

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 1 November 2017

(Extract from book 18)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

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 16 October 2017)

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

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(from 13 September 2017)

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

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry

(to 12 September 2017)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. L. D'Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment, and Minister for Resources	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence (until 23 August 2017)	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

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 Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #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 Mulino, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing and Ms Tierney.

Fire Services Bill Select Committee — Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Rich Phillips, Ms Shing and Mr Young.

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, Ms Hutchins, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O’Brien, Mr Pakula 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 Bath, Ms Patten and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon 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*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and 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 Gepp 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 D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

President:

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmar, Mr Melhem, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Purcell, Mr Ramsay

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁷	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	AC	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 ⁸	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 ⁴	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
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ⁹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁸ Appointed 12 October 2016

⁹ Appointed 18 October 2017

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AC — Australian Conservatives; 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

CONTENTS

WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2017

BATTLE OF BEERSHEBA COMMEMORATION	5489
PETITIONS	
<i>Crime prevention</i>	5489
<i>Legal services commissioner</i>	5489
<i>Whittlesea police station</i>	5489
MAGISTRATES COURT OF VICTORIA	
<i>Report 2015–16</i>	5490
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING	
<i>Rate capping policy</i>	5490
PAPERS	5490
MINISTERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Victorian Early Years Awards</i>	5490
<i>Recreational fishing</i>	5491
<i>Regional assemblies</i>	5491
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Victoria University</i>	5492
<i>Devondale Murray Goulburn</i>	5492
<i>Lifeline Gippsland</i>	5493
<i>Cape Paterson Surf Life Saving Club</i>	5493
<i>Shepparton Relay for Life</i>	5493
<i>Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation</i>	5493
<i>Parliamentary work experience program</i>	5494
<i>Road Smart</i>	5494
<i>A City Free from Porn</i>	5494
<i>Victorian Education Excellence Awards</i>	5495
PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS	5495
GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE	5507, 5521, 5528
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
<i>Electricity supply</i>	5513
<i>RSPCA Victoria</i>	5513, 5514
<i>Kuark forest timber harvesting</i>	5514
<i>VicForests</i>	5514, 5515
<i>Auslan training</i>	5515
<i>Prisoner drug and alcohol testing</i>	5515, 5516
<i>The Bubble student support centre</i>	5516, 5517
<i>Corrections system</i>	5517
<i>Jasvinder Sidhu</i>	5518
<i>Written responses</i>	5518
RULINGS BY THE CHAIR	
<i>Questions on notice</i>	5518
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS	
<i>Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	5518, 5520
<i>Western Metropolitan Region</i>	5519, 5521
<i>Western Victoria Region</i>	5519, 5520
<i>Northern Victoria Region</i>	5519
<i>Southern Metropolitan Region</i>	5519
<i>Northern Metropolitan Region</i>	5520
<i>Eastern Victoria Region</i>	5520
FIREARMS AMENDMENT (ADVERTISING) BILL 2017	
<i>Second reading</i>	5525
<i>Third reading</i>	5528
APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS	5542
STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS	
<i>Public Accounts and Estimates Committee:</i>	
<i>budget estimates 2017–18</i>	5549
<i>Fire Services Bill Select Committee: final report</i>	5550
<i>Country Fire Authority: report 2016–17</i>	5550
<i>Mental Health Complaints Commissioner:</i>	
<i>report 2017</i>	5551
INAUGURAL SPEECH	
<i>Dr Ratnam</i>	5552
ADJOURNMENT	
<i>Gippsland public transport</i>	5555
<i>Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services</i>	5555
<i>State care leavers</i>	5560, 5556
<i>Residential planning zones</i>	5556
<i>Victoria State Emergency Service Cobram unit</i>	5557
<i>Wyndham kindergartens</i>	5557
<i>Goulburn-Murray Water</i>	5558
<i>Drysdale bypass</i>	5559
<i>Buckley Street, Essendon, level crossing</i>	5559
<i>Frankston line elevated rail proposal</i>	5560
<i>Responses</i>	5560
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	5558

Wednesday, 1 November 2017

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

BATTLE OF BEERSHEBA COMMEMORATION

The PRESIDENT (09:34) — I make note of the fact that, as many of you would be aware, yesterday was the anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba, another very significant engagement involving Australian troops. It was commemorated with a ceremony at the site of the Beersheba horse charge, which was a significant victory for Australian troops and an important engagement in the course of World War I. Interestingly enough, that battle's commemoration fell in the same week as the 94th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Turkey by Ataturk, as a secular state. Australia and Turkey have become very firm friends and have shared a great deal of goodwill, initially as adversaries on the battlefields but indeed throughout much of the 20th century and into this century as partners in the global community.

Clearly Turkey at this time has some difficulties, and we are hoping that there will be a reconciliation of those matters and the people involved in those matters in Turkey so that it can continue as a democratic country in the context of Ataturk's vision. We do certainly commemorate those troops who fell, particularly the bravery of those who forged such an extraordinary success on the battlefield at Beersheba, and recognise the importance of that historic moment.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Crime prevention

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of residents in Victoria calls on the Legislative Council to note that there is a crime tsunami engulfing Victorians. Small businesses are regularly being targeted, residents feel unsafe in their own homes and going to work, and Victorians are losing faith in our justice system.

The petitioners therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Council calls on the Andrews Labor government to match the coalition policy and introduce mandatory sentencing, toughen up the justice system and hold criminals to account.

**By Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan)
(35 signatures).**

Laid on table.

Legal services commissioner

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that:

on 29 July 1919 a Collins Street estate agent, Edward Vernon Jones Esq., sold lot 3 of a 103-lot subdivision to a Mrs Caroline Mary Curran, then of Parkville, under covenant that she would not build more than one dwelling house on that lot (now known as 73 Raleigh Road, Maribymong);

on 26 August 2014 an application was made to the Supreme Court of Victoria by the current co-owner of Mrs Curran's lot, Footscray solicitor Luke Luat Thien Tran, to change the 1919 covenant to instead allow 'three dwelling houses' on the lot;

on 26 September 2014 the court made orders requiring notice of this application be given to landowners having the benefit of the covenant;

none of the undersigned owner-occupiers ever received any such notice, thereby depriving them of the opportunity to seek advice and respond;

on 15 December 2014 the court made a declaration 'that the plaintiffs had given the notifications as required'; and

on 26 February 2016 Associate Justice Nemeer Mukhtar granted the application, having decided, 'Since those last orders, the plaintiffs have still not received any written objections to the application by any person. The application is unopposed ...'.

The petitioners also draw to your attention that the legal services commissioner will not entertain complaints about lawyers from anyone other than the clients of those lawyers.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council inquire into their concerns with a view to reporting its findings and making recommendations.

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

Laid on table.

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

Whittlesea 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 Whittlesea residents that the Whittlesea police station is under threat of closure or reduced police numbers.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria ensures that the Andrews government provides a written guarantee that:

- a) there will be no reduction to the current authorised strength of police at Whittlesea police station — that being one senior sergeant, two sergeants and 12 senior constables or constables; and
- b) the Whittlesea police station will not be closed following the opening of the new Mernda police station.

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

Laid on table.

MAGISTRATES COURT OF VICTORIA

Report 2015–16

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills)
presented report by command of the Governor.

