. They put themselves in danger every day and they ought to be supported, and I am sure all Victorians will agree with me. We stand supporting our security forces and Victoria Police in the job they do, and I wish the three officers a speedy recovery. Let us hope that terrorism one day will be eradicated all over the world and we will have peace again.

Local government funding

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I was at the Public Accounts and Estimates hearings the other day and saw the Minister for Local Government, Natalie Hutchins, attempt to defend the indefensible — defending a \$150 million cut to interface councils. The fact is the \$50 million a year that has been paid the last two years has been cut to \$25 million a year and there is nothing in the two out years. That is a \$150 million cut

to interface councils, the 10 councils with very fast growth, whether they be Wyndham, Melton, Mitchell or the Hume area, where the growth is massive; 4 and 5 per cent is the rate of growth in many of these areas.

Natalie Hutchins had moved around the countryside promising an increase to \$100 million per year, but in fact it was cut to just \$25 million per year in the budget. And this is also off the back of the government husbanding or sitting on a huge treasure trove of growth areas infrastructure charge money — hundreds of millions of dollars of growth areas infrastructure charge funding — collected from the growth areas. These areas have desperate needs for infrastructure. They have massive population growth and the need for community centres, roads, bridges and all manner of services that need to be provided to these areas. For Natalie Hutchins to try and defend this extraordinary cut, this outrageous cut, by this government is nothing short of shameful. The interface councils will be very unhappy with this performance, and I invite people to read the shocking transcript that she allowed to be laid down.

Victorian Lebanese Community Council

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — I was proud on the evening of 26 May to represent the Premier, the Honourable Daniel Andrews, and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Robin Scott, at a celebration to honour the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Victorian Lebanese Community Council. It was a joyful occasion which recognised the good works of this organisation. They are a community group of dedicated volunteers who foster good relations between Australian-Lebanese citizens and those people who are newly arrived in Victoria. I highly applaud their efforts.

Our Lady of Lebanon Church

Mr ELASMAR — On another matter, I attended a fundraiser for the Maronite Our Lady of Lebanon Church on the evening of 27 May. The funds raised are utilised to deliver advice and guidance for the young people in the community and provide daily social interaction and care for the elderly within the community.

Ramadan iftar dinner

Mr ELASMAR — On another matter, last night I was honoured to attend the 2017 Ramadan iftar state Parliament celebration, co-hosted by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Robin Scott, and his shadow ministerial counterpart, Mrs Inga Peulich from this

chamber, together with Mr Ahmet Keskin, executive director of the intercultural society. This is an annual event that showcases a demonstration of interfaith and cultural dialogue between Australians from all walks of life, and I truly admire the commitment of all the organisers to ensuring this occasion is a successful and enjoyable event.

Ramadan iftar dinner

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I also join colleagues in extending my condolences to those who have lost loved ones or whose loved ones have been hurt as a result of the unlawful use of violence involving innocent citizens, often in the pursuit of political goals — that is, terrorism, which is unfortunately a word all too often coming into our lexicon.

It does not matter where lives are lost, whether it is Afghanistan, Manchester, London, Iraq, Egypt, Somalia or Brighton in Melbourne, every life lost, no matter how unknown that person may be, is a tragedy that we should all stand and denounce. In particular those communities from which those acts of violence and terrorism emanate must lead that denunciation, that condemnation, of the use of terror. I note also that several Middle Eastern countries are coming out and denouncing and cutting ties with Qatar, which is being seen as sponsoring terrorism.

That is why, for example, last night's event, which was mentioned by a colleague earlier, the iftar dinner organised on the 17th occasion by the Australian Intercultural Society to mark the holy month of Ramadan, was such an important event. It was well attended by colleagues, both state and federal parliamentarians, and I would like to thank them all, as well as the judiciary, community leaders, religious leaders and the like, for supporting this event as a way of fostering the fellowship between people of different faiths and fostering dialogue, communication and the pursuit of peace.

Ramadan iftar dinner

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — This month marks the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. It is a special month for people of the Islamic faith, when Muslims use their time while fasting to reflect on their life and seek guidance and forgiveness. During Ramadan, Muslims observe the sacred tradition of iftar, breaking the day-long fast at sunset, and this month I have had the privilege of attending many iftar dinners.

On Thursday, 1 June, I attended the Commonwealth Bank Ramadan iftar dinner. Representing the Premier of Victoria, the Honourable Daniel Andrews, and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Honourable Robin Scott, was a member for Eastern Victoria Region, Mr Daniel Mulino. Also in attendance were the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, the Honourable Matthew Guy; the President of the Legislative Council, Bruce Atkinson; the member for Broadmeadows in the Assembly, Frank McGuire; and the member for St Albans in the Assembly, Natalie Suleyman.

The tradition of iftar symbolises unity and encourages people of all cultural backgrounds and religions to come together, share a meal and foster peace and harmony across different communities around the world. I thank Mr Huss Mustafa, general manager of multicultural community banking at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, for organising this event. I also wish to thank those from other faiths who took the time to attend and to share in this sacred Islamic tradition, and I look forward to attending many other iftar events during the month of Ramadan.

Western Victoria Region crime

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I am forced to raise this matter again in this house in relation to law and order in the Geelong and Bellarine areas. Today I read the *Geelong Advertiser* to see that a mum-and-dad homewares store was broken into over the weekend and an estimated \$30 000 of goods were stolen. The family business was preparing to open a second store within weeks. Also their CCTV hard drive was stolen. Again last Saturday we saw the front page of the *Geelong Advertiser* telling the story of an East Geelong newsagency that is the ongoing victim of theft and break-ins. The store believes it has lost \$10 000 worth of goods in this manner in the last 12 months alone. Some may say these are just small matters, but they are not. They go to the safety of the owners, the shoppers and the employees. It impacts their sense of safety and detracts in many ways from society in general.

I am sick of seeing these headlines and others which have become so common under the reign of the Andrews government. We know that Victoria has suffered a 20 per cent increase in crime under this government, and we note other crimes in the Geelong region: a police pursuit of a stolen car through Geelong on Friday after an alleged burglary on 3 June; police urging residents to install their own CCTV after a Corio woman was woken by a man in her home with a baseball bat; a person was arrested for alleged heroin trafficking on 10 May; police are hunting for a gunman

after a shooting in Norlane on 18 May; a 15-year-old allegedly breached bail 13 times before assaulting an 80-year-old Whittington man on 10 March; and the arrest in Leopold in February of a Rebels motorcycle gang member, now facing charges for trafficking ice, possessing firearms, theft, burglary and handling stolen goods. That was on 13 February.

What Victorians need is a greater police presence, tougher and increased minimum — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Order! Mr Ramsay, time!

Love Latrobe exhibition

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — This week in Queen's Hall some of the Latrobe Valley's most innovative businesses will be showcased as part of *Love Latrobe*, an exhibition that celebrates and promotes our fabulous region. The exhibition is hosted by my colleague the member for Morwell in the Assembly, the Honourable Russell Northe, and it highlights local success stories that show Victoria that the Latrobe Valley has a strong and innovative business culture.

Businesses participating in *Love Latrobe* include: Australian Paper, Mahindra Aerospace, Narkoojee Winery, Safetech, The View From Here, Latrobe Valley Enterprises, Gippsland Trade Printers, Latrobe City Council, Latrobe City Business Tourism Association and the Morwell State Emergency Service. I encourage all MPs and visitors to stop by, meet stallholders and begin to appreciate the importance and diversity of businesses within the Latrobe Valley.

Library at the Dock

Ms BATH — Last night Planet Ark's Sean O'Malley and Make It Wood campaigner David Rowlinson gave the state Nationals MPs a tour of the beautifully crafted Docklands timber library. The three-storey building, made from engineered timber and reclaimed hardwood, is Australia's first 6-star Green Star public building. Now more than ever we should be looking to wood as a lightweight, durable, carbon capturing and environmentally responsible building material. I note and commend Latrobe City Council and the Wellington and East Gippsland shire councils for being the leaders in Australia's wood encouragement policy, and I congratulate former Latrobe councillor Sandy Kam for being a trailblazer in this field.

Crime rates

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) — Crime is out of control in Victoria. It is absolutely out of control, and Premier Daniel Andrews's legacy to Victoria will be the extent of crime that we are now facing on a day-to-day basis across the whole of the state. Security is meant to be the number one priority of any government, but unfortunately that does not seem to be the case with this current Daniel Andrews Labor government. We have got home invasions everywhere, along with carjackings and burglaries, and God help the people who own jewellery stores at the moment. We have got crime gangs roaming all over the place creating havoc wherever they go.

Under Daniel Andrews crime has risen by 20.1 per cent across the whole of Victoria. The only other thing that has risen that much is the amount of taxes that he is charging. In Macedon Ranges crime is up 26 per cent, in Bendigo it is up 25 per cent and in Benalla it is up nearly 36 per cent. The former police commissioner, Kel Glare, said there was a 'crime tsunami' going on in Victoria, and it is just out of control.

This government is not keeping its citizens safe. Whether it comes to the crime that we are seeing in Victoria or the destruction of the Country Fire Authority that is unfolding in front of us now, Daniel Andrews is absolutely soft on crime, and the criminals know it. That is why we see crime rates in Victoria out of control and continuing to increase.

Community safety

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — What is going on in our state of Victoria? It was not so long ago that most of us thought nothing of attending a football match, a festival or other public events where large numbers of people gather. Most of us had not a second thought for our personal safety in our own homes or perhaps even in our own beds. Until recently most of us did not have a problem with allowing our kids to head down to the neighbourhood milk bar or to enjoy some fresh air in the local park. The sad fact of life is that in 2017 none of that now applies.

The fact is Victorians are now living in fear. Victorians are now making decisions such as what car they will buy based on the crime tsunami that is sweeping our state. I have spoken to people in the past week who are seriously thinking of selling up and shifting elsewhere to avoid the high levels of crime threatening residents of Melbourne's west.

This is intolerable. Personal safety in Victoria has gone to hell in a handcart over the past two years, and we have a government that is unable or perhaps unwilling to do anything about it.

The Andrews government soft-on-crime, soft-on-criminals attitudes and policies have led to this deplorable situation. Roll on November 2018, when a government will be elected that will actually take protection of the community seriously. Premier Matthew Guy and the coalition government will make Victoria safe again.

Vietnamese Dual Identity Leadership Program

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — On 20 May I had the pleasure of attending the Vietnamese Dual Identity Leadership Program. This is a program that has been running over the last few years for young Vietnamese people who are often not quite sure where they sit in the world: are they Vietnamese, are they Australian? Or it could be due to their relationships with their parents, who have often had terrible trauma in getting to Australia. The program has given young people enormous confidence, and every time I go to one of these events the thing that strikes me is how that confidence is building. They organise everything themselves; their public speaking is amazing, as are the singing and the cooking. It is just a totally joyous night.

These are young people who are proving themselves. They know who they are. They are Vietnamese Australian. They are proud of who they are. I think it is a remarkable program, and I think it is one that could be rolled out into a number of other communities.

Liverpool, United Kingdom, protest

Ms HARTLAND — I do not usually talk about funny things that I have seen on Facebook, but I would like people to go and have a look at something funny. There was a demonstration over the weekend in Liverpool with extreme right wing protesters, who basically hate everything. Another group of people staged a counter-demonstration. But instead of the usual biff-up, they played Benny Hill at high speed and really loudly and completely drowned out the right-wing protesters. I thought: that is the way to go; just drown them out with Benny Hill.

APPROPRIATION (2017–2018) BILL 2017*Second reading***Debate resumed from 25 May; motion of Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State).**

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — For the 11th time I rise to provide a triple-bottom-line assessment of a state budget and talk about what might be in this budget that looks for the things that all Victorians want to see us balance up in the future — that is, people, planet and prosperity. My colleagues from the Greens are likely to come forward and talk in a little more detail about their individual portfolio areas, but let us just go through those three broad themes first up.

In relation to education, health and housing, I sense that Labor members are walking with a bit more of a spring in their step. They feel like this is a budget that delivers on their core values, which of course relate to not just the wages and conditions of workers but also the broader social wage, the government services that provide a very real supplement into the pockets and lifestyles of everyday people in Victoria. Those are things that we should not neglect when it comes to high-quality free government education and when it comes to the ability to walk into a hospital or a doctor's surgery and hand over a Medicare card, rather than what happens in the US where they swipe your credit card. In terms of housing, the government plans some further investment in public housing through this budget.

Of course the government would recognise that a lot of this is catch-up. They would recognise that over many, many budgets with sort of an ongoing program of austerity, these matters that I have just referred to have been run down and degraded. Combined with, at least in the short term, a rapidly growing population, we can see that it really is not possible for any government to kick back and have a rest, even for one year. If you went over the broad sweep of years and budgets all the way back to those first introduced by Jeff Kennett, you would see that the public has been struggling as that basic social wage has been eroded, let us say.

While some of these measures are greatly welcomed by the community, I can tell you that the parents at my local school are thrilled about the amount of facilities that are being provided there. I have not quite explained to them yet that it has something to do with them being in an ultramarginal seat and that perhaps this money is not being spread like an even layer of Vegemite across the whole of the Victorian community. But

nevertheless, communities welcome investment in these facilities. They welcome it greatly.

That moves us on to the next issue, which is an enduring concern for the Greens, and that is what it is that this budget might do for the environment. Unfortunately in that area the government has not done so well and has not got such accolades. Just taking us to what the environment groups said on the day, the Friends of the Earth described the allocations for climate change as 'modest' and effectively skipped to the 2018–19 budget and started talking about what ought to be in that, saying that next year's budget, the final before the election, will be the litmus test. What they said in detail is:

While the government has a clear grasp of the dynamics affecting education, health and infrastructure expenditure, it's unclear how climate is impacting the budget and what is allocated towards climate change prevention, resilience to impacts and disaster response.

There is a word in a headline used by Environment Victoria that you would never want to see in relation to a budget press release — 'State budget fails to prioritise achievement of climate change and renewable energy targets'. To quote perhaps the most pertinent paragraph, they say:

This is the third of four budgets that will be delivered by the Andrews government in this term, and none of them have treated climate change as the grave threat that it is to our safety, prosperity and quality of life, despite positive policies and commitments by the Premier between budgets.

And so on. These environment groups are not necessarily asking for the sun, the moon and the stars; over recent years their expectations have been lowered considerably. But they were unable to discern the connection between the money that is in this budget and some of the pledges that the government has been talking about in terms of action on climate change, so I just want to unpack that a little bit.

The government has committed to zero emissions by 2050, and how could they not? That is in fact what the world has aspired to through the Paris agreement. Naturally they were all out there on Twitter the day before yesterday tut-tutting at Donald Trump for having withdrawn his country from the Paris agreement. He is going to withdraw and he is going to renegotiate, he says, the Paris agreement. Good luck to him. The Paris agreement consists of a bunch of non-binding, voluntary commitments, so I am not entirely sure what it is that he thinks he will be renegotiating. So far, and immediately in response to his announcement, other countries reaffirmed their commitment to their voluntary targets, so all he has really done with that

announcement is make his country a kind of a rogue nation when it comes to CO₂ pollution. Of course his isolationism brings to mind past eras when America withdrew from global efforts on a range of issues, and let me just say that was not good for the world. While Trump is out on his own, it appears that Mr Andrews is saying all the right words but not backing it up with funds.

Let us just talk about what that CO₂ trajectory means. If the Premier is saying that he is going to take emissions to zero by 2050, it is not clear whether that is aimed at achieving a 2-degree warming limit or a 1.5 limit. Mr Andrews has the same dilemma as the nations of the world. If we as the world reduce our emissions to zero by 2050 but still want to achieve a 1.5-degree warming limit, then what we need to do is actually go into negative emissions post-2050. In fact significant negative emissions would be required, possibly as much as half of the current level of emissions, and those negative emissions would have to continue for many, many years.

Alternatively, the Premier and the world need to achieve a much more ambitious reduction goal, which would in fact be something more like zero emissions by something like 2025, maybe 2030. If the Premier is not looking past that particular date, then really what he is saying is he is blowing the 1.5-degree target and is willing to tolerate 2 degrees. The difference between the two, as we know, is basically the end of a number of Pacific nations. That is the reason the Paris agreement maintained the ambition of 1.5 degrees; the alternative was that we were locking in the extinction of a number of small island nations.

While I will probably be dead and the Premier will be in a nursing home around about 2050, nevertheless, he should understand the implications of what it is that he is putting forward with his reduction goal and he should be able to back it up with action. So far it is not in this budget.

In fact what is in this budget is more dollars for the development of coal. There are dollars in it to get in front of the private sector and go out and explore for more gas, and of course there are dollars for the continued subsidy and destruction of forest logging and woodchipping when in fact our carbon-dense forests would be one of the easiest and best ways to start creating some of those negative emissions that I was referring to. At the same time of course it is a real shame that across Victoria — I am now talking on private land and on some public land — we still have a net loss of tree cover, and that is contributing to our emissions when we should actually be looking at

reforesting to draw down some of that CO₂ that we have already put in the atmosphere. There are questions about how we deal with waste. There is a huge throughput into landfill, with the measures of the past, such as landfill levies, not having had the necessary effects.

Among all this is the continuing issue of how agriculture is going to survive, adapt and flourish to continue feeding us and a large part of the world under the scenarios we are facing, whether it be 1.5 degrees, 2 degrees or an unthinkable higher degree of warming. In order for that to happen, though, we need to address first of all the energy market — stationary energy, coal-fired and gas-fired power stations. We had a huge number of them here in Victoria, and we still have a surplus to our needs. In fact if you look back over the last month or so, you will see that Victoria's fossil fuel fleet has been operating at about 60 or 70 per cent capacity; that is even after they took up the slack from the closure of Hazelwood. But the problem is, as the late comedian John Clarke pointed out, we are not just dealing with an energy system, we are dealing with an energy market, and the energy market is perverse. This budget and the measures that the state government is putting forward unfortunately send no signal to investors as to where they should invest next into that energy market.

We are eagerly awaiting legislation for a Victorian renewable energy target. I believe we are going to see that, and I hope it is legislated and operating before this government runs out of time. But there is one signal that needs to go to those investors who will put money into wind, solar, other renewables and storage, the combination of which is now cheaper — dramatically cheaper in fact — than new-build gas, and of course we are never going to see another coal investment here in Victoria; it is just too risky and too expensive. Those investors would like to see a plan for the phase-out of fossil fuels going alongside the plan for the expansion of renewables, but it is just a hot wire that the government is unwilling to touch. Instead they keep painting pictures in this budget of some sort of renaissance of coal and fossil fuels and gas in Australia, and they are backing it up, unfortunately, with taxpayers money that will go down the drain.

Turning to the question of the economy and prosperity, I would just settle for productivity right now. There is no vision for that in this budget. Land use planning measures seem to focus largely around residential land use. That might be the thing that fills up newspapers, but it is the future industrial and commercial land, it is the way the fast-moving economy is going to chop and change across the landscape, that we really need to see

action on. Without an economic vision you are going to be along for the ride when it comes to jobs. With no assessment of what the jobs of the future look like or where they will be, it makes it a bit hard to sit down and draw up a land use plan.

We missed the boat unfortunately when we sold off the port of Melbourne. Now we are back to an argument of where a second port might be, but in fact what we should have been working on was not a second port but a plan to stage out of central Melbourne the existing port to a new port. Unfortunately now that question has been put aside for probably decades to come, so that is another major missed opportunity there.

While I am calling for productivity measures, pretty much all we are getting in this budget is another round of privatisations, and there is not a lot left to sell. They are selling the land out literally from underneath our citizens' feet. There is some talk of bulking up, carving out and selling off the land titles office, but apart from that it is the land under our feet, particularly land that the government sees as surplus or even where people are currently living — public housing estates, which the government thinks it can simply hand off to a developer in return for getting back a small increase in public housing. We need to be doing a lot better than that. The land that has been accumulated over many decades — the open space, the sports fields, the public housing land — should not just be sold off lightly. In fact we are trustees of that land rather than people who think they just have the right to come in and more or less flog it off on what I think I have demonstrated is a very narrow, very short term horizon that this government appears to be working towards.

Tax reform is another missed opportunity. I know I have said it in every one of the 10 budgets that preceded this. There are a number of fiddles, tweaks and twerks to various tax regimes, but nothing that you would call tax reform. People perhaps do not pay very much attention to state taxes. I do not think most people would even know how much state tax they paid last year.

The local council sends you a rate notice once a year and, bingo, there it is — you have to write a cheque. The federal government — well, they sting you with their income tax and every other time you purchase something. Small business people would understand they are basically a branch of the tax office, but state taxes are such a mixed grab bag from stamp duties to land taxes and the rest of it. Did you play a poker machine last year, Acting President? If so, you also paid some state taxation.

It is a mess. People do not really understand where taxes come from, and they do not understand the distorting nature of them. Not only are the various state taxes some of the most distorting taxes that you will find in terms of economic efficiency and equity but Victoria's particular mix is said to be the worst of any state. So we are missing the opportunity for stamp duty reform.

The government ruled out an inner-city congestion charge at the very moment that Infrastructure Victoria recommended it, but now they are introducing one by stealth. I know Mr Finn will be interested in this because it seems that as Transurban rolls out their plans they are going to basically eventually control every on-ramp into the city and you will have a de facto congestion charge — not one that was designed for a public purpose, not for a revenue purpose, not to create the proper incentives to unclog that inner-city area but in fact just to make a money-making machine for Transurban.

That leads us to the productivity-enhancing question of infrastructure. Again the government does not have that vision. They are trying to throw off the legacy of the east–west road tunnel by building a west–east return. They are complaining that the federal government has not provided Victoria with its fair share of infrastructure dollars, but that is because they are still largely having an argument about which irrelevant, polluting and congestion-creating road tunnel is the proper one to be tipping dollars into.

Message to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and to the other transport ministers: if you keep putting up stupid, low-productivity infrastructure to the federal government, it is going to be harder to make your case for further federal infrastructure funds. After all, this federal government is still trying to work out whether it is going to subsidise a rail line from a coalmine to the ocean. What chance do we have of getting the money we need to build a rail line to the airport?

Clearly these sorts of investments are very much about what the future economy consists of, but time and again we see money thrown back at propping up the old fossil fuel based economy. Once upon a time the economy of Victoria was reasonably easy to understand — we made cars and we made cottage housing. Well, we do not make too many cars any more, and the question of housing has become a major hot potato.

You really have to look closely to see what the opportunities are to invest in in the growth economy. If I was not an MP and I was looking at which stocks I would be buying — as I once upon a time was a

small-cap stock picker — I really do not know where I would be putting my money, because we do not see that the government of the day, state or federal, has picked up on what the growth engines of the future economy are to be. So they fall back to the time-honoured old favourites — toll roads where people can drive cars to and from an ever-increasing urban sprawl. It was great as a growth model all the way from the postwar period, but it is not going to do the job in an environment where we are strictly constrained on the amount of fossil fuels that we can afford to burn.

So it is disappointing and quite frightening in some ways to see the ongoing decline within the TAFE sector. The TAFE sector was always our economic engine when it came to creating the skills that were needed in the future. When I was in about year 9 my school got a computer, and we all stood around and wondered what this thing was. I signed up for a semester of computer classes, and at the end of one semester I had learned how to program the computer to draw a smiley face. At that point I dropped computer classes because I really could not see that there was much future in such a clunky instrument, but that is how wrong I was and it shows how wrong you can be if you stick with the way — —

Ms Shing — You could have started Facebook.

Mr BARBER — I missed the boat, Acting President. Ms Shing is very worried about the Greens taking credit for things. I think she is almost more afraid of the Greens and Labor getting together and doing things. There will be a little bit of that in this week's Parliament, but let us watch how comfortable they are while we are doing it.

As I was saying, the TAFE system was a well-managed system that was used to address some of the questions that I have been talking about — how to skill people up rapidly for these changes that are occurring, whether it be what you need to learn to move from being an electrical engineer in a coal-fired power station to being an electrical engineer on a wind farm or whether it be to use your skills working in a vehicle assembly line to produce different sorts of vehicles, perhaps light rail vehicles that will transform this city and bus congestion, leading to a dividend in terms of productivity. The TAFE system was the way we did it, and unfortunately it is in a bit of a mess.

It is not just dollars alone that are going to fix it; it is in fact a government with vision. This budget is a bit patchy. It may to the Labor people feel like they are returning to their roots, but any modern government has to have the answers on this list of questions that I raised

here today, and unfortunately in relation to this budget it is hard to see.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) — It is an honour to rise to speak in support of the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. This was a landmark budget in many ways. First and foremost, it was a landmark budget in relation to the priority that it gave to family violence policy and funding. This budget lays out funding for addressing family violence that is greater than all previous budgets that have been handed down in this state's history. It also provides more funding to prevent family violence than all the other state and territory governments and the commonwealth government combined did in their most recent budgets. It is a landmark when it comes to that area of policy, one of the greatest scourges our society is facing.

Secondly, it is a landmark budget when it comes to infrastructure. It is the first budget in this state's history which crosses \$10 billion in funding from this state in relation to transport, in relation to health, in relation to education and on it goes. And I might say that we are crossing that threshold — \$10 billion in infrastructure funding — at a time when Infrastructure Victoria is providing much-needed guidance to the state in terms of its long-term infrastructure needs and at a time when the Office of Projects Victoria is providing much-needed assistance to the state in relation to improving project delivery.

It is a landmark budget in terms of the security it provides in fiscal settings and overall economic certainty. That overall economic environment is one in which this state is creating more jobs than all other jurisdictions combined. It is an absolutely remarkable achievement. It is one that we have become used to over the last two years but one that nonetheless is remarkable.

Let me delve into some of the details, having touched on those three, in my opinion, extremely important overarching landmark themes. The fiscal settings of this budget are rock solid. The 2017–18 surplus is estimated to be \$1.2 billion, and surpluses average \$2.4 billion over the forward estimates. We are not spending more than we earn. Expenses growth will average 3.2 per cent over the forward estimates while revenue growth will average 3.7 per cent. It is a responsible budget, and it contains responsible fiscal settings going out over the forward estimates. That is reflected in the way in which the markets and the ratings agencies view this state's economy. On Wednesday, 3 May, Moody's confirmed that our economy remains AAA. We remain AAA with both Moody's and Standard & Poor's. Our debt is manageable. This is a very important achievement for a

subnational government. It is very impressive, I would argue, for a state to maintain a AAA rating in the face of such strong and persistent demand for infrastructure, which we are meeting.

That of course is not an end in itself. We do not have surpluses as an end in themselves. We have a surplus because it drives the economy, and we drive the economy because it creates jobs, amongst other reasons. Jobs growth, as I indicated, is running at an incredible rate in this state. Our budget settings are a critical underpinning for that environment. The rate of economic growth in Victoria has more than quadrupled from 0.8 per cent in 2013–14 to 3.3 per cent in 2015–16. Over 2000 jobs have been created since November 2014, with over 60 per cent of those jobs being full-time. We all know in this place that creating jobs provides people with opportunities, provides people with income and material wellbeing, and also provides people with meaning to their lives. It provides people with support in so many more ways than just their material wellbeing. We are seeing almost 250 jobs a day being created in this state. That has occurred since this government was elected. In the last year more jobs were created in Victoria than in the rest of the nation combined.

We have strong fiscal settings, which are enabling us to invest in the infrastructure that this state needs, and they are creating an environment in which jobs growth is continuing at a very rapid rate. Let us look at infrastructure. Over \$10 billion will be spent on infrastructure in 2017–18 across the state. The government's average infrastructure investment across the forward estimates is \$9.6 billion. That is around double the decade average of \$4.9 billion before we came to government. Obviously that infrastructure is critical in providing the services — the roads, the public transport, the hospitals, the schools — that our community needs and expects. Those services are in great demand with population growth running at a very high rate, the highest in the nation. That infrastructure is also supporting the jobs growth that I referred to earlier. Something in the order of 50 000 jobs will be created over the forward estimates as a result of the government's direct infrastructure investment. So not only are we creating an economic environment that is leading to jobs growth but the infrastructure investment that we are funding is itself also creating jobs — and creating very important jobs: jobs that provide training, jobs that are providing very high wages and jobs that are supporting important specialist skills.

We can look at a whole range of specific areas of infrastructure investment. We are on track to remove 28 level crossings by the end of 2018 — eight more

than we had promised and 21 more than in the decade before we were elected. This is an important program, one that the community is extremely supportive of. This government is ahead of schedule in providing important solutions to this congestion and safety problem that bedevils many different communities across our state.

We have spent \$879.5 million to deliver more frequent and more reliable public transport. We have significant investment going into both below and above track. There is significant new investment in track. We have significant investment going into rolling stock. Over \$1.1 billion will be spent to improve regional public transport. To use the words of the previous speaker, the Vegemite is being spread right across this state, and it is benefiting people in communities far and wide.

We are also spending significantly on roads. Almost \$2 billion will be spent to reduce congestion and build and upgrade new roads. This includes over \$500 million for regional roads, \$300 million for the Mordialloc bypass and \$100 million to finalise planning and preconstruction for the north-east rail link.

This government has been delivering major projects. We have the Melbourne Metro project, we have the removal of level crossings, we have the Tulla upgrade and the M1 upgrade, and now, as I just indicated, we are putting money into finalising the planning and preconstruction for yet another major transport project.

Let me get back onto family violence, which for me is probably the most important single element of this budget. There is \$1.9 billion to deliver on the recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. There are a lot of firsts in this. There is \$448 million for 17 support and safety hubs, which will revolutionise the delivery of a lot of much-needed services. There is over \$270 million for victim survivor assistance, over \$269 million for Victoria's legal system, including specialist family violence courts, and on it goes.

I refer to one key stakeholder in this area, the Victorian Council of Social Service, which indicated that because of the investment in family violence and other aspects of the budget this is a budget with a heart. The budget delivers on our commitment to addressing family violence, an issue that has for too long not been given the priority it deserves.

We are dealing with both infrastructure and social investment not just in the metropolitan area but right across the state. The 2017–18 budget delivers an unprecedented \$4 billion for regional Victoria. Since 2014 the Andrews Labor government has spent over

\$8.5 billion in the regions. What this reflects is that the state is growing at an unprecedented rate. We are growing at over 100 000 people per year. A lot of that growth is occurring in Melbourne, but our regional cities are amongst the fastest growing regional cities in the nation, so it is absolutely critical that we maintain investment in our regions. We need to maintain investment for connectivity, we need to maintain investment for the standards of service provision, for health and education, and we are seeing this occur.

We are also seeing a range of innovative policies. For example, in an Australian first, regional Victorian businesses will get a 25 per cent discount on their payroll tax if they are operating substantially in regional Victoria. This kind of economic incentive is critical for generating real ongoing job growth in the regions. The headline job numbers that I referred to earlier — over 200 000 jobs created since November 2014 — are impressive. But if they are not spread right across this state, then that story is not half as good. We are putting in place incentives that will create economic development in our regions. A 25 per cent discount on payroll tax is extremely important as it will allow businesses to set up in a sustainable way and to then grow over time.

Another important measure for regional Victoria is the doubling of the first home owner grant. This will increase from \$10 000 to \$20 000, which will make a material difference when it comes to people deciding where to locate. This is a measure that I believe will significantly increase the appetite of first home owners to locate to regional areas, and that will be of great benefit to those communities when linked with the efforts to boost economic growth in those areas.

We can also talk about the significant number of government jobs that are being located in regional areas. Ballarat will benefit from 700 jobs and the Latrobe Valley from 170 jobs. What we are seeing is a whole range of measures that will act together in a synergistic way to boost economic development and livability in regional areas.

Another couple of areas are critical in this budget, and Mr Barber referred to them. In the 2017–18 budget \$1.3 billion is invested to make sure that we have the best teachers in our classrooms, that we have the best facilities in our schools and that every child gets the support they need. This includes \$685 million for new and upgraded schools across Victoria. We are spending huge amounts, well above trend, on new schools and huge amounts, well above trend, on refurbishing existing schools. There are so many schools that are performing well in spite of the fact that they have

outdated equipment and outdated buildings, and we obviously need to give those communities more support by investing appropriately and refurbishing their outdated buildings.

New schools are critical. We are opening new schools at an unprecedented rate. In my electorate it was very gratifying to open a school in Pakenham at the beginning of this year that was in fact a paddock at the beginning of the government's term.

Mr O'Donohue — Announced by Denis Napthine.

Mr MULINO — Taking up the interjection form those opposite, we hardly opened a school in our first two years, which reflected the pipeline that we inherited. It was actually what one might call an empty pipeline.

But we are opening schools at a very rapid rate. John Henry Primary School was full the day it was opened. I remember on that day, opening that school with over 400 kids running around, looking across the ovals at a range of half-built houses. That school is an icon. That school is a symbol of why it is so critical that this government is investing at above trend in education.