Laid on table.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Rate capping policy

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State),
pursuant to standing order 23.30, presented
government response to fourth report.

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Court Services Victoria — Report, 2016–17.

Crimes (Assumed Identities) Act 2004 —

Report pursuant to section 31 by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission for 2016–17.

Report pursuant to section 31 by Victoria Police for 2016–17.

Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board — Minister's report of failure to submit 2016–17 report to the Minister within the prescribed period and the reason therefor.

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board — Minister's report of failure to submit 2016–17 report to the Minister within the prescribed period and the reason therefor.

Harness Racing Victoria — Report, 2016–17.

Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 — Practitioner Remuneration Order, 1 January 2018.

Professional Standards Council Victoria — Report 2016–17.

Sentencing Advisory Council — Report, 2016–17.

Shrine of Remembrance Trustees — Minister's report of failure to submit 2016–17 report to the Minister within the prescribed period and the reason therefor.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Heritage Act 2017 — Nos. 108 and 109.

Professional Standards Act 2003 — No. 106.

Veterans Act 2005 — No. 107.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 — No. 110.

Surveillance Devices Act 1999 —

Report 2016–17, pursuant to section 30L for the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission.

Report 2016–17, pursuant to section 30L for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Report 2016–17, pursuant to section 30L for the Game Management Authority.

Report 2016–17, pursuant to section 30L for the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.

Report 2016–17, pursuant to section 30L for Victoria Police.

Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003 —

Report 2016–17, pursuant to section 13ZR for the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.

Victoria Legal Aid — Report, 2016–17.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission — Report, 2016–17 (*Ordered to be published*).

Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine — Report, 2016–17.

Victorian Law Reform Commission — Report, 2016–17 (*Ordered to be published*).

Victorian Legal Services Board and the Legal Services Commission — Report, 2016–17 (*Ordered to be published*).

Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board — Minister's report of failure to submit 2016–17 report to the Minister within the prescribed period and the reason therefor.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Victorian Early Years Awards

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Early Childhood Education) (09:42) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is supporting and celebrating the great achievements of our early childhood professionals and services in Victoria. Last week, as part of Children's Week, I had the great

pleasure to attend the 2017 Victorian Early Years Awards, which recognises the innovative and creative approaches taken every day by professionals and organisations across the state to support children and their families.

Among the award winners were programs supporting refugee mothers and babies, programs embedding Aboriginal perspectives into educational programs and the development of a nurturing room in response to a number of young children who were vulnerable due to trauma. The Minister's Award was presented to Wodonga City Council for their program No One Left Behind, which involves council working with other local services to ensure that vulnerable children are identified and linked in to early years services. This concept of working to ensure that all children, including those most vulnerable or at risk of missing out, are given the opportunity to succeed is also what underpins our government's Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan.

I was also proud to present the Early Childhood Teacher of the Year award to Rachel Webb of Nowa Nowa Kindergarten in Gippsland for her work helping children — many of them from Aboriginal backgrounds. Other award winners included Wyndham Kindergartens — Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Program and Practice at Scale, Wyndham City Council and partners, which won the Improving Access and Participation in Early Learning Award; the Empowering Parents Empowering Communities, Victorian Cooperative on Children's Services for Ethnic Groups New Futures and partners, which won the Supporting Parents to Build their Capacity and Confidence Award; the Healthy Happy Beginnings for Refugee Mothers and Babies, Murdoch Children's Research Institute and partners, which won the Creating Collaborative Community Partnerships Award; and the Nurturing Room Bridges Home to School, Warrnambool East Primary School and partners, which won the Promoting Children's Health and Wellbeing Award.

I congratulate all the award winners. The awards are a demonstration of the excellence that we have in our state in our early years services and the commitment that our early years services and teachers have to providing families and children with strong support in early childhood so that all children are ready for kinder, ready for school and ready for life.

Recreational fishing

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (09:44) — I would like to take this opportunity to update the house that from 7 November 2017 some new recreational fishing rules will apply for stingrays, skates and guitarfish, also known as banjo sharks, to provide them with enhanced protection and to ensure that they are treated with respect. Extensive public consultation over the winter months attracted almost 1200 submissions, the vast majority of which supported increased protection of these species.

The new rules will prohibit the take or possession of stingrays, skates or guitarfish greater than 1.5 metres in width; reduce the combined daily bag limit for rays, skates and guitarfish from five to one, which must be less than 1.5 metres in width; prohibit the take of these species within 400 metres of any pier, jetty, wharf or breakwater; and require these species to be landed whole so they can be measured by fisheries officers. To support the introduction of the new rules this spring, dedicated officers from the Victorian Fisheries Authority will undertake Operation Liberty to educate anglers on the water and encourage responsible fishing. More signage will be erected on piers around Port Phillip and Western Port and along Victoria's coast to raise awareness among the fishing community, promote the new rules and illustrate good handling practices. Existing fishing regulations will continue to require anglers to return unwanted or undersized species to the water with the least possible injury.

We have listened to passionate stakeholders on this issue, including the Project Banjo Action Group, and made significant changes to fishing rules to address their concerns. In several coastal towns very large rays are local identities that can attract tourists to jetties and provide families with an opportunity to glimpse a wild creature in its natural habitat. They are also appreciated by snorkellers and divers. We recognise the need to inform beginner and expert anglers alike about the new rules, which is why a dedicated education and enforcement effort will be delivered through spring and summer.

Regional assemblies

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (09:47) — I would like to update the house on the Andrews government's regional assemblies. This year nine Victorian regional assemblies were attended by more than 2000 people, ensuring that regional Victorians had the chance to directly tell the government their priorities and aspirations for the future of their regions. The

assemblies, which were held between June and October this year in Swan Hill, Wodonga, Horsham, Sale, Bendigo, Seymour, Creswick, Geelong and Portland, each had a unique feel and their unique issues but were all marked by strong attendance by the community, government ministers, local MPs and mayors, and by engaged discussion. In total there were 44 ministerial appearances across the assemblies as well as parliamentary secretaries and many local MPs. There was a clear message from the government that we were there to listen to community views.

Now in their second year, the assemblies are an important part of the government's regional partnership model, which was introduced in 2016, recognising that local communities are in the best position to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by their region. As well as the very high on-the-night attendances, several partnerships held mini assemblies in the run-up to the assemblies, either in different towns — including Leongatha, Lakes Entrance, Echuca, Ballarat, Castlemaine, Alexandra, Nagambie, Shepparton, Broadford and Colac — or based on specific themes, and they were attended by more than 650 people. In addition, there were over 700 online engagements with pre-assembly surveys and questionnaires. Each partnership is now in the process of reporting back to community participants on their assemblies, and partnerships have started making their presentations to the cabinet committee.

Each region has its own needs and priorities. I attended all nine assemblies, and there were some issues that came up again and again. Transport, digital connectivity, education and training, health outcomes, tourism and the economy are the things that most concern people in regional Victoria. They also concern our government, and we are listening and acting on these things.

When the Premier launched the regional partnerships model of regional consultation he had a very simple and very strong message: local communities are best placed to determine their own priorities. Through our regional partnerships and assemblies we are hearing about local priorities. I want to thank the large number of Victorians living and working in regional Victoria for coming out and engaging with partnerships and government over the past few months. We were at assemblies to listen, and I can assure you we did just that.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Victoria University

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) (09:49) — I have had a long association with Victoria University (VU). At the age of 40 I did the community development course at St Albans. I had left school at 16 with poor literacy skills, so when I decided to go to VU the first thing I looked for was the support that I could get with my essays et cetera. They were just great; the student support team really helped me. I saw real pride in the students and the staff that this university was part of the west and it was giving education to local people.

I do not understand what has happened to the leadership at VU since, but they now seem to be constantly wanting to undermine staff. They have gone on the attack against staff, they want to retrench a vast number of very experienced educators and it would now appear that they are not even going to have enough staff to actually teach the undergraduates next year. I had a letter from VU yesterday telling me all about what a great job they are doing but that I needed to keep it confidential. I need to go back to the university and ask them why I need to keep this information confidential when they have not actually told me why they feel it is acceptable to undermine the conditions of staff and leave the students out in the cold.

Victoria University is a very important part of the western suburbs. We need to keep that university going as a hub and as a place where people like me, as mature-age students, can go and get that second chance at education.

Devondale Murray Goulburn

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (09:51) — Today I want to acknowledge the sad passing of a once-proud Australian-owned dairy processor, Murray Goulburn, which, as has been reported, will be sold to Canadian dairy processor Saputo for \$1.3 billion. This once-proud locally owned dairy cooperative that made great inroads into the dairy food export market and was acknowledged in many export awards, which I had the good fortune to be part of judging, has now fallen prey to the aspirations of corporate cowboys who thought they could fly on the fiscal cloud, only to drown in their own egos and global market realities. The losers will be the Victorian dairy farmers, who now, if the takeover goes ahead, will lose a dairy processor that was able to maximise the highs in the global food market and return those benefits to their suppliers.

While the proposed sale of Murray Goulburn will be conditional on the approval of the Foreign Investment Review Board, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the shareholders of the company, this will be just another Australian company that has become a casualty of the global trading market. While I understand that the impact of price to dairy farmers may not be adversely affected in the short term, the international companies work on the rule of obtaining product at the lowest price and rarely reward their suppliers during the highs of the market. The fact that Murray Goulburn has sunk, with high debt, loss of milk supply and a net value of \$1.10 per share, is a reflection of the battering the company has taken from poor governance decisions and unpopular clawback provisions that had suppliers leaving in droves.

Lifeline Gippsland

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (09:52) — I rise today to congratulate the various members of Lifeline Gippsland and the work that was undertaken in recent times to take three miniature alpacas on a jaunt through town. It was Harold, Riot and Button that went around to promote the importance of having conversations and the importance of talking and reaching out for support or assistance when people need it. I would like to in particular thank Dan, Lill, Mel, Helen, Annette, Louise, Marisca and Lynton for providing ongoing support within this volunteer organisation as part of a wider team of dedicated people who support the work of Lifeline through the 131114 crisis service, the HALT! and say HI! project, the Connect Call Back program, which is local to Gippsland, emergency response, the warehouse and op shops across the six local government areas of Gippsland and all of the other initiatives that they participate in.

Cape Paterson Surf Life Saving Club

Ms SHING — On another matter, it was absolutely fantastic to return to the Cape Paterson Surf Life Saving Club to confirm that the Andrews Labor government will fund \$2.3 million to make sure that this club can be rebuilt with the facilities that it needs and deserves to keep Victorians safe, to enhance the work of its volunteers and to provide the education around marine safety that is so crucial. I look forward to federal member Mr Russell Broadbent being able to contribute the funding necessary from the federal coalition government to make sure that the rebuild can go ahead fully.

Shepparton Relay for Life

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (09:54) — It was a great privilege to once again participate in the 17th Shepparton Relay for Life held recently at Princess Park in Shepparton. I take great pride in having been involved in all 17 Relay for Life events held in Shepparton, being a member of the original organising committee and acting as master of ceremonies at the inaugural event in 2001, prior to my entry into Parliament.

Relay for Life is an opportunity for communities to recognise and celebrate those who have overcome cancer or who are undergoing treatment, as well as an opportunity for participants to honour the memory of loved ones lost to cancer. It also raises much-needed money for cancer research. Relay for Life began in Australia in 1999, when the community of Murrumbidgee raised over \$75 000 for the cancer council. It is now held in every Australian state and territory and raises over \$24 million each year.

Sadly 2017 was the last Relay for Life event to be held in Shepparton. In the 17 years of the event over \$2.5 million has been raised by the Shepparton community, with the money going to the cancer council's vital research, prevention and support services. I particularly want to thank the organising committee and participants of the 2017 Shepparton Relay for Life, as well as the 31 local businesses for their generous support of this year's event.

Having lost my own father to cancer, Shepparton Relay for Life will always hold a very special place in my heart, and I congratulate every organiser, sponsor and participant for their support of the event over the last 17 years. The memories will stay with us forever.

Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (09:56) — On 23 October I was very pleased to attend the 20th anniversary of the Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation (PPCR) — 'Celebrating 20 Deadly Years'. PPCR was formed at a public meeting at St Kilda town hall in 1997 which was convened by Jacki Willox and attended by hundreds of people, including politicians, councillors, Indigenous musicians and members of the public, including me. For 20 years PPCR has been very visible and active, promoting reconciliation, awareness and understanding of the history of Aboriginal people, particularly in the local area. It works closely with the Boon Wurrung Foundation, which represents the interests of the descendants of the Boonwurrung language group,

which includes the Yalukit-willam people, the traditional owners of the Port Phillip area.

The celebrations began with a welcome to country by Arweet Carolyn Briggs. The MC for the evening was Leila Gurruwiwi, and proceedings were opened by PPCR co-chair Rosemary Rule. Other speakers included Cr Bernadene Voss, mayor of the City of Port Phillip; Martin Foley, Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing; and Richard Frankland, associate dean of diversity and inclusion at the Victorian College of the Arts, whose message was hope for the future. PPCR co-chair Dennis Fisher recited two of his poems, and there was wonderful singing from the Winja Ulupna women and the Galiamble men's group. I really enjoyed the slide show of people at the hundreds of events that PPCR have held over 20 years. Richard Frankland also sang a couple of songs at the end, accompanied by opera singer John Wayne Parsons. Also in attendance were councillors Tim Baxter and Dick Gross, and former councillors Caroline Hogg, Judith Klepner and Serge Thomann.

I would like to congratulate the Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation for its 20 deadly years of work for and with the Aboriginal people of the Port Phillip area.

Parliamentary work experience program

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (09:58) — I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Meri Ivanovska and Darren Hughes from the Inner Northern Local Learning and Employment Network and Oliver Walsh from the Powerful Placements program, who are working closely with our special schools in Victoria to provide work experience placements to students with disabilities within the Parliament of Victoria. I believe the concept is fantastic and gives students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in a structured environment around influential people working closely with the community. We are one of the first equal opportunity offices to participate in this new placement program, helping to provide young persons with such work experience and endeavouring to make a positive difference.