We can also look to health. Almost \$2.9 billion is being invested to ensure all Victorians receive first-class care. This includes funding to upgrade and expand the Northern Hospital and funding to plan the new Footscray hospital development. Over \$400 million is being invested to boost access to mental health services across Victoria, meaning 579 additional inpatient services and approximately 75 000 hours of emergency care.

Let me just return in closing to those three themes that I touched on at the start. Family violence: family violence had been off the radar and had been very low on the priority list until this government came to power. A royal commission was something that we promised in the last election. We delivered it very early in this term, and now we are delivering on the policy implementation.

The second theme that I opened with was infrastructure. The 10-year average was in the order of \$4.9 billion. We are seeing over double that in this current year: \$10 billion for the first time. We are delivering infrastructure, not just talking about it, not just handing out Monopoly tickets, like previous administrations did.

Jobs: what a remarkable record on jobs. We are creating the environment for jobs more than the rest of this country combined, and we are also delivering on job creation in the government sector itself. We are

delivering jobs at a rapid rate, many of which are full time, many of which are high wage and many of which involve training.

So this is, again, a landmark budget that delivers on key policy areas, and I recommend it to the house.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Brighton incident

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, I refer to the incident in Brighton yesterday. It has been reported that the offender's ankle bracelet was removed, in breach of his parole conditions. Minister, exactly at what time and on what date did this removal of his ankle bracelet occur?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — I thank the member for his question. Given that he has raised the incident, I think that it is only proper that we firstly acknowledge the unfortunate death of a person that was in the wrong place at the wrong time, going about his daily work duties. It is reprehensible that he is no longer with us, and I do extend our sincerest sympathies to his family and his friends.

I also indicate and acknowledge the work of our police officers who were at that incident, particularly those that were injured in the line of duty. Quite frankly, if they were not there when they were, the incident would have taken longer to resolve itself in a way other than it did, with probably a more horrific situation than what was already a dire situation.

Having said that, this matter is under police investigation, and I am not in a position, given the investigation, to go to particular aspects of it. I am prepared to talk about the investigations, but I will not go to the particulars. I have also asked Corrections Victoria to investigate and review all management of the offender, whether that be in prison or since his release into parole.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, the Premier and the chief commissioner have done a full stand-up press conference about this issue today and the Premier has answered questions about this serious incident today in question time in the other place. I think it is most appropriate that these sorts of details be provided by the minister to this house, and I think it would be very regrettable if the minister chooses to ignore the legitimate questions from the opposition about this most serious incident.

Ms Shing — Further to the point of order, President, that Mr O'Donohue has raised, in the question he noted that there were allegations contained in reports that formed the basis of the question. Given that these are, as the minister has indicated in her answer, the subject of an investigation, it appears to be something which invokes the sub judice rule to the extent that they may involve conclusions of fact or law in relation to the matters of substance in that investigation.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, President, it clearly cannot be sub judice in this respect because this would mean that every case of this nature, wherever there is a police investigation, would be sub judice. The minister must know the details of this — if she does not, that is a point of public interest — and she can answer it. Indeed it would be disrespectful to those who have suffered not to get to the truth.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I first take Ms Shing's point of order and indicate that this matter is not sub judice, in part because no charges have been laid and clearly no charges will be laid because the offender was killed in the incident. Sub judice refers to court proceedings, and there will not be court proceedings in this matter. There will be an investigation by the police professional standards section. As I understand it from the press conference that I heard this morning, there will be a — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Yes, but also professional standards because it involved a police shooting. There will be a coroner's investigation as well, but neither of those matters are really covered by our sub judice rules.

In respect of Mr O'Donohue's point of order, the minister clearly will need to be circumspect, I would have thought, in some of the remarks that she might make in regard to questions posed to her today because the police investigation may not yet have established all of the facts in this matter. There is an ongoing investigation. To that extent, the minister cannot be expected to provide accurate information to this house if it has not been already substantiated by the police investigation.

Nonetheless, the minister is obliged to respond to those questions, not to rely on the fact that there is an ongoing investigation but to indicate that a fact has yet to be established, or indeed if she does know the answer to that question, to respond in that way. As I said, my view is that the minister ought not rely on an ongoing investigation as the answer, but to indicate that a fact

has not been substantiated yet is a valid answer in this context.

Ms Shing — On a point of order, President, further to your comment in relation to criminal proceedings, in the event that we are not able to establish that no criminal proceedings have been or in fact will be laid, is there not still capacity for sub judice to apply in this situation, particularly in relation to the federal framework?

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Shing — I am just respectfully asking.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The member is entitled to establish this position. The answer is no. The sub judice rule does not apply. The sub judice rule actually only kicks in once criminal charges are laid, so even if we were to anticipate or to believe that there may be some criminal charges forthcoming, the fact that they have not yet been laid means that there is no sub judice application here. To this extent, at this time it is believed — according to the press conference this morning that I listened to — that there was the one offender, he is deceased and clearly charges will not be laid in any event in this matter.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, I wonder whether the minister would like to reconsider her answer to the substantive question in light of your ruling?

The PRESIDENT — The minister has completed her substantive answer on this occasion. I note you have got a couple of other opportunities to pursue answers in regard to these matters.

Mr Jennings — On a point of order, President, I am sorry to draw it your attention and the chamber's attention, but just because the suspect, the offender, has been killed does not mean that there may not be criminal charges laid in relation to this matter, so any assumption that there is no potential for criminal charges to be laid is not accurate in relation to how the various investigations may ultimately lead to those outcomes.

The PRESIDENT — That is correct and is consistent with what I said, because sub judice does not kick in until such time as those charges are laid. Clearly this question in particular that was put, the substantive question from Mr O'Donohue, was in regard to a matter that in fact preceded this incident and sought information that was not within the scope of the

incident yesterday in any event. Clearly it would be extraordinary if criminal charges were laid and there were court proceedings in regard to somebody who was deceased.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It might involve other people, but it will not involve the offender.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I ask the minister by way of supplementary: Minister, can you detail the offender's full monitoring regime whilst he was on parole?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Again, President, I have asked, as I said before, Corrections Victoria to investigate and provide a review to me on all management contact with this offender in prison and since the person had been released onto parole. My problem is that there are certain bits of information that I personally know of, but because there is an investigation I am finding it difficult, because you need to have the fulsome detail of a report before I think that you can actually deliver it. That is the dilemma I find myself in, President, in that I would actually like to be able to, but I think it undermines the investigation that I ordered earlier today.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, in response to the point made by the minister, the minister has in effect told the house that she has been briefed or has information that she is aware of in relation to this matter, but she is refusing to disclose it to the house. I would submit to you, President, that she has an obligation to respond to these questions in an accurate way. You have detailed to the house in response to my previous point of order the ways that she can answer these questions and not answer other questions, but she has an obligation — with the knowledge that she has that she has just advised the house of — to respond in a clear and truthful way to these questions.

Ms Tierney — On the point of order, President, I have indicated that I have had a preliminary briefing. I have preliminary information, and as a result of that I have ordered an investigation to understand the full arrangement Corrections Victoria has had in relation to this offender. It is very difficult to respond properly to questions when you do not have all of the information that goes over the history of the offender and goes over the history of the offender since that person was released onto parole.

Ms Shing — On the point of order, President, there is no requirement that a minister answer a question in a certain way. The minister was asked a question by Mr O'Donohue and has answered that, so for him to seek further particulars is not in fact a point of order.

The PRESIDENT — In respect of the points of order that have been raised with me, Ms Shing is correct. I do not have the capacity to direct a minister on how they should answer a question. I have provided some guidance to the minister on this occasion today, which I think is consistent with the expectations of the house in how a minister might respond in circumstances that are unfolding and where there is perhaps information — more importantly, perhaps speculation — on matters that needs to be confirmed as fact rather than speculation.

In respect of the point of order that has been raised by Mr O'Donohue, clearly I do have a power to consider whether I regard an answer to be apposite, relevant and responsive to a question, and on that basis I determine whether or not I will seek written responses.

As Ms Shing rightly says, the minister has an opportunity to respond to a question as she sees fit, and I then have an opportunity to determine whether or not that answer is adequate to inform the house, not necessarily to satisfy the questioner. I indicate that I certainly regard the first question as a matter that is separate to the incident yesterday although clearly not unrelated to some investigations that might be proceeding.

Brighton incident

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is again to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, can you list all the conditions of the parole order with respect to Mr Khayre, the Brighton offender?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — As I said in my answer to the substantive question, I will not go through the details of the individual offender. The work that I have asked to be commissioned is to check the systems and the processes that were put in place by Corrections Victoria when the person was in prison and since the person was released into parole. Those processes and systems need to be outlined to me, and then I will work out from there what the steps are so that we can provide the full and proper answers that the public requires.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, I note your ruling, but the substantive question requested

the conditions of the parole order, which would have been made by the adult parole board (APB) prior to the offender's release from prison onto parole. That is unrelated in any way to the incident yesterday, per se. It was a decision made by the APB late last year, if media reports are correct. The Minister has the full ability to release those conditions without compromising any investigation or compromising any issue associated with the incident yesterday.

The PRESIDENT — As I have indicated, the minister is entitled to answer the question as she sees fit at this time, and I have an entitlement to request a written response.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Minister, at any time since he was paroled in late 2016, has the offender failed to comply with any of those conditions? If so, what were the consequences?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Again, President, I am in a situation where I am aware of some of the information but not all of it, and until such time as I am provided that information through the investigation that is going to be conducted by Corrections Victoria it makes it very difficult.

Corrections system

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Corrections. Minister, how many people with known terrorist links are currently in Victoria's correctional facilities?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — What I can advise is that in the last state budget there was an allocation of \$6.385 million over four years for anti-radicalisation programs, and I can advise the house that the Islamic Council of Victoria is contracted to deliver the program and is currently working with up to 22 prisoners and people in the community each year.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Thank you, Minister. I note your answer that work is being undertaken with up to 22 prisoners in our correctional facilities. I ask, by way of supplementary, how many people on parole have known terrorist links?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — The advice that I am provided is that there are up to 22 people in the corrections system.

Brighton incident

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, was the Brighton offender's previous involvement in the Holsworthy Barracks terrorism plot provided to the adult parole board during consideration of his parole at the end of 2016?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Again, I would like to make comment, but this matter is part of the overall investigation in terms of processes and systems within the investigation.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Minister, further to information provided to the adult parole board, was the board informed that the Brighton offender had reportedly trained in Somalia as a terrorist?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Again my answer remains the same. This is subject to an investigation, and I have asked for all of this information to be included in a report for me so that we can have proper and fulsome discussion within the community.

Brighton incident

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is again to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, my question relates to the information provided to the adult parole board. Specifically, what adult offences committed by Mr Khayre were notified to the adult parole board prior to them granting parole in late 2016?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Again this goes to the very heart of one of the questions that I have asked to be investigated in the investigation that will be conducted by Corrections Victoria.

Honourable members interjecting.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Mr Leane

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Leane, 15 minutes, thank you — and you are lucky it is not longer.

Mr Leane withdrew from chamber.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I trust that was not to me.

Mr Dalidakis — No, not at all, President.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It was unacceptable to me irrespectively, but certainly given that I was the last one to speak you are on very thin ground.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Questions resumed.

Brighton incident

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Minister, further to the information provided to the adult parole board, in 2007 this offender was sentenced for a series of burglaries, thefts, intentionally causing injury, attempted armed robbery and other offences. He went into youth justice in April 2007 and was released from Malmsbury about a year later. Minister, was this information provided to the adult parole board in advance of them considering and granting parole to this offender?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Again, my answer remains the same as it has with most of the others, and that is essentially that I have asked for a full investigation by Corrections Victoria in terms of all elements and in terms of all contact that Corrections Victoria has had with the deceased offender over the history of our contact with him.

Adult Parole Board of Victoria

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, on 8 March this year you approved a three-year delay in the ability to get full intelligence and make informed decisions about the granting of parole for the adult parole board, as recommended by former High Court judge Mr Ian Callinan. Minister, the Andrews government has had years to get this done. Instead of this disgraceful delay will you give a commitment to have this vital intelligence system delivered by the end of July this year — a commitment that may save lives?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — This question, I think, has been asked six times now, and the answer is on the record.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — The record shows that in April 2015 Wade Noonan said that the comprehensive case management system of the adult parole board would be delivered by December 2015, and the delivery time for that system has been delayed by three years. Minister, you said these delays were because of integration with related departmental systems and further workflow efficiencies. Minister, will you now admit that Victoria's community safety and Victorians' lives are more important than departmental workflow efficiencies and that the Andrews government has put at risk Victorians' safety by not having this recommended intelligence system in place right now?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — This question also has been asked on numerous occasions, and the answer is that the original scoping of that work was inadequate. We have asked for a more comprehensive integrated system, and we believe that that is the way to go. That is an investment in our community's safety, and in the long term it will ensure greater safety for the Victorian community.

Firearm regulation

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections representing the Minister for Police. Recently Victoria Police announced a new team to deal with illegal firearms, and given the propensity for law-abiding firearms owners to be blamed and punished for the actions of criminals, I have had a number of concerns raised about how this will relate to lawful firearm owners. My question to the minister is: what assurances can you give that the new squad will be used to fight criminals and not just be an extension of the firearms registry?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — Thank you, Mr Bourman, for your question. I do have a response to that question. It is a discussion that we have had in relation to this very issue for some time. I can provide that now if you wish or, if you would wish that, provide it to you in writing, I am in your hands. You would like it now?

The PRESIDENT — Order! You are not in Mr Bourman's hands; you are in my hands and the chamber's hands. The question has been posed in the chamber now. It is not a negotiation of when to provide the answer. If the answer is available now, please make it available now.

Ms TIERNEY — I understand that, President, but I was seeking greater efficiency indications from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and they did indicate that they were happy to have it provided in writing. But given your direction, I am happy to provide that now.

Mr Bourman, from the Minister for Police, Lisa Neville, the response is this: this government respects the rights of legitimate and — —

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Questions interrupted.

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Mr Dalidakis

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Dalidakis, first of all I seek a withdrawal, and then I seek your withdrawal for half an hour. Withdraw the remark first, thank you.

Mr Dalidakis — So withdrawn.

Mr Dalidakis withdrew from chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Firearm regulation

Questions resumed.

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) — This government, as I have just said, respects the rights of legitimate and law-abiding firearms users, and we do take a zero tolerance approach to those who are involved in the illicit firearms criminal industry that do cause us great harm in the community.

In December 2015 new laws came into force to help police tackle the black market in illegal guns, which I am sure you are very much aware of, Mr Bourman. Anyone caught possessing three or more unregistered firearms over a 12-month period can now be prosecuted for trafficking. The second thing is that a new onus has been placed on a person found with a firearm to show it is not in their possession, to help police deal with serious and organised crime groups. The third, a new offence, is the so-called manufacture of firearms, which will carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail. The fourth is a new theft of a firearm offence in the Crimes Act 1958, which will carry a maximum penalty of up to 15 years jail, up from the previous maximum of 10 years. Further to that we have announced that we will be introducing more laws to create the offence of drive-by shootings, firearms prohibition orders and

additional laws to make it an offence to possess firearms parts or equipment to create a firearm.

But more than the new laws and powers for police, we are giving Victoria Police all the resources they need to fight crime, including 3135 new police on top of the attrition rate that the force has. As part of this record investment we have also funded two new illicit firearms trafficking investigation teams, which I know you are particularly interested in. Both teams have started work, and their work will be wide ranging. These two teams are made up of five dedicated sworn police, and I think we have talked about that, and two Victorian public sector staff to support them. They will investigate the links between the theft of firearms and organised crime, as well as disrupting the supply of firearms. They will track down those who traffic firearms and help frontline police tackle gun crime, such as those who steal guns from legitimate firearms owners. They will also be able to carry out random inspections, which I think is really important, as well as helping firearms rangers, that make them tougher targets for criminals. But the team will also focus on outlaw motorcycle gangs, Middle Eastern crime gang networks, youth offending, high-risk offenders and any other organised or networked offending.

The to-do list for our new squad is indeed a long one, but it has one aim, and that is to remove illicit weapons from our community and stop the criminals who steal them, use them, make them and sell them.

Dairy industry

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Last year Victoria's dairy industry was decimated by the clawback implemented by Murray Goulburn and then Fonterra. Not only did this shake supplier confidence, it made many dairy operations unviable, and consequently many farming families have left their lives on the land. At the time the state government made a lot of their support for the dairy industry. Therefore my question to the minister is: what has the government done to make the dairy industry recoverable and to make sure that the clawbacks do not happen again?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Purcell for his question and for his concern for those in our Victorian dairy communities who have been so terribly impacted by volatility and uncertainty in dairy prices in what has now been 13 months. There were already some price pressures that existed, but it was in late April of last year that Murray Goulburn and then a week later Fonterra made announcements around prices, including some initiatives to recover. Mr Purcell

used language that is commonly used — price clawbacks — for the mechanisms that were put in place. This caused shockwaves throughout our dairy communities. Many dairy farmers were faced with the prospect of having to operate their businesses when the income that they were receiving for production was less than the cost of production and were in fact facing that future for some time while international prices recovered.

Our farmers I think are well used to the ebb and flow of the commodity market, and we are really quite exposed in Victoria to the commodity prices in dairy. Around 80 per cent of all Australia's dairy exports come from Victoria — around 70 per cent of all dairy production — so Victoria has certainly been the area where these challenges have been most acute. We continue to support our dairy communities in each of the three regions through very, very difficult circumstances.

Indeed just earlier today Murray Goulburn announced their farm gate price for the coming year. I have not had the opportunity to talk in the few hours since that has happened to any of the dairy farmers who are impacted by this, but I did note some early comments in response from the Victorian Farmers Federation, who have welcomed the early price signal. This time last year everyone was very keen for an early price signal. It being earlier in June rather than a few days before the end of the financial year to give people a bit of advance warning I think is welcome. The price, though, of \$4.70 per kilo of milk solids I think would be disappointing news for people. Cost of production for most people would be north of \$5 or in the order of \$5. It does remain a challenging set of circumstances. I think people are more optimistic now because seasonal conditions have been much, much better over recent months.

The dairy support package that Mr Purcell referred to was something we put together within, really, a couple of weeks of the first announcement of Murray Goulburn. The \$13.5 million package included a significant expansion of Tactics for Tight Times and Taking Stock, which were existing and known programs to support people to do a full stocktake of the needs in their business and make well-informed decisions about going forward. There were also parts of the package that were around small grants to encourage those who were in a position to invest in their business to also stimulate some economic activity in their towns and their communities that were impacted, and some community benefit as well.

The federal government have been undertaking some inquiry in the area of price regulation, and farmers groups have been very active in advocating for that as well. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) made an announcement in April of this year about the approach that they would be taking between now and the end of the year in terms of their ongoing work on pricing and pricing transparency. We certainly look forward to seeing the outcome of that work. The report will be transmitted I believe to the federal Treasurer by 1 November.

Supplementary question

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — I thank the minister for her response. Do the government have any strategies in place to make certain that the events that happened over a year ago do not happen again, particularly in regard to the clawbacks that took place at that time?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Purcell for his further question. I have been asked this question by lots and lots of dairy farmers in the last 12 months. People are just wanting to know: could this happen again? The contractual arrangements that exist between the processing companies and individual dairy farmers are really individual commercial negotiations. There are of course enormous pressures that are placed on our dairy farmers. We see the role that major retailers play in suppressing the price of milk for consumers where you have the extraordinary circumstance where a bottle of water can cost three times or four times as much as a bottle of milk. So there is a role I think for consumers in how they purchase and a role for the big retailers as well.

If there is anything within our power to do to play a positive and constructive role in the federal government's response to this, we will. But I think unfortunately right now while the ACCC and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission are continuing their inquiries and until the ACCC in particular have provided that report to the federal government, it is a little premature to say. But I think all the advice that I have had from our department over this very long 13 months for the dairy industry has been that these are not mechanisms that are within our control.

La Trobe University lobbyist

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Training and Skills, Ms Tierney. Minister, recently your ministerial colleague Ms Kairouz was asked about meetings that

she might have been having with gaming industry lobbyist Stephen Conroy. She said:

I have not met with Mr Conroy, and as for Mr Conroy's activities I don't know how he reconciles his role as a gaming lobbyist and his involvement in internal party matters.

She said she would take a chaperone to any meetings, but later she said she would not meet with him at all. Minister, Mr Conroy is now registered as a lobbyist in Victoria on behalf of La Trobe University. Have you met with him or will you?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) — I thank the member for his question. The answer is no. I have not been advised of any consultancy arrangements, and nothing has been proposed to me.

Supplementary question

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — So that was a no, you have not met with him in relation to your portfolio, or was it a no, you would not meet with him under the same criteria laid out by Ms Kairouz?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) — The answer is that I have not met with him and there has not been a meeting sought, and I am not familiar with what engagement he has entered into even.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I have answers to the following questions on notice: 7651, 7705, 10 560, 10 571, 10 573–4, 10 599, 10 949, 11 041, 11 052, 11 054, 11 065 and 11 103.

The PRESIDENT — I indicate that Ms Wooldridge has sent me a letter requesting the reinstatement of a number of questions. The letter was in respect of questions 10593, 10594, 10595, 10959, 10960, 10961, 10962, 10895, 10986, 10987 and 10988. I have perused those questions and had the staff also look at them, and it is my view that they should be reinstated. The questions were to the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Families and Children in respect of their representation of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing respectively. As I said, I reinstate all those questions.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The PRESIDENT — Order! In respect of today's questions I request written responses from Ms Tierney in regard to Mr O'Donohue's first, second, third, fourth and fifth questions, both the substantive and the supplementary questions, and in respect of Mr O'Donohue's sixth question the substantive question only. It is one day on each of those. I do make the observation that in this matter I might well have been concerned about a line of questions that dealt specifically with last night's incident, but I am mindful of the fact that the questions that Mr O'Donohue led today were about earlier matters and parole board matters rather than the actual incident last night. On that basis I think that it is fair to have the minister consider whether a further response can be provided to the house.

Ms Lovell — On a point of order, President, I note that in an attempt to paint herself in a better light Ms Mikakos has had her own personal spotlight installed on her desk, and I ask: is this a luxury that is going to be afforded to all members or is it just an entitlement for this member only?

The PRESIDENT — Order! It might have been better if this matter had been raised with me privately rather than by way of a point of order because, apart from anything else, I and the staff in this place try to facilitate the participation of members in the activities and processes of this place. There are sometimes facilities that are required by members to ensure that they are able to cope with the requirements of their work in terms of their roles. There is no doubt that the lighting in this place is not necessarily the same at every vantage point. The minister receives briefs and has to refer to notes, and I think that it is valid that she is provided with a light that enables her to read those and convey that information to the Parliament. If there are other members who are having trouble with the lighting standards at their seating, then by all means they should raise it with me.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, President, a matter of sub judice was raised earlier on, and there seemed to be a measure of confusion in the chamber. I thought it may be worth you reissuing a version of your paper of 6 August 2014, which laid out some of these principles for the assistance of members.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I will give some consideration to that, but I think there is guidance in *Rulings from the Chair* as well, as Ms Shing indicates. I

think today we probably did clarify it. I understand that the Leader of the Government in raising the point of order was alluding to the point that there could always be criminal proceedings or some sort of proceedings in the courts that involved people other than the actual offender from last night's incident, who is deceased. I accept that that is always a possibility, but the house is not in a position to anticipate that. As I have said, sub judice only kicks in at the time that charges are laid and the court is obliged to deliberate on those matters.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: will the minister give an assurance that the data being collected by the North East Link Authority and other state government road bodies will be used only by those entities and not find its way into Labor Party databases? The North East Link Authority is currently promoting a comprehensive online survey, with the information from residents helping prepare the business case for the link. At the same time the government, through the Level Crossing Removal Authority, is promoting other road construction programs and is urging residents to sign up for newsletters. For instance, the Level Crossing Removal Authority is currently seeking nominations from the community to represent their local area during the track duplication and the Lower Plenty Road level crossing removal.

I want to make sure that the information residents provide to these authorities stays with them and does not find its way into Labor Party databases. This data should not be used for the government's political purposes. The government has form in this area. VicRoads held community consultations on the long-awaited upgrade of Bolton Street in Eltham in late 2015, yet public advertisements of the event gave the member for Eltham's contact details as the RSVP and residents who attended were told a copy of their personal details would also go to the local member's office. This is unacceptable, and we need to make sure that residents' privacy is maintained.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is on behalf of a constituent in Doncaster and is directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The question pertains to registration concessions and stamp duty exemptions for privately owned wheelchair-accessible motor vehicles. Could the

minister please confirm, firstly, that stamp duty is exempt for a private vehicle whether it is to be driven by an incapacitated person or for a passenger in a wheelchair? My constituent points out to me that guidance on this matter from the State Revenue Office is not clear because it only states that the vehicle is modified to allow an incapacitated person in a wheelchair to access the vehicle. Secondly, could the minister confirm that the stamp duty exemption applies on initial registration and on transfer of registration of an already registered vehicle?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Families and Children. I was pleased to see that the minister last week launched a campaign to raise awareness of the importance of reading to children in the years before they start school as part of the fourth annual Premiers' Reading Challenge for Early Years. This year's challenge will be accompanied by a digital campaign promoting the benefits that reading has for your kids, including interviews with authors and ideas on great books to share. Last year's Premiers' Reading Challenge for Early Years was especially successful. More than 8000 children and families participated and over 265 800 books were read. The question I ask the minister is: how will the government's new campaign of raising awareness help young children in the Western Metropolitan Region improve their school performance and cognitive skills so they can achieve the best possible start in life?

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Public Transport and it is regarding the appalling standard of the Shepparton line rolling stock's cleanliness. During a visit and inspection of the Shepparton train station with the Leader of the Opposition, Matthew Guy, last Monday, we got to see how filthy Labor has let our train carriages become. Constituents say the stock is disgusting, and when you pay good money for a seat you want to know it is clean. One constituent even said, 'I could hardly see my grandchildren waving goodbye through the filthy windows as the train pulled out of the station last Sunday'. I took some photos of the filthy state of the outside of the trains in case the minister is in any doubt about what I am saying — the minister can view them on my Facebook page. Part of the minister's job is to make sure our train carriages are clean and safe, so I ask: will the minister make sure the Shepparton rail stock is clean and comfortable for passengers both inside and out?

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and it is in relation to plans to slash the number of car parks on Mair Street in Ballarat. The minister has announced that these plans will go ahead without the proper consultation with the many business owners who are going to be directly adversely affected by these plans. The question that I ask is: will the minister commit to halting all plans in relation to the Mair Street redevelopment until affected business owners are properly consulted and their views are taken into account before any work commences?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My matter today is for the attention of the Minister for Corrections. We have heard today in question time a series of questions which have not been answered. I note in the *Herald Sun* that the terrible incident in Brighton overnight within my electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region saw one innocent man killed and three brave police tragically injured. But Yacqub Khayre had been charged and later acquitted, the *Herald Sun* says:

... over a terror plot to launch a suicide attack against Sydney's Holsworthy army barracks ...

It says he later:

... carried out a violent and terrifying home invasion which resulted in him being jailed for at least three years.

The court heard he carried out 'gratuitous violence' on a young woman before punching and headbutting her father.

He has recently been paroled, indeed as apparently a low-risk person, by anti-terrorist police. I therefore ask the minister to explain how on earth this man was out on parole.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I rule that out as a constituency question. That is not a constituency question.

Mr DAVIS — On a point of order, President, it is indeed. It is about Brighton, within my electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region. It is a part of my electorate, and constituents of mine have been directly affected.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It is not a constituency question. It is a broad matter, and while the incident happened in your electorate, the matter which you have gone to is not a direct issue for your electorate.

Mr DAVIS — On the point of order, President, it is hard to see how an incident that actually occurs within my electorate is not related to the people in my electorate within a particular — —

Ms Pennicuik — Read the standing orders.

Mr DAVIS — Indeed it does relate to those very directly.

The PRESIDENT — Order! You have actually got it on the record. Your speech is on the record, but your question does not beg an answer from the minister because it is not a constituency question within the standing orders.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, and it concerns the commuters on the South Morang line in my electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region. Starting at South Morang — postcode 3752, the fastest growing area in Australia — the train line is full every single day, and it stops at every station on the way into Melbourne from South Morang. I consistently receive questions in my office about this, and I thank people like Mr Seth in South Morang who asked me to ask the minister if she would consider an express service from South Morang into the city. Interestingly enough, the Hurstbridge line has an express service, and we ask on behalf of my constituents in Northern Metropolitan Region, those who use the South Morang line, if the minister would give consideration to an express service from South Morang and provide me with information so I can answer those constituents.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question today is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Suburban Development, the Honourable Lily D'Ambrosio. Late last year we were all rightly concerned by the destruction of the Corkman Irish Pub in Carlton and the subsequent dumping of asbestos from the site in Cairnlea within my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region. I understand that the owners of the land where the asbestos was dumped are currently planning to erect two apartment towers on that site. This is potentially a cause for great concern amongst my constituents, especially future residents who may purchase apartments at that site. My question to the minister is: can the minister please assure me, my constituents and future tenants of the apartments on that

site that the Environment Protection Authority Victoria has conducted thorough testing at the Furlong Road site and that it is clear of all remnants of asbestos?

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is to the Treasurer on behalf of landholders in Western Victoria Region. The question I ask the Treasurer is: what was the dollar value of the renewable energy certificates purchased by the Andrews government from Acciona that allowed the construction works on the Mount Gellibrand farm at Birregurra to commence? The planning permit for this wind farm has been live for over 10 years, and it is only now after the Andrews government's intervention that Acciona has started construction. My question is asked on behalf of those taxpayers who want to know the true cost of this wind farm development.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Planning. As I have no doubt the minister is acutely aware, the Sunbury community is vitally interested in the future of the former site of the Sunbury campus of Victoria University on Jacksons Hill. The community is very keen to see these buildings returned to their former use as an educational facility of some kind. The community does not want to see the site consumed by new residential housing. Keeping this in mind, will the minister inform me when the Victorian Planning Authority will complete the master plan for the Jacksons Hill precinct structure plan?

APPROPRIATION (2017–2018) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) — It gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand up and make a contribution — my first contribution — in relation to a state budget in this place.

Mr Finn — A pity it was not a better budget.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — That is very true. This is an opportunity that could have delivered a lot of things to a lot of people in a lot of areas. It is a budget that has got plenty of money to spend, but unfortunately we have seen many areas miss out, areas that were well deserving of getting a whole lot more than they did. Regional Victoria is one area that has really missed out in this budget, but we have come to expect that under

the Daniel Andrews Labor government as it selects winners and losers in the way it conducts its business. There is no doubt that the closer you live to Parliament House or the city, the better you do under a Labor government. We have seen that not just in this government; we have seen it in successive Labor governments along the way.

Usually when a budget is delivered it comes with a lot of fanfare, a lot of media coverage and a lot of headlines. The TV stations cover it; they have live crosses. The radio stations have got their budget lock-ups where everyone comes in, gets a sneak peek at the budget and then they get out to write their stories. I find it quite strange that such a budget has such a low profile. This budget has come and gone in the blink of an eye, and there is no aftermath to the budget that is going to carry on very far into the future. It is a one-day wonder story that has just been swallowed up and tossed away because it was so unmemorable to so many people. The media found it so uninteresting that they moved onto other things almost within a day. I know we have got a very fast moving news cycle in this contemporary world we live in, but I did not think it was so fast that this state budget would only have a life span of less than 24 hours. That is what we have seen with this budget.

There are some things about the budget that I do want to put on the record. One thing that I find interesting is the fact that this budget has got nine new taxes — yes, nine new taxes. Those taxes cover a whole range of areas. We have an energy tax on coal royalties, the tax that was applied to taxis and Uber operations and the tax in relation to land surcharges for absentee owners. There will be a hike in the fire services levy as a result of the reform of the Country Fire Authority when this government dismantles it. We have got an increase in stamp duty for people wishing to buy new cars. We have got stamp duty increases for those people who buy a property straight from the plan. It used to be a way of avoiding stamp duty, but no, this government has found a way to tax those people as well.

This budget introduces new stamp duties on property transfers between spouses. That was once an area where, if someone was transferring a house within their family operation, they would be able to do that without any stamp duties being applied, but no, this government has found a way to tax them as well. Do not worry, they are not going to miss out. They will be taxed; everyone is going to get taxed in this budget. There is a new annual property valuation which will increase land taxes as well.

This government, more than any other government we have ever seen, knows how to put their hand in the taxpayers pocket, pull out a wad of cash and take it for themselves. What I find most interesting about the fact that there are nine new taxes in this budget is that when the people of Victoria were making up their minds who they were going to vote for at the 2014 election, they were probably making up their minds on the basis of who would increase taxes and who would increase the cost of living as a result of extra taxes. Would it be the coalition? No, the coalition rarely increases taxes. Was it going to be the Labor Party, because quite often they increase taxes because they tend to be higher spending governments?