Our work experience student, Jake Tynan from Ascot Vale Special School, has been a delight to teach and has had the opportunity to experience how the office operates day to day. He has even had a visit to Parliament House this sitting week, where he has been able to experience all aspects of the Victorian Parliament in action. Jake Tynan is a talented young man who has displayed an interest in drawing, art and graphic design. He is very passionate and develops his own art designs. Through his creativeness, sensitivity

and imagination he has been able to design my Christmas card for 2017. Jake plans to work in a creative role in the near future. Well done, Jake, and thank you for sharing your creative talents with our office.

Lastly, the work experience placement program is beneficial to both the students and members of Parliament, so I ask all members to please consider making a difference to young people with disabilities by giving them the opportunity to experience the work we do.

Road Smart

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:00) — On Sunday I was very pleased to sit in on the Australia Driver Trainer Association's session around Road Smart, which is an Andrews government school education driving initiative. Year 10 students will get the opportunity to have an in-class session and go to an off-road facility to be able to — hopefully the first time that the young people get behind the wheel of a car — experience braking, accelerating, steering et cetera in a controlled vehicle in a controlled environment away from a busy highway, which tends to be the experience now when young people first get their learners permit.

I am very pleased that the driver trainers are on board and excited about this initiative, which will be rolled out to Victorian schools next year; they really get what the government policy is about. It is a simple policy. If you are on a construction site and there is a new piece of plant, you get inducted into the safety aspects of it before you go anywhere near it. That is the simple premise that we would like to see operating the first time someone gets educated in using a motor vehicle.

A City Free from Porn

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (10:01) — Last Friday I had the privilege of attending and speaking at a rally in Toowoomba to promote the City Free from Porn campaign. I was inspired to see city leaders, such as mayor Paul Antonio and groups like City Women, led by Letitia Shelton, focusing their efforts on genuinely improving the health and wellbeing of their community and not on political correctness agendas like tearing down Australia Day. To work towards a city free from porn is a worthy aspiration, and I encourage everyone here to get on their website, cityfree.org.au, to find out more about this courageous initiative.

I took the opportunity at the rally to share the personal experience of my relationships being wrecked by the

presence of porn in the home, and I was encouraged by the number of men and couples who attended to pledge their strong opposition to what has essentially become an epidemic in our society. I have encouraged Victorian councils with the best interest of their families and their communities at heart to invest in similar initiatives. There is a better way for our families and our communities.

Victorian Education Excellence Awards

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (10:02) — I rise to speak of my trip to Swan Hill and Mildura last week to visit the finalists for the Victorian Education Excellence Awards, which were held last Friday night. The awards recognise inspirational teachers, principals and support staff that get the best out of their students.

I visited Chaffey Secondary College in Mildura and music teacher Luke Peak. Luke was a finalist in the Outstanding Secondary Teacher Award category and has transformed the school's music program using the students' passion for contemporary music as a learning tool. He has developed a program that allows students to learn songs that they love. He treats them as musicians, no matter their music ability or experience.

Next I headed to Swan Hill to meet teacher Riley Corrie at Swan Hill Specialist School. This is a fantastic school looking after children with autism and disabilities. Riley was also a finalist in the Outstanding Primary Teacher Award category. In addition to her classroom role, Riley provides professional development and mentoring in mainstream schools for teachers of students with autism. She became a regional program coordinator with Autism Connect and has grown the network of schools from three to 26.

Finally, I visited Swan Hill North Primary School to speak with principal Campbell McKay. This year they won the Outstanding School Advancement Award category. Over the past five years the school has implemented a teaching model based on positive psychology and effective classroom instruction to lift student achievement.

I wish to congratulate both finalists and Swan Hill North Primary on their fantastic achievements and for putting Northern Victorian Region schools on the map, making Victoria the Education State.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (10:04) — I am pleased to move this motion, but I do so also with a heavy heart because this is a motion that ought not be

being moved and ought not need to be moved, but I am going to move it so that the chamber and the community understand precisely what we are dealing with. I move:

That this house —

- (1) notes the resolution of the Council of 24 February 2016 seeking the production of documents relating to Labor's sky rail between Caulfield and Dandenong;
- (2) notes that with the sole exception of a closed briefing provided to a handful of members of Parliament to demonstrate Labor's electronic model on Monday, 27 June 2016, no documents have been provided to the house pursuant to this very clear directive;
- (3) reaffirms the intention of the Legislative Council to see these documents presented given the clear public interest and the impact of the project on communities near the rail corridor between Caulfield and Dandenong; and
- (4) reaffirms the right of the Council to demand and receive these documents and indicates its extreme displeasure with the Leader of the Government for his failure to respond properly and comprehensively to this order and reiterates the order demanding the documents be provided in full by 14 November 2017.

This is a contempt by this government — an arrogant and determined attempt to refuse to provide documents. It is worth noting the length of time involved here: from the very early period of February 2016 through to now, November 2017, the government has refused to provide these documents. There have been points of order, there have been questions and there has been pressure put on the government to respond, but it has steadfastly refused to honour the obligations under the standing orders and the directions of the chamber.

Returning to the original motion that was moved under standing order 11.01, it sought a copy of documents and it listed but was not limited to a series of categories of documents. The first was:

- (1) any sound and vibration attenuation studies and shadowing studies ...

undertaken on this Caulfield to Dandenong level crossing removal project. We know that there have been vibration studies done. We know that there have been very inadequate sound studies done, because the government has since released some documents publicly but not the full suite of documents publicly. We know from the electronic documents that there are calculations about shadowing, but they have not been shared comprehensively with the community, and that is simply wrong and it is simply unfair. People's houses have been impacted, people's lives have been impacted and people are making decisions about their major asset in many cases — their house, their home — in many of

the suburbs along that corridor. They are doing that without the information that the government possesses — the information about sound, diesel and noise and vibrations in general. It is my contention that this chamber should have had all of those documents. The government released a half-baked sound study publicly but has not sought to provide that document or the information around that document to the chamber, and it should have.

The government also should have complied with the next direction:

- (2) any directions given to research organisations regarding the make-up of focus groups and the product of any such research ...

We know that the government has done market research. We know in fact that much of the market research excluded people in the immediate sky rail corridor. People within 400 metres of the sky rail were told that they had a conflict of interest and were therefore not entitled to be part of the focus groups and the consultation groups that were involved. Those people were excluded. We know that that work was done. I know people who have had the phone calls from those pieces of research — they are honest people who actually documented the phone calls in some particular detail. We know that document exists, but the government refuses to provide the document pursuant to this order.

The next directions were:

- (3) details of submissions and comment either for or against elevated rail;
- (4) de-identified copies of all Level Crossing Removal Authority communications with the community ...

All of those points should have been provided to the chamber. They are very reasonable requests by the chamber. They are not cabinet documents; they are not documents that are commercial in confidence; they are not documents that attract any form of immunity whatsoever — yet the government has arrogantly refused to provide them.

On the electronic presentation of the 3D modelling, I was one of just a handful of MPs who, in early July 2016, went to a secret showing of the 3D modelling and saw some of the frightening images of the sky rail and what it will do to many individual properties. It is actually quite a sophisticated model, but it has not been shared with this chamber and it has not been shared with the community more broadly. Some individuals were allowed to see a version of it with respect to their own property, but the Legislative Council is not

allowed to have full access to it. Those who are seeking to have voluntary purchase schemes put in place are not necessarily entitled to see this in full.