The people of Victoria were probably reassured after listening to speeches made during the election campaign by the then opposition leader, Daniel Andrews, in relation to higher taxes and charges. I wonder whether people got some comfort from what the then opposition leader said in relation to increasing taxes and charges. Going through some of the media reports at the time, there are some instances where Mr Andrews made some comments in relation to increasing taxes and charges. On 5 November 2014 on ABC News it was reported:

Mr Andrews ruled out increasing state taxes or household fees and charges to fund Labor's promises.

That is the first instance when Mr Andrews said there would be no increase in taxes or charges, so we have had one reassurance on 5 November.

On 6 November 2014 — just one day later — the *Herald Sun* reported, and I quote:

Opposition leader Daniel Andrews said Labor would reveal its full costings before the election, and said he had 'no plans' to increase fees and fines.

On two occasions — on two successive days — the people of Victoria had reassurances from Mr Andrews that he was not going to increase taxes, fees and fines.

On 19 November 2014 David Speers was doing an interview with Daniel Andrews on Sky News, and Mr Speers asked Mr Andrews:

So, any higher taxes, levies?

To which Mr Andrews replied:

Absolutely not ...

That makes three times that Daniel Andrews said there would not be increases to taxes, levies, charges, fees or fines.

There was a fourth occasion, on 28 November 2014, and this was the night before the election. On Channel 7 news Peter Mitchell was doing a live interview with Daniel Andrews. He was standing out the front of Parliament House when Peter Mitchell asked:

Daniel Andrews, all the polls say you will be Victoria's next Premier. If you are, do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

That is a pretty straightforward question: if you are the Premier, do you promise tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce new taxes for Victorians? Daniel Andrews replied, 'I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian'.

Here we are on 5 November, 6 November, 19 November and 28 November — all within the space of 23 days — and Mr Andrews said on those four separate occasions that he would not increase taxes, charges, fees and fines. I guess probably a lot of Victorians made a decision that they might give Mr Andrews a go on the basis that he had given them four reassurances that he was not going to put his hand in their pockets and take their hard-earned money.

Mr Andrews said he was going to be very transparent and very honest in terms of the way that he would conduct his government, but here we are, just a short couple of years later, with a budget that has introduced nine new taxes — not eight but nine new taxes. And some people actually debate that there are some others that have been overlooked, but I am not sure about that. I did not want to go out and say that there were more than nine because I do not have direct evidence of that, but I am happy to go through the process of talking about the nine new taxes.

It makes me wonder that if Mr Andrews said on four separate occasions in November 2014 that he was not going to introduce any higher taxes or levies or increase fees or fines or anything like that, why then do we have nine new taxes in this budget? Obviously Mr Andrews's word cannot be taken as being honest. He lied to the Victorian people when he said he was not going to introduce any new taxes or increase fines or fees. I think that is pretty disappointing because the people of Victoria on many occasions have been finding it difficult with the cost of living.

They have only got Mr Andrews to blame in terms of this, because this is a very high spending, very high taxing government. I think when the coalition was last in government the budget was about \$52 billion. It is now up to about \$64 billion, so this government has increased spending by about 20 per cent in just two and a bit years, which is something that they should not be

proud of because they are absolutely hurting people out on the ground by taxing the living daylights out of them. As a result of that I do not think people are saying, 'Well, I can see where the money's going, and they're doing good things with it'. I do not see anyone saying that whatsoever. That is very disappointing. People are getting charged about an extra \$200 per person per year, and they are not seeing anything for it.

In terms of the regional areas we have seen about an \$87 million reduction in school upgrades across rural and regional Victoria, and many of those areas in northern Victoria in particular are missing out. There was no money in the budget for the Echuca Special School, which is something that would have been very valuable in what is being called the Education State. I think everybody who has bought a car of recent times must carry that badge of honour around on their number plate: the Education State. That might be the case if you are in Melbourne, but it is certainly not the case if you live in regional Victoria, where there has been an \$87 million reduction in school upgrades.

In the agricultural area, which is of particular interest to me, there was a \$32 million cut to the agricultural budget. Agriculture plays such a critical role in Victoria through its exports, through its research and through its employment, but unfortunately what we see here is this government having no real plan for agriculture in Victoria. There is a whole range of things that could be done through additional research and development to boost production that would boost exports, bring more wealth to our state and create more employment, but unfortunately we are seeing this government cutting the agricultural budget. Agricultural exports are worth about \$11 billion for the state, so it is not an insignificant industry, but unfortunately it is not getting the support it should have as a result of this budget.

In terms of regional rail we see that regional rail is an issue that is of particular interest to regional people at the moment. This government came out on the Sunday before the budget with a big headline about a regional rail revival, saying there was \$1.4 billion for a regional rail revival. This all sounds like a good deal, but you do not have to scratch very far at all. What they should have said in the second line of the press release is, 'We don't actually have any money to do this. We have to rely on the federal government to give us all this money so we can keep some of those promises'.

But no, this government came out with a big headline about a regional rail revival. Unfortunately they forgot to tell anyone from the federal government that they are spending their money. I think the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Darren Chester, called it a

Santa's wish list. I think that is absolutely right. This government is big on commitments but very small on backup in terms of delivering on those commitments.

Another one I thought was particularly fascinating was in relation to wild dogs. When wild dogs came up in the budget I thought, 'Terrific. Finally we're going to see some action from this government in relation to wild dogs', which are a real scourge when it comes to attacking baby lambs and calves and also the native flora out there in regional areas. I thought, 'Beauty. There's going to be some action on wild dogs finally'. But when I looked a bit deeper into it there was \$9 million to be given to the Melbourne Zoo in relation to the African wild dog. I was quite disappointed. I thought there was finally going to be some action on wild dogs — but no, only some money for the African wild dog. There was no money to fight the scourge of wild dogs around regional Victoria.

Wherever you look in this budget there is nothing but misery for people who live in regional Victoria. Taxes are up, charges are up, everything is going up, but unfortunately there is less going into regional Victoria and there is just more of Premier Andrews digging into people's pockets and taking money that they could better spend in their own communities and on their own families.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise today to speak on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. I have to say that this is Daniel Andrews's all-new taxing budget. This is the biggest con job Victorians have seen since Daniel Andrews said he cared about the 60 000 Country Fire Authority volunteers. All we see is tax after tax after tax, despite, as my colleague Mr O'Sullivan said in his contribution, the fact that Daniel Andrews said he would not introduce new taxes. We will get to that in just a moment.

There is an energy tax on coal royalties. The taxi and Uber tax is still being debated in this place. There is the land tax surcharge for absentee owners, which was introduced as 0.5 per cent and then increased to 1.5 per cent. The stamp duty surcharge for foreign buyers was introduced at 3 per cent and is increasing to 7 per cent. The fire services property levy has been hiked up. There is an increase in stamp duty on new cars. There are new stamp duties on off-the-plan purchases. There are new stamp duties on property transfers between spouses. There are new annual property valuations to increase land tax.

This is Daniel Andrews's taxing budget. One could speculate that this is part of his process to build the war

chest to splash, splash, splash the cash next year. Victorians desperately need support from this government, and once again the Andrews government is conning Victorians. In this budget Labor will increase taxation revenue by \$174.8 million and \$1.4 billion over the next four years. From 1 July 2017 — not far away, Acting President — stamp duty on property transfers between spouses and de facto partners will occur. This will raise an additional \$20 million per year. This is all at a time when the Treasurer has said the government has plenty of money. They have got plenty of money, and their only strategy is to increase taxes on Victorians.

The government is going to make buying a new car more expensive for Victorians. The duty on new passenger vehicles will increase from \$6.40 per \$200 of the market value to \$8.40 — an increase on new vehicles of 1 per cent. This is going to raise \$391.4 million over four years and \$93.8 million this financial year alone. It is going to introduce a vacant residential property tax. We are still not clear how that will work out. We are still not clear on how that is going to affect property owners and the downstream impact on affordability and tenancies. This will increase revenue by \$80 million over the four years, and it will raise \$10 million alone in the next financial year.

The government is going to remove the off-the-plan stamp duty concession from 1 July this year — not far away. It will only be available to homebuyers who qualify for the principal place of residence stamp duty concession or who qualify for the first home buyer stamp duty exemption or concession. This will raise an additional \$51 million next year and \$841.2 million over the next four years.

This is the kicker, and we will talk about this a bit more this week: they are going to introduce property valuations annually rather than every two years — Daniel Andrews's tax grab. The budget does not really say how much revenue this will raise. I think the government knows. I see Mr O'Sullivan nodding away there. I think they know, but they are not coming clean with Victorians. They have introduced new taxes, which have increased tax revenue by over \$1.6 billion over the last two budgets.

As the Addams family — Lurch, Uncle Fester, Wednesday and the rest of the Addams family — run Victoria, let us reflect on what Daniel Andrews said.

Mr Rich-Phillips — Which one's Wednesday?

Mr ONDARCHIE — I won't tell you yet who Grandmama is either.

Let us reflect on what Daniel Andrews told the people Victoria on 28 November 2014 as he spoke to Channel 7's Peter Mitchell. Live, down the camera, Peter Mitchell asked him:

Daniel Andrews, all the polls say you will be Victoria's next Premier. If you are, do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

And Daniel Andrews, on 28 November 2014, on 7 News, looked down the barrel of that camera to all Victorians in their homes and said this, and I quote:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

Well, it does not take him long to forget. It does not take him long to forget that he said one thing and has done another.

On 19 November on the Sky News election forum David Speers asked him:

So, any higher taxes, levies?

Daniel Andrews said:

Absolutely not ...

In the *Herald Sun* of 16 November 2014 — the *Herald Sun* has been reporting very accurately the failings of this government — it is quoted:

Opposition leader Daniel Andrews said yesterday that Labor would reveal its full costings before the election, and said he had 'no plans' to increase fees and fines.

Can we believe anything this man says? He looks down the barrel of the camera and says, 'No new taxes or levies on Victorians', and what does he do? He taxes Victorians to the hilt.

He talks about jobs. He talks about the great things he is doing in jobs. I will tell you what, Acting President, public sector wages have increased 24.5 per cent, or \$4.5 billion, since Labor came to office. The pre-election budget update forecast employee expenses of \$18.5 billion for the 2014 financial year. This year's budget puts employee expenses at \$23 billion for the 2017–18 financial year. This is where it is coming from. He is including the number of jobs in Victoria by upping the public sector wage bill. This is where it is coming from: jobs for his mates. Daniel Andrews is taxing more but giving less.

In just over two years Daniel Andrews has increased taxes by nearly \$4 billion. This is an increase in taxation revenue of over 22 per cent. But despite his record taxing of Victorians, violent crime rates are increasing, road congestion is getting worse, public transport is more crowded and less reliable and the

standard of education our children are receiving is declining.

I have to say since the 2014 election Daniel Andrews has increased taxes by an average of \$2000 for every Victorian household. Never has a government had so much money and done so little with it. Before the election he promised no new taxes, but in each of his three budgets Daniel Andrews has broken that promise.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I pick up the interjections of those opposite — the great apologists for Daniel Andrews, the great deniers who do lots of talking but not much delivering. The only thing they have done is hurt Victorians. They have imposed \$252 million in energy tax on coal royalties, and they wonder why Hazelwood closed. They would say, 'It has nothing to do with us'. So they increase taxes on business, business hurts and some businesses close, and they deny responsibility.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I am prepared to wait for Mr Dalidakis to finish his interjection and hear what he has to say if he would like to take the floor at some point in the future.

And then Daniel Andrews had the gall to dupe regional Victorians with his announcement of a \$1.45 billion regional rail package, but he has refused to spend one single cent of state government money on it. Mr O'Sullivan quite clearly talked about this in his contribution to the debate: it is somebody else's money. So Daniel Andrews makes a promise and expects somebody else to pay for it. Mr O'Sullivan nods away feverishly because he knows regional Victorians will not be fooled by Daniel Andrews and his mob. They will not be fooled by this cynical media stunt that they pulled during the budget campaign promising to provide rail services to Victoria that they are not going to pay for.

A big cut in this year's budget is the halving of the Growing Suburbs Fund, which represents a massive cut of \$15 million to growth councils in particular over this year and the next year. In my own electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region, where councils like Hume and Whittlesea depend heavily on support from the government for their growth, this government has decided to affect those families in those growth areas and make them losers as it takes away this money for the growth.

Taxes are up 20 per cent in this state. Interestingly enough the crime rate is up over 20 per cent. Despite that soaring crime rate of over 20 per cent and the acknowledgement by the police minister that Victorians do not even feel safe in their homes anymore, there is no funding for new police stations or to reopen those police stations that Daniel Andrews has closed. In my own electorate I see a reduction in hours in police stations for counter services.

In West Heidelberg, which was in my electorate until the last election — it is now just over the border, yet many of my constituents are affected by it — the West Heidelberg police station closed under Labor. The member for Ivanhoe campaigned when he was in opposition on the reopening of the police station, yet here we are into the third year of the Andrews Labor government and that police station is not open. Talk about doing lots of talking and taking little action. We are seeing more and more of this from the Andrews Labor government.

There is no capital investment for our country hospitals. There is no money for new police stations or additional police officers across regional Victoria despite the statewide crime crisis. The country roads and bridges program still has not been restored despite the appalling state of our country roads. I was in Mr O'Sullivan's electorate last week, along with Ms Lovell, and they clearly pointed out the state of the roads in their electorates.

Where is that money being spent? One only has to look at the amount of money being spent on roads and bridges in that country hamlet of Mulgrave, the Premier's own electorate, to find out. The money has come from regional Victorians; it has been cut from their country roads and bridges program and is being spent in the Premier's own seat of Mulgrave. Mr O'Sullivan shakes his head in disgust, and so he should. This is the biggest con job Victorians have ever seen since Daniel Andrews said he cared about the 60 000 Country Fire Authority volunteers.

Daniel Andrews has announced new taxes in two years but has effectively cut the number of mental health beds. The government's own budget papers show that this government is failing Victorians who struggle with mental illness by cutting the number of mental health beds. Buried away deep on page 244 in budget paper 3 is the disclosure that the government fell around 16 000 short on residential bed stays this year and has wound back its target for next year by a further 12 000 bed days. They are failing Victorians.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — The minister for frequent flyers interjects over there. He travels around the world, flight after flight after flight, and the only thing keeping him in Victoria today is the parliamentary sitting day. Otherwise he would be business classing it somewhere around the world. As he sits there and accuses us of not doing the right thing, they are failing Victorians. They are failing Victorians time and time and time again.

Our state population has grown by 300 000, which means that many of our hospitals need to be upgraded to meet the demand. What did they do? After copious campaigning in the northern metropolitan area by myself and the local community for support for the Northern Hospital, finally they have come clean and said they will support the Northern Hospital — but they are three years too late. If they had done this when we said we were going to do the hospital, they would have saved a lot of money and it would be up and running by now. But they just spend, spend, spend and tax, tax, tax. Labor have form on this. They have been doing it time and time again.

They talk about the much-lauded Monash Children's Hospital. What does it not have? It does not have a dedicated emergency department for children. It is an irresponsible decision. The growth area all the way down to Casey will be serviced by the Monash Children's Hospital, which has no emergency department for children. I have to say that they are not responding to that, because they have failed Victorians again. In an act to try and look like he cares about it, he says, 'I'll release some beds in the adult area for children, and we will build a paediatric emergency department'. It will be ready in 2022 — another five years. These people play catch-up politics because they are spending more time on taxing Victorians and more time on raising the cost of living in Victoria. They do not care.

I take myself particularly to the Northern Metropolitan Region, where the member for Yuroke in the Assembly, Ros Spence, said, 'Craigieburn Road needs funding, Mickleham Road needs funding'. She tells us that she has been advocating strongly with her government for the people of Craigieburn and that fast-growing area in the City of Hume. I will let you guess: how much money did Craigieburn Road get in the state budget? Zero. Nothing. When questioned by local advocate Jim Overend and many others in that community through the local paper, Ros Spence said she was disappointed by this budget.

How can we rely on the Labor government to do anything in the northern metropolitan area when they think it is Labor heartland and take it for granted?

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I will tell you what, Mr Dalidakis, as you continue to interject: Labor do not care. Labor do not care unless you are a mate of Labor. Standing at the front door is Peter Marshall and the United Firefighters Union. The 60 000-plus volunteers of the Country Fire Authority in this state will not forget. They will not forget what you are doing to them. This is a taxing budget that is the biggest con job Victorians have ever seen, and the greatest self-promoter in the Victorian government cannot do anything but bark rubbish across the chamber.

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — I rise this afternoon to make my contribution on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. What I can tell you, Acting President, is what is missing in this budget. It is a budget with holes. For a start, let us look at the holes. There is no new capital investment in our country hospitals — not one capital investment in country hospitals. There is no new money for police stations or additional police officers so desperately needed across rural and regional Victoria, including in my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region. There is no reinstatement of the country roads and bridges program. This program was universally liked, respected and utilised by our local councils to help fund the breadth of road maintenance and the building of roads and bridges required across rural and regional Victoria.

While Labor claims that they are making Victoria the education state, this year the budget shows a massive \$87 million drop in school funding. Too many of our country schools are again missing out. I was looking at one only the other today. They are in 1958-style besser block buildings, not fit for purpose, and portables full of asbestos for young and disabled students.

There is no plan for Victoria's population. There is no plan for regional cities and our large towns. How can they become the fantastic centres and hubs of innovation and community importance if there is no population plan from this government?

Farmers are appalled to see that Labor slashed \$32 million out of the agriculture budget. In addition to the cuts, funds that are being painted as new initiatives are anything but.

Let us look in detail at a couple of areas of interest to me. The Andrews Labor government looks at the education investment in this state. Well, \$87 million has been cut from the schools upgrade program. In my electorate stage 2 development funding for three major school centres was missing in action. Bairnsdale

Secondary College had an election promise from the Andrews Labor Party in 2010. It was there on the books, but did the government choose to fund it? No, it has not in this budget — again. Korumburra Secondary College's stage 2 was again missing in action. The Wonthaggi Secondary College campus is cramped, has steps and is just not fit for purpose anymore. An upgrade is desperately needed by the whole community and has been endorsed by the local Bass Coast Shire Council. It is missing in action. Maybe it is going to be a taste tester for next year, an election year, but the government is making the students and families of that area wait and wait and wait.

Foster Primary School was originally built in 1965, and it is now in a poor state of repair. There is asbestos lining all through the school. Much of the money that is required for routine maintenance is used to patch up holes between the bricks to contain this hazardous material. The budget also indicates a downgrading of the removal of asbestos from schools. This was an election promise. Mr Andrews has abandoned schools in Gippsland and their school communities.

The Premier has also abandoned school communities on a number of fronts. If we look at training and skills, we see a pot of worms. It is just a disaster at present. We talk in my electorate of Federation Training, especially the relocation from Fulham to Sale. This is now well outdated, it is out of town, it is not fit for purpose and, sadly, many courses are being slashed and removed from that TAFE campus. It does not serve the population of Sale. Again universally the councillors and the mayor of Wellington shire and my counterpart in the lower house, the member for Gippsland South, Danny O'Brien, have been pushing for an upgrade of this facility, but it is missing from the budget.

Again, the country roads and bridges program was vital for important infrastructure upgrades across Gippsland. It was strongly supported by all shires, councillors and CEOs when we listened to evidence at the environment and planning committee hearing. It is stated in the report that the recommendation is that it should be reinstated.

If we look at rail across Gippsland, we see that the Gippsland rail services are widely known to be the most unreliable rail services in Victoria. The Andrews Labor government has neglected the Gippsland line compared to other regional lines. It is inadequate, and service levels are poorer in relation to journey times, reliability and frequency. Passenger trains operate at the lowest average speed on any Victorian main line. In fact compared to 2001, from Warragul to Melbourne the journeys are now 10 to 15 minutes slower than 15 years

ago. The line sections between Bunyip and Longwarry need to be upgraded. It is only through our federal colleague the Honourable Darren Chester that the federal budget has provided \$290 million for upgrades on the Gippsland line, the most significant funding in terms of rail infrastructure. But what did we hear from Labor? We heard them spruiking a wish list that was not their own, bragging about a hoax for rail upgrades that was not in their coffers. None of the money that is coming to Gippsland rail is from the state coffers.

As we look at crime throughout our state, there are people living in fear in relation to going out at night. There are people living in fear around being at home and wondering whether their home is fortified enough against people coming to attack them. The only thing rising faster than the crime rate is the tax rate. Crime has increased by 20 per cent under Daniel Andrews, yet the tax rate has gone up 22.2 per cent. We have no new funding for police stations in rural and regional Victoria at a time when the crime rate has risen 20 per cent.

Police in and around Latrobe Valley are in a very precarious position. They often speak to me about a lack of resources. They speak to me about how stations have not had an upgrade in seven to 10 years. There are Victoria Police members being transferred into task force regions but not being replaced, leaving a gap and a need for backfilling, which is not occurring.

One constituent spoke to me about a situation where a constituent had to notify the police station that somebody had breached their bail conditions. It then took police four weeks to make an arrest of this person. One member of the police force said, 'You know that we are greatly under-resourced'. Labor cannot find one dollar to reopen a police station that they have closed, they cannot find one extra police member to fill in in Gippsland, yet they are happy to support Mr Don Nardella to sit in his chair in the Legislative Assembly, not pay back hundreds of thousands of dollars and be an upstanding representation of the Labor Party — now ex but still in there supporting the Labor Party. It is not what one would expect of any decent party or any decent person.

If we look at the employment rates across Latrobe Valley, we see that since Daniel Andrews took over there has been a 50 per cent increase in unemployment across Latrobe Valley, and that is even before 750 directly lost their jobs from the Hazelwood power station and the flow-on in terms of first-tier and second-tier contractors and stress on local industry that supplied and performed services for the power station.

If we look at the Australian Bureau of Statistics March regional job figures in terms of youth unemployment, we see that the Latrobe Gippsland youth unemployment rate is up. I think it has actually gone up since March, but in March it was 14.6 per cent compared to a state average of 9.9. Now I believe it is around 15 per cent as opposed to 10 on average, so we have 50 per cent higher youth unemployment across the state. How does it engender positivity in our students going through the secondary school system when they really do not have a channel into jobs going forward?

We also see that there is no coal policy direction. It has not hit the table. How can business and industry have confidence to start to invest in our local region when the government is not giving them direction. I have had comment after comment from local industries that are frustrated and perplexed. They need some direction. Whatever the line be that the government will issue, industry can then make forward projections and start to either invest or go away. It is like being on an elastic wire and bouncing around with no clear direction.

In terms of the timber industry and Heyfield, the key issue the government has now is the possum review report; it has finally been tabled. The Arthur Rylah Institute has produced that report. It is with the government, but why will the government not release that report? The government needs to come clean and say what is in the population of Leadbeater's possums, how healthy they are and what are the government's policy settings — what will be their direction? It is leaving the people of Heyfield and the timber industry as a wider group in disarray and great despair about their jobs.

The Committee for Gippsland had a report in 2015, *Our Region Our Future*. It speaks of the local power employers having 3000 direct employees and over 1000 indirect employees. I was speaking with a very substantial member of the community — a business owner and contractor — the other day in Latrobe Valley. His words were, 'We haven't put people off. We are losing money at the moment, but we are desperate to keep our workers on. We are devastated by this loss'. Are they unproductive? Are they unviable? No. They are a very positive and professional group of people, but their market has been pulled out from under them, and there is nothing new happening.

If we look at the energy crisis that is ripping through the state, we see that wholesale prices are up over 40 per cent, retail costs have skyrocketed to 10 per cent and the average Gippslander is struggling to bear that burden, particularly people who are utilising energy, including farms and businesses.

Let us recap the jobs loss from regional Victoria this year: 750 power station workers from Hazelwood; Latrobe Valley Hotel, 14 lost; BOC Gas, dozens of jobs; Johnson Health Tech, about 20 jobs; and Alternate Dwellings, 20 jobs. There are indirect jobs that have not even transferred because there are people holding other people up, as I have just mentioned. Elsewhere across the state there were 241 meatworker jobs at Cobram; 60 mining sector jobs at Hamilton; and 240 factory jobs in Kiewa and Rochester, along with the real risk of Carter Holt Harvey jobs not being transferred; and 260 sustainable jobs at Heyfield.

This is not what we need in Gippsland. We need positivity, we need real jobs and we need something that Gippslanders can actually get their teeth into. We do not need a government hub that is going to bring all these amazing jobs; it does not start until 2020 — 150 jobs, but it does not start for another three years. How can people not eat for that period of time? How can we wait?

Mr Dalidakis — You can't get your staff to write a speech for you attacking Gippsland then call for more positivity. It doesn't work like that.

Ms BATH — Mr Dalidakis is no friend of the forestry industry anymore. He is no friend of the people of Gippsland, and he should be ashamed of his response and attitude towards Gippslanders and the timber industry.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — In rising to speak to the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017 I think it is probably quite a nice time to do this at this point, because I would actually like to give some credit where credit is due. I would like to congratulate the government on the sale of the port of Melbourne and the infrastructure spending that that sale is facilitating. I compliment them on the Metro Tunnel, regional rail announcements and, on behalf of Northern Metropolitan Region, the north-east link proposal. But this is a long time coming, and certainly Victoria has been bereft of new transport infrastructure really since about 1986, when there was the last substantial spend. For 30 years we have been starved of this.

Looking at the population growth, this infrastructure is well overdue, and I am pleased to see that the government is prioritising. I hope it will continue to do so, because we are looking at 8 million residents of Victoria in the very near future.

So in that vein I would strongly encourage the government to continue with this, and to look at things like the airport link that would not only go to the airport

but would link the regional cities, so we would see fast rail to Melbourne via the airport from places like Bendigo, Seymour and regional areas. This will not only help the people living in those regional centres but address, to a significant extent, housing affordability. It will look at improving regional living, improving regional jobs and really enhancing a whole bunch of opportunities. We do not want this state to turn into a doughnut where everything falls into Melbourne. We want to see a much broader separation, and fast rail out into those regional areas is imperative to that.

I would also like to thank the government for heeding my representations on behalf of Coburg High School, which needed that funding, and also for the establishment, finally, of a school in Docklands — not before time — and in fact by the time it is built we will need another school in Docklands. I welcome the strong investments in mental health, family violence, homelessness, specialist courts and social enterprises.

But that said, I would suggest there are some other ways in which this government's fiscal management could be enhanced, primarily by adopting evidence-based policy. It would come as no surprise to you, Acting President, or to anyone in this chamber, that I would like to note that a medically supervised injecting centre would save this government millions of dollars in emergency response and health sector costs alone. The amounts of \$406 million for urgent mental health and \$78 million for substance abuse are significant, but there was no real investment in dual-diagnosis facilities, and we know those two issues go hand in hand. As the Coroners Court has recently revealed, 67 per cent of people who died from an overdose in 2016 also had a clinically diagnosed mental health condition. We would be much better spending that money together. We would be much better investing in dual-diagnosis programs of which we have seen a small rollout in Victoria, but we need to significantly improve that.

The government announced \$360 million in spending to strengthen youth justice facilities. Much of this could possibly have been avoided by simply adopting evidence-based policy, rather than pandering to the media. Despite what my friends to my right may have us believe, youth crime is actually decreasing year on year. The number of children sentenced in the Children's Court has halved since 2008–09, but what we do know is that a cohort of 180 children and young people — that is, 1.6 per cent of youth offenders — are committing a quarter of all of those offences in this state. So it comes down to 180 young people. I would have thought that we could have reached them quite proactively. In looking at the figures, if you just take

4 per cent of the government's youth justice facility spending announcement of \$360 million you could employ one full-time caseworker per child, literally, to work with that child on an individual basis. Now I am not suggesting that is the answer, but it is an example that highlights how much more effectively we could be spending our money.

In Spain they are doing almost exactly this and demonstrably better outcomes are being achieved there: where upon reception each child sees a psychologist daily, who draws up an individual program for each child; where a good day is not one without a violent disturbance but where the children have learned well and made progress; and where the knowledgeable and educated staff who run the centres are called educators.

It costs \$2000 a day to hold a child in juvenile detention in Victoria. Significantly less money than that could be spent far more intelligently to reduce recidivism in this state. Education would be a good start. Now, \$628 million to 'build the Education State' is a positive thing. It is largely being targeted at school upgrades — and possibly, after hearing the contribution from Ms Bath, not enough at asbestos removal — and some IT equipment. But education spending should also be outcome-focused. Australia is falling behind the rest of the world in maths and science, which are the engine rooms of our future. An education state should not just be about gymnasiums, it should be about improving outcomes, particularly in those science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects.

As a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee this year I have had the opportunity to look at the budget in a far more detailed way than I had in previous years, and probably more than many of my colleagues in this chamber who would not have had that opportunity. I think what I found lacking was that there did not seem to be a road map. There did not seem to be a road map to where the state was going and where it was going to find its future prosperity. What was its future? In the face of a changing economy — and we have certainly seen, as others have noted, the decline in traditional manufacturing and agricultural industries and an increase in the service sector — it will be the innovative and the intelligent businesses that will be the lifeblood for our future prosperity. Supporting a strong and diverse small business sector now will drive those jobs and industries into the future. For that reason I support the reduction in payroll tax for regional small businesses and the small reduction in payroll tax for the rest of our small businesses. This should be central to our economic agenda. The small business sector is where our future should be lying and where our future focus from government should be. We need to invest in

science and technology as the drivers of our future economy. We need to encourage progressive industries and reward creative initiative and innovation in Victoria.

I did not see a lot of that in the budget. I did not see that in the performance measures set out in the budget. Look at robotics and 3D printing and where that will be taking us. I know we have some great innovative companies working in these areas of manufacturing in Victoria, but we are still lagging behind the rest of the world, and this budget does not give me much confidence or optimism that this is where we are focusing.

I suppose this is not surprising, but the planning seems limited to election cycles. There are some qualitative and quantitative measures in the budget. I do not think a lot of them are really going to answer the questions: is that good value for money, and does that expenditure achieve what we wanted it to achieve? I think we can do a lot better in setting up those performance measures and setting up for a future, not looking at two years time, one year's time or four years time. For example, we should be directing our programs and services to regions where they are most needed. We know from the Ombudsman that somewhere around 50 per cent of all prisoners come from six postcodes, so we should be targeting a lot of those supports and services into those areas, and we are not. The budget does not show that.

I would also like to note that the government is forgoing, I would suggest, millions of dollars, principally in land tax, by permitting non-charitable organisations to claim charitable status to which automatic tax exemptions apply. Commercial enterprises owned by religious institutions should be subject to the same legal and financial laws as other commercial entities, but they are not. One example is that in 2016 Catholic Church Insurance, based in Melbourne, which underwrites property and workers compensation for the Catholic Church in Australia, generated \$13 444 000 in profits. It is a large insurance company, except it operates without the company tax and without the land tax. I would not have thought insurance is your typical charitable activity, and I would even expect AAMI and GIO to agree. Catholic Church Insurance is tax exempt, and with respect to Victorian taxes it is exempt from land tax, payroll tax and stamp duty. Taxing these types of businesses is common sense. This is done in Montreal, it is done elsewhere around Canada and in many jurisdictions in Europe as well, and I think we should also consider it here.

As I have highlighted previously I would also urge this government to tax and regulate cannabis. Colorado, a

state very similar in size to Victoria, generated \$200 million in tax revenue in 2016. This proposal would also reduce pressure on the criminal justice system. Currently Australia arrests 66 000 people each year for personal use and possession of cannabis. That is conservatively estimated to be \$80 million per year in court costs. It just makes good economic sense, and it is not a novel concept; it has been done before in many jurisdictions.

So in making this brief contribution I would like to see more future planning in our budgets. We are not looking at an ageing strategy. Every other state has a strategy for what we are going to do about an ageing population. That is not found in this budget. As I said at the beginning, I commend the government for some of its expenditure and certainly for the work it is doing on family violence and, to a degree, on homelessness and in other areas and on infrastructure, but I believe it could do better. I certainly would like to see greater performance measures in the future.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to speak on the appropriation bill this afternoon. It is an important part of our annual contribution to the Parliament, as we reflect on the government's priorities for the next year. I have to say overall our perspective is that it is a very disappointing budget. It essentially means that Victorians are paying more but getting less and less. One very clear broken promise of Premier Daniel Andrews is that he has introduced or increased 10 taxes since the election. There are clear broken promises in a whole range of areas, and no doubt we will debate that with the state taxation bill State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2017 later this week.

There has been a windfall from the port of Melbourne sale, there is a significant increase in GST, Labor has increased state debt by \$10 billion and there is a \$4 billion tax increase. But what we find again and again is that the services, the support and the capital investment that this state needs are not being delivered by this government. Not surprisingly I would like to focus my contribution around my shadow portfolio in terms of health and also my constituency in terms of Eltham in Eastern Metropolitan Region.

It is fair to say that the response from the health sector has been that this budget is underwhelming. It fails to hit the mark in a whole range of areas, and I would like to go through that in some detail. There is not the excitement or enthusiasm in relation to the budget, and there are some clear failures and gaps as well.

First of all, this is a health budget that fails rural and regional Victorians. I think that is starkly presented when you actually have a look at the map that is provided in the budget, in the rural and regional section, for all the various investments. There is one marker on the whole map of Victoria for a health investment outside Melbourne. That is for a mental health facility at Ballarat, so there is not anything else in the entire health portfolio that is reflected. There is \$7.5 million for funding to plan for the next stage of redevelopment for South West Healthcare, which is an important investment, but of course it goes nowhere near the \$100 million that the Liberals and The Nationals have committed to actually deliver that redevelopment rather than just plan for it.

We had said, 'Let's do the planning at least if this government is not prepared to commit to the funding to deliver it'. So that is welcome. But interestingly that funding of \$7.5 million does not appear on that map, and the reason is that while it is listed in the budget papers, it is actually out of a rural and regional health fund that was funded in last year's budget. So in an act of desperation this government is actually pulling funding from previous years to try and have something to say in terms of capital investment in health services in rural and regional Victoria.

The concern in terms of the rural and regional aspects was also highlighted by the Victorian Healthcare Association, which had this to say, particularly in relation to the budget for small rural health services:

Reductions in funding for service delivery by small rural hospitals will have flow-on effects of generating more demand for services delivered by larger hospitals and health services.

They actually outline that there has been a significant decline in funding small rural health services, which will see \$558.9 million in 2017–18, down from \$561.9 million last year. So not only is there not enough of an increase to allow for health inflation, in fact there is an absolute decline in funding for the small rural health services, which do exceptional work in small communities right across our state.

In addition, another aspect that is very concerning in relation to this budget is this fact of unfunded and underfunded assets across the board. Once again a very stark area of this is in relation to Daniel Andrews's so-called Victorian Heart Hospital. The Treasurer said on budget day that this was one of actually two or three election promises that he is unable to deliver. That is because in 2014 Daniel Andrews made an aggressive promise to build a standalone Victorian Heart Hospital and said that it would be built and operating by 2018.

Well, here we are in June 2017 and there are no funding partners committed. That was confirmed at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing. There is \$150 million on the table, but in relation to the business case — which once again would not be answered at PAEC in terms of the cost of building it — what we know is that it is at least \$450 million. So there is a \$300 million funding gap in what the state government has put forward, with no funding partners committed and some discussions underway. Clearly it will be surprising if there is even a sod turned before the election in 2018 — let alone a fully built hospital, as was promised by Daniel Andrews.

This is a project that, because of the flawed nature of the model as a standalone away from the Monash Medical Centre, is having trouble finding those additional funding partners. That is the experience two and a half years on in relation to it and why the Treasurer called it a broken promise.

Interestingly in PAEC, Ms Hennessy said, and I quote:

Like many of the other great health services that have been built with a specific focus, whether that is the VCCC or the Monash Children's, they often are 10 years in the planning and the making, and it is important that we get this right given it will be the first standalone cardiac hospital in this country.

Well, that is all fair enough, but the promise was a fully funded \$300 million to \$350 million Victorian Heart Hospital built and operating by 2018. Ms Hennessy is now hedging her bets and saying '10 years'. Things would probably be quite good if they achieved it in that time.

There are a whole host of other areas where on the capital side once again we are not getting what should have been seen in this budget. Two million dollars was committed to Western Health last year for the redevelopment of Footscray Hospital. Once again there is a funding commitment to do some further planning and some further critical maintenance, but the fact of the matter is that that work has been happening for some time now and should have been funded in this budget.

For Melbourne Health once again there are some critical infrastructure works, but that hospital is in some places being held together by chicken wire. In PAEC the minister did confirm that some of the critical infrastructure works would actually be used for some planning for the future as well, but we do know that last year there was some money in there for planning. There has been planning for the Parkville precinct. This planning money continues to drag out and allow the Andrews government to equivocate on what is needed

in terms of a definite plan for the future of Melbourne Health and its role in Parkville precinct.

We have seen the Alfred not get any funding at all, much to their great disappointment — once again a very significant, important hospital for people in Melbourne and Victoria but one which has been overlooked in this budget.

Ballarat Health Services was described as one of the losers of this budget, with its empty shell of theatre space absolutely not funded for the redevelopment or fit-out that is needed — additional theatres and additional space. At the same time waiting lists have blown out nearly 60 per cent under this government. This government has been in place for two and a half years. They have not planned and they are not delivering for the people of Ballarat in relation to much-needed additional surgical capacity.

Of course Warragul hospital was also described as a loser in this budget in relation to the failure to commit to a new hospital on the greenfield site. Once again there has been some planning money in relation to this. There has been a lot of work, but the government keeps ducking and weaving, hiding and not delivering for the people down in the Gippsland area.

There is also significant short-termism in relation to this budget. What we see again and again when we look at the budget papers, particularly budget paper 3, is demand management that is only funded for a year or two. So we have issues in relation to improving access to elective surgery — \$174 million next year but dropping to \$47 million. So it is a \$120 million plus gap that will have to be filled next year even just to maintain a basic level.

Expanded oversight and service delivery of some of our key agencies is funded for two years, but it is clearly left for a government post the end of 2018 to fund that increased growth there. Meeting demand for ambulance services is funded for two years. How ridiculous that the funding would be in place for increased demand and only funded for a year or two years rather than reflecting that that demand is built on each and every year and is not funded in this budget. So lots of short-termism is seen consistently across this budget.

Of course there is a massive lack of transparency in relation to the issues here repeatedly. The Liberals and The Nationals have been asking for some detail in relation to the cost of the enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) struck with nurses and with paramedics — very significant EBAs and a work value case in terms of the paramedics. Once again in PAEC,

having gone through in detail to seek to understand the costs and whether those costs are actually included in the forward estimates, we had excuse after excuse after excuse. Some of the excuses included ‘The department doesn’t employ nurses’, ‘We’ve got to look at rosters’, ‘We’ve got to look at workforce models’, ‘We’re only an interested party’, ‘Is it a gross or net?’ and ‘There are lots of multiple moving parts’. The excuses just kept coming in relation to the cost.

I have sat on that table. I have been part of EBA discussions. I know that the department presents the minister and the government with the cost of an EBA that is estimated in advance of it being signed. It is entirely reasonable both for the nurses EBA and for the work value case for the paramedics that we see some transparency in relation to what the costs of these are, not just the percentages that have been provided. What are the actual costs? Are they in the budget and are they funded?

This is nowhere more important than the fourth year of the nurses EBA, where there is a 9 per cent increase in nurses salaries, but the response from Mr Stenton in PAEC was that 3.45 per cent is added to the cost base each year. That is well and good for the first couple of years, but by the time we get to needing to pay for a 9 per cent increase in nurses salaries the budget will not be covered for that very significant increase. That is why we need some transparency in relation to it.

So it is a very disappointing and underwhelming budget from the perspective of health services, which actually creates more problems into the future in relation to things that are unfunded, particularly some very basic demand measures in relation to elective surgery and ambulance service delivery.

I did just want to touch on things in relation to Eltham. What we have seen with Eltham — and I have had a lot of trouble getting answers out of the government and relevant ministers in relation to this — is that after two and a half years there are still no extra trains on the Hurstbridge line, despite the promise that they would be delivered in 2015. The Bolton Street redevelopment is talked about and there is lots of planning for it, but it has not even commenced, and we know that it is underwhelming in relation to what is actually needed and it is underfunded. There have been no level crossing removals. There are no plans to see the daily Eltham congestion relieved through Main Road and Fitzsimons Lane.

We have seen the Eltham green wedge under threat from high-density housing, with new planning regulations and a very concerning suggestion made at

PAEC by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and the head of the North East Link Authority that they are planning and modelling an elevated north-east link the entire way from EastLink all the way through to Greensborough. The head of the North East Link Authority specifically highlighted the Greensborough end of the north-east link as a potential for a sky road set-up, with elevated road over rail. It is very concerning.

There is no funding for Eltham North Reserve. This is an issue that the local member, Vicki Ward, promised some funding for but not enough to deliver it. The council, under the strong leadership of mayor Peter Clarke, is delivering additional funding — funding the state government should have delivered so that Eltham North Reserve can happen. But there are still no funds committed by the state government to this project.

We have seen the Country Fire Authority station at Research and the integrated station at Eltham under massive threat, and of course there have been massive increases in crime in Banyule and Nillumbik, where it has increased by 48 per cent since Daniel Andrews came to government.

Overall for health this budget is underwhelming and there are many gaps for residents in Eltham in relation to this state budget. I will finish where I started. This budget is all about Victorians paying more and getting less from Daniel Andrews in terms of the basic services that they expect to receive and that should be delivered.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. As Ms Wooldridge has just highlighted in her contribution, this is all about taxing more but giving less, and I think she made some very good points about how that is for all Victorians. She also pointed out the failures of the budget in her own portfolio areas. We know the Treasurer delivered his budget on one sitting day, I might add, of the Parliament. We came in, we heard from the government about the budget titled *Getting on with the Job: Victorian Budget 17–18* and then they went off to congratulate themselves. The government was nowhere to be seen for the next two days. The opposition was not given an opportunity to reply to the budget until the next week, which coincided with the handing down of the federal budget.

Victorians are not that stupid; they actually know what is going on. They can see through this government. They can see that the lack of transparency by the government is extraordinary in relation to their gimmick of delivering this budget, going off and

congratulating themselves and not giving the opposition the opportunity, in a democratic fashion during that budget week, to reply to the Treasurer's budget.

The Treasurer obviously has a few issues on his plate. One would be the debacle following the announcement by Minister Mikakos earlier in the year to build a new supermax youth justice facility in Werribee South. There was a terrible community outcry about that, and the government backflipped on that decision. Now they plan to build it at Cherry Creek, and they are working out whether there are going to be Aboriginal cultural and heritage overlay issues with that site. They have been scrambling.

Treasurer Tim Pallas thought this budget was going to convince Victorians that things are in good shape, but as we know they are not. This government has had the good fortune to sell the port of Melbourne, which has reaped billions and billions of dollars for their coffers, but still they are increasing taxes by extraordinary amounts. Taxes have gone up by over 20 per cent, and these are all flowing through to everyday Victorians — everyday households and businesses. These costs will flow on to Victorians, who will notice these increases in their household bills.

When the shadow Treasurer was finally able to make an excellent reply to the Treasurer's budget he highlighted the fact that in just over two years Daniel Andrews had increased taxes, despite what he said looking down the barrel of that Channel 7 news camera, and I am paraphrasing, 'Take my word, Peter, there will be no new taxes'. Who really believes this now? Daniel Andrews said that the east-west link would not cost a cent either, and that has cost Victorians \$1.2 billion. The absolute gall of this Premier to go out there and say that! I do not think anybody takes him terribly seriously now or thinks he is at all genuine when it comes to the management of significant money, significant projects and, can I say, law and order, because look at our state. Look where we are at, look at the crime wave that is sweeping across our state and look at what has happened in relation to the many, many significant issues that have arisen out of this government's priorities. And that is what a budget is: it is about priorities, and I will come back to that in a moment.

I do want to say that in relation to the taxes that have increased there have been a number of new taxes that have also been increased by Daniel Andrews. In fact there have been nine of them, and they include the \$252 million energy tax on coal royalties. It is no wonder the operators of Hazelwood had no option but to pack up their bongos and get out of town. They were taxed out of their business. The loss of jobs through that

unfortunate circumstance is going to be very significant. Those people, those families and those businesses will all experience a ripple effect. They will feel the effect of the closure of Hazelwood through the rise in energy costs reflected in their household bills.

The government is passing the taxi and Uber tax on to the consumer, with a \$2 per ride tax. Pensioners, elderly people and people who have to take sick children or elderly relatives or other relatives on a regular basis to health and other appointments are going to be whacked with this \$2 tax. There is a land tax surcharge for absentee owners, which was introduced at 0.5 per cent but then increased to 1.5 per cent. There is a stamp duty surcharge for foreign buyers, which was introduced at 3 per cent and then increased to 7 per cent. The fire services property levy was hiked up — and let us just think about by how much — to 11 per cent. There has been an insidious tax creep undertaken in so many areas, whether it is the fire services property levy or land tax, which is up by 35 per cent. Stamp duty has reaped great benefits for this government too, bringing in \$1.7 billion or a 39.4 per cent increase, and then of course there are vehicle registrations, with around a 30 per cent increase in those.

All of these taxes are going to have an impact on households. Victorians are waking up to just how much this government is slugging them and the impact that will have on their ability to spend their hard-earned dollar. After all, this is taxpayers money that the government is administering. It does not grow on trees. It does not come out of thin air. It is Victorian taxpayers who are paying these taxes.

While I am on that, I will just turn to the budget papers and have a look at some of those issues. The youth justice issue has cost the Victorian taxpayer \$72 million because of the government's mismanagement. The minister has overseen, as I have been saying for months and months and months, a system that is in chaos and continues to be very unsettled, and there continue to be significant ongoing issues and costs associated with that mismanagement.

The minister will not even declare how much this mismanagement has cost, and we know that through the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearings, where she refused to disclose the costs of the legal fees of her botched processes in the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal for the first court proceedings. Of course we have had two other court proceedings undertaken by the government to defend their position when they did not follow the law. They have absolutely botched that decision, and that has cost the taxpayer millions of dollars. That of course does not

go towards the riots, the reports or the reviews. The mismanagement under this minister is just absolutely disgraceful.

While I am talking about PAEC, I will look at the area of early education. There is the *Gender Equality Budget Statement* in the Victorian budget. When the minister was asked about the \$98.4 million for kindergarten initiatives that will help improve educational outcomes for girls, she referred this to the Minister for Women. When that same question was asked of the Minister for Women, she did not have an answer either, so you have got — —

Mr Morris — She had no idea.

Ms CROZIER — No idea. Neither of these two ministers had any idea about this initiative that was specifically stated in the budget. Here they reckon they are getting on with the job, yet those ministers who are supposedly responsible for these areas had no clue. I think that is indicative of where we are at with this government — and we have just seen their performance in question time. This goes on and on, and there are many, many issues in relation to that.

When the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence was asked a number of questions in relation to the government's output initiatives and the whole-of-government approach to family violence, at one point it was so important that it had to be within Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), but now we are not going to have it in DPC anymore; we are having it over in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms CROZIER — Well, I am not sure. We did have a Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, but she has been sideswiped by the Premier, and now we have the Special Minister of State who oversees everything. In actual fact when you go through the 36 line items in the budget, the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence has responsibility for only two — \$50 million out of a \$1.9 billion budget.

If we are serious about getting rid of this dreadful issue of family violence, which I think all members are in agreement about, we have to fund it, because we have got far too much violence and hideous crimes occurring within the domestic setting. Far too many women and children are affected, but there are unfortunately men who are victims also. They got very little in this budget — in fact there is nothing for men who are fleeing from family violence. The latest figures state that around 20 per cent of victims are men, and that is

because of the drug and alcohol problems and the mental health problems that women have as well. They can be the perpetrators. I know that the royal commission did look into the whole family violence issue, but I am not sure that their terms of reference allowed them enough time to look at this more deeply.

This issue of violence across our society is becoming an increasing problem, but if you look at the government's budget with the dedicated minister, she actually has got very little responsibility. What does that say about the Premier? He was out there lauding that this was the first state to have a minister with such a position, but he has dumped her, it seems to me, which I think is very unfair. He really has given her no time at all over the last 18 months — —

Mr Morris — He is threatened by strong women.

Ms CROZIER — He is threatened by strong women, Mr Morris, you are absolutely right. Ms Garrett, Lucinda Nolan, Ms Richardson — they are all very capable, strong women who were doing their job and had a different opinion to the Premier, and look where it landed them. They have all got the boot. They have all been sacked. I think that speaks volumes about the true character of this Premier. He actually should walk the walk and talk the talk. I have to say at times I just wonder about his rhetoric — he does talk about equality for women and promoting women, but he has done this to three very strong and capable women. He has given them the sack, as I said.

Unfortunately I do not have an extraordinary amount of time left to go through the many issues that I did want to raise in this budget debate. There are many gaps. If you look at the support for vulnerable children, there is \$72.2 million in 2017–18 but nothing in the forward estimates for better assisting children in the statutory child protection system. There is \$59.6 million this year for better assisting children in the statutory out-of-home care system, but there is nothing after that. There are these gaps in this budget. There are many questions to be asked, and I am looking forward to getting the answers to those questions that could not be answered in PAEC by the secretaries or the ministers — they were not able to provide the information that I requested at the time — and to really understanding a little bit more about the specifics in the budget through that process, because I think there are many gaps.

The government and the Premier are talking about this tough-on-crime approach, but we have got crime increasing by more than 20 per cent across the state. These are terrible, terrible statistics in every community. Of course we had the most tragic and

frightening of circumstances last night in Brighton, which borders the areas of Bentleigh and Sandringham in my electorate of Southern Metropolitan Region. Mr Davis and Ms Fitzherbert are in the chamber with me this afternoon, and of course we are very conscious of the crime that has been occurring across our electorate, whether it is home invasions, carjackings or aggravated burglary. It is affecting everyday Victorians every day, whether they are going to work or they are in their homes. Women are one of the biggest cohort who no longer feel safe either on the streets or in their homes. I think the government has done very little to allay those concerns for many people by spending not one dollar for new police stations. I will conclude my remarks there.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise and make my contribution to the Victorian budget 2017–18 debate and to note that this will not be a comprehensive contribution. I want to focus on some portfolio areas, particularly local government and planning-related areas, but I do want to pick up on some points made by Ms Crozier at the start about the incident that occurred in Brighton in our electorate overnight. I know Ms Fitzherbert, Ms Crozier and I are equally concerned about what has occurred down there.

There are many questions, and I have got to say that today I was not placated by the responses we heard in this chamber from the Minister for Corrections. There are many questions about the government's handling of this — and I make the point of saying 'the government' rather than 'the police'. The police did a very good job, and we have seen a tragic loss of life. One innocent man has lost his life and three police have been injured, and I think our community as a whole is very concerned to see these incidents stop and see the violence that has been an increasing feature of Victoria over the last two and a half years reversed.

We have seen not only an increase in general crime but in particular an increase in violent crime, and the quality of that crime — the actual qualitative aspects of it — is shocking. In relation to the carjackings and the home invasions that many of us have seen the results of, if you visit the homes of people who have had a home invasion you cannot but be incredibly shocked by what you hear.

The government appears, in my view, not to be listening or responding, and it is important to put on the record in this sort of budget debate that the government took actions early in its period of government to weaken the police response. It weakened bail laws, it weakened parole laws and it did so wilfully and after

warning. The shadow Attorney-General, John Pesutto, from the Legislative Assembly, gave very direct warnings on these matters, and the government has got to bear on its head the decision to weaken parole and weaken bail laws wilfully and against advice in the early period of government.

It is equally important to realise that the government's failure to act on some issues is important — such as its failure to act on the Court of Appeal decision of December 2014. Our government had put in position a series of baseline sentencing changes which we believed were very important, and they were wilfully struck down by the Court of Appeal. The court in my view erred in these decisions. The Court of Appeal went beyond its purview. I know people get agitated when politicians criticise the courts, but sometimes some plain speaking is important.

In this case the Court of Appeal has got to share in the responsibility for what has occurred in the last two and a half years, and the government failed to respond to that decision of the Court of Appeal with new legislation to actually make it very clear and to button down the court to make sure that it implemented lawfully and properly the will of the people. There is no question that the people, the community, do not want soft sentences. They do not want the 'roam free' decisions that are made by courts in the current environment, so I want to make sure that those points are on the record before I move to some areas that I want on the record in regard to other portfolios.

The local government portfolio is an area where this government has lost its way. We are awaiting the review of the Local Government Act 1989, which is much delayed, but in reading about that Local Government Act review one sees there are directions that have been laid out in the government's directions document that I think would concern many Victorians. I think we are going to see a structure for local councils put forward by the government which is not in the interests of the state. The increased mayoral powers that are being discussed — the two-year terms and the increased suite of decision-making powers for the mayor — will have the practical effect of de-democratising many of our councils. I am concerned about that particular approach.

I am also concerned that the government has laid out its decision to strip businesses and property owners of the right to vote in local government elections. That is very clearly the direction that is laid out in the directions document.

Ms Shing — What does this have to do with the budget?

Mr DAVIS — In fact the review of the Local Government Act is funded out of the local government portfolio area, and that local government portfolio area — you may wish to look at table 1.16 on page 65, Ms Shing, and you will be able to see the local government portfolio spending initiatives and the money that is outlined there. You may not know, although I suspect you are slowly learning, being on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC), that the budget contains a series of sections that roll on year after year, including the base funding for portfolios like local government, from which much of the review of the Local Government Act is funded.

What I would say is the government plans to strip businesses and property owners of the right to vote in local government elections. I think that is a mistake. I have been on the record on that quite widely. I think there are some old principles. The American Revolution was fought on the principle of no taxation without representation, and I think you could easily have the situation of the largest business in a city, town or municipality, the largest employer, which pays the largest hit of rates and employs thousands of people but will not have a single vote — not a single vote — in the council elections as to how that money is spent in the municipality. I think that is wrong, and we have certainly outlined our concerns to a wide group in the community about the anti-democratic nature of that decision that has been laid out by the Minister for Local Government.

I might say that the Minister for Local Government has also laid out, and it is in this budget, the cuts to the growth area funding, the reduction from \$50 million a year to \$25 million a year for the interface councils, many of which are growing at 4 and some at 5 per cent — massive growth. That \$50 million fund over the last two years certainly did assist them, but the cut down to \$25 million over the next two years and falling to zero after that I think is a serious mistake. I think the government had built expectations amongst the interface councils that they would in fact be getting \$100 million a year to share in across those municipalities to support basic infrastructure and the services that are needed in those fast-growing areas. I think it is a vindictive and nasty act of the government to strip that money out of those municipalities, and I think the minister's commentary at PAEC was disappointing, to say the least. She did not want to concede the facts, but the facts are there, unfortunately for her and the government, in black and white.

What I would also say is that there are issues in those same growth areas with respect to the growth areas infrastructure contribution (GAIC). The growth areas infrastructure charge is a very important revenue collection by the government, but it is designed to be spent in growth areas. It is designed to ensure that there is a proper flow of support, and it is a contribution, the growth areas infrastructure contribution. It is not the whole funding but a contribution that is paid as properties are developed. As those growth areas are developed they have GAIC levied on them, and the GAIC comes into a central pool. The problem that we face at the moment is that the GAIC is not being spent out of the central pool.

It is interesting to look at table 4.2 of budget paper 5. In that paper you can actually see that the growth areas infrastructure contribution will be \$166 million this financial year, \$175 million is planned for the next financial year, \$183 million in 2018–19, \$193 million in 2019–20 and an estimated rise to \$203 million in 2020–21.

That is on top of a war chest of hundreds of millions of dollars that the government is already sitting on. It has announced the expenditure of \$60 million, but it has to get moving. These areas are growing fast, with the massive population growth of Victoria at 2.1 per cent this year, and the figure of 127 500 people coming into the state as at 30 September 2016. The principal areas that are bearing the brunt of these enormous growths are those 10 municipalities. The Shire of Mornington Peninsula is growing at 4 per cent; the City of Melton is growing at 5 per cent; and there are similar figures through all those municipalities. The state government has got to get on and move this war chest and it has to actually spend that money in the growth areas which need it, and they need it now. We cannot wait for the government to get around to spending it. We cannot have Treasury trying to hold on to the money. GAIC receipts are estimated in the same budget paper on page 155 to grow at an average of 5.2 per cent over the next four years. That is a massive growth in receipts.

The last point I want to make in this contribution is on the huge growth in taxes in this budget. We now see that 45 per cent of the state budget's collections are from the property and development sector. These are huge increases in takings, and you cannot be surprised when the price of land and the price of properties go up so much when you tax them so much. This government in the last two and a bit years has put in 16 new taxes. It is worth actually putting these on the record in the chamber. The infrastructure contributions on new estates was jacked up. The planning fees of councils have gone up — this is a decision of the planning

minister — which has increased planning fees, and the range of increase in fees is between 100 per cent and 1000 per cent. All of these flow through.

The axing of the longstanding off-the-plan duty will come into effect on 1 July. That is effectively a new tax on those apartment buildings that will be built closer to the city. There is the axing of the stamp duty concession on investment property transfers between spouses. There is the growth areas infrastructure contribution which, as I have already referred to, was jacked up and brought forward in the bill that came to this chamber a little while ago. The new community infrastructure charge also increased the infrastructure contribution on those new estates. There are the surcharges on foreigners: the land tax twice, the stamp duty twice.

There is the \$222 million levy imposed on the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) over four years. About 12 per cent of VMIA's business is in the building and construction sector and that is a \$50.2 million hit on the property sector over four years. The new vacancy tax, I think, will have all sorts of implementation issues. There is the introduction of various social housing requirements for large new projects, the many value-capture collections that are added to certain projects, the capture that is on a whole series of government land, the expansion of the inclusionary zoning mechanisms and the increase of the fire services levy above the CPI.

We were promised by the then Leader of the Opposition, Daniel Andrews, before the election that he would not increase taxes, charges and levies — and he repeatedly said this. When asked by Jon Faine on 4 September 2014:

Are you going to put taxes up?

He said:

Of course we're not.

He was asked by David Speers:

So, any higher taxes, levies?

Daniel Andrews said:

Absolutely not, we're not in the business of trying to solve problems ...

David Speers went on:

I just want to nail this list down ...

Daniel Andrews replied:

The answer is a very simple one, no increases, and the question also related to new charges, I have no intention of introducing new charges.

And it was the same with Peter Mitchell before the election. On 28 November 2014, on the last day of the campaign, Peter Mitchell asked:

Do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

Daniel Andrews said:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

In the light of that we now have 16 new taxes on properties and 16 new taxes that impact on the development and construction sector. Is it any wonder when 45 per cent of the state's taxation arrangements are founded on property and development that the costs of properties and buildings are growing?

The government has also botched many of the land releases. I want to put on record that there are serious troubles in the amount of land that is available on the edge of the city. This is only a few weeks worth of land in some municipalities. In the Shire of Cardinia in particular, but also in other municipalities in those growth areas, there is a very short supply. Feeding in additional funding into those, which is what will happen with the new charges, where there is a constrained supply, will see a surge in prices. I put my concerns on this matter on the record today.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I am pleased to make a contribution on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. I will first start out with a word of caution in relation to the revenue that the government has indicated they would be achieving through the appropriation bill. It is based mainly, as my colleagues have said in their contributions, on an increase in taxes. My concern of course is that a lot of the revenue is based on stamp duty realised out of property transactions. Of course, as we know, the residential property market, and to a lesser extent the commercial market, has been on fire. There have been a large number of transactions on significant amounts of property that have had significantly higher values and consequently the state has been a good tax recipient of that. But that will not last forever.

It worries me that this budget is based on the fact that this revenue will continue through the next year, and of course there is a significant amount of expenditure in the current estimates and forward estimates based on the sort of ongoing rolling revenue streams that this

stamp duty will provide the state. As well as that we have seen significant increases in the revenue collected from speeding fines, from gambling taxes and from land tax. To offset that to a degree we have seen a significant increase in public service costs.

As we know, with the currently enterprise bargaining agreements (EBA) being rolled over there has been a significant cost to the state in relation to those people in the service industries achieving well over and above CPI agreements in their EBAs. My view is that in the future we will see those EBAs actually contributing, through the public service costs associated with the budget, well in excess of 50 per cent of total budget costs, and that will have a dramatic impact on the longer term sustainability of the budget.

As Mr Davis has indicated, there are 16 new taxes. I have not added them all up myself, but certainly I have noted the fire services levy will go up and the Uber tax has been foreshadowed. We know that land tax is going up, stamp duty tax is up and the annual land valuation tax will create a significant increase in rates and land tax. We know planning fees are going up, registration is up and there are a whole range of indirect taxes associated with royalty collections on power generators et cetera. We know the government has increased taxes significantly to offset the ongoing costs of the overgenerous EBAs to our public service unions.

In the shadow portfolios for which I am responsible I note the agriculture budget has been cut by \$32 million. As we know our farmers are reliant on ongoing investment in research and development. To be competitive in a global market, where we are not subsidised, ongoing work and investment by governments into research and development are essential, so it is very disappointing that the government has seen fit to cut the agriculture budget by \$32 million.

Also we see no sign of the very successful country roads and bridges program that was initiated by the previous coalition government, which served four years. The importance of this direct funding to local government was well supported and acknowledged, and consequently we have seen a significant deterioration of our road and bridge networks right across regional Victoria because of the loss of that very important program, which I see is not funded in the budget and which is being sorely missed by our regional councils particularly.

Also I do not see a line item in the budget in relation to the moneys that were tagged from the port of Melbourne sale and which were to go directly into a

regional transport infrastructure fund. It is supposed to be 10 per cent of the port of Melbourne lease sale proceeds of over \$9 billion, so there should be a line item there of over \$900 million directly tagged for regional transport infrastructure projects. I have not seen that in the budget in relation to that fund. I suspect that fund no doubt has been gobbled up by a whole range of different departmental funding projects.

There is no real money for the regional rail vitalisation project. Much has been said about the budget announcements by the Treasurer in relation to regional rail, whether it be in the north-east, Gippsland or the south-west, where there has supposedly been up to \$1 billion of new project money for regional rail, but as we know it is all dependent on what the federal government will provide in the asset recycling funding, which Treasurer Pallas has indicated was calculated at around about \$1.4 billion. But in answer to a constituency question that I raised with him on 11 May, Mr Pallas indicated that in fact there will be no funding for these projects until such time as the federal government provides its \$1.46 billion.

He indicated the federal government's \$1 billion offer is:

... a substantial reduction of the funding due to Victoria — funding which they sought to direct to certain projects. The federal government have reneged on a deal —

so Mr Pallas said —

and have cheated the Victorian government out of hundreds of millions ...

blah, blah, blah.

The Victorian government is not in a position to comment on the progress of any of the regional rail projects which relied upon the full receipt of the asset recycling funding and these will be subject to the progress of ongoing discussions.

So by that commentary from the Treasurer I foresee a stalling of all the projects and that regional rail, which was announced with great fanfare by the Andrews government, will actually not eventuate until such time as there can be an agreement between the federal government and the state.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — I certainly say, 'Stop the politics, Ms Shing, show us the money and start delivering on the projects that you promised'. They are actually not even detailed in the budget. There is no detail on the matching funding in relation to the \$100 million for the duplication of the South Geelong and Waurin Ponds rail duplication. There was a lot of fanfare about that but no

detail. On the Surf Coast rail, again there is no detail about whether that means a direct rail link between Torquay and Geelong — we are unclear about that — or whether it means an upgrade of the Warrnambool line or whether it means more rolling stock. Again, there is no real detail in the budget, just a sort of generalisation of projects. But as Mr Pallas has indicated, there will be no money coming forward to commit to those projects until such time as there has been, I suppose, an agreed position with the federal government.

I note in the budget there was no real money for a Geelong convention centre, which was much heralded and much promised by the local Labor MPs. Christine Couzens, Lisa Neville and John Eren from the Legislative Assembly all lined up there and gleefully, as reported on the front page of the *Geelong Advertiser*, said ‘We are going to build the Geelong convention centre’. Daniel Andrews rushed down to the Eastern Beach foreshore and said, ‘The time for political spin is over. We’re going to build this convention centre’. And when we look in the budget we see not one red razzo appropriated to the convention centre.

In fact Ms Pulford, the Minister for Regional Development, has indicated that they are going back to the drawing board in relation to the plans that they have spent two years developing for the convention centre because they have made the thing too small and potentially put it on a site that is looking like it will probably not accommodate a convention centre at all. So it seems all that work by the Geelong planning authority, by Deakin University and by Regional Development Victoria has come to nought because the Andrews government does not have the ticker to put money in for a convention centre.

There is no money for the expansion of the Geelong police station. We know it is at full capacity. We know there is land next door that could be bought to accommodate non-uniform officers in a new complex, but again there is no allocation of money. There is no money for the expansion of the Geelong train station. The car park is chock-a-block at 8 o’clock in the morning. You cannot get a park there. There is no indication that there will be any works in relation to a bridge from the station proper across to the car park or in fact an expansion of the car park, or a multilayered car park — anything that would remove the bottleneck of cars in the car park.