All of this information, in my view, is publicly funded information that ought to be in the public domain. What is so secret about this document? Why will the government not provide this document? I will tell you why. It is because the government does not want to open itself up to litigation, because it is not necessarily an accurate representation of the shape of the sky rail. Every version of this that has been seen by people has had disclaimers all over it. You would have thought a government going forward with a major project would have released a set of plans, a set of blueprints. Honestly, here we have a massive engineering project and there is still not a set of plans, designs and drawings that are available in the public domain for people to look at and check. The chamber has sought this information, and Mr Jennings, as Leader of the Government, who was the subject of the motion, has wilfully decided that he will not provide that information. It is shameful and it is wrong.

On the minutes, agendas and correspondence of the community consultation panel chaired by Mr Steve Dimopoulos, the member for Oakleigh in the Assembly, we sought this information under FOI. It was provided in part under FOI, but the government has not deigned to provide it to the chamber even in the form that was released under FOI. How appalling is this behaviour? We know the document exists — I have a copy of the document — but the government cannot be bothered providing that to the chamber. What a shameful approach. I would strongly quibble with what was provided to me through FOI about the community tender advisory panel. The redactions are extraordinary. We do know in part why the government might not want to let it go, because we know from some of the minutes of a meeting of the community tender advisory panel on 17 August 2015, chaired by Mr Dimopoulos, that in a presentation — at agenda item 1 on page 2 of a document that this chamber is not allowed to see, according to the government — the advisory panel were told:

We are asking that you do not advocate or actively seek feedback from local community.

I can understand that the government would not want that out there. This is the community tender advisory panel — a group of community representatives who were put in place to represent the community but who were told that they actually cannot communicate with the community, they cannot seek views and they cannot make a representation to the community. What sort of

community tender advisory panel is that where the community link is severed? That is, I think, why the government did not want this document in the public arena, and that is why it took so long to get this document out through FOI. In the end it was going to become subject to a court proceeding, and the government realised that it had to release it at that point. But in its arrogance it said, 'We're not going to release this to the chamber. We're not going to release it to one of the chambers'.

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr DAVIS — We released a huge amount of information, and you know that to be the fact.

This goes further. People know the consultation around sky rail was a cart-before-the-horse sort of mechanism where they announced the sky rail and then they did much of the consultation after that.

We know from page 3 of the minutes that even at these early points:

Sessions weren't well communicated ...

The session times and dates didn't get communicated with the brochure.

This is about links to the community. Members of the community tender advisory panel were actually saying this to the government about the process.

So I can understand why this government did not want this document in the public domain, and I can understand why it would be awkward, embarrassing and inconvenient to have it before the chamber, but the fact is the document ought to have been provided to the chamber. There is nothing in it that is secret or that would attract any reservation in terms of what is released to me under FOI that could not have been released to the chamber. I would argue much, much more could have been released through this chamber process than was released through the FOI process, because the FOI process has, for example, serious commercial-in-confidence protections, which do not apply to documents motions in this chamber automatically. There is no automatic exemption for commercial-in-confidence matters. There is no automatic exemption even for other points that attract protections under FOI.

I continue down the list of items that were sought. We know the community tender advisory panel chaired by Mr Dimopoulos was a panel that was cut off from the community by edict. We know that because its own minutes show that quite clearly. Yet the government would not release that information to the chamber. On

the assessments of alternate models of level crossing removals considered by the government, we know that there is a process that the government went through here. We wanted to see them and the community wanted to see them, and the chamber so ordered that in fact those alternate models ought to have been available for perusal and that the cases for and against the different models ought to have been something that is able to be seen by the community — but not under this government.

We wanted the full business case for the government's announced sky rail option or such of the business case that has been completed to date. We know in the case of the level crossing removals the government proceeded without a business case. Despite the blather that it had gone on with in previous times, it went ahead and spent billions of dollars of public money without a business case. The Auditor-General pinged the government on this, saying that it is actually a risky procedure. Those who disagree with me should read pages 19 to 21 of the Auditor-General's report on the relevant investigation and they will see that he indicated that proceeding without a business case was inherently risky.

Indeed the government has now come forward with a shallow business case — if I can put it as kindly as is reasonable — a very shallow business case, and we know that the level crossing removals are already hundreds of millions of dollars over budget and likely approaching \$2 billion over budget. Looking at the government's own figures in the succession of budgets, it is clear that there is a \$1.8 billion variance. We know that the scuttlebutt around is that there are hundreds of millions of dollars more and additional variance that is occurring — easily likely to be more than \$2 billion.

So the government is proceeding without a business case. It did not have full costings in place on these level crossing removals, and it is proceeding in that way. It is very reasonable of the chamber to ask for the business case, or such of the business case that was provided, but even the shallow business case that has subsequently been released publicly by the government has not been provided to the chamber. So you have got to ask yourself why on earth this government would want to hide such background documents as would exist on that and why the government would want to obfuscate in this way.

On the sound studies, we know that the government has more comprehensive sound studies than what has been released. We know the flaws in the government sound studies that have been released. There is a comparison between a new sky rail and the current at-grade rail.

That is what their model does. It does not fully work out the sound impacts of going up and down the gradient, and it does not actually compare a trench option. There is no comparison in the public domain that compares a trench option.

Even worse than that, we know the government has assessments of the actual impact at certain points. Those impacts have not been shared with the community — not with the chamber and not even with those who are directly impacted in those areas. However, we know that VCAT has chiselled down and got some of those. I draw the chamber's attention to a recent VCAT case. This is Glen Eira City Council, 8 Egan Street, and it was held in April this year before Margaret Baird and Carol Daicic, members of VCAT. For those who want to go and look that up, the applicant is Goal Number 7 Pty Ltd and the VCAT case number is 695 in 2017. So you can go and read that case, but let me tell you in short summary what the case says. It shows effectively that the massive noise booming out from the sky rail will hit very hard onto those areas of the community. They refused a planning permit for a 16-level apartment building with ground level rail, and they blocked this process.

This is a very interesting case because there had been an earlier application which had been blocked on that site on different grounds. I actually feel the developer has been caught betwixt and between on this. The developer was told 'No' at an early point and 'Here are some design flaws in your proposal'. The developer went away, redesigned the property with respect to those design flaws and came back with a model that addressed VCAT's earlier concerns. But in the 2017 case VCAT said, 'Several factors have now intervened. Yes, we accept that you have redesigned your proposal. You have redesigned it, you have taken account of what the earlier VCAT ruling was and you have modified it. You have actually fixed the problems'. However, these are the changes that they pointed to:

These are the current construction of the sky rail elevated rail corridor and the introduction of DDO9 into the planning scheme.

VCAT said:

We also find that it has not responded ... to the changing physical circumstances associated with the sky rail project ...

In relation to the land at 8 Egan Street, zoned commercial 1, on the railway corridor immediately to the south of the land and the Dandenong Road major infrastructure elements, VCAT noted:

The final design and form of the 'sky rail', is not certain —

so even VCAT could not get to a final design for that —

however, we have been provided with some artist impressions which give us an understanding of the concept. It appears that the elevated rail structure will be 8.6 metres above ground level.

At that point near Egan Street in Carnegie, the tribunal found that rail noise was a central issue, and they said:

We return to rail noise below. This is relevant to the change in physical circumstances in several ways including that the acoustic evidence indicates the elevated rail structure will give rise to higher noise emissions as relevant to the proposed development compared with the at-grade railway.

And that is in existence now. The tribunal noted the earlier decisions and:

... made findings about traffic and access with an understanding that the level crossing would be removed but without any indication that an elevated solution was to proceed.

The tribunal also noted:

These works include elevation of the railway line on a structure of around 8.6 metres in height opposite/close to the subject land.

In a telling footnote the tribunal says the sky rail is:

Assumed to exclude any screening devices.

So that is the information they had.

The information presented at the hearing indicates that no screening will be included along the northern side of this section of the sky rail.

Images with the usual Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) caveats were provided to the respondents in the case, but the tribunal went further and said:

... although the parties agree that no detailed design information is publicly available to be certain of the design.

The tribunal went on at paragraph 95 to say:

We consider significant changes arise with the sky rail project as it relates to the subject land and environs. These include:

Changes to the physical appearance of the public environment of Egan Street including the visual and aural presence of the elevated rail structure ...

At paragraph 105, the tribunal said:

The elevated rail structure will cast shadows over spaces below it. However, it also appears that the proposed development will cast shadows over the northern part of the open space ...

Then it goes further on that point. At paragraph 115 it says:

It is relevant in considering the implications of sky rail that Mr Tardio's evidence is that noise from the elevated railway will be higher than emitted by the existing at-grade rail line with respect to dwellings in the proposed development ...

The south facade is the most affected with noise levels considerably lower on the east and west facades and substantially less with respect to the north facade.

Noise will be significantly higher at night based ...

measurement —

The maximum levels with also be higher.

Some maxima will be lower, notably at the three lower levels of the buildings.

But anything above levels two and three was going to get it in the neck from the sky rail. They went on to say:

As far as we are aware, none of the cases referred to in the evidence involved an elevated ... structure and we are concerned about the high noise levels for living rooms facing the elevated ... structure in the current proceeding.

They considered this quite closely. They also said:

We expect that there are ways in which windows can be physically attenuated to limit noise intrusion from sky rail ...

This is VCAT speaking; this is not me. This is a government tribunal that is deciding on a planning application for Egan Street, right near the sky rail.

We expect that there are ways in which windows can be physically attenuated to limit noise intrusion from sky rail, particularly relating to the southern facade.

So this is on the north side of the sky rail.

There remain, however, consequential impacts. One is with respect to the useability of (particularly) south-facing living rooms and balconies after 10.00 p.m. Another is with respect to natural ventilation when the windows must be closed to meet the design standards adopted by Mr Tardio.

So the sound acoustician — the acoustician who is doing the work for the developer who has got access to the sky rail sound data — says, 'Look, actually here's the data. Yes, it's noisier, but we can attenuate it by closing the doors and doing this and doing that'. But the tribunal was not moved by this. At paragraph 121 it said:

We note Mr Tardio's response to our questions on this matter and how ventilation might be provided. Even if this is able to be overcome, we consider that the tension between providing dwellings with outlook to the street and creating an internal environment that addresses rail noise from the elevated structure has not been sufficiently resolved in the design before us. This part of the site's context does not appear to

have informed the design response. This is a factor in the overall balancing of considerations we must make.

They made the consideration, and they said, 'No, you cannot proceed'. The tribunal said:

We are not satisfied that the design adopts a human scale in this narrow street setting and, with the sky rail structure, will create a canyon-effect.

They describe it as a 'canyon-effect' — the massive sky rail, the high building, the lack of sound attenuation. Honestly! These are government sound figures that have been held back from this chamber. VCAT is looking at them. They are saying they are bad, bad, bad — noisy — and 'You cannot proceed with your 16-storey apartment development because you are too close to the sky rail. It's too noisy'. We are using government data to knock this out, but the Parliament — the supreme organisation that is responsible for our land and our governance in this state — is not entitled, according to Mr Jennings and Labor, to hear the same information, the same secret data, the same secret sound data, that has been provided to VCAT. It is an absolute disgrace. It is a travesty of democracy. It is deeply wrong that the government is holding back data that it has.

This is not just VCAT saying it. I now have the actual documents provided by the Level Crossing Removal Authority to the developer. You can actually see the calculations; you can see how they have worked their way through it. I have no doubt the acoustician is right. I have no doubt that VCAT has made the right decision in this particular case. I do feel sorry for the developer who has been caught betwixt and between. He has modified his project, but the government has come along with a dirty, ugly, noisy sky rail in the meantime, and they will not even release the full details of that to the chamber.

This is very bad indeed. I am happy to make available the email from the LXRA, which lays out the sound data for 8 Egan Street — the secret sound data that has been denied to this chamber. Why has Mr Jennings not provided this document to the chamber, which was provided to an acoustician who was putting a case for the government? This is from Thursday, 23 March 2017, at 12.19 p.m. Kim Norton was involved in sending this material. There is a noise and vibration engineer — I will not name him — at the LXRA. He has clearly been doing hard work. He has got big work to do there working through all the noise and vibration issues, but the work of such an engineer is not available to the Parliament. The work is not available to the Parliament, according to this secretive approach by the Andrews government. This is absolutely appalling.

It was sent from Kim Norton at the LXRA. Goodness gracious. Why on earth should we trust a government that will not release its own data — data that it clearly has in its possession?

What correspondence have we actually had from the government on this? I think it is worth just stepping through the formal correspondence that has come to the chamber. On 21 March 2016 there was a holding letter:

The process of identifying and collating documents that might fall within the scope of the order is currently underway. When this process is completed, the government will review ... the documents for the purposes of providing its response, including considering whether any claims of executive privilege are to be made over ... the documents.

They never made claims of executive privilege because they never came back properly. On 20 June they came back and said:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution ...

The Council's resolution requires —

and this is correct; one dot point —

the production of, amongst other categories of documents, the electronic presentation of the 3D modelling ...

As the presentation can only be viewed on a computer with special software, the government invites members of the Council to view the presentation ... on Monday, 27 June ... at the Theatre ... Exhibition Street ...

As I say, I and a handful of others did attend that.

I come back to a single document headed 'Documents released'. Here it is; that is the sheet, stating:

Electronic presentation of the 3D modelling shown to residents in the Level Crossing Removal Authority's one-on-one ...

The date of the document is 2016 and the author is the Level Crossing Removal Authority. That is the document that was provided in a briefing to a handful of MPs. According to the government there are no other documents available on the sky rail at all. Really? We know those documents exist. I have got them under the FOI process in some cases. We know of other documents from the VCAT process. We know of all of those documents, and they have been denied. This is a terrible blow to basic democracy here. The community expects that these documents should have been released. I make the point that more than 10 000 people signed a petition against sky rail that was tabled in this chamber. I cannot think of anything that is more contemptuous than the rebuffing of those 10 000 people, even the basic honesty to provide documents that we know are in the government's

possession to the chamber and thereby to the community. Why on earth would the government think that that is right or fair? That is why this motion has been brought today, and I believe the government ought to provide these documents.