Again, I can say the same for the South Geelong station car park. I can tell the house the residents are going absolutely crazy about having their streets clogged with cars that are not able to use the car park proper but are

having to park down a heap of side streets. It is having a significant impact on livability for the residents there. Again, no money is appropriated for extending the South Geelong station car park, which is at full capacity now.

There is no money for a fast train Geelong–Melbourne service. We have still got this old, chaotic service of about 59 minutes on a regional rail link that sort of drags all the Geelong commuters halfway around the state to get back into Southern Cross station. The government has decided to plonk another half a dozen stations along the way, so instead of a 59-minute trip it could well turn out to be a 1½-hour trip by the time anyone gets to Southern Cross, and they are unlikely ever to get a seat. I would have thought at this point in time this budget would allocate funding for looking at a way that we can invest in a fast rail service for Geelong–Melbourne commuters, even using the old Altona North line, which could, with the support of the Metro system, provide a very fast, 35-minute, rail service from Geelong to Melbourne, but sadly nothing is done, said or seen in the budget.

Again there is no money to provide police hubs in retail precincts around Geelong and on the Bellarine. Lisa Neville, the Minister for Police, has been very busy closing all these police stations around the Bellarine but sadly not looking at any potential new police hubs in the retail precincts where they would be highly visible and where the community could interact with the police. There are no new ideas around that, just the old ideas about cutting the hours of police stations or closing police stations proper, leaving communities with nowhere to go to seek police support in the event of an emergency.

There is no money for the construction of the Barwon Health North hospital. Members may remember it was the coalition that committed funding for a new hospital for the northern suburbs of Geelong, something that has never been done by a Labor government; and we are still talking about the planning issues surrounding a Barwon Health North hospital, where and how it might be situated and the gazetting of planning permits that will need to be acquired to build it. This is two going on nearly three years in, and those living in the northern areas of Geelong are still waiting for a medical centre.

Despite the political spin on city deals, Geelong is still waiting for funding for the development of the yacht club and the marina. Again, we see no new money in relation to funding to allow that development around the Geelong yacht club and the marina itself. Even though I do acknowledge that there was money in the previous budget for some co-funding for that project,

again with this proposed city deal I would like to think the state government would be active in talking to the federal government and local government in relation to how we can actually bring these projects to fruition.

We are still waiting on defence contract works. Land 400 was talked about for a long time, but it unfortunately seems to have withered on the vine. I am not sure what the state government has in mind in relation to defence procurement works for those workers that have obviously lost their jobs at Ford and other associated motor industries. They were looking forward to applying their skills to some defence jobs that might come to the Geelong area, but again I see no proactiveness by the Andrews government in relation to bringing to Geelong some of these manufacturing contracts that are so desperately needed.

I see no money for the development of the Point Henry or Moolap precincts. We know Point Henry has been closed for a number of years now. Obviously there is an opportunity to start developing with both private consortiums and the government in relation to those areas. There have been plans, there have been consultations and there have been reviews, but sadly there has been no allocation in the budget to help progress the development along the foreshore and Moolap precincts.

There is no money for the Queenscliff museum hub. It is much talked about by our local Labor members down around Queenscliff and the Bellarine, but of course there is no money. This has been a consistent response from the Andrews government: talk, talk, talk, but not providing any money, money, money.

The Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Club has been reaching out to the Andrews government for funding not only to fix its back beach lifesaving club but also to redevelop its new club. I have gone to see the club and looked at the plans and I fully support its endeavours to get funding for that development work, but again there is nothing in this budget to support the Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Club.

The Queenscliff destination reserve is seeking state government funding, but again I see no allocations in this budget to support those on the Bellarine.

On the Toolern railway station, I went up to Melton on the weekend to talk to a leadership group. They said, 'Isn't it great to have a member of Parliament that actually lives in the region?'. They said, 'What we need is a railway station at Toolern, and what we need is a railway station at Melton north — and isn't it great that we have a local member that is listening to us and not

just trying to feed his pockets by living in caravans down in Queenscliff?'. So they were very appreciative — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr RAMSAY — Ocean Grove, yes. It was not him in Queenscliff; it was the then Speaker.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! Mr Ramsay, that is time.

Mr RAMSAY — Yes. I am sorry; I am digressing. The Western Highway extension at Rockbank — I could go on.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! Mr Ramsay, that is time. Thank you.

Mr RAMSAY — I think I have made my point.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — I think you might have, Mr Ramsay.

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — A government's budget is a very revealing document. It spells out its priorities but also what does not matter. A big priority for this government is raising taxes. Taxes have been raised by about 20 per cent by this government, and a range of new ones have also been introduced. The government needs to do this because even though it is pulling in the taxes it is a spending like there is no tomorrow.

There have been a number of cost blowouts on a number of favourite government projects. Let us look at level crossing removals. These have blown out and are now at \$11.3 billion, as I understand it. Recently I heard the Minister for Public Transport having to defend the budget blowouts on this project when it has barely begun. She was talking to Raphael Epstein on ABC radio and was bending over backwards to avoid saying that the project is costing more than \$1 billion more than the government said it would before the election. Then there was the V/Line cancellations debacle, where the costs blew out to the tune of some \$60 million, and there has been the \$30 million cost blowout for the 24-hour public transport trial. They are just a few projects in transport.

Earlier today I heard Mr Mulino speak about the initiatives in the budget that relate to domestic violence. This is something that Ms Crozier has also touched upon. A range of pieces of legislation in relation to domestic violence have passed through this chamber during this term. I have spoken on a number of bills that pertain to domestic violence. Inevitably I am following

Ms Crozier as the lead speaker. A range of our colleagues, if not all of them, have spoken, including Mr Finn and Mr O'Donohue, to name just a couple.

As members on both sides of the chamber have often said, much of this legislation has its genesis in the *Betrayal of Trust* report, which was the product of an inquiry by a council committee that was so ably chaired by Ms Crozier. That is one reason why a few days ago I was quite surprised to see a tweet from the member for Bentleigh. It said, with no irony:

The only time the Liberals talk about family violence is to play politics. No bipartisanship from them on this issue. Shame.

That was on 26 May.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms FITZHERBERT — Yes, Ms Crozier. As I said, that was said with no apparent irony. I responded that that was a lie, and the response I got was:

Oh, really? Well, I genuinely wish it wasn't true, but sadly it is.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms FITZHERBERT — These statements from the member — yes, they are ridiculous — are grossly untrue and utterly misleading. The member's comments deliberately seek to airbrush the significant contribution made by Ms Crozier and also by Ms Andrea Coote when she was in this place. This is just one aspect of the totally unreasonable nature of these comments.

There are in fact a number of members on the coalition side who have contributed to the fight against domestic violence — not only within this place but well before we were elected to Parliament. If I could single out just one, I refer to a member from the other place, the member for Bass. The issue of domestic violence is something that concerned him for many years before his election to this place. It is something he cares about and it is something that he has spoken out about in a number of places — and he still does. He speaks in schools, and I have seen columns that he has written for his local newspaper.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms FITZHERBERT — And I was about to say that in recognition of the work that he has done — not just in this place but I would suggest it is in large part recognition of the work he has done in the community over many years — he was made an ambassador for White Ribbon. I just want to put on record the fact that

these comments were made and that they are wrong. They need to be called out, and frankly the member should apologise for making these grossly untrue statements.

Ms Wooldridge spoke earlier on the health portfolio and, in her usual fashion, did so with great detail. I will speak on just a few points. She mentioned the lack of funding for small rural health services. This is an issue that is playing out in rural communities around the state. We see rising waiting lists for elective surgery in both Bendigo and Ballarat. In Ballarat there was a lot of anticipation that the ghost wing at the Ballarat Base Hospital would finally be fitted out. This is intended to have some extra operating theatres. This would be a direct way of dealing with the increases in waiting lists, but it was not to be. In raising these issues, this is not a criticism of hospital staff at all. They do a fantastic job. It is, however, a complaint about the Andrews government and the funding decisions that it makes, particularly in relation to rural services.

I also note the lack of action on level 13 at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. This was something that from memory was delved into at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearings. This is, of course, where we were supposed to have had Peter Mac Private, which was planned by the previous government as additional capacity for cancer services. On coming to government, the Andrews Labor government decided on ideological grounds that this was unnecessary. In fact they went further than that. Not only was it unnecessary, they made a decision that it was better that that space should sit vacant rather than be put to good use with cancer patients immediately. I do not need to remind people in this chamber that cancer treatment is not something that can wait. It needs to be done immediately and it needs to be done properly, and it is simply negligent to have that kind of facility there not being fully used for those who need it the most.

On the issue of the ideological decision that was made in relation to Peter Mac Private, as we have noted here before, it is apparently okay to have exactly the same arrangement at the Royal Women's Hospital with Frances Perry House. I note that the lease for the operation of Frances Perry House is currently up. There is no suggestion at all that the ongoing way that that floor has operated for some 40 years or so should change.

Similarly I understand it has been suggested that there should be a similar private facility at the heart hospital. Ms Wooldridge earlier took us through the history of that. The money that was put into the budget for the

heart hospital has somehow disappeared, and it looks like the heart hospital is a bit of a mirage rather than something that is even nearly shovel ready. On any view, it is not happening soon. But the point I make is this: it was apparently okay to have a private facility there, just not for cancer patients. I know — I think better than almost anyone in this place — that cancer is a very serious disease. Cancer patients are sometimes considered special in some way, but it is not a good way to be special to be singled out in this way, and to remove what would have been additional capacity for the system which aids everybody who needs to use it.

I spoke earlier of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. One issue that was delved into, or attempted to be delved into, at PAEC was the cost of enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) within the health sector. Last year in PAEC we were not allowed to know what the figures were, and the main justification given for refusing to give that information was that the EBAs had not been finalised. The terms had been agreed between the parties, but I acknowledge that the formal process for signing off on those — the voting process and so on — had not been done. However, the government had been party to those discussions — they had been intimately involved in them as the funding source for those wage increases — and it beggars belief that they did not have a decent sort of understanding of the additional payments that they would be required to make to health workers. Again, this is not in any way — before it is mischaracterised as this — any sort of criticism of hospital staff or hospital managers. It is in fact a valid question to a minister or indeed to a Treasurer.

This year at PAEC the Minister for Health returned and the same questions were asked. Last year of course the reason given for not giving the answers was that they had not finished the agreements. This year they have been signed off. There were absolute contortions to avoid saying what the figure was. I noticed the press gallery had some similar frustration about the government's very clear intention to avoid giving the answer to a very reasonable question. One way the Minister for Health handled this was to flick it over to a public servant so that she did not have to answer personally. One reason offered was that hospitals employ the staff, not the government, and therefore the government does not know what they are paid, which beggars belief, and it made the point that hospitals make decisions regarding shifts, and indeed they do.

It is also the Victorian Hospitals Industrial Association that was involved in these negotiations, and they did so in close consultation with the government, as they have during every round of EBA negotiations over the last

20 years or so. It beggars belief that the government does not know the precise amount. It is indeed in there; the government just did not want to say. However, it was extraordinary to watch these, frankly, pathetic excuses being offered at PAEC and to see how they could be made with a straight face.

I want to make a couple of comments about budget issues that are relevant to Albert Park, the electorate in which my electorate office is located. The first thing is that it has taken two and a half years and a broken promise since the government's election to put capital funding into a budget for the South Melbourne Park school. I should say that money has been previously allocated to the school, but there had not been \$1 put towards actually building it. There had been some \$8.5 million in there of Department of Education and Training money, but this was going to be spent on Orchestra Victoria and Parks Victoria and getting them out of that building. Both of them refused to go. They had been in the building for some time, they needed other premises to go to and, not unreasonably, they did not want to go without having financial support to find a new home. In the case of Parks Victoria it has been a minimum of \$5 million — money that really should have been spent on school facilities rather than on a separate department and its responsibilities, I would have thought, but this was the decision that was made by the now government before the election and therefore it had to be carried through.

Millions of dollars were spent on Parks Victoria and on Orchestra Victoria. I am not aware that Orchestra Victoria has a permanent home. It may have been, I understand, housed on a temporary basis. Parks Victoria similarly has had a couple of moves rather than just one into a new facility, which was its preference, and, as it pointed out in documents to the education department, it would have actually been cheaper to do it that way, but it was not to be. Some money was also allocated for planning.

The government has used, frankly, sneaky language about the opening date of this school. They say that it will be delivered in 2018, and that means it will open in 2019. Parents who were looking at this promise from an opposition party before the last election might have thought that 'delivered in 2018' meant their kids would be able to attend the school in 2018. That is evidently not what it meant.

There was capital funding provided in the last budget for the Ferrars Street school, but the site was unfortunately literally left to sit for a year or so while the government avoided doing anything with it. In addition to that there was money allocated to be spent

on actually buying the site — some \$5 million was allocated by the previous government for site preparation. The Labor government sat on that for a while and did not even use the money that had been left to fix up the site. To recap, this is the site that the member for Albert Park in opposition criticised very heavily. He argued that it was inadequate and that parents deserved better. However, today, given the problems and delays that the park school site has experienced, the current government, courtesy of the planning and foresight and funding offered by the previous government, will be able to provide its first new school in South Melbourne.

I am going to, as earlier speakers have, finish where I began. This is a government that is taxing a lot more and delivering less. Taxes are up by some 20 per cent, but the basic issue for most Victorians is that they are feeling increasingly unsafe, even in their own homes, even in their own cars. This is why the budget is no circuit-breaker for the government, as it may have wished it to be. The overwhelming issue for Victorians is crime and a diminishing sense of personal safety, and the budget has shown no real answers to address this fear. That is the basic reason why this budget is the Andrews government's latest failure.

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — I rise to speak on the 2017–18 state budget. This is a typical Labor budget. It is a very high taxing budget. In fact tax is up by 20 per cent in the state of Victoria, and coincidentally the crime rate is also up by 20 per cent in the state of Victoria. Families are now paying more in the way of taxes. In fact since the 2014 election Daniel Andrews has increased the average tax take from every Victorian family by \$2000 per year. However, as Ms Fitzherbert just said, they are feeling increasingly less safe because crime in this state is also up by 20 per cent. You would think when you are paying more in taxes that the government would be able to respond better to increasing community safety, but instead this government has seen crime just skyrocket out of control. Unfortunately last night in Brighton families were unsafe. People were locked in a supermarket while an incident occurred where an innocent man was killed and indeed the perpetrator of the crime was also killed.

Labor have actually introduced nine new taxes. Just before the election, on the Channel 7 news on 28 November 2014, Peter Mitchell asked Daniel Andrews the following question. He said:

Daniel Andrews, all the polls say you will be Victoria's next Premier. If you are, do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

Daniel Andrews said:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

And Daniel Andrews has broken that promise to every single Victorian, because he has increased taxes in this state.

This particular budget will see taxes increase by \$174.8 million in the 2017–18 year alone, and by \$1.4 billion over the next four years. Daniel Andrews has actually introduced nine new taxes in this state. He has introduced an energy tax on coal royalties, which has tripled the taxes on coal royalties and seen the closure of Hazelwood, and power bills for families are skyrocketing because of Daniel Andrews's tax. He is introducing an Uber tax, and this will particularly hit pensioners in regional Victoria very hard, where we do not have access to public transport and their only option to get to the doctor for appointments, to get to the hospital, is a taxi. They will have to pay \$4 extra on a round trip in order to access that taxi, where they do not have the option of using public transport.

The land tax surcharge for absentee owners has been introduced, the stamp duty surcharge for foreign buyers has been introduced and the fire services property levy has been increased — and of course that is likely to absolutely balloon out of control if Daniel Andrews gets his way with the split of the Country Fire Authority. Yes, he is saying, 'We will put a cap on it for two years', but after that let us see what happens to the fire services property levy because that will have to increase to cover the costs of Daniel Andrews's plans.

We have seen an increase in stamp duty on new cars, we have seen new stamp duties on off-the-plan purchases of apartments et cetera, we have seen new stamp duties on property transfers between spouses and we have seen a new annual property valuation to increase land tax. Daniel Andrews is the greatest taxer in this country at the moment, and it is certainly hitting the hip pockets of families hard.

What are families getting in return for that? In Shepparton families are actually getting very little. In this budget there was a lot of hoo-ha around rail services, but the budget did not actually introduce one new rail service. What we saw in the budget this year was a commitment of \$33 million towards infrastructure. Our community for a long time has been advocating for \$186 million to be invested into our train services to bring our train services up to eight per day. That is broken down into \$101 million for infrastructure and \$85 million for new trains. We saw \$33 million announced as part of the budget, but actually not one cent of that was committed in the

2017–18 year. That money will not even start to be delivered until the 2018–19 year, and Shepparton will not see any results until 2020, two years after the next election. The \$33 million will fund some stabling works at the Shepparton station and a passing loop at Murchison, but that passing loop is in the wrong spot. All of the studies on this line say the passing loop needs to be at Tabilk — but no, this government is pressing ahead with one at Murchison.

The other \$70 million that is needed actually upgrades the track so that we can put faster trains on that track. It upgrades the level crossing, something that Melbourne is getting but country Victoria seems to be left out of, and it also upgrades the signalling. Without all of that being done, the Shepparton line will not be able to move past five services a day to the eight services a day that our community has been advocating for. All of that infrastructure work needs to be done at once. The minister has admitted in the lower house that the infrastructure works that have been funded will mean interruptions to services. That is over the next three years, and then, if the other work is to be done, that will be more interruptions. If all of the infrastructure had been funded at once, it could all be done well and we could have our trains earlier and less interruptions to our services.

Shepparton does always seem to be the poor relation, getting the token investment on the drip-feed. When we look at what other areas have got in the way of rail announcements it makes Shepparton look particularly hard done by, because it is paltry funding that has been announced for Shepparton compared with the committed funding of \$518 million to the Ballarat line in last year's budget and the \$435 million in committed funding for Gippsland line in this year's budget. Even when the state government is trying to spend other people's money, trying to spend the federal government's money, when they announced their regional rail revival package they did not include Shepparton.

There was some commentary from Suzanna Sheed, the member for Shepparton in the Assembly, in the *Tatura Guardian* following the budget that said:

On Sunday morning when I saw the news I must say I was in quite a state ...

She went on to say:

I was told by this person (Ms Allan) to settle down, sit tight and wait for the budget.

Well, she must have been in quite a state, but Ms Allan was quite condescending in her comments to Ms Sheed

in telling her to 'settle down'. What a way for one member of Parliament to talk to another! But it does make me wonder, if Ms Sheed was in such a state that a minister needed to tell her to settle down, if she is really suited to politics, because politics is a tough gig. It is a role where we get disappointed on many occasions and where we have to just gather up ourselves and continue to lobby, and there is no point in getting in 'quite a state'. But for a minister to talk to another member of Parliament in that manner is quite appalling.

The Shepparton community have advocated for a long time for \$20 million to commence the planning and acquisition of land for our bypass stage 1. We needed \$10 million for planning and we needed \$10 million for acquisition of land, but this government only produced half of that money. So \$10 million has been committed over the next few years. Only \$500 000 of that has been committed in 2017–18, and the rest will be spent beyond that. So that is putting this project on the backburner again by putting that funding in the forward estimates of the budget.

Even when that funding has been spent — and they will not commence the actual planning spending until the 2018–19 year — all we will have is a pretty picture of a road that needs to be built on land that the state does not even own. The other \$10 million was needed to actually make that project shovel ready by the acquisition of the land. I know that there will need to be federal contributions towards the construction of this road, but I liken this project to someone going to the bank and saying, 'We want funding from the bank to build a house on a block of land that we do not own'. A bank would laugh at you. So if a state government were to go to the federal government and say, 'We want funding to build a road on land that we don't own', the federal government would laugh at it.

I was pleased to see some investment in education for Shepparton. The Lighthouse Project will receive \$1 million funding a year over the next three years, which I was absolutely delighted with, and there is money for a business case for the Munarra Regional Centre of Excellence. I note that there is nothing to assist the Better Together alliance, which has been a tremendous project that our four secondary schools have put together. They have been asking for additional funding to facilitate that project for a number of years now, but the government just does not seem to want to support Better Together.

A handful of our local primary schools in this district will also receive some maintenance funding, including Bouchier Street, Ardmona, Kialla West, Orrvale, Tungamah, Wunghnu and Mooroopna Park, but there

are still a number of schools in the region that need serious investment in maintenance that missed out in this year's budget.

It is disappointing that the budget also reveals that the new Shepparton law courts are actually behind schedule, and the fine print in the budget reveals that the law court project, which was due for completion in 2017–18, has now been pushed out to the 2018–19 financial year with this new completion time. I spoke just this afternoon in constituency questions about the problems there that local suppliers are having in getting access to tendering for parts of this project. It is extremely disappointing particularly that small businesses are being cut out of things like the contracts for the blinds. It would have provided much better ongoing servicing for the courthouse had that contract been awarded to a local company, but it has been awarded to Melbourne. So there is no point governments putting out press releases saying that projects are creating jobs in regional communities when they are actually awarding contracts to Melbourne.

The Minister for Industry and Employment came up last week to look at that project and to say 'Isn't it great?', because we do have a local electrical contractor working there and they are employing people. What he forgot to mention is that the only reason that that project is there and that there is a crane on the skyline of Shepparton is that the former Liberal government funded that project. So any employment that is being created by the construction of the courthouse has been created by the former Liberal government, not by this government. The decisions that this government is making are to allocate contracts to Melbourne and to cut local businesses out of even tendering for those contracts.

I was also pleased that Shepparton is to be included as one of the two statewide locations for the specialist family violence court. Unfortunately our community has a demographic that means that we do have a high incidence of family violence in our community. That is something that none of us think is acceptable, and we all want to see it eradicated from the community.

But overall this is a token budget for Shepparton. It does not deliver anything in full. Nothing is funded to completion, and that is typical of this government. It is just keeping Shepparton on the drip-feed. It is putting in stage 1 of the hospital, which it says is the whole thing, but it does not actually take in oncology, outpatients or mental health, which are all bursting at the seams. It does not address the need for radiotherapy at the hospital. It does not fund our second river crossing or stage 1 of our bypass.

The budget does not fund the new train services that are so desperately needed in Shepparton. As I said, \$101 million is needed for infrastructure to take Shepparton to eight services a day. Our ultimate aim is to move to 13 services. The way that needs to be achieved is through the airport link. Of course the federal Liberal government, the federal Labor opposition and the former state Liberal government have all committed to that airport link. The only person that is standing between Shepparton getting 13 services a day because of the airport link is the Premier, Daniel Andrews, who is totally against building the airport link in Victoria. It is interesting that he is actually at odds with Bill Shorten on the need for that very important project.

But all in all this is a typical Labor budget, a very high taxing budget, that will see families' budgets depleted by further tax. On average \$2000 per family extra will be paid in tax due to this budget.

Mr ATKINSON (Eastern Metropolitan) — I wish to make a contribution to this budget debate, but I do not wish to comment directly on the budget that the government has brought down, because I believe that in the position I hold in this Parliament it is not appropriate for me to consider in detail matters of the budget, notwithstanding that my electorate does have some benefit from some of the initiatives in the budget. Also there were projects that I and my colleagues would have desired to have addressed by the government in the budget that at this stage have still not received adequate funding to proceed.

But my concern in terms of this debate is that I as a member of Parliament and looking towards the future am very concerned about our future direction in this country and this state. We have a very real challenge that I wish to bring to the attention of the house in terms of discussing and working on policies that will address the future of work in this country. One of the major concerns that I have about this state budget and indeed the federal budget is the fact that I do not believe that some of the forecast figures that have been relied upon are going to be realised. I recognise that the Victorian government in fact has moderated some of its growth figures in terms of domestic growth product and certainly unemployment levels and so forth, but nonetheless I think that those figures are still going to be very difficult to achieve going forward.

My concern is this: if you are an alcoholic, unless you acknowledge that you have a problem you are not going to get the right solution, you are not going to address that problem. This is an issue that we have in terms of our state and our country, and indeed it is a

global issue in terms of employment levels. I am aghast that we continue to use figures that are just fabrication. I note that the government here and the federal government rely on the same figures that are produced essentially by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), in which there is a suggestion that well over 100 000 jobs have been created in the last 12 months, and I think the state government is claiming 200 000 jobs in the last two years. The figure is not right, and unless we acknowledge that the figure is not right we are not going to get the right policies going forward to address what is a crisis situation, particularly for our young people.

The reality is that unemployment is measured by an extraordinary formula, where the ABS contacts a panel of 1000 people and asks them if they have worked for 1 hour, paid or unpaid, in the last two weeks, and if their answer to that question is yes, then they are employed. I cannot think of anybody who would believe that they were employed if they had worked for 1 hour delivering meals on wheels. And yet that is how we calculate unemployment. The figure is at least half of what the true unemployment level is in this state.

We talk about the jobs created. Again, it is a nonsense, because the reality is that of the 200 000 jobs that are supposed to have been created, when you actually ring up the ABS and check if they have taken off the redundancies, the people who have retired from the workforce and the people who have lost their jobs or otherwise left the workforce in a particular way they say, 'No, we don't know how to calculate that'. So in other words the 100 000 jobs might be jobs that people have started in but it is not a jobs growth figure. What is more, when you look at the 100 000 jobs created, or 200 000 in the last two years, if Mr Finn has a business employing 30 people on a project and he finishes that project and those people move to Ms Fitzherbert's new project, they are counted as 30 new jobs. But they are not new jobs; they are a relocation of existing jobs — a transfer of jobs. If we do not get that statistical base right, then how do we really address our policy settings and make sure that we do create a growing economy?

There is no doubt that the conditions that we have in this economy today in Victoria and Australia are very troubling. We have people who are in mortgage stress. Some 22 per cent of mortgages are already under stress. If there is any movement in the interest rates — and certainly I think the Reserve Bank of Australia is loath to move the interest rates one way or the other because they have not got a clue about what the implications would be of any movement at this time — and if they were to move up, in fact that mortgage stress would increase dramatically. In some parts of regional

Australia and regional Victoria indeed the suggestions are that mortgage stress could be as high as 50 per cent. That is obviously an unsustainable position.

Retail sales growth, which is always a good litmus test of the economy, is struggling to break the 1 per cent barrier. It was slightly better in April as a result of the catch-up on Easter, but nonetheless it is really struggling for serious growth. And the number of businesses that are closing is enormous. I mentioned the people that have left the workforce; in fact across Australia in the last 12 months 60 000 people in the retail industry alone have lost their jobs. Based on Victoria's position in the retail industry, that is probably around 15 000 people in Victoria in the retail industry who have lost their jobs.

The banks are shedding people. Toll Holdings is shedding people. We wonder why we have troubles with a crime wave. We wonder about some particular young people within the economy, within our community, who are running amok. One of the key reasons is that they do not have jobs. They are angry, they are frustrated, they see no future. We have young people who have been turned out of universities who have been told that they are going to have spectacular careers, high-paid jobs and clean jobs and that they will not need to get their hands dirty — 'This is the knowledge economy'. But the reality is that most of those young people are struggling to find a job as a barista in a coffee shop. They are struggling to get passengers in an Uber. It is because they simply cannot find jobs in the economy.

We talked about the manufacturing industry and we said, 'Well, we're not good at making cars.' Well, we were good at making cars, it is just we were not competitive enough, or so some people thought. So we closed down much of the manufacturing industry. Mind you, there are real opportunities for that to come back now, because certainly China's increasing cost base and its quality control are now providing some opportunities for the re-emergence of manufacturing opportunities in this country — if they can find bank finance and if they can find the skills in workers to actually participate in that manufacturing sector going forward. There has been so much bad news for so long that there is a lack of confidence in the potential of what could again be a significant sector of our state economy.

But when we look at the jobs market we can see that perhaps we were not so crash hot at manufacturing and in a commodity sense. That is one thing. But what are we good at? We have got lawyers, we have got accountants, we have got telcos and we have got health

companies all sending jobs overseas — backroom work. Processing work from their companies is being sent overseas. These are those white-collar clean jobs. These are the entry-level jobs that they are sending overseas that might well introduce young people to the workforce and allow them to learn and to build careers. But those jobs are disappearing too, and it is a real crisis.

Is it any wonder that housing affordability is a real issue? Because it is not just the price of our houses and it is not just the cost of developing, it is also the fact that people who are working 15 or 20 hours a week cannot possibly get a mortgage to actually contemplate getting into the housing market going forward.

We have got some serious issues to consider, and the budgets that governments bring down are simply a mechanism to address some of these policy problems. Certainly for us in Victoria what we need to be looking at, what we need to be looking at in Australia and indeed what other countries around the world will continue to look at from now on is: what is the future of work going forward?

Bill Gates suggests that in fact we should be charging robots income tax because those robots, those electronic or digital processors, are replacing people. You have got computers that can now give you a better diagnosis than most medical practitioners because they are crammed with so much information and they can analyse that information in a very short time and deliver a diagnosis as to what your medical issue might be. Think of the ramifications of that going forward even in health delivery services.

Some of the things that technology has done for us are great. It is fantastic to have some of the opportunities that have been promised for the future in a knowledge economy. But the reality is that the jobs are not being generated, and the reality is that those jobs that are being created at this time are mostly jobs that are being created either by the government or indeed in industries that are heavily subsidised by the government, such as vocational training and aged care.

We have some serious thinking to do. And in terms of creating confidence in our economy so that business is prepared to invest and people are prepared to spend money as consumers, we need to make sure that we are providing them with a very genuine prospect of a prosperous future for Victoria and opportunities for our children and grandchildren going forward.

More alarmingly, in the short term we even need to provide jobs for those young people, especially, and the

middle-aged who have been turfed out in redundancies from the careers that they have held, to give them opportunities to be true participants in our economy — to make their wages and so forth so that they are able to contribute as consumers, so that they are able to maintain their homes and so that they are able to pay for their health care and the other demands of modern living.

I trust that this budget will get some of us thinking about not just the financial year that it covers but indeed the more extended future; that it will make us think about the sorts of policies that we debate in here to ensure that we really do think about creating a better and stronger economy going forward. This state has always prided itself on its achievements. We now have some real challenges, and I just hope that we can continue to achieve.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — All good things come to those who wait, as my grandmother always used to say. It has been said that this budget is a Labor budget, and I have to agree. This is a classic Labor budget, and we know it is a classic Labor budget because when we look at it there is nothing much in it for the west of Melbourne. That is something that the Labor Party has become renowned for over the years — ignoring the west of Melbourne. The attitude of the Labor Party is that it does not matter what they do to the people in the west of Melbourne, they will still vote for them — ‘We can ignore them, we can neglect them, we can use or abuse them and they will still vote for us’. I am starting to think that little lurk that the Labor Party have been on for a very, very long time might be coming to an end, because after speaking to a lot of people in my neck of the woods it is clear they are very, very unhappy with this government, and who would be surprised at that?

The people in the west remember the Napthine-O’Brien government and the last budget that that government handed down. There were billions of dollars in it for the west of Melbourne. It was the most generous budget for the west of Melbourne quite possibly in the history of our state, and that is really saying something. One of the things I am particularly proud of with that budget is that for the first time we can now have a full and complete education for children with autism in the west of Melbourne. Up until that budget and up until the Jennings Street School was built we did not have that opportunity if we had children with autism. We did not have the opportunity to give them a full education; they had only four years and that was that. We changed that, and I am very, very proud to have been a part of that. I can assure you, Acting President, that there are plans afoot. After we win the election in November next year

there will be further changes for schooling in Melbourne's west for children with autism. Again I am very proud to be a part of that, and I am very excited at the prospect of what we will be able to deliver after the next election.

This is, in its own way, a do-nothing budget. Sure, it is big spending and big taxing, but that is what you expect from the ALP. That is what they do. The rest of us get up and brush our teeth in the morning and put our clothes on. The ALP get up in the morning and they spend and they tax. That is what they do. By nature, that is what the ALP do, and they are certainly doing it in this budget.

Mr Davis — It is in their DNA.

Mr FINN — It is in their DNA. Mr Davis is spot on the money. It is most certainly in their DNA. But this budget is such a nothing budget that within days of its delivery the government was on to something else. You would reckon that if a government had a good budget, if a government had a strong budget and if a government had a budget that it was proud of, it would give it more than a couple of days before it moved on to something else. But it did not on this occasion, because it knows this budget is a stinker. It is a shocker, and it offers nothing to anybody, apart from those thousands and thousands of public servants who the government is offering new jobs to — not sustainable jobs, I hasten to point out, but jobs, nonetheless.

Then of course we have the government saying they are spending money. They say they are investing in fighting the crime tsunami that is sweeping across our state. But I doubt it very much. I do not see anything happening on the ground, despite some of the public relations stunts that the Premier and the government have been pulling around the place. I do not see anything happening on the ground. When I go out to Tarneit and I see the troubles that people in Tarneit are having with the crime wave, the home invasions, the assaults and the robberies, I do not see any relief for them from this government. When I go to Caroline Springs and I speak to people who have had their homes invaded and when I see the people who have had their cars stolen and the people who are living in fear in their own homes, I do not see this government actually doing anything to protect those people.

What is going on in this state? In 2017 we have a situation where people are living in fear in their own homes, so scared at night that they cannot even sleep in their own beds. What is going on? Why do we have a government that has dropped the ball on defending and protecting the community? It is always the first

responsibility of government, if I can paraphrase the great Ronald Reagan, to protect the people, not to tell people how to run their lives. That is absolutely spot-on. Unfortunately this government has it the other way around. They cannot protect the people, but they are very keen on telling people how they should run their own lives, and we see that with the social engineering policies that this government has implemented and continues to implement in schools.

I will get back to that a little bit later on because I heard this morning that in schools we are teaching our children what is good and what is bad. We are teaching them what they should and should not be doing. Under normal circumstances I might not think that is a bad thing, but with this government and its very, very strange priorities I am very concerned. I would very much like to know what they think is good and what is bad, because I have a feeling it might not be on the same page as what I think is good or bad.

Going back to the crime situation, we have a situation in this state, and Mr Atkinson almost touched on in his address just a few minutes ago. We have a subclass, if you like — if I can use that unfortunate term — who have no fear of authority. They have no fear of the police. They have no fear of going to jail. They think that they can do anything they like. If we are going to live in a society where people actually can live without that fear, we have got to change that attitude. We have got to show these people, whether they be young or old, that there are consequences for their actions — that if they harm our society, if they harm people in the way that they have been harming people, then they will suffer severe consequences. We have some people who have come from countries that make going to jail here almost luxurious by comparison to what they have come from.

Mr Morris — It is like Shangri-La.

Mr FINN — Well, I am not sure it is Shangri-La, Mr Morris, but it is certainly luxurious by comparison. We have to change what these people are going into. It is not good enough to put them up for maybe a week, maybe two weeks. To get three weeks in jail in Victoria you really have to do something pretty bad. It is like putting them up in a hotel. That has got to change, and if we do not change that, then we are failing miserably.

We really have to provide a situation where the police have not just the resources to do their job but the authority to do their job, because at the moment many of the police are at sixes or sevens. They do not know what they can and cannot do, and we have seen that on a number of occasions over the last year or two. The

police are out there. They put their lives on the line quite often. They are facing situations where they are in danger, and they do not really know what they are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do. A bit more direction, I have to say, from police command would be very good.

I have to say that I am a bit concerned about police command at the moment. I think we have returned to the days of Christine Nixon, it seems, in Victoria Police, which is a bit sad. We really have to give the police the authority to do their job and have them know that what they do is important to us and that as a government we will back them. That is what we have to do in my very strong view.

Getting onto the area of transport, what concerns me is that the government is spending a lot of money — and we are talking about spending \$5.5 billion — on a tunnel, the West Gate tunnel.

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr FINN — I do not know. It was the western distributor last week, it is the West Gate tunnel this week, it might be Dan's ditch next week.

Mr Morris — Yes, let's hope he is!

Mr FINN — Let us hope he is, exactly right.

Here we are with a government that is proposing to spend \$5.5 billion on a road that is going nowhere. This will be the most expensive T-intersection in the world; it will be the most expensive relocation of a traffic jam in the history of mankind.

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr FINN — Do not get me started on him.

This is a dog of a project. This western distributor, West Gate tunnel — whatever it is called this week — is a dog of a project. The only people who are going to benefit from this project are Transurban. If I had Transurban shares, I would be a very, very happy man, and I can understand why Transurban are wagging their tails at the prospect of what is coming their way. What this government is doing with this project is handing over to Transurban the future of our roads for another generation, and they are expanding it. I supported CityLink, and I fear to think where we would be without CityLink now, but it was within reason that these agreements were made. There does not seem to be any reason anymore. We are talking about extending for well over a decade the toll regime on roads that are

nowhere near associated with the T-intersection that is called the West Gate tunnel.

We really have to have a government — I am getting ahead of myself there; I should not be referring to 'we' as the government until after November next year — that starts spending a bit of money on roads that need it. It has to start spending some money on roads that will make a difference to getting people where they need to be when they need to be there, because this western distributor-cum-West Gate tunnel will do nothing for anybody except Transurban. A bit of money on Sunbury Road would not go astray. The duplication of Sunbury Road is something that this government should most certainly get behind.

Mr Morris mentioned Buckley Street in Essendon, and in the very brief period I have left I will make reference to that, because this is an act of — I nearly used an unparliamentary term — swinery that this government is perpetrating against the people of Essendon. Deputy President, you might know a few people out that way who will back me on that, because what the government is trying to do is build what they are calling a trench through the middle of Essendon. The people are upset, but the government does not care because that is the way this government is. It does not care about the people, it just wants to do whatever it likes and it does not care about the consequences.

I could talk about the Footscray Hospital. I would love to talk about the Footscray Hospital — in fact I would love to rip down the Footscray Hospital and build the whole thing up — but my time is at an end. We are back to the future: this government is a big spending, big taxing, classic Labor government.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on the Andrews Labor government's third budget. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer on delivering another terrific budget. The Treasurer in his budget speech said:

... budgets are more than economic blueprints. They're more than a set of numbers, more than a list of initiatives.

They're about people. They're about communities. They're about the type of society our grandchildren will inherit.

They show us where a government's heart lies.

I could not agree more with this. The Treasurer is a man who is well versed in financial management. He is very good at delivering very large surpluses — a surplus of \$1.2 billion in fact for this budget and surpluses averaging \$2.4 billion over the forward estimates — and lower net debt than inherited from the

previous coalition government. However, he is also a man with a heart. He is a man who deeply cares about our community, and I think that Treasurer Pallas has delivered a budget that is financially responsible but also delivers on the type of society that we want for Victoria.

It is a strong foundation to help us get on with the job of delivering better schools, hospitals, roads and public transport and of removing level crossings, creating jobs and keeping Victorians safe. And I am particularly proud that at the heart of this year's budget is a historic and life-changing investment to end the scourge that is family violence in our society.

The 2017–18 budget invests in the things that really matter. For many years in my local electorate my community missed out under the previous coalition government, and I have spoken about this before. I was appalled that they went to the 2010 election with a list of schools that they were committed to redeveloping, and there was not one school — not one school — that was in the Northern Metropolitan Region. If you just think about the fact that that is one-fifth of metropolitan Melbourne and there was not a single school that was north of the Yarra, I think it is a damning indictment of the previous government that it shamelessly pork-barrelled and just ignored so many parts of Victoria, ignored the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne, ignored regional Victoria and ignored so many parts of our state.

But after four years of stagnation we are getting on with building on our already record jobs growth, with a \$90 million boost to attract more of the world's biggest and most innovative businesses to Victoria and to protect Victorian jobs. We are supporting small businesses in my electorate and across the state that will benefit from an increase in the payroll tax-free threshold. We are a government that is delivering on strong job creation because it is so vitally important to Victorian families that they have a job, and our record is really the envy of the nation.

In terms of health services I am so pleased that the budget delivers \$162.7 million in funding to the Northern Hospital. This will deliver on investments in Indigenous maternal care; upgrades and expansions, including the completion of a seven-storey tower; 96 new inpatient beds; three new operating theatres; and more treatment rooms. Looking to the future the project will also include space for the expansion of cardiology services, cath labs and medical imaging. I congratulate the Northern Hospital management team and their executive for their advocacy for this project, and I commend and thank the Minister for Health, Jill

Hennessy, for recognising the importance of this hospital to Melbourne's growing northern suburbs.

Austin Health will receive \$29.8 million for critical infrastructure works to make sure that patients in Melbourne's north-east continue to receive the best care as well. The Royal Melbourne Hospital will benefit from a \$40 million cash injection to upgrade key infrastructure across two sites, while planning continues on the next steps for the Parkville biomedical precinct. I am so grateful for the investment that is being made in our ambulance network. Under the previous government we had a real crisis, and the government is investing more money in the ambulance service and across our health system as well, including record funding in mental health services.

In education I am very grateful for the investment that is being made into our schools infrastructure. We are making Victoria the Education State, and this budget continues our record investment in school capital and learning. In terms of the schools that are going to benefit from this investment, there is funding for Aitken Hill, Campbellfield Heights, Fawkner Primary School, Merri Creek Primary School, Clifton Hill Primary School, Newlands Primary School, Brunswick North Primary School, Docklands P–6 primary, Alphington P–2, Coburg High School, Coburg North Primary School, Bundoora Primary School and Findon Primary School.

In addition to this we will have the reopening of the new coeducational school, Preston high. We will have \$1 million to begin construction of a new vertical primary school for the inner city with Docklands Primary School, upgrades to the Lynall Hall Community School in Richmond and of course the new high school for Richmond, Victoria's first government vertical high school. I take this opportunity to thank all of those school communities for their advocacy on behalf of school families and students in their communities and thank them for the important work that they are doing in giving those young children every opportunity.

In terms of other investments that we are making I am pleased that there is continued investment in our train, public transport and road systems, a very significant investment across a range of projects. Given that there is not a great deal of time I want to spend some time talking about the investments in my own portfolio.

I am very proud in this year's budget that we have delivered \$975 million to the families and children portfolio as part of the our government's ongoing commitment to improve the lives of children and

families. This will fund our groundbreaking Education State early childhood plan, really putting Victoria at the forefront of reforms in early childhood education, as well as providing further funding for our continued efforts through the *Roadmap for Reform* to transform our child and family services and move away from crisis intervention to a greater focus on prevention and early intervention, and of course support our ongoing response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, as well as strengthening our youth justice system.

The \$975 million investment means that over our three budgets to date we have increased our investment in my portfolio by \$628 million — an increase of more than 40 per cent. Investment in early childhood education creates the best outcomes for the wellbeing of children. This is why over our three budgets we have more than doubled the average investment in early childhood education and parenting compared to the previous government's four budgets.

To give every Victorian child the opportunity to succeed in life, we launched on budget day the *Early Childhood Reform Plan*, backed by a \$202.1 million investment in this year's budget — the largest single investment in early childhood education. This nation-leading reform plan sets out our long-term vision. It includes a \$108.4 million package of kindergarten reforms to support quality services and services that are more accessible and inclusive for all children. I am very proud of the fact that we have included an additional \$55.3 million to our kindergarten services as part of a school readiness fund.

We have had needs-based funding in our state now for a number of years, and now we are extending it to the kindergarten sector for the first time in this innovative investment. It is an investment that will enable our kindergartens to bring in speech therapists, allied health professionals, child psychologists and social workers, as well as employing additional early childhood educators to lift language development skills and numeracy and literacy skills for children. Sadly one in five children do start in prep developmentally disadvantaged, and this investment is designed to lift those outcomes. It is a very, very important investment in our children's future.

We are also providing \$22.8 million to improve quality through targeted quality improvement grants and a significant increase in specialist support staff provided by the Department of Education and Training. We are providing a further \$10 million to build new early childhood facilities co-located with government schools. This is on top of an existing \$60 million

towards early childhood infrastructure. So there is a total of \$70 million over our first three budgets in comparison to only \$37 million appropriated by the coalition government over their four budgets.

We are also investing in reforming our kindergarten funding model for non-government schools for the first time to also enable more Catholic schools to build and operate kindergartens in our state. We are investing in our local government central kindergarten enrolment system with \$5.5 million to enable parents to navigate the early childhood system. That is of course almost entirely operated by either local government or not-for-profit and for-profit providers, not directly by the Victorian government.

We are assisting the most disadvantaged children in our state to access kindergarten as well. There is \$6.3 million for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This is targeted at Koori children and children known to child protection and effectively gives them access to free three-year-old kindergarten. I am really heartened by the fact that we have driven up kindergarten participation amongst these very disadvantaged groups, but this is designed to enable even more children to access this important program. Last year we piloted the prepurchased kindergarten places program, and we have provided funding of \$2.3 million in the budget to make this a permanent part of the system. This enables children who might move to a different local government area later in the kindergarten year to access a reserved kindergarten spot for them if they come from a disadvantaged family. That is because disadvantaged children have the most to gain from participating in a quality kindergarten program.

I am also very proud of the investment we are making in inclusion and ensuring that children with a disability can also enjoy a quality kindergarten experience. We have provided \$5 million for the kindergarten inclusion support program and a further \$7.2 million to help more children access early childhood intervention services whilst these services transition to the national disability insurance scheme.

Our maternal and child health service in this state is one that is world class and one that we should be really proud of. We have invested \$81.1 million to expand and strengthen our maternal and child health service and provide better support for parents. I am very proud of the investment of \$37.7 million that we are making to expand the enhanced maternal and child health service. This is a service that is targeted towards the most disadvantaged families in our community. Currently it ends when a child turns one, but we are going to extend that to when a child turns three and

provide it to more families, and they will receive more support than they have in the past. This is going to benefit 37 000 families when it is fully rolled out.

Another initiative that I am very proud of, which is another Australian first, is we are providing \$11 million so our maternal and child health nurses are able to undertake an additional outreach visit in instances where they are concerned about the risk of family violence. Our maternal and child health service is an important screening service in terms of making the appropriate referrals for women and children experiencing family violence.

We have committed \$22.3 million to expand our supported playgroups statewide for the first time, which will benefit 6000 more families. There is a further \$5.4 million in initiatives for Koori families to ensure they can access culturally relevant playgroups and parenting initiatives.

Our commitment to reform our childhood and family services system has seen average investment increase by almost \$120 million during our three budgets compared to the coalition government's previous four budgets. There is a \$161 million commitment of initiatives in the budget, including 450 new child protection practitioners — the biggest ever expansion of our child protection workforce. We have provided more funding for more home-based care placements and the expansion of our targeted care packages so more children can find a home-based placement. We have a range of initiatives to end the scourge that is family violence in our state as well as a record \$360.7 million to create a stronger and more secure youth justice system.

I am very proud of our third budget, and I congratulate Treasurer Tim Pallas on a remarkable budget.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am pleased to make a few remarks in relation to the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017, the third of the Andrews government. By the third budget any government has had the chance to set the course of its priorities and what it plans to do for Victoria. It is often said by people that budgets are about choices. Governing is also about choices and prioritising conflicting and competing priorities. In the electorate of Eastern Victoria Region there are two parts of the region that stand out as having been neglected by the Andrews government either by a lack of investment or by policy settings it has chosen that have had a significant impact on jobs and economic activity.

In relation to the former it is interesting to listen to the Minister for Families and Children about the northern suburbs and parts of her electorate. The growth corridor of Eastern Victoria Region through parts of Casey and Cardinia is experiencing enormous population growth. Every day there are new houses being built in that area with all the consequent demand for extra infrastructure — extra schools, childcare centres, roads, public transport, bus services and jobs. What we have seen in the Casey-Cardinia growth corridor is very little investment from the Andrews government.

Mr Mulino in his budget speech talked about a new school in Pakenham. I have a feeling that that school was one that was funded in the 2014–15 budget by the former government. Mr Mulino actually asked a rhetorical question about what investment the coalition provided in relation to schools in that part of the electorate. I will tell him: Officer Secondary College, which is a beautiful and fantastic school providing a quality education for students of the growing Officer community, and Officer Specialist School, which is on a large footprint with a larger capacity than normal and is really a leader when it comes to the provision of education in that setting. It is co-located near the railway station and is a legacy of the former government. We have seen nothing of that sort of investment in the growth corridor from Berwick to Pakenham in the Eastern Victoria Region. The choices this government has made have neglected that area.

We have seen that also with dedicated infrastructure projects. The McGregor Road railway crossing is crying out to be upgraded. The road reduces to a single lane at the railway line, causing enormous traffic congestion, particularly during the morning peak when lots of mums and dads and families are getting children from the residential estates south of the railway line to the schools which are predominantly to the north of the railway line. A relatively small project in the scale of infrastructure projects that would make a significant difference to traffic in that area has been neglected yet again by the Andrews Labor government. There are countless other examples I could list, but I will not.

The other parts of the region that I just wish to touch on in my remarks about the electorate are the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland. We have seen the impact of the Hazelwood power station closure and the loss of 700-plus jobs from Hazelwood, the impact on the broader economy for those who are associated with Hazelwood and the impact on the confidence in the valley that the closure of that power station in such a short time frame has had on that community. If you put on top of that the Heyfield mill and the failure of the government to provide adequate supply to keep the mill

employing the 250 people it employs — the adequate cubic metres of timber required to keep that mill operating in the way it has been — is a conscious policy choice of the government that is leading to job losses in Gippsland. Of course Carter Holt Harvey has made a decision recently to also close in the valley, and that will impact over 100 jobs.

This is serious economic dislocation coming after the Andrews Labor government tripled the brown coal royalty in the previous budget, covering the current financial year, and it continues into the new budget that is the subject of this debate. Policy settings and defending seats from the Greens in the inner suburbs of Melbourne over protecting the jobs of workers in the valley and in Gippsland are clear choices of the government, the Treasurer and the Premier. They are defending the seats of Richard Wynne, Jane Garrett and other inner-city members who are at risk of losing their seats to the Greens, and the people paying the price for that are those workers in the Latrobe Valley that I have referred to.

There are significant challenges throughout Eastern Victoria Region as a result of the conscious choices of this government and the policy settings and investment choices it has made to neglect one of the fastest growing parts of Victoria, the Casey-Cardinia growth corridor.

Just moving on, in the time I have left to talk about portfolio issues, let us talk about the corrections system. I think the first point to be made is that it is most regrettable that we have a corrections minister with responsibility for higher education, a police minister who is also responsible for water, and an Attorney-General who is also responsible for racing. At this time, with all the law and order challenges confronting Victoria not just in recent days but over the last two and a half years, we need justice ministers who are devoted to the justice system; we need justice ministers who are dedicated 100 per cent to their portfolios.

It is time that the Premier looked at a reshuffle so that the corrections portfolio is not coupled with higher education and the police minister does not also have responsibility for the water portfolio. These are important, critical portfolios that deserve the full-time attention of a justice minister or justice ministers who are not splitting their time between other departments, other secretaries and other portfolios that have disparate and different issues that are unrelated to the law and order challenges that Victoria is currently confronting.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! Thank you for the courtesy of allowing me to interrupt, Mr O’Donohue. The purpose of the interruption is to enable me to welcome on behalf of the house Chief Justice Warren and her colleagues. I am not sure what the collective noun is for so many justices of the Supreme Court. I thought about a jury of justices, but I think you are above that. I extend to you a very warm welcome to the Legislative Council chamber this evening. I look forward to meeting you again shortly with some of my colleagues from the Parliament, but we are delighted to have you here. Indeed you have had the opportunity to hear — and perhaps will continue for a little while in terms of your own time frame — Mr O’Donohue talking on matters very pertinent to your roles in the court system.

APPROPRIATION (2017–2018) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr O’DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Thank you, President. It is a pleasure to have such esteemed company with us.

As I was saying, to refer to the budget papers themselves, if you look at the output targets contained in budget paper 3 for the corrections system, the current 2016–17 budget has a target of 90 per cent for the proportion of benchmark measures in prison services agreements achieved. The expected outcome in this current financial year is 82.2 per cent, so there is a significant shortfall in that expectation. On the rate of return to prison within two years — the recidivism rate — the target for this financial year is 41 per cent, and the expected outcome is 42.9 per cent, so under this government it is expected that 42.9 per cent of prisoners who were released from prison two years ago will be back in jail within that time frame.

This contrasts with the three full budget years of the coalition, when the recidivism rate was in the 30s not the 40s. This current government has had a recidivism rate above 40 per cent for the entirety of its term in office, with the target anticipated to remain at above 40 per cent — at 41 per cent — in the 2017–18 financial year. But perhaps it is the recidivism rate in the community corrections space that is even more concerning. The target in this financial year was a 28 per cent recidivism rate, and the expected outcome is 33.4 per cent. Following the Auditor-General’s report that was tabled earlier this year the government made

much about its reforms to the community corrections system.

On the back of those reforms and the claims made by the minister and the government one would expect to see in the 2017–18 target a reduction in that recidivism rate for the community corrections system. But what we see is that the government has actually given up. It has abandoned the target in the 20s — of 28 per cent, as it was this year — and has adopted as a new benchmark the blowout that is occurring this year. So there was a 28 per cent target this financial year, and the expected outcome is 33.4 per cent. The target for the coming financial year blows out to 33 per cent. This is more than a 50 per cent increase from the time of the previous coalition government, when the recidivism rate for community correction orders was in the 20s. That is a significant change.

Whilst it is not my shadow portfolio responsibility, the youth justice community-based services, for which Ms Crozier has responsibility on behalf of the opposition, also has a litany of targets that are missed, and the budget papers identify a range of shortcomings when it comes to those issues. While the government has made much about the community safety statement since it was launched last December, it is in effect one line item in the budget. That makes it very difficult to get accurate details and information.

Looking forward to what the community safety statement may deliver, I think it is important to understand the context in which it was delivered and what we currently experience in community safety challenges. In the two years of the Andrews government to December 2016 the total number of offences was up 20.2 per cent. We have had serious increases in offences such as robbery, dangerous and negligent acts, theft, assault, burglary and break-ins, and drug use and possession offences.

While the crime rate has been growing significantly, the number of police has not been. One of the first actions of the incoming Andrews government was to stop the growth of police through the academy. If you visited the police academy at any time in 2015 and indeed well into 2016, you would have seen that the police academy was like a ghost town. There was virtually no commitment to new police in the first budget of the Andrews government, with the police custody officers being the centrepiece of its justice investment. Four hundred and six police were promised in this current budget over two years, and following community outcry, extra money was allocated to supposedly fast-track that deployment.

During those two years, when crime increased by over 20 per cent and Victoria's population grew by over 200 000 people, the number of frontline full-time equivalent (FTE) police at stations grew by only 7.89 to November 2017. So crime was up by over 20 per cent and the population had gone up by over 200 000, yet the number of police in the vans and at the stations was virtually unchanged from the change of government. If you look at the total FTE police, the number between November 2014 and March 2017 increased by only 373.92, or 374, police.

If you take into account population growth, as the chief commissioner confirmed at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee outcomes hearings earlier this year, the per capita number of police has gone backwards. Indeed Wayne Gatt, the secretary of Police Association Victoria, told the legal and social issues committee at a public hearing last week that police continue to be stretched for resources because despite all the talk, we have had two lost years when it comes to growing Victoria Police and providing the police that the community needs. It is going to be a mighty task for the academy to catch up on those two lost years under the Andrews government.

From my perspective, Eastern Victoria Region has missed out, and the key challenge of community safety continues to be a major challenge for Victoria.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — I do rise to make my contribution to the budget papers. I will just begin by saying that this budget is nothing short of an abject failure for the people of western Victoria. As many on this side have said in contributions in the same vein, this is indeed very much a Labor budget because it is a budget that is not delivering for the people of regional Victoria. This metro-centric government has forgotten that there are people who are living outside the Western Ring Road of Melbourne and who are being severely neglected in this respect.

I did want to make some particular comments about some specific areas of failure that this government has refused to address throughout this budget. One of the most significant failures of this government has been in law and order, as Mr O'Donohue correctly stated earlier. I note that just this afternoon another police car in Ballarat has been rammed, which is the second incident of a police car being rammed in Ballarat in 13 days. In just 13 days there have been two incidents in which the good officers of Victoria Police have had their vehicle rammed by offenders. One would have thought that in the city of Ballarat, considering the significant population growth that we have experienced along with the significant rise in crime, we would have

seen an increase in the number of frontline police protecting our community. However, what we know and what we actually see on the ground is a reduction in the number of police who are keeping our community in Ballarat safe from the time the previous government was in power.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

Sitting extended pursuant to standing orders.

Mr MORRIS — I was saying that what we have seen in Ballarat is a reduction in the number of frontline police who are keeping our community safe. There have been 7.79 full-time equivalent (FTE) police cut from the frontline police on the beat in Ballarat. That is despite a massive increase in crime and in particular aggravated burglaries. Aggravated burglaries have gone up by well over 100 per cent in the suburbs of Alfredton and Ballarat North. It is a parlous state indeed that law and order is in presently in Ballarat.

I was fortunate to have been joined in Ballarat by Mr Ed O'Donohue, our shadow police and corrections minister, and also the member for Hawthorn and shadow Attorney-General, John Pesutto, for a law and order forum last Thursday evening at the magnificent Ballarat Mechanics Institute. At that forum we heard from many a Ballarat resident who has been affected by crime and who has had enough of the rising crime rates and the lack of sentences that are in line with community expectation. The Handford family were there. Their father and grandfather, Ken, was tragically murdered in his own home. One of the offenders in that case received a sentence that was nowhere nearly in line with community expectations. I do want to acknowledge the strength and courage of the Handford family in fighting the fight to ensure that those who perpetrated this horrendous crime are brought to justice and receive a sentence that is somewhere near in line with the horrendous crime that they committed.

The law and order forum also heard that not only is crime out of control but our sentencing regime is not giving those criminals who commit those crimes the types of sentences that they should expect. The revolving-door nature of our legal system at the moment is not really keeping our community safe. It is something that needs to be addressed and needs to be addressed now.

Another particular area of absolute failure in this budget is health. The Ballarat Base Hospital is currently experiencing a huge crisis in terms of the number of people on the elective surgery waiting list. We have seen a 59 per cent increase in the number of people on

the elective surgery waiting list at the Ballarat hospital since this government has come to power. This is despite commitments by the health minister that we would see a reduction in the elective surgery waiting list. Quite to the contrary, in every quarter over the past four quarters we have seen a rise quarter on quarter in the number of people on the elective surgery waiting list.

We are seeing not just more people waiting for surgery but fewer surgeries being conducted at the Ballarat Base Hospital. Again, quarter on quarter we have seen a reduction in the number of people being treated at the Ballarat hospital. Not only that, but in the last 12 months we have seen a more than doubling of the number of people waiting over a year — waiting over 365 days — for surgery, which is absolutely unacceptable.

This is despite the fact that we know what needs to be done to address this. What needs to be done to address this is the fitting out of the ghost wing at the Ballarat Base Hospital. The previous government funded and built a new building of the Ballarat Base Hospital in Drummond Street, but at present what we have there is an empty shell that needs to be fitted out with the additional two operating theatres that are urgently required to address the elective surgery waiting list. We were committed to this prior to the last election, and it was certainly met with much fanfare — the need for the fit-out of the ghost wing at the Ballarat hospital. It was not a ghost wing under us — it was still being built. However, in the last three budgets Labor has failed to fund the fit-out of this urgently needed space. As a result of that we have seen a massive increase in the elective surgery waiting list. This is not rocket science; it is just Labor again forgetting the people of regional Victoria — of western Victoria and more specifically of Ballarat.

It is not just in the areas of law and order and health that Labor is failing the people of western Victoria. In the public transport area we are also seeing this government attempting to commit to rail upgrades and then just sending the bill entirely to the federal government. Without even having a conversation or a discussion about the funding arrangements, Daniel Andrews came out and announced, 'The government is going to upgrade regional rail lines, except I'm going to send the bill entirely to Malcolm Turnbull and not have a discussion about it'. That is not a mature way to be developing policy. To ensure that critical infrastructure receives the funding that it needs, discussions need to occur between levels of government. I know this well from my time in local government. Many discussions were had between me and federal and state colleagues.

These were mature discussions. I discussed what was in the best interests of our community with both sides of politics. However, this is something that Labor has failed to do.

Prior to the election Labor made certain promises about the Ballarat railway station precinct, and then once it came to power it chose to absolutely walk away from these commitments and fail the people of Ballarat. What we are seeing with the Ballarat railway station precinct is the government attempting to carve up a piece of land that has been preserved as a railway precinct for many, many years and attempting to gift it to a Queensland developer. Not only is it attempting to gift it to a Queensland developer, it is attempting to cut the number of car parking spaces available at the railway precinct.

Labor is attempting to turn the magnificent heritage Lydiard Street North into a bus depot. The government threw \$5 million at this project to build a bus interchange in an attempt to fix the problem. There are no plans for this bus interchange. The government has absolutely no idea how it is going to achieve it. There has been no consultation with the community about how this is going to be done, and once again Labor has failed in this project.

Not only are we seeing that they are not increasing the number of car parks at the railway precinct and that they have got a half-baked idea for a bus interchange within the precinct, we are also seeing that before the election they committed to a 4-star hotel at the railway precinct. What we are seeing now is serviced apartments being built. They could be sold off at any time. Basically what we are seeing here is a land development. It is a land development for this site that could be sold off as individual apartments. There is no doubt this is a great deal for the developer. It is just a terrible deal for the people of Ballarat and the broader Victorian public.

The government is not only failing us in law and order, in public transport and in health, but education in Ballarat is also falling well behind — and not only in Ballarat but further out into the Legislative Assembly electorate of South-West Coast as well. I know that Ms Britnell, the member for South-West Coast in the Assembly, has been a strong advocate for the Warrnambool Special Developmental School that I was fortunate enough to visit recently. Prior to the election Mr Merlino proudly stood at the Warrnambool Special Developmental School and said it was only Labor who was going to rebuild that school. However, Labor has absolutely walked away from this. It has abandoned the families and children at the Warrnambool Special

Developmental School and has refused to fund what is needed to rebuild the school. I understand that the families and the children at that school are absolutely devastated by this, which I certainly saw when I visited the site.

The school is currently situated at the top of a hill. A special developmental school based at the top of a hill is not going to achieve a good outcome. It is dangerous in terms of points of entry, and the site itself does not lend itself well to a school for many children with significant special needs. Prior to the election the members of the government said they were going to do it, but yet again they have walked away from this commitment and have abandoned some of the most vulnerable people in our community. It is an absolute disgrace that they have not seen fit to fund this incredibly important redevelopment of the Warrnambool Special Developmental School.

Not only are the people of South-West Coast being forgotten but also the people in the Assembly electorate of Ripon are being forgotten by this government. Lucas is one of the fastest growing suburbs not only in western Victoria but in the state, and there is an urgent need for a primary school there. I take my hat off to the Catholic Education Office, which has seen fit to gazump the government and not only announce it is going to open a school but it has brought the opening of that school forward significantly. That school is currently operating in Lucas, yet the government in this budget has still failed to fund the building of the urgently needed Lucas primary school.

The closest primary school to Lucas is the Alfredton Primary School. The principal of the Alfredton Primary School has been reported in the media as saying that her school is absolutely packed to the rafters. They are receiving more and more students, and there is a significant lack of capacity there to be able to maintain educational outcomes with the growth that is being experienced. I certainly understand those challenges and lament the fact that Labor has forgotten the people of the growth area of Ballarat and refused to build what is an urgently needed new primary school in Lucas.

We see these areas of failings. One other area of failing that I did want to mention is that of the Eureka Stadium. Eureka Stadium is a development that Labor committed to. Before the election, of course, Labor committed to two AFL games being played in Ballarat this year. They have already walked from that commitment — that is another promise broken by the government — and there appears to be only one AFL game that is going to be played in Ballarat. But prior to the election the government astonishingly forgot to try to ensure

that proper access to the ground could be achieved. This placed the Ballarat council in a very difficult position where they needed to compulsorily acquire the land at the Eureka Stadium owned by the North Ballarat Football Club. The North Ballarat Football Club is a very proud football club that certainly has had its challenges of late, but for the government to stampede through and require the council to compulsorily acquire this land does not bode well for the general community of Ballarat and is not the way that a government should do business. With my time soon to expire, this is an abject failure of a budget.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I join my colleagues in making comments on the Appropriation (2017–2018) Bill 2017. Despite the huge tax grab by the Daniel Andrews Labor government, despite promises that he was not going to increase taxes or levies — and it was a promise he had made to every Victorian — the huge tax grab, with an additional 10 new taxes generating \$4 billion in extra revenue, a \$10 billion windfall from the sale of the port of Melbourne and an additional \$13 billion in higher GST receipt, this government has little to show for the enormous amount of money, the rivers of gold, that have been generated from Victorian taxpayers.

This government is less accountable and less transparent. Our democratic institutions are being corroded, our social capital is being undermined by an assault on our values and the cost of living is escalating. The only thing that is actually escalating at a higher rate than the taxes and levies in Victoria is the crime rate. We have rising crime and rampant drug problems, but the government wants to put the white flag up and introduce drug injecting rooms, or so we presume by their referral of a motion to an upper house inquiry.

We have botched physical infrastructure projects as a result of the sheer arrogance of this government and its failure to consult, and this failure to consult permeates absolutely every area of government activity, such as the level crossing removal program, with the government making an announcement and then realising the community was not actually going to like it — especially not the one in the south-east along the Frankston line, where they have a bit of muscle and it is called the ballot paper, it is called their vote, and they are not going to lie down and take it — and indeed then realising they have got a few problems. So the consultation in relation to physical infrastructure investment in Victoria has been a con; it has been a hoax.