I know there are other documents that are in the government's possession too, because documents were tendered in the court proceedings that the Lower Our Tracks group ran in the Supreme Court. It was very clear the court was not convinced by the government's consultation processes. As a matter of law it felt that it could not support the community, but it did indicate its concerns about the government. The government media adviser is sitting over there in the chamber laughing and carrying on. I am sorry, but that is actually showing deep arrogance to the community. You may actually think it is funny, mate, but it is not funny. It is arrogant —

Mr Mulino — On a point of order, Acting President, it is against standing orders for a member to make reference to and describe people who are not in the chamber as members.

Mr DAVIS — On the point of order, Acting President, it is correct that it is wrong under the standing orders to refer to a member outside the chamber but in the precinct in that way, but I would also point out that it is wrong for them to be interjecting into proceedings in this way, communicating in a manner that seeks to diminish the proceedings, given the seriousness of the matters that are being debated.

Mr Mulino — Further on the point of order, Acting President, so Mr Davis's fundamental point of order is that somebody else did something wrong so he is allowed to do something wrong?

Mr DAVIS — Further on the point of order, Acting President, I have conceded that under the standing orders I should not refer to those who are outside the immediate chamber, but I have referred to the reason that I did so. I believe there is another breach that has occurred.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, Acting President, the standing orders are not optional. You cannot just choose the ones you like and choose the ones you do not, so I would urge you, Acting President, to uphold the standing orders, whether Mr Davis feels breaking or ignoring them is justified or not.

Mr Finn — On the point of order, Acting President, I would be very, very keen to know which number standing order Mr Mulino is referring to, because I have been in this place now for some 11 years and I am

not familiar with the standing order that he has referred to. I would love to know which number he has come up with this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — I am going to actually end the debate on this one. I think we need to move on. I think there has been plenty of discussion, and I think the various parties have answered each other. I ask Mr Davis to continue his contribution, and I just remind him to stick to the motion and to not be too personal or bait people — and vice versa to the other side. Mr Davis, please continue your contribution.

Mr DAVIS — I thank you for your guidance, Acting President. Unfortunately somebody outside the chamber laughing like a hyena at the impact on the community is not the right way to go. I want to conclude this now. I have made the points that I need to make. This motion notes the resolution of 24 February 2016. It notes that with the sole exception of the closed briefing in June 2016 no documents have been provided. It reaffirms the intention of the Council to seek those documents, it reaffirms the Council's right to demand those documents and it calls on the government to proceed to provide those documents by 14 November.

I believe I have comprehensively laid out that documents do exist. I have pointed to those documents; I have some of those documents in my possession. They ought to have been provided to the chamber. They are only a small sample of the many, many thousands of documents that relate to this request. The government has had a very, very long period of time to provide those documents. I think the chamber's patience is well running out, and for that reason I ask the chamber to assert — strongly — its right to those documents.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:38) — I just want to point out from the outset that the government will be opposing this motion, but I want to start by saying that in opposing basically everything Mr Davis has said, I found his delivery today somehow extra stylish for some reason —

Ms Lovell — It's the new suit.

Mr LEANE — Yes, it might be. Something about it seems really stylish, so I just want to start with that.

This motion indicates extreme displeasure towards the Leader of the Government for doing his job and upholding his oath as a minister, but I have to say that I do not understand it. I have to say that outside the chamber we are feeling extreme displeasure as to why

the coalition does not support the level crossing removal program. The level crossing removal program is about making our network safer. It is about removing the opportunities for collisions between trains, cars, buses, trucks, pedestrians and cyclists. You remove that conflict when you remove a level crossing. It is also about improving our rail network, and the improvements to our rail network do not just involve removing a set of gates. In the process we will improve the signalling, we will put in new track and we will make the network much more reliable. So our transport network will get an amazing improvement to it.

It also alleviates congestion on the roads, because we do not have boom gates down for 40 minutes, 45 minutes and close to 50 minutes or an hour in peak-hour. That is obviously a great improvement to our road networks, it improves productivity and it is great for the economy — all the things that I would have thought the coalition would support. It is a sad, sad day when we have major parties that are against removing level crossings. I think they are not coming along with the community in the way they are reacting.

Now, I know Mr Davis has an obsession with what he calls 'sky rail' — an obsession with nine level crossings being removed along the Dandenong-Pakenham line; an obsession about how they are to be removed, which has been endless; and an obsession about what it is going to look like. Well, I would suggest to Mr Davis that it is looking pretty much close to what it is going to look like now. It is progressing well, the project will be done, the rail will be elevated and the conflicts between the road and the rail will be eliminated by the middle of next year or thereafter. After that, the existing rusty old hardware of the existing rail will be removed, and to replace that existing old rail hardware — and further abreast — there will be parkland, there will be a shared-use path so people will be able to cycle, there will be activity centres, there will be off-leash dog parks, there will be trees, there will be vegetation and there will be community spaces.

I think where Mr Davis is not coming along with the community is that people will appreciate this project, and they are already appreciating this project. They can see the span is already over the roads. The elevated rail track is already over those roads. So when people are sitting at a boom gate now and being held up for a long time — in particular Murrumbeena Road is one of them that is just appalling as we speak — they can see that there is a rail bridge above their heads when they are sitting in their cars, and they are thinking, 'I cannot wait until the trains are travelling over these particular roads'.

Now, with Mr Davis everything is a conspiracy. ‘It’s going to be noisier than it is now’; well, that is simply not true. Channel 7 recently had an expert, an engineer, that stated that this will be quieter when it is on new tracks and it is elevated. Then they cut to Mr Davis — no expert in much, I would have thought — who says, ‘Oh, it’s going to be booming out’, based on nothing but his own drivel. It was the funniest bit of vision I have seen for ages. We have an expert that is trained in this area. An expert, an engineer, says it will definitely be quieter, then they cut to Mr Davis and he goes, ‘Oh, no, it’s going to be a lot louder, it’s going to be booming out’, based on nothing but the drivel that rotates inside his head. I think in 20 years time Mr Davis is going to be walking around in circles muttering about sky rail.

It is like Mr Davis has found something new. I have said this in the chamber before: when something travels over something else — one mode of transport travels over another mode, or maybe a mode of transport travels over a river or a creek — for thousands of years that has been called a bridge. Romans were building them. It is actually a bridge; it is nothing new.

Ms Pulford interjected.

Mr LEANE — Well, the Romans built bridges. That is what the Romans did for us. The Romans built sky bridges. They are in members’ own electorates. There are sky rails in Malvern. There are sky rails in Burwood, Box Hill, Ringwood, Sandringham, Brighton, Caulfield, Mount Waverley and Hawthorn. They have been there for decades in your own electorate, Mr Davis. Elevated rail has been there for decades.

You are not coming with the community, and you are going to lose out. When you go through the real estate newspapers and when you go through what they publish, since the sky rail has been announced property values, especially around Carnegie and Murrumbeena, have gone up by 30 per cent — kerching! Here is Mr Davis saying the world is going to end and everything is going to be terrible for the residents, it is all bad, but for the residents their properties are up by 30 per cent. They will be able to walk from one side of the rail corridor to the other at any given point safely. So if their back fences are on the line they can access a shared-use path and a park and they can walk their dogs, and if one of their young children should unfortunately get out of the house without them knowing, they are not going to be walking onto a live track like they can now.