Social capital has been corroded, the physical capital program is being botched, accountability and

transparency are being diminished and corroded and the state of our parliamentary democracy is weaker now than it has been in the past. The most iconic example is the fact that this Premier is prepared to tolerate the rorters and the crooks who continue to deliver votes for the Labor government, a primary example being Mr Nardella in the Legislative Assembly, who has collected an additional \$174 000 in benefits and still sits there on the benches with the Premier not having done anything to retrieve this taxpayer money. This will remain the hallmark of this government: that it is prepared to tolerate corruption and tolerate the rorters and the crooks. Contrast that with the zealotry with which — and I am certainly not defending what the former member did at all — the Premier pursued the \$1600 that was misused by the former member for Frankston. These are two very different sets of standards. The duplicity of this government is astonishing.

This is no more visible than in this assault on Victoria's values. This government, driven by a Socialist Left Premier and supported by a Socialist Left leader in this house, has been hell-bent on attacking, corroding and vilifying people who subscribe to traditional values. You would have thought in our democracy that people have the right to live by their own values within the parameters of our laws — that in actual fact their values, which may or may not include religious conviction, define who they are and give them their identity. This is the hallmark of a vibrant democracy that actually believes that, even though we may disagree, we defend each other's rights to express those beliefs. This government believes that its own values, its own Socialist Left values, are the only values and that all the other values are to be trashed, undermined and sabotaged.

There is no better example than the Safe Schools program. Intended initially as a targeted and customised program to be delivered to a narrow group of students who may have issues with their gender identity in terms of providing support material and resources, this has been rolled out across the school system targeting children who are taught that their own traditional values are somehow to be ditched and indeed cultivating an isolation from their own families and their own values and cultivating a level of secrecy that I think parents find enormously disturbing. Tipping on its head the United Nations declaration that parents have the primary responsibility for raising their children, this government believes that it is, in actual fact, a Socialist Left government that is going to be the primary shaper of human values.

The government has pushed to introduce euthanasia without having at all consulted with faith communities, who are the key stakeholders and who believe — as occurs in other First World countries — that the existence of palliative care is the best form for delivering death with dignity rather than hastening death and changing the entire culture of our medical profession and our medical institutions, which indeed may become institutions of death.

There are softer drug laws, an attempt to ban Christmas carols and Christmas cards and bubble zones for abortion clinics when in actual fact there was a simple business solution: to provide a separate entry into a facility that may attract some attention. Bubble zones are certainly not the answer. The respectful relationships program is a light version of brainwashing of younger children. All of this is enormously disturbing, certainly to me, having grown up in a Communist system where the state considered the rearing of children with certain types of values as its primary responsibility and a way of securing its political future.

So education is botched, and of course what they are trying to do is also block the homeschooling option. I have never been a great advocate for homeschooling, but if I had children of an impressionable age exposed to sabotage of the values that I was attempting to rear them with, I would consider homeschooling as an option. I think that is a very sad reflection on our state education system.

In terms of investment in physical infrastructure, there has never been a better example of the botched delivery of a program than that of the level crossing removal. The sheer stupidity of a government that thinks that elevating sky rail along the length of our beautiful coastline was the answer — just sheer stupidity. Clearly it did not go through cabinet; otherwise it probably would have been knocked on the head by the Minister for Planning, who like previous ministers, had been encouraging higher and medium density around transport nodes. Suddenly they are going to have sky rail running past their lounge rooms while they are sitting there in their boxer shorts having a glass of wine with the missus — an absolute disaster. Of course those on the Caulfield–Dandenong line have been even more poorly treated, and there will be political consequences for those members along the way.

What has the south-east got out of this? We have got no consultation on sky rail and we have got 10 years of extra tolls to pay for a toll road in the western suburbs that most of our commuters will not use — all so that Premier Andrews can claim the business case stacks up.

We have got no plans to deal with traffic congestion, which is a big issue in the south-east, and of course rising crime such as home invasions and carjackings. Crime in the south-east has risen — —

Mr Dalidakis — On a point of order, Acting President, this has been a wideranging debate, but I believe that Mrs Peulich is extending it so far and wide that it is absolutely beyond the legislation we are debating.

Mrs PEULICH — On the point of order, Acting President, all other speeches have been wideranging, and basically what I am talking about is other values which underpin the operations of this government.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! I do not uphold the point of order.

Mrs PEULICH — There has been a 12.6 per cent rise in crime in the south-east. Public crime statistics reveal that a record 98 210 offences were reported in the south-east compared to 87 222 a year ago. Under Daniel Andrews our justice system is in crisis due to weak sentencing, watered-down bail laws, the repeal of move-on laws, cuts to frontline police, which they have subsequently now been pressured to make other promises about, and the closure of police stations. Indeed my mother says to me, ‘If you are being carjacked, don’t drive to the nearest police station because you won’t know whether it is open or closed’. That undermines public confidence. These figures are undeniable proof that crime is out of control in the south-east, and the Daniel Andrews government has no solutions to fix it.

In relation to my shadow portfolio of multicultural affairs, I have a whole 4 minutes, which is not a lot of time to explain in detail how much this government has stuffed up multicultural affairs. I will highlight three reasons. It has now decided on a set of values — *Victorian. And proud of it.* The problem is that nobody has been consulted on these values. I have not yet spoken to an organisation that has actually been involved in consultation on these values. The Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria has not been consulted. The Victorian Multicultural Affairs Commission was presented with a draft which they rejected. Eventually they had to rubberstamp the second draft without detailed involvement. No faith community has been involved in the consultation. I certainly have not been involved. I suspect it was drafted in the dim corridors of the Department of Premier and Cabinet — I call it the department of political correctness because that is certainly what it has become.

So there we are. We are going to get Vicky the Truck at a cost of \$1 million every year. It will be trotted out to festivals and events, promoting government propaganda and promoting values which Victorians have had no role in defining. That is a classic example of — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! Mrs Peulich, I did not uphold the point of order earlier, but I think it is important that you go back to talking about the budget. Please go back to the bill.

Mrs PEULICH — Acting President, this is information that has come directly out of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee in relation to multicultural affairs, when the minister could not answer a single question. This minister chews and spits out facts and figures all the time. We all know that he has a great mind for facts and figures, but he was not able to answer key questions in relation to the multicultural affairs portfolio, including, for example, how many staff the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) has. He did not know. What was the budget of the Victorian Multicultural Commission? He did not know. How does the strategic plan of the Victorian Multicultural Commission align with the government's strategic plan for multicultural affairs? He had not sighted it.

I put out a press release some time ago that the VMC had been gutted, nobbled. It is certainly not an independent statutory authority. It has been completely subsumed by the department of political correctness. It is an absolutely sad and sorry time, because Victoria now needs people who are given some independence and who are supported to engage with a community that is struggling with some very difficult issues, such as, for example, radicalisation and the emergence of extremism, which concerns everyone, including our Muslim community. It is indeed something that we all need to work hard on.

Mr Dalidakis — How is your relationship with the Indian community going?

Mrs PEULICH — My relationship with the Indian community is outstanding, and in actual fact if I was so inclined, my diary could be filled entirely with Indian invitations or Asian invitations. It is a very, very active community, but no thanks is due to the assistance of this government.

In relation to values, they have botched it. They have destroyed the VMC, a primary agency for development and engagement with the community, and they are now resorting to propaganda. Let me say that when Vicky

comes to your town and your neighbourhood it should really be called Tricky Vicky, because Tricky Vicky is about promoting a set of values that no Victorian has been a party to or has been involved in. In actual fact very serious concerns exist about the way that these values have been defined.

This government is undermining the social capital which binds this state. It has botched the development of infrastructure, it has become less accountable and less transparent and it is our diminishing our institutions, including our parliamentary democracy. This will continue while former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Telmo Languiller and former Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Don Nardella continue to sit in this Parliament. With those few words, I am very disappointed in the budget.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Ordered to be committed next day.

CORRECTIONS LEGISLATION MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 25 May; motion of Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children).

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am pleased to speak as the first speaker on the Corrections Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017 on behalf of the opposition, and I indicate at the outset that the opposition does not oppose this bill. I thank the departmental officials for their briefing that was provided in relation to the bill, because some elements of the bill are relatively complex, which is not unusual in corrections to the Corrections Act and some of the other acts that this bill amends, particularly the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 (SSODSA), which is quite a complex piece of legislation.

In essence this bill, whilst it does some things, does not do very much, and I will talk about that at a later time in my contribution. There are many things that need to be brought to this house in relation to corrections legislative reform. Unfortunately, with just this week and the final week before the winter recess, it appears that some of the central reforms that are required will not be in this house until August at the earliest. But, as I say, I will talk about that in a minute.

The bill amends the Corrections Act 1986, the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009. The first main amendment establishes laws prohibiting remotely piloted aircraft, also known as drones, and helicopters near a prison or a residential facility unless authorised or under a lawful exemption. The bill also gives search and seizure powers to police officers and corrections officers for these incidents. This change affects not just prisons but post-sentence residential facilities in the adult system and, as per the changes to the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, juvenile facilities as well.

The issue of drones has been one that has been on the table for a while. It is an area where technology and low cost have combined to see the proliferation of drones in the community, and this has posed challenges for correctional authorities. I note that I asked a question of the minister back in 2016 about the number of drone incursions around Victorian correctional facilities following reports of a drone at the Melbourne Assessment Prison. The location of the Melbourne Assessment Prison creates its own challenges with the way there have been such developments around that precinct, but that is a separate question.

I note a report from a story by Nick Dole on 17 August 2015 where it was reported that corrections ministers had lobbied the commonwealth at the Council of Australian Governments to make amendments or further regulate this space. This article reports that former Minister for Corrections Wade Noonan, the first corrections minister of this government:

... has warned it could happen again.

That is in relation to it a drone incident. He is quoted as saying:

When it comes to drones, they are advancing quite significantly in terms of their technology.

He said:

This problem will become larger, not smaller.

The interesting quote with which he concludes his comments in that article I think is most relevant to the bill today. He said:

We can put walls around our prisons but we don't control the airspace around those prisons.

That was also the response in effect from one of the previous corrections ministers we have seen so far, Minister Herbert. Steve Herbert basically said this was a matter for the commonwealth. In fact his response to me was that commonwealth laws regulate airspace

generally, and he went on to talk about changes that have been sought from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

As I said in my introductory remarks, the departmental officials were helpful in providing some clarity about the jurisdictional issues around this, because from Minister Noonan's comments it was implied that the state has no authority over the airspace in and around a prison. It turns out that as per new section 32A in the bill in relation to the airspace above a prison, a youth justice facility or a post-sentence residential facility, the airspace at or below 400 feet above ground level is the responsibility of the state and above that it becomes the responsibility of the commonwealth. As I mentioned earlier, this new section also empowers police and correctional authorities to take action if they see such a drone.

Interestingly — and perhaps this is a question I will pose to the minister in committee — the government rejected the A Metre Matters legislation because it is unenforceable. Knowing where a metre exists between a driver or a vehicle and a cyclist is difficult to enforce. I will put the question to the minister and give her advance notice of this: if you cannot tell the distance of a metre between a vehicle and a bike, how can you tell whether a drone is 400 feet above ground level or 401 feet above ground level? How do we know the difference between the state regulation and the commonwealth regulation? Those two propositions that I have just articulated appear to be inconsistent. So that is something that I look forward to hearing discussed either by a government member in this second-reading debate or by the minister in committee.

The second reform or amendment that the bill seeks to do is to give courts more power to update the core conditions and supervision orders, including to prohibit serious sex offenders from committing violent offences or engaging in violent offending and violent conduct, which the government says will build on previous reforms that were granted in 2015 and 2016 that gave courts powers to update core conditions when orders were reviewed. That is relatively uncontentious in my opinion, and I think it is probably best described as an incremental reform. While one would anticipate it is a positive, it is hardly a major change.

The next element of reform contained in the bill is to expand the category of serious violent offenders and terrorist offenders. So the bill introduces stricter parole laws for prisoners who have been convicted of an aggravated home invasion, home invasion, aggravated carjacking, carjacking, defensive homicide or terrorism offences. In essence, it is basically adding that list of

mainly new offences in the statute book to the two-tier panel process, which was one of the recommendations of Ian Callinan in his 2013 review of the Adult Parole Board of Victoria. Establishing a two-tier panel process is a check and balance — a further review — for the most serious offenders to ensure that their files are adequately and separately reviewed from the initial panel that considers a parole application now. Under those reforms, a request from a prisoner for parole is reviewed by the second panel pursuant to the two-tier panel process. This reform does nothing to alter that process; it just adds the new offences that have been added to the statute book in recent times to that process.

I have a question in relation to that, and again I am giving the minister advance notice of a question that I may pose in the committee stage. Why were those changes not made when a bill was before the house to create the home invasion offence, the aggravated home invasion offence, the carjacking offence and the aggravated carjacking offence? Why was this change not made at that time? Since the creation of those offences, offenders have not been subject to a two-tier panel process. I assume that there have not been any offenders who have gone through the system post proclamation and been considered for parole, given the time the proclamation was made and the length of imprisonment those offences carry. Arguably that was an omission from those bills that went through the house at that time. Whilst those offences should be subject to the two-tier panel process, something which the opposition supports, it is hardly a significant piece of reform.

The fourth tranche of changes is quite complex, but in essence the concept is simply the better sharing of information to promote consistency between the Corrections Act and the serious sex offenders scheme. It seems that just about every corrections amendment bill that comes before the house has provision for better information sharing. I think the previous corrections amendment bill had provision for better information sharing with certain overseas jurisdictions, and there were information-sharing provisions as part of the Callinan legislative reforms that went through this place several years ago. The ability to share information quickly and efficiently is becoming more important from a community safety perspective as time lines are compressed. When some offenders decide to act with criminal intent, the ability to share information to gain a full understanding of a risk or a threat is critical.

But of course it is one thing to have the legislative system in place to enable that; it is another thing to have the information technology systems to enable that. We know that just within the Department of Justice and

Regulation there are multiple IT platforms that do not necessarily communicate effectively, let alone communicate across government from a Victorian perspective — and let alone share information with federal agencies, federal bodies, federal organisations or state-based organisations in other states of Australia. Whilst it is one thing to put in place the legislative framework for information sharing that balances privacy rights with the community interest in getting a full picture of the risk offenders pose and giving authorities such as the adult parole board and others all the information they require to make decisions, getting the information-sharing platforms right is perhaps the harder task.

To divert from the bill, perhaps that is best evidenced by the delays and the cost blowouts in implementing the first recommendation of Ian Callinan's reform to establish a comprehensive case management system for the adult parole board. As was reported in the adult parole board's annual report last year, I think in the chair's foreword, that process has been delayed. From the minister's answers to questions in this place, it is clear that process has been delayed. We know the first corrections minister in this government, Minister Noonan, said in April 2015 that the comprehensive case management system would be fully operational by December 2015. On 8 March this year Minister Tierney signed a brief in which she noted that the time line for that project had blown out to December 2018.

We know that \$4.2 million was allocated to delivering this recommendation as part of the \$84.1 million provided for the parole reform process in the 2014–15 state budget. According to a briefing in March this year, \$4.6 million had been expended against that \$4.2 million budget, and as yet a full cost for that project has not been able to be identified because the full scope for that project has yet to be quantified. This is perhaps a poignant and timely example of the challenges of delivering the infrastructure required to match the legislative regime that this bill in part seeks to implement for information sharing across different parts of government and between different governments and different agencies within government. These legacy IT issues are going to be a significant challenge to government going forward. We have heard very little from government as part of the 2017–18 budget about dealing with these issues.

The bill also makes some miscellaneous amendments to the SSODSA, including the review and renewal of orders, the conditions of orders and reporting requirements and the use of force by supervision officers, police officers and specified officers. Again they are relatively uncontentious. Of course the number

of offenders who will be subject to the SSODSA in a residential facility has grown significantly from 40 in 2014. The previous government funded an increase of 15 beds at Corella Place. The current government has created the new 20-bed Emu Creek facility at the Langi Kal Kal prison, and as part of the Harper review recommendations a new 20-bed facility is to be constructed at Ararat for serious, violent and sex offenders.

The number of beds for these post-sentence offenders is increasing significantly, and that no doubt is in part due to the increased and better understanding of the risk that this cohort of offenders may pose to the community. I think it also reflects that some of these very serious, violent and/or sex offenders are not receiving the periods of incarceration that they should or the jail terms that they should, and then the community, through the SSODSA, has to come up with a legislative scheme to protect the community once these offenders have served their time in jail.

When I posed a question to the minister in the previous sitting week regarding the \$400 000 cost per bed of the new facility at Ararat and whether those beds were the most expensive correctional beds in Australia, her answer to me was that there is no comparison available with other correctional facilities because no such facility exists in other jurisdictions. To the best of my knowledge I think that is correct. Other jurisdictions have supervision orders, but as I understand it, that can require either supervision in the community or supervision in a prison context.

As Harper has identified and as the tragedy of Masa Vukotic has made all too real and apparent, this facility is no doubt needed, but the question must be posed: would the community be better served if this cohort, which is too dangerous to live in the community outside of a residential setting such as Corella Place or Emu Creek, received longer jail terms that protect the community by having them being removed from the community? I think the community would overwhelmingly say yes for that very serious and limited cohort that we are talking about.

Of course there are other questions that I think flow from these Harper review reforms. Corrections Victoria, as I understand it, have identified that there may be up to 200 prisoners who qualify for the new post-sentence facility with 20 beds that is being built in Ararat. The question is: will those 20 beds be sufficient? Given the way that the numbers of offenders on a post-sentence order in a residential facility continue to grow, it has become apparent that it is very difficult to transition some of those offenders into the

community. Many of them have been in those settings now for many, many years. These are all very difficult but very important questions when it comes to community safety.

The final point I will make in dealing with this bill is about what it does not do. I think there is one Harper recommendation that will be implemented with this bill, but what we are yet to see is any legislation to establish a new public protection authority to take over responsibilities from the Adult Parole Board of Victoria, as identified by the Harper review. The government has had the Harper review now for over 18 months. It has had a significant period of time to review that important piece of work. The time now is for implementation. As I said earlier, with just one more sitting week before the winter recess, we are at risk of these reforms not being before this house until well into August, and I think that is most concerning.

A range of other recommendations of Harper still require legislative change, including the test for the post-sentence violence orders, which is the new post-sentence scheme that Harper recommends be established. Those difficult but very important questions are not dealt with by this legislation. This is a piece of legislation, as I said earlier, that makes some modest reforms — no doubt worthy in many regards but modest nonetheless — and is a missed opportunity in my opinion to make the more substantial reforms that have been recommended by others, which have been with government for a significant period of time and should be before this place.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — The Greens will be supporting the Corrections Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017, which involves quite detailed changes to the Corrections Act 1986 in relation to prohibiting drones near detention facilities. There are also changes in relation to parole for certain offences and important changes to the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 (SSODSA) in relation to supervision orders and police powers for auditing electronic devices.

The bill — for the first time in Australia, we are told — prohibits intentionally or recklessly operating remotely piloted aircraft and helicopters or drones and the possession of remotely piloted aircraft at or in the vicinity of prisons; residential facilities, like Corella Place; and youth justice facilities unless there is a reasonable excuse. This attracts a two-year maximum penalty, and the offence is to fly at or below 400 feet, or approximately 120 metres, above such a facility. As Mr O'Donohue outlined, that is the difference between the state jurisdiction and federal jurisdiction with regard

to airspace above detention facilities. A person can be ordered to leave the neighbourhood of a prison if there are reasonable grounds to believe that they have contravened this provision, attracting a maximum penalty of five penalty units.

I note that the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee in its comments on the bill — and the minister may wish to clarify this — asked the government for further information about the meaning of the terms ‘near’ and ‘neighbourhood’ in clauses 4, 42, 64 and existing section 45(2), as the provisions are with regard to a corrections officer being able to order anyone ‘near’ a corrections facility to leave the ‘neighbourhood’ in some circumstances, and in clause 5(2) with regard to permitting prison officers to search any thing or person ‘near’ some prisons in some circumstances.

This offence is in response to the problem of contraband entering prisons and the fact that drones present a serious risk in this respect as they can be used to smuggle in contraband such as drugs, weapons and even mobile phones. They have been detected near a number of prisons, including the Melbourne Assessment Prison and the three prisons in Ravenhall — the Metropolitan Remand Centre, the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and the new Ravenhall prison. It is noteworthy that the justice secretary of the United Kingdom presented a blueprint for prison reform which includes the introduction of no-fly zones to stop drones dropping drugs and other contraband into jail grounds. Such legislation has also been introduced into the North Carolina legislature, and six other states in the United States already have similar bans around prisons and jails.

The bill also expands the search and seizure powers in the Corrections Act, the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and the SSODS act to encompass where the new offence under section 32A involving operating or attempting to remotely pilot an aircraft or helicopter is reasonably believed to have been committed or is being committed — clause 5 for searches and clause 6 for seizure under the Corrections Act — and these amendments are mirrored in the other acts to cover detention facilities for youths and for serious sex offenders. So if a person is believed on reasonable grounds to have contravened section 32A(1), then in conducting a search of the area outside the prison an escort officer or prison officer may search and examine that person, including anything belonging to or in the possession of the person, including the person’s vehicle, and can seize anything found which the officer believes on reasonable grounds will afford evidence of the commission of an offence against that section.

With regard to the parole changes under the bill, it introduces stricter parole provisions into the Corrections Act for prisoners who have been convicted of aggravated home invasion, home invasion, aggravated carjacking, carjacking, terrorism and foreign incursion offences, and defensive homicide, which are grouped together as the relevant offences under clauses 8 and 9. Serious violent offenders and sexual offenders are treated differently — —

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

Sitting extended pursuant to standing orders.

Ms PENNICUIK — Serious violent offenders and sexual offenders are treated differently from other prisoners for the purposes of parole. Section 74AAB of the Corrections Act creates the serious violent offender and sexual offender parole division of the parole board, which may only allow parole for this cohort of prisoners if another differently constituted division of the parole board has recommended parole be granted and the SSODS division has considered the recommendation. This separate division was established pursuant to recommendations made by the former High Court Justice Ian Callinan’s review of the Victorian parole system.

Mr Finn — Acting President, I think it is disappointing that Ms Pennicuik does not have the audience she deserves, and I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Ms PENNICUIK — This separate division of the parole board was established pursuant to recommendations made by the former High Court Justice Ian Callinan’s review of the Victorian parole system in July 2013. It was in fact introduced into the Parliament by the Corrections Amendment (Further Parole Reform) Bill 2014. At that time, in the debate on the Corrections Amendment (Breach of Parole) Bill 2013, I made the comment that to me it has always seemed that one of the basic problems is what appears to be a lack of separation of these types of offenders — that is, serious violent offenders or serious sex offenders — from the bulk of the prison population when considering parole. This is an issue that was highlighted by Justice Ian Callinan and by Professor James Ogloff in their reports as well as by former Chief Commissioner of Police Ken Lay. And so it was that the deliberations of the parole board were changed in terms of dealing with applications for parole by serious violent offenders and sex offenders along with a lot of

other changes to the parole system that have been made over the last few years.

If a serious violent offender or sexual offender is charged with a violent offence or sexual offence while on parole, the board must cancel their parole unless there are circumstances which justify the continuation of parole. If a serious violent offender or sexual offender is convicted of a violent offence or sexual offence while on parole, the prisoner's parole is automatically cancelled on their conviction. Clauses 8 and 9 of the bill extend the operation of these provisions to prisoners convicted of a relevant offence, and I mentioned what they were before.

These tighter parole laws for terrorist offences and aggravated home invasion and aggravated carjacking offences, whereby they are now considered serious violent offences, we do not oppose, given that offences similar to these are already covered under serious violent offences such as aggravated burglary and armed robbery. Members may remember that at the time when these new offences were introduced the Greens raised the concern that they were in fact introducing offences that already existed in the Crimes Act. We now have duplicated offences in the Crimes Act, and in fact different penalties apply to them. In particular mandatory minimum sentences apply to the newer offences. The Greens are not opposing these provisions of the bill, but at the same time we would always take the opportunity to say that the government must ensure that it is investing not only in rehabilitation programs for such offenders whilst they are in prison but also in secure housing and post-release programs to ensure that parole is not denied due to lack of housing and support services being available to people who are on parole and that that is not a reason for denying parole.

The bill also amends the supervision order regime under the SSODS act, including with respect to the review and renewal of orders and the core conditions attached to orders so that it is easier for courts to update them, and the reporting requirements on the use of force by supervision officers and other specified officers. The bill will insert an amendment allowing any core conditions of a supervision order or an interim supervision order to be updated without the requirement for the secretary to satisfy the legal test for leave currently set out in SSODSA. This is because some serious sex offenders are not yet subject to the core conditions prohibiting violent offending and behaviour since the commencement of this community safety act, and the government wants them transitioned to the conditions prohibiting violent offending contained under that act as soon as possible.

The ability of the courts to update the core conditions of supervision orders without leave seems appropriate given the government's reasoning provided in the second-reading speech and in the interest of community safety, so the Greens will not oppose that provision either.

The final provision that I wanted to comment on is under clause 52, which inserts a new division 7A into the SSODSA, the purpose of which is to provide for the auditing of an offender's computer and other devices. These provisions apply if a supervision order contains a condition requiring an offender to comply with the directions of the adult parole board in relation to the auditing of computers and other devices in the possession of the offender. The offender must comply with the direction of the adult parole board to produce to an officer a computer or device that is in their possession or under their control. If the offender fails to comply with such a direction, proposed new section 158ED empowers an officer to enter any part of the property where the offender resides and search for anything belonging to the offender or in their possession or under their control. We are supportive of that provision as well.

I also want to comment on the provisions to broaden information sharing to promote consistency between the Corrections Act and the SSODSA — for example, information sharing to facilitate the delivery of mental health services to prisoners and offenders under clause 11. The bill expands the ground to use or disclose personal or confidential information about prisoners, parolees, offenders and former offenders. Information sharing will be permitted where it is reasonably necessary for a person to perform their official duties for the purpose of corrections-related legislation.

It is important that this sort of information is shared, and certainly some recent events have highlighted the need for that sharing. In fact we have seen the role that the lack of that sharing of information between relevant agencies played in some recent events in New South Wales in particular but also in Victoria with regard to prisoners or people released from prison who had ongoing mental health issues and were not receiving the appropriate care, support and programs post-release to assist them in reintegrating into the community and not reoffending. For people in prison, in post-sentence residential facilities or on parole, and even after their parole period has been served and they are living in the community, it is these types of programs of ongoing support that are often needed, particularly if they have been in contact with the justice system over a long period of time, if they have ongoing mental health

issues or if they have ongoing drug and alcohol problems.

We have heard a lot today about community safety and how we handle community safety, and we need these types of programs and also programs of justice reinvestment in communities. We can identify the communities where most offenders come from. We know that about half of all offenders come from about six postcodes in Melbourne. Justice reinvestment means putting money back into those communities, identifying the problems that people in those communities are having and putting in place programs to assist the people in those communities — particularly young people, but all people — to overcome the problems they are experiencing in their communities and to lift those communities out of the disadvantage they may be experiencing and thereby enhance community safety. That is where we should be putting taxpayers money and the attention of government. I know that the government is paying some attention to this, but looking at overseas experience we could really increase the amount of attention and resources that are put towards justice reinvestment. That is how communities will become safer.

Mr SOMYUREK (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise in support of the Corrections Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017.

Mr Ramsay — Deputy President, I ask you to check the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mr SOMYUREK — This bill provides for a significant reform to three very important portfolios within the corrections system. The bill will amend the Corrections Act 1986; the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005; and the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 (SSODSA) to prohibit the use or possession of a remotely piloted aircraft — hitherto referred to as an RPA — or helicopter in, at, near or above a prison, a residential facility or a youth justice facility; and to rapidly transition serious sex offenders to new core conditions of supervision orders that prohibit violent offending. The bill amends the Corrections Act and these other acts to also introduce stricter parole laws for prisoners that have been convicted of a number of offences, including aggravated home invasion, aggravated carjacking, defensive homicide and terrorism offences, and there are a few other offences on that list too. The act will be amended in order to broaden the

information-sharing provisions to promote consistency between the Corrections Act and the SSODSA.

These reforms respond to continuing consultation with key stakeholders, such as Corrections Victoria, Victoria Police, the Adult Parole Board of Victoria and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. These important improvements and strengthening of aspects of our corrections system recognise and appropriately respond to the growth in some crimes impacting upon our community.

In a national first Victoria is responding to the use of remotely piloted aircraft as a method of surveillance of or contraband distribution within prisons, youth justice or residential facilities by banning RPA and helicopters from intentionally flying near or above these facilities. An RPA was used around the Melbourne Remand Centre in 2014 to attempt to smuggle contraband and since then reports have been made of the same occurring in most other Australian states.

This bill also makes clear that existing search and seizure powers can be exercised in relation to the new offence. The bill provides a power for corrections officers or youth justice officers, where relevant, to order a person to leave the neighbourhood of a prison or a residential facility or youth justice facility — of course, upon reasonable belief that the person is committing or has committed the new offence.

Clauses 8 and 9 of the bill are significant and respond to the serious crimes some of our communities have unfortunately experienced in recent times. Changes in types of crimes and the way they are perpetrated are nothing new. Every decade or so experiences new targets in criminal pursuits and new methods of targeting, thieving, assaulting et cetera. In response, governments and law enforcement agencies devise and invest in new strategies to target the perpetrators of crimes.

The most recent method of orchestrated crime is that which involves aggravated theft, mostly of cars through carjacking and from home invasions. Earlier in his contribution Mr Finn was quite emotional when talking about home invasions. I feel the same way. I think anyone who has been brought up in our lovely state feels the same way. We all feel angry that people will brazenly just walk into your house in the middle of the night, knowing that you and your family — it does not matter who the occupants are — are doing your business at home and just take whatever they want, be it your car, your TV, your video or your computer, and assault the occupants of your house. That is frightening and needs to be stamped out because that is not the

Victoria and the Australia we know. This bill goes a long way to doing that.

Former High Court Judge Ian Callinan's 2013 review into Victoria's parole system highlighted the importance of having a clear categorisation of offenders on their conviction and special consideration being given to serious violent and sexual offenders. One of his major recommendations stated, and I quote:

One category should be of offenders who have committed intentional crimes of violence which could result in personal injury requiring treatment, or serious sexual crimes. I would also include in that category offenders who have broken and entered residential premises for the purposes of committing a crime.

Mr Callinan noted:

Historically, the law has always regarded, and should continue to do so, crimes of breaking and entering in these circumstances as having a special tendency to lead to violence by reason of the alarmed response to an intruder by a householder.

In this bill prisoners are only able to be released on parole by the serious violent offender or sexual offender (SVOSO) division of the adult parole board as overseen by the chair of the adult parole board. The SVOSO division can only grant parole after another division of the adult parole board has recommended that parole be granted. Parole granted to a serious violent offender or sexual offender will be cancelled if the person is charged with or convicted of a violent and/or sexual offence that was committed while the person was on parole.

Just as with aggravated burglaries, unfortunately the crime of terrorism is rapidly changing and developing. Through this bill, people convicted of terrorism-related offences will be subject to stricter parole laws in light of the serious nature of the offences and the significant threat and impact on the community.

Many recent events have also demonstrated just how valuable greater information-sharing provisions would be to enhancing community safety. There are important reforms contained in this package of amendments to further strengthen the arm of our policing and security agencies that I do not have time to detail here tonight, but key stakeholders in this bill are satisfied with their inclusion.

In conclusion, these amendments, together with further upcoming legislation, the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Amendment (Governance) Bill 2017, created in response to the recommendations made by Judge Harper, are responding to the changing nature of crime and providing the necessary measures

and improvements to ensure Victoria's community safety. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I have pleasure in making a very small contribution to the debate on the Corrections Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017 in order to allow my colleague Mr Bernie Finn to make a much larger, more expansive contribution, which I am sure he will make when his turn comes.

As my parliamentary colleague and lead speaker in this debate Ed O'Donohue said, the coalition is not opposing this bill. The bill in fact does little other than contain a range of administrative clean-up provisions, as is usually the case with these annual corrections bills. However, it does give me an opportunity to expand on a couple of sections.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Corrections Act 1986, the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 to make a range of improvements to the operation of the corrections system and the serious sex offenders scheme. While it is important in aim, the detail of the bill is perhaps more administrative than anything else.

The main provisions of the bill are, first, a prohibition on remotely piloted aircraft and helicopters. There have already been contributions made about drones in particular. For the first time in Australia the bill will establish laws prohibiting remotely piloted aircraft, commonly known as drones, and helicopters near a prison or a residential facility unless authorised or under a lawful exemption. The bill will also give search and seizure powers to police officers and corrections officers for these incidents.

The second part of the provisions is amendments to the serious sex offender scheme. The bill will give courts more power to update the core conditions of supervision orders, including to prohibit serious sex offenders from committing violent offences or engaging in violent offending and violent conduct. This will build on previous reforms in 2015 and 2016 that gave courts powers to update core conditions when orders were reviewed.

The third part of the provisions are parole reforms, expanding the category of serious violent offenders and terrorism. The bill will introduce stricter parole laws for prisoners who have been convicted of aggravated home invasion, home invasion, aggravated carjacking, carjacking, defensive homicide or terrorism offences.

It is strange that at this point I would be speaking to a provision of a bill before this house today when in fact we have seen over the last 24 hours the parole provisions in legislation that led to a known terrorist being able to commit murder and to cause serious injury to persons, including police officers. That person had committed a significant number of serious offences and was actually on parole at that stage. He had known violent activity and also had been known to have been fully trained in explosives in a Middle Eastern country. He was allowed to walk the streets in Melbourne, and he committed those heinous crimes yesterday in Brighton in Melbourne.

We had the police commissioner, Graham Ashton, and the Premier, Daniel Andrews, standing side by side saying that in fact the parole system was working and there was nothing untoward about the fact that that person, who committed murder on our streets in Brighton, was not adhering to the parole laws, as we see them. So after that incident happened, we are now actually in this chamber discussing tightening up the parole laws with this legislation. I just find it extraordinary. The Prime Minister said this afternoon and tonight on the news, as did the opposition leader, Bill Shorten, how is it that a person — from Somalia, as we know now — who has had significant training in explosives, has had significant training in terrorist activities, who has been before the courts in relation to quite violent criminal activity and is now on parole is allowed to be able to walk the streets, free of any undue constraint? In fact, having had the Premier and the police commissioner trying to validate the fact that this person was actually on our streets on parole, given all the history associated with his violent terrorist activities, we now have a bill in which the government has seen fit to strengthen some of the parole laws.

It is an oxymoron in that on the one hand we have the Andrews government trying to justify this person's being on parole and on the other we have this bill. That person, with the parole board presumably having all the evidence associated with his past history and connections in terrorist countries in relation to his significant training in terrorist activities, even being allowed on parole — given all that, the government tried to justify that there were no parole laws broken in relation to his being able to have free and easy access to our streets.

I just wanted to draw that to the attention of the chamber because it brings me to the point where we have Matthew Guy, the opposition leader, continually stressing the importance of mandatory sentencing, tidying up bail laws and reforming our parole laws and being laughed at and chided by those on the other side

of the chamber in the other house. Yet here is the government now trying to play catch-up in relation to coalition policy on parole reforms in relation to serious violent offenders and terrorism, which is exactly the history of this person that was walking the streets of Brighton last night and caused all this carnage and suffering to so many people. The government would have you believe today, with the Premier standing up with Graham Ashton, the police commissioner, saying, 'All is all right', that everything was conforming to the current parole laws associated with him being able to walk the streets.

I just find that so hypocritical and so fake. Talk about fake news! I am sure our community is absolutely despondent to hear the Premier not providing some leadership in this respect. I note that even the federal opposition leader is saying to the Premier, 'What on earth are you doing and thinking in relation to trying to provide some credibility around the current parole laws associated with allowing this to happen?', as has the Prime Minister. Enough said about that. I am sure my colleagues will make more of that in their contributions.

The fourth part of the bill's provisions is to do with information-sharing reforms. The bill will broaden information-sharing provisions to promote consistency between the Corrections Act and the serious sex offender scheme.

The fifth part of the main provisions makes miscellaneous amendments to the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009, including the review and renewal of orders, the conditions of orders and the reporting requirements on the use of force by supervision officers, police officers and specified officers.

This is a start. It is sort of a step towards getting to a point where hopefully the government will see that the coalition has been calling for stronger parole reforms, stronger bail conditions, mandatory sentencing, more police resources and tighter correction controls in our facilities. The Andrews government is going through a small, step-by-step process where the coalition has very firm and substantial policies already in the community arena. I think the events over the last 24 hours have indicated that there is urgency in making sure that we strengthen even more the parole reforms, the bail reforms and the mandatory sentencing and certainly give a very clear message to the judicial system, many of whose members I understand are in the building tonight. Hopefully they will get wind of the sentiments in the Legislative Council, if they are not in the President's side dining room, and they will have a better understanding of the importance of the concern

raised in this chamber by what is going on out there in community land, and also obviously the draconian sorts of laws that we currently have which are providing absolutely no deterrence to those would-be terrorists in our country that wish to create mayhem in the name of radical Islam.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Deputy President, before I begin my contribution, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mr FINN — Thank you, Deputy President, and welcome back to the chamber to my colleagues from the other side. This bill, the Corrections Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2017, is one that is not being opposed by the opposition. What it does barely warrants any opposition, because what we have in this state is a crisis. We have a major crisis of justice, we have a major crisis of law and order and we have a problem whereby the community has totally lost confidence in the judiciary, has totally lost confidence in the legal system and realises and openly accepts that there is no justice in this state.

I could stand here for a couple of hours just going through case after case after case where the judiciary have failed. I wish that those erstwhile and eminent judges who were sitting in our public gallery just a little while ago were still there right now so that I could tell them that they have failed. I wish that they were still in the gallery so I could look them in the eye and say that they have failed to represent justice in this state and failed the people of Victoria.

Let us be very honest here. Where did this all come from? It came from one bloke. I remember — and other members will remember I am sure — me, back in this house during the days of the Brumby government, getting up here and saying that Rob Hulls was the most dangerous politician in Australia. I said at the time that the government would go and he would go but his legacy would linger for a very long time, and the justice crisis that we have in this state right now is the legacy of Rob Hulls — the legacy of Rob Hulls and the legacy of those who have followed him. Those who believe in the same sorts of things that Rob Hulls believes in are enforcing today the sort of crisis that we have in this state.

It is interesting to see the Minister for Corrections with a smile on her face as I talk about that. It is interesting. I reckon the minister should go out and talk to a few people in the real world. She should get out of her white car and go and talk to some people in the real world

about what is going on, about people being bashed, about people having their homes invaded, about people having their cars stolen and about violence and robbery in the streets left, right and centre. The minister should get out there, and I will tell you what: the community would wipe the smile off her face very quickly, as they will do in November next year.

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Leane say, ‘Oh, yeah, righto’. It has been clear to me for a very, very long time that this government is firstly unable to do anything about the crisis in justice in this state, and not just unable but unwilling. It does not actually want to do anything about it. That is something that befuddles me — absolutely astounds me; something that I cannot for the life of me work out — because I would have thought the protection of the community is the first role of any government.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Ondarchie makes an excellent point. If every member of the community was a member of the union, they would have the full protection of this government because the only people that this government is interested in protecting are members of the union — whichever union that may be, if indeed the unions are not at war with each other at any given time. Perhaps we should talk about the United Firefighters Union and the CFMEU. Although perhaps Mr Jennings might like to give me another couple that I could throw into the mix. That would be very thoughtful. If you could do that, Mr Jennings, I would appreciate it.

I just ask the question: what the hell is wrong with this government that refuses to protect the people of this state? What is wrong with a government that sees what is going on in the suburbs and the towns of this state and refuses to do anything to save these people?

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr FINN — And Mrs Shing, or Ms Shing over there — that is something; do not get me started — is cackling like an old chook on a fence, and she thinks it is hysterical. She thinks people being bashed, being robbed, being afraid of living in their homes is hysterical. Well, what a great audience she must be. It is just deplorable. What this government is doing to Victoria is disgraceful — indeed what this government has done to the people of Victoria.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr FINN — Come out with me, Ms Shing, and you talk to the people out in Caroline Springs. You explain to them where the dead body came from in their back alley yesterday. You go and talk to the people in Tarneit and talk about the gangs that roam the streets there. Go and talk to the D'Abaco family, whose son Jayden was bashed and robbed.

Mr Ondarchie — Twice.

Mr FINN — Well, he was certainly bashed and robbed once, but accosted on another occasion. Jayden in Tarneit is a young 17-year-old with autism — somebody who had been building up confidence to actually have some sense of independence. He was taking the bus so that he could go to the footy — something as simple as that. We would normally take that for granted, would we not — taking the bus — but when you have autism it is very, very different indeed. It is something you have to build up to, and it is something that people have to be conditioned for. In one day Jayden's confidence, his ability and his independence were destroyed just with one bus trip where he was bashed and robbed by a gang in broad daylight. This was not at 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock at night; this was in broad daylight, and that kid's life has been turned upside down, as has the life of his family. I know that for a fact because I have spoken to them and I know how devastated they are. It is a disgrace that this government refuses to take responsibility for what is happening on the streets of Melbourne.

The western suburbs are awash with crime. If I could move into Mr Ramsay's electorate, in Melton in particular, you can understand why Mr Nardella does not want to live there, because it is absolutely awash with crime. Every day, almost on the hour, there is another criminal attack in Melton. But it is happening right through the western suburbs of Melbourne, and of course as we have seen with the various jewellery robberies it is not constrained to the west. It is happening right across Melbourne. Over on the other side of Melbourne from where I am — over in the eastern suburbs; some of the leafy suburbs I think they call them — we have seen carjackings. I have actually spoken to people who have decided against buying a certain brand of car because they are afraid that if they buy that car that will then make them a target for a home invasion to have their car stolen.

What sort of a state and community do we live in where people actually have to take the crime tsunami into consideration when they are buying a car? For something as simple as buying a car you have to take into consideration what sort of car that has to be in case your house is broken into and your car is stolen. This is

appalling. This state is in crisis, and the people of the state are living in fear. Do you know what is even worse than living in fear? This government — the Andrews Labor government — does not give a stuff. They do not care for the people who are living in fear. They do not care for people that I have spoken to who are afraid to close their eyes at night.

That is no exaggeration. They are afraid to close their eyes at night because they have been subject to these home invasions. They have been subject to people bursting through their doors or indeed their windows at some ungodly hour of the morning and have had thugs standing over their bed demanding their car keys or their jewellery, money, cash or whatever it may be at 2, 3, 4, 5 in the morning. That affects people.

I ask members of the house to consider this: you are asleep in your bed. I would have thought that there is probably nowhere safer than being asleep in your own bed — but no longer in Victoria. I ask members to consider how you would feel if you were woken at 3.30 in the morning by a gang of thugs who had kicked in your front door, come into your bedroom, woken you up, belted you around and demanded the car keys, demanded to know where your cash was and demanded to know where your valuables were. How would you feel? As Mr Ondarchie so correctly points out, you would never fully recover from that. The psychological impact of that is something that would stay with you for a very, very long time.

So whilst we may have the legacy of Rob Hulls in the appalling judiciary that we have today, the legacy of this government will be the psychological fear of so many in this state who are afraid to live in their own homes, who are afraid to walk out to their car, who are afraid to even go to bed. That is the legacy of this government. This government, by any measure, has failed comprehensively to protect the people of Victoria, and that must always be the first priority. The first priority of any government must always be to protect its people — the people who it is bound indeed to protect. But this government has not done that.

It does not matter whether you go up to Mildura or you go down to Phillip Island or you go to Bairnsdale, or down to Warrnambool, or to Port Fairy, or anywhere in Melbourne, they tell you the same story: this government is not worth two bob. This government has failed, and I tell you what: yes, there is a crime tsunami. Mr Leane shakes his head. He is fortunate. But can I suggest that Mr Leane goes out and speaks to some of his constituents? Clearly he does not do that often. Can I suggest that he might like to do that, and he will find

out that there is a real fear, a genuine fear, in the community about what is going on at the moment.

If I had more time tonight, I would be very happy to talk about police command. I would like, at some length in fact, to speak about police command, because my very, very grave concern is that what is happening in Victoria at the moment is a return to the years of Christine Nixon. That is what is happening in this state because, as we know, the first thing the Labor Party always does when they get hold of government is they remove the chief commissioner and they put their own bloke in — or woman in, in that case. That is pretty much what has happened on this occasion, and we have seen the result. The morale of the police force is flat, and they are being undermined from within and also by the judiciary. Indeed in many cases criminals have more rights than the police. That is the simple fact of the matter.

I have only got 15 seconds left, so I cannot go into the bill in detail, but I would say to you, Deputy President, that this government really needs to get its act together, because Victoria is living in fear.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Ordered to be committed next day.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Shepparton rail services

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and it is regarding passenger safety on the Shepparton line rail service. My request of the minister is that she allocates transit police and protective services officers (PSOs) to the Shepparton line to ensure safe and comfortable travel for passengers and staff.

In the past fortnight I have been made aware of a number of recent incidents on the Shepparton rail line where passenger safety has been put at risk by other passengers. Passengers have the right to expect to travel on public transport safely and comfortably without dangerous disruption from other passengers. Unfortunately, however, this has not been the case recently on the Shepparton line.

One such incident happened in late May when a passenger on the 4.31 p.m. service from Southern Cross to Shepparton became abusive at the Broadmeadows station. The train was delayed almost an hour while police were called to attend and eventually removed the passenger.

While visiting the Shepparton railway station with Matthew Guy last week I was approached by a regular passenger who raised the need for security on Shepparton's trains and told us of two recent incidents she and her husband had experienced. The first occurred on a Melbourne to Shepparton service, when a man of Middle Eastern appearance got on at the Murchison East station and just before Mooroopna began walking up and down the length of the carriage repeating, 'You are all going to suffer'. During the trip he sat across from a girl in her 20s, who had one leg in plaster and was lugging a suitcase. He pushed his gas cigarette lighter up into her face in a threatening manner. At the conclusion of the trip passengers who witnessed this approached the conductor, who said they should have come and got him, but the passengers said that from the time he took their tickets they did not see him until the end of the trip. A visible presence of staff could have been a deterrent.

The second incident involved a man who had just been released from jail that morning. He had been in for attacking or stabbing someone at a petrol station. Witnessing passengers believed he was high on drugs and said he talked the entire time during the trip about what he had done to end up in jail, and about his time in jail, including what kind of sex he had had. During the trip he was sitting opposite a young man and was asking extremely invasive questions about him. The witnessing passengers, who happened to be an older couple, made sure the young man got to his car safely when they departed the train, such was the level of threat they felt from this passenger.

The safety of staff and passengers on Victoria's public transport is paramount, but the onus for passenger safety cannot only be on the conductor or other rail staff. This responsibility can only be on specialised security staff, such as transit police or protective services officers (PSOs), who are already out in force across metropolitan and other major regional stations like Bendigo and Geelong.

My request of the minister is that she allocates transit police and PSOs to the Shepparton line to ensure safe and comfortable travel for passengers and staff.

Energy efficiency programs

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Lily D'Amrosio. My office has been approached by local business owners claiming that their energy prices are of concern. I am aware that the Andrews Labor government is assisting businesses by providing Victorian discounted energy-efficient products through accredited providers, which has already saved participating businesses approximately \$27 million on their energy bills in 2016.

My question to the minister is: what other schemes and programs are available for businesses in my electorate to help keep their energy costs down, and how do they access these programs to ensure they save money on their energy bills? The action I seek is information on how they access these programs to ensure they save money on their energy bills.

Poker machines

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter tonight is addressed to Minister Kairouz, the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and it concerns the destructive impact that poker machines have on our community here in Victoria. I remind the chamber that in my first speech in this place one of the concerns I raised was the harm caused by gambling, and I just want to follow up on that. I call on the minister to become more serious about gambling reform and changes that will reduce gambling-related harm, and I have four suggestions to make tonight.

Gambling addiction is a major driver of household debt and family and personal destruction. People with a gambling addiction are six times more likely, apparently, to be divorced, and poker machines fuel domestic violence and homelessness. The Victorian government has itself commissioned research, which shows that poker machines are a leading cause of crime in the community, second only, apparently, to the illegal drug trade. It is interesting to note that Australia has less than one-half of 1 per cent of the world's population but it in fact has 20 per cent of the world's poker machines, and that is not something to cheer about.

Unfortunately where I am in the western suburbs of Melbourne is a gambling hotspot. Figures from 2014–15 show massive losses to poker machines among my constituents. The City of Brimbank, for example, was ranked first in the state in poker machine

losses, with a massive \$142 million. Brimbank's 976 machines took in an average of \$146 000, over six times the average income of each Brimbank resident. City of Wyndham residents lost \$94 million in local clubs and pubs. Out of their 893 machines they averaged a \$105 000 take per year, over three times the average income of each Wyndham resident. In Moonee Valley there are 746 machines, taking in over \$100 000 each. The total losses to poker machines in Moonee Valley was \$75 million. In Maribyrnong residents lost \$53 million, and Hobson Bay residents lost \$47 million. Maribyrnong is ranked third in the state for pokie losses per adult.

I could, of course, go on, but I want to call on the minister to become more serious about gambling reform, especially in regard to poker machines, and reduce the horrific impact they are having on our Victorian communities.

Cowes police station

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — My adjournment this evening is for the Minister for Police, and the action I seek from the minister is that she provide an update on the completion of the new Phillip Island, or Cowes, police station.

The current budget, the 2016–17 budget, provides resources to build a new police station at Cowes. Others have expressed disappointment that the location for the station has not changed; rather the current building is being demolished and a new building built in its place. The ship has sailed, in the vernacular, on that issue — that is, that the station is going to be rebuilt at the current location. The police left the station and the station was closed prior to Easter, yet perplexingly the contract for the tender for the new station has yet to be let, so police have been forced to relocate to San Remo, leaving Phillip Island without a dedicated police station, even though the demolition of the current station is yet to occur. Indeed the tender for the construction of the new station has yet to be let, so there are questions around that issue.

But, more importantly, with the delay in letting this tender into winter and with the mobilisation time it will take from the levying of the tender to the demolition and then construction of the new station it appears now that the new station will not be completed and operational prior to the schoolies, Christmas holiday, January and summer season at the end of this year. Indeed the station may not be completed until well into next year, which raises all sorts of issues because extra police numbers are deployed to the island to accommodate the influx of people.

The San Remo police station, which is accommodating the current Phillip Island police, does not have the capacity to accommodate a large number of temporary police for the summer period. Of course a permanent police presence on Phillip Island during the summer period is critical, so the action I would seek from the minister is for her to provide advice as to when the police station is now forecast to be completed. And if the completion does not take effect before the summer period, what contingency plans are in place to deal with the influx of extra police that are needed during that busy summer time on Phillip Island?

Swan Street Bridge upgrade

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The Swan Street Bridge is currently being upgraded. The works include a separated shared-use path on both sides of the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists. However, there appears to be no plan to improve the cycle paths that lie under the bridge on both banks of the Yarra, which are very narrow and are dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. From VicRoads's own estimates, these cycling paths have up to 1000 cyclists per hour. My action is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to ensure that the cycle paths under the Swan Street Bridge are widened and improved to accommodate growing cycle traffic as part of the upgrade works.

Family violence

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Honourable Fiona Richardson. I am proud of this government's commitment to prevent and address family violence in all its forms. A lot of work has taken place since the royal commission handed down its report last year, and we are getting on with the job of implementing every single one of its 227 recommendations. This is incredibly important and complex work, particularly in the area of primary prevention. Recently the minister launched Victoria's first primary prevention strategy, *Free from Violence*. It will help us to stop family violence before it starts. That strategy will ensure that we take the steps needed to address the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence in the homes. The action I seek from the minister is that she outline to me what the government's specific plan and programs to be implemented to prevent family violence in my electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region are.

Warrnambool Special Developmental School

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Education, and it relates to Warrnambool Special Developmental School. Warrnambool Special Developmental School is a school that has seen significant growth in terms of the number of students that are attending the school. It is also a school that is not situated in the best location, especially considering the special needs of the students that attend the school. Warrnambool Special Developmental School is situated at the top of a hill, which is not the best place for entry to the school for many students with physical disabilities. It is also not a good place for cars to enter. It is quite a dangerous situation, with blind corners and the like.

Members of the government prior to the election, with much supposed fanfare, declared that they were going to rebuild the Warrnambool special school on a new site to provide the school community, the students and the teachers with a site that would be better suited to the many special needs these students have. To this point the government have absolutely failed. They have absolutely failed some of the most vulnerable people in our community and indeed in the South-West Coast electorate. I know Ms Britnell, the member for South-West Coast in the Legislative Assembly, has been advocating very hard on this. I was fortunate enough to attend Warrnambool Special Developmental School with Ms Britnell recently to speak with teachers and students about the many concerns they have about the site where the school is presently and indeed the lack of support that the government are providing to the school.

I do note that this is not something that can be fixed by just fiddling around the edges. This is not something where if you do some minor improvements to the site that is going to fix the problem. What needs to be done is that a new school needs to be built on a new site that will actually meet the needs of the very vulnerable students in this community, because this is a school that is growing. There has been significant growth in the student population, and the site that the school is presently situated on is not delivering what needs to be done for the school community. The action that I seek from the minister is that he keep his election commitment and immediately commit to building a new Warrnambool Special Developmental School that will actually meet the needs of that school community.

Mernda rail extension

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan. The Mernda rail jobs hub was recently opened by the Minister for Industry and Employment, Wade Noonan, and the member for Yan Yean in the Legislative Assembly, Danielle Green. They both had great input into this particular jobs hub. Local people that are interested in maybe gaining employment on this project, which will employ thousands and thousands of workers during the life of the project, can go to the jobs hub and get information about how they may be able to apply for the many jobs that will be available on the project. It will link them to the main contractor that won the tender for the project and to other subcontractors via its various websites as well as allowing firsthand discussions with them. I think this is a fantastic initiative.

There are many Andrews Labor government projects of this size and bigger, and I think this jobs hub would be a good initiative in other projects like this one. The action I seek from the minister is for her to work with the Level Crossing Removal Authority, which has carriage of this particular project and others, to explore whether there are other project opportunities for this sort of hub.

On these projects thousands and thousands of people are getting opportunities to gain employment. I think it is a fantastic by-product of what has probably been the most ambitious capital works program any Victorian government has embarked on. I have got to say I am proud to be a part of a government that has embarked on such a hugely ambitious program that is creating jobs for not just existing construction workers but new construction workers — for young people and for people that are not necessarily getting a go in a lot of areas. They see hope in a government that is prepared to be courageous enough to embark on such a hugely ambitious capital works program, one that will supply jobs not just this year and into next year but, when you think about some of these projects, into the next decade.

In asking for this action of the minister I want to praise her and I want to praise the Premier and all in this government on the courage, the foresight and the ambition they have shown. I can only say once again that I am proud to be part of a government that is prepared to have the courage to embark on such an ambitious program.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Can I just check what the action is?

Mr LEANE — The action is that the minister consider whether there are other projects where there could be jobs hubs initiated, similar to what has been initiated at the Mernda rail jobs hub, because this government is creating thousands of jobs through a very ambitious and courageous capital works program. I would like to see other people having the opportunity at other projects similar to this to walk into a jobs hub, a jobs hub that is at the site, and be able to get firsthand information from a place that is manned five days a week and on the weekends by appointment.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Thank you. I do not want the whole debate re-run. I was actually more relaxed with Ms Shing's interpretation of what the adjournment item might have been. It is tenuous.

Ombersley quarry

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased in the adjournment debate tonight to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Planning in the other place, and it concerns an extractive industry operation near the Princes Highway in western Victoria, between Winchelsea and Colac. This could provide a significant saving to taxpayers, but there is a little bit of detail here, and what I am going to seek is that the minister act swiftly. The project has been subject to a call-in by the Minister for Planning. The justification for the call-in is quite clear. The matter has been heard also by a panel, the decision and report of which has not been released. The location is 320 Mooleric Road, Ombersley, Victoria. This is a serious matter. It is about the building of a major road.

The quarry group, MCG Quarries, began this application process on 28 August 2014. A work plan was approved by the former Department of State Development, Business and Innovation through work authority WA1546, and that was submitted with the planning application. Officers from the Colac Otway Shire Council supported the application but the council did not. The minister was later asked to call in the application, which he did. As I said, he then appointed a panel. Prior to that though VCAT had begun to hear this matter and indeed an application was made to the tribunal on 11 February 2015.

The council moved a motion to refer this matter to the Minister for Planning through a request for a call-in. The MCG Quarries-Ombersley Quarry Advisory Committee was appointed on 18 December 2015. There is some detail to this, but I think the time line is actually important. At a directions hearing on

19 February 2016 the committee directed that a preliminary hearing on cultural heritage matters be heard.

The key point here is that this is an important quarry. It is in a position to provide significant support for the Western Highway. There are significant savings to the public purse, and as I understand it VicRoads has in fact provided a figure for that saving being in the tens of millions of dollars. The government has yet to make a decision, and the government should make a decision. I seek that the minister release the panel report, make a decision and ensure that this quarry is able to proceed. I note also the support of the local member in the Legislative Assembly, Richard Riordan, who has been a strong supporter of this particular project.

Police resources

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Police, the Honourable Lisa Neville, and it just so happens that the matter also relates to the minister's seat of Bellarine and the crime wave and upheaval that is happening across this region, including Geelong. I related a number of stories in my members statement today in relation to criminal activity around Bellarine and Geelong. I will just quote some areas here in relation to press clippings from the *Geelong Advertiser* and *Geelong Indy*.

Here is a quick litany of events: home invasions with machetes in Thompsons Road, reported in the *Geelong Indy* of 23 March; a home invasion at Hamlyn Heights, *Geelong Indy*, 16 February; an attempted stabbing during an attempted armed robbery in Torquay by a 16-year-old, *Geelong Indy*, 3 March; Geelong teenagers charged with offences after a police pursuit in April, *Geelong Indy*, 10 April; sexual assaults in a public toilet in Newtown, *Geelong Indy*, 19 January; a taxi smashed into during an attempted armed robbery, *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 May; and an alleged armed robbery at gunpoint, *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 May. I could go on and on, but I have only got a minute.

This random list of crimes and alleged crimes is just from the last five months. It is irrelevant to the figures from last year, which show another 10 per cent jump in criminal offences, creating a 20 per cent increase in crime during the reign of the Andrews government. I have previously suggested to this house that the minister is not across her portfolio. I am now asking the minister to step down from the portfolio, and I request that the government get serious about tackling crime, particularly crime in the Geelong region, including Bellarine. But before the minister resigns, the action I seek is that she provide more police and more crime

prevention tools to the Bellarine region to respond to this increasing crime wave that I have just identified.

Tullamarine Freeway closures

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. There was a running joke many years ago, I remember, that whenever there was a football match down in Geelong VicRoads would have roadworks on the Geelong road, causing no end of mayhem. It seems that Transurban has picked up on that. On the last two Saturday nights there have been football games on in Melbourne. At the first one 86 500 people were at the MCG, Essendon being one of the teams playing, and as you can imagine, tens of thousands of those people would have liked to have accessed the Tullamarine Freeway to get home. Unfortunately they could not, because Transurban had indeed chosen that evening to close the freeway altogether, so there was no chance that anybody could do that. I was among many thousands who were left to navigate their way through the backstreets of the north-western suburbs of Melbourne to find our way home, which we did — well, I certainly did — eventually.

Last Saturday night was even worse.

An honourable member — You were celebrating?

Mr FINN — I was celebrating. I was very pleased; it was a very good win. Last Saturday night was even worse because during the week Transurban had been advertising that the freeway would close at 11.30 p.m., and that was widely advertised on big electronic signs and was on their website and their Facebook page. At 11.30 the freeway was going to close. I was very pleased when I got to my car after the game at Etihad Stadium, where Richmond had given North Melbourne a fair hiding. I was very pleased indeed to have got down to Flemington Road at a quarter to 11, thinking to myself, 'Great. I'll be able to get on the freeway and get home before I know where I am'.

However, Transurban had other ideas, because at the end of Flemington Road the freeway was closed. Not only was the freeway closed but it had obviously been closed for quite some time. There was nobody around to have recently closed it, so you can only assume — and I will give them the benefit of the doubt — that they closed it at 10.30 instead of 11.30, which led to a whole range of people heading up Mount Alexander Road and into the beyond, into the abyss as it were. I will not go into the details — I do not have time

anyway — of how I got home that night but it was fascinating.

Given that Transurban has an exceedingly cosy relationship with the government and with the minister at this time, I ask the minister to use his influence to ask Transurban to review its policy on freeway closures with a view to showing some respect to its customers.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Can I just ask you to rephrase the action, Mr Finn, in the sense that I am not comfortable with it. The minister has jurisdiction. The minister could take an action. What you have sought is the minister —

Mr FINN — To ask.

The PRESIDENT — Yes, it is a bit foggy. Can I ask you to rephrase.

Mr FINN — I am happy to do that, President. I ask the minister to direct Transurban to review its policy on freeway closures with a view to showing some respect for its customers.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am more comfortable with that.

Youth justice facilities

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter this evening is a very simple one, so I will not be taking up too much of the chamber's time, but it does relate to some emails that I sent to the Minister for Families and Children, so my adjournment matter is directed to that minister. It relates to a number of requests I have put to the minister regarding the youth justice facilities at both Parkville and Malmsbury. On 9 September last year I wrote to the minister requesting to go out and see both facilities because obviously there had been many incidents, riots and issues that had arisen throughout the youth justice system, and I did get a response from the minister's chief of staff saying that they would come back to me.

Obviously there have been a number of incidents that have occurred since that time, and we have had a redirection from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Department of Justice and Regulation, but I again wrote to the minister on 18 May requesting a visit, and I have had another email saying that they will come back to me. I am requesting that those emails be actioned. As a shadow minister with responsibility for youth justice I look forward to the minister actioning those emails so that I can go out and visit those two facilities.

Responses

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) — This evening we had 12 adjournment matters, starting with Ms Lovell, who raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport, Ms Allan, in relation to safety issues on the Southern Cross–Shepparton rail line. Mr Eideh raised a matter for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Ms D'Ambrosio, in relation to energy prices and assistance provided to businesses, particularly in his electorate. The third was from Dr Carling-Jenkins, and her matter was directed to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Ms Kairouz, in relation to action in respect of the use of poker machines.

Mr O'Donohue raised a matter for the Minister for Police, Ms Neville, in relation to the Phillip Island police station and advice on when it will be completed. Ms Dunn had a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Mr Donnellan, in respect of cycle paths. Mr Elasmar had a matter for the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, Ms Richardson, in relation to a specific plan to be implemented to prevent family violence in his electorate. Mr Leane had a matter for the Minister for Public Transport, Minister Allan, and it was in respect of employment programs and the successful employment programs that have already occurred in relation to government infrastructure projects. He is seeking an extension of them to other capital projects.

Mr Davis raised a matter for the Minister for Planning, Mr Wynne, in relation to an independent advisory panel and wanted the minister to make a decision sooner rather than later in support of an application for a quarry. Mr Ramsay had a matter for the Minister for Police, Ms Neville, in relation to crime matters in the Geelong region. Mr Finn had a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Mr Donnellan, in relation to freeway closures. Ms Crozier had a matter for the Minister for Families and Children, Ms Mikakos, seeking that she take action on emails that were sent on 9 September and 18 May.

Mr Morris raised a matter for the Minister for Education, Mr Merlino, in respect of Warrnambool Special Developmental School. One would think that essentially nothing had been done in this area. I would like to indicate that —

Mr Morris interjected.

Ms TIERNEY — What this government has done is more than anything that anyone in the coalition as the local member for South-West Coast has ever done.

Mr Merlino was at the school last Thursday. Not only was he at the school last Thursday but he met with the council and discussed a number of issues.

Mr Morris interjected.

Ms TIERNEY — This is in my electorate, so I am well acquainted with these issues, Mr Morris. Indeed he was at Portland Special Developmental School on Thursday turning the sod for a brand-new special developmental school in Portland. Indeed in this term alone not only have we funded a new school in Portland but we have also bought land — a huge parcel of land that I have walked on myself — in Warrnambool where we will build a new school, something that you have not been able to do in this area, whether it be in the previous government or any other time you have been in government.

I have written responses to adjournment debate matters raised by Ms Dunn on 21 February this year, Ms Dunn on 2 May 2017, Mr Davis on 9 May 2017, Ms Fitzherbert on 9 May 2017, Mrs Peulich on 10 May this year, Ms Wooldridge on 10 May this year, Mr Finn and Ms Hartland on 11 May 2017, Mr Ondarchie on 11 May 2017 and Ms Lovell on 24 May 2017.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Just before I adjourn the house I indicate that on the last sitting day, 25 May, Mr Ramsay presented an adjournment item, and I indicated that I had some concerns about that item and that I would reflect on that in terms of a review of *Hansard*. I am of the view that the matter that Mr Ramsay raised on that occasion did not fit the guidelines for the adjournment debate, and therefore I rule that matter out of order and indicate that the minister is not required to respond to that matter.

Following the minister's responses, we are now in a position where the house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 8.57 p.m.