So there is only ever upside and, as I said from the start, I think it is sad that the coalition have rallied against the level crossing removal program. I think it is sad thing. I do not know who they are running with. They are not running with the community. The more that Mr Davis and Mr Finn talk about and the more they bring up the level crossing removal program, as far as the government is concerned, the better. The more you bring this issue up, the better, because if you think it is an unpopular activity this government is doing and if you think you are going to get some political currency by rallying against it, then good for you, that is fantastic. Please keep doing it. Please keep bringing up the level crossing removal program. It does not matter how many times you bring it up. We will appreciate it every, every single time.

Ms Pulford — We thank them for it.

Mr LEANE — We do thank them. It is just fantastic. Then what gets me is that there was this: from the early days they knew we were going to remove the level crossing. They went out there and they got community members — sometimes it is a lot of members of their party — to say, ‘We all want it to go underground. It has to go underground. It all has to be a trough’. That happened in Cheltenham — ‘It all has to be underground. It has to be a trough. Skyrail — the world is going to end’. It was announced that the best remedy at Cheltenham was to actually put a trough, not to have elevated rail. So what do Mrs Peulich and the people who were running the campaign —

Mr Gepp — It is a trench.

Mr LEANE — No, it is a terrible thing. It is a trench. Oh no, businesses out there are going to suffer with a trench! They have been campaigning for a bridge.

Ms Pulford — How many jobs did the level crossing program create?

Mr LEANE — How many jobs? That is an aspect that actually really saddens me as well. Ms Pulford has just brought up something that I do not understand as well. Why would the coalition rally against thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs that have been created?

Ms Pulford — And people go to shops, too, with that income.

Mr LEANE — Well, they do. I suppose it is all about enterprise, which you would think the coalition would be happy with. But no, they have to rally against everything. What I do not understand is this passion

against elevated rail but then when it is decided to be a trough there is passion against a trough. Before the last election the coalition came up with a plan for Rowville rail that was going to be elevated 18 metres in the sky. Their Rowville rail plan — 18 metres in the sky. It was going to be touching the clouds.

I think in fairness to the coalition they do not understand major projects. They never embark on them when they are in government. They never invest in them. They never build them. I think, in defence of them, they have a major ignorance of how to go about delivering major projects, how to build them and how to plan for them, because they never actually do it. They are good at calling for major projects. They call for roads, they call for rails here and rails there and they call for roads and all sorts of things — very good at calling. They call for everything, but their problem is that they never deliver. They are not very good at delivering.

I would have thought that delivering and building major projects are probably the more important aspects compared to the calling. It may just be me, but I think the end result is when you get a new rail, you get a new road, you get a new school or you get a new hospital. That is probably the outcome that you want. That is probably the best aspect of actually delivering something. I know calling is good. I do not know how effective it is, but I know calling is good. But as far as we are concerned we are a government that gets on with it. We want to leave a legacy of things that have been built for the benefit of the people we represent.

So I have to say again, as I started, that the government will be opposing this particular motion. We will be opposing this particular motion from a party that, when in government —

Mr Finn — The spirit of cooperation!

Mr LEANE — All this call for documents when they were in government. I mean, the best one was the east–west link short-term business case.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — Whatever the project value was, there was a call in this chamber for the business case, and then what was delivered was a 12-page pamphlet. It had beautiful photos in it. It was this beautiful glossy thing — you do not count the covers, because there is two pages — and then inside on one page there was a whole half-picture of a tram. This is a road project, but they had a whole half-picture of a tram. Then on another one of the pages there was a big, beautiful, colourful tram. It was fantastic. Then on one of the

other pages there was a three-quarter picture — or it might have been one page — of pedestrians walking in the middle of the city, nowhere near the project. It was happy. It was colourful.

This is what Mr Davis's government delivered when there was a call for a business case, so I think this government stands on its record that it has produced more documents in this house than any other government. We are happy to produce documents that have not got concerns around commercial in confidence and commercial documents, because we need to be able to operate as a government to be able to put more tender documents out there.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr LEANE — That is right, and protecting people's business interests. So we reject this motion, we will be voting against it and we would urge everyone else to vote against it as well.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:55) — I rise to speak to Mr Davis's motion. The Cranbourne-Pakenham elevated rail project has been very sensitive for affected communities that live, work and go to school near the line. Over the past 18 months my colleagues Ms Springle and Ms Pennicuik and I have listened to diverse views of members of the community, consulted with experts and project stakeholders and undertaken visits to the affected sites. It is worth noting from my colleague who is in fact a resident nearby some of the construction sites in Noble Park that she is very happy to see those works being undertaken in the area, and in fact it is her view that once those works are completed it will be a far superior solution to what the current conditions are in the Noble Park area.

It is certainly understandable that many of the residents and businesses that are located close to the elevated rail have the most concerns, particularly with respect to loss of privacy or overshadowing. There have been many deficiencies with the implementation of this project. The critical deficiencies occurred prior to the announcement of the elevated rail solution, and certainly it will not be any surprise to members in this chamber, because the Greens have raised these issues in the past. There was insufficient discussion with the community about the comparative advantages and disadvantages of all the options for the removal of those level crossings. A lot of community angst could have been avoided if much better communication and information had been provided up-front rather than after the announcement.

The state government provided little explanation of the benefits of elevated rail, with deference to an artful video rendering of the proposed station and without a meaningful discussion of how the project as a whole could potentially benefit the local community and commuters from further afield. Neither the community nor local councils were given the opportunity to provide meaningful input into the design of the main piece of infrastructure — the elevated rail tracks — particularly the exact alignment and how this will affect neighbouring businesses, residents and the broader community. There has been no clarity as to how the voluntary acquisition of property along the rail corridor will function. Since the project construction commenced there has been woeful disclosure of detailed information on vegetation removal, particularly which trees would be removed, why the removal would be necessary, when the removals would happen and the extent of tree removal associated with the different possible options. The Greens have raised this issue both in this place and directly in advocacy meetings with the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA).

There has been a failure to develop confidence in the community that heritage elements will be preserved satisfactorily and incorporated into the final design, and I make particular reference to Carnegie and Murrumbena stations. The Greens have raised this in this place and directly with the LXRA, resulting in the LXRA committing to preserving parts of heritage stations for incorporation into the new stations or other aspects of the project.

The Greens also have concerns that the life span of this critical infrastructure project will not be as long as claimed by the state government. While the brief provided by the government to the Level Crossing Removal Authority for the Cranbourne-Pakenham line was for two tracks, it is not clear that two tracks will be sufficient to accommodate express metropolitan services, V/Line services and freight trains beyond 2030. It would have been prudent to look for quadruplication of tracks on the Caulfield–Dandenong corridor instead of solely removing level crossings. I know rail experts, such as the Rail Futures Institute, advocated such a holistic solution to the government prior to the construction of the elevated rail. Unfortunately the retrofit of two additional tracks would have major implications for communities neighbouring the line, not least due to the need for more property acquisitions. It would jeopardise the existence and utility of the parks, gardens, community features and sporting grounds that the government has promised will be created under the elevated tracks. It is certainly worth noting — and I draw on the comments of my colleague Ms Springle in terms of that project that is

rolling out in the Noble Park area — that in fact those elevated tracks actually remove what was a physical barrier between the two halves of Noble Park, and in fact that will be removed as part of the project.

However, we as a Parliament must learn some lessons from this experience so that future infrastructure projects will be better received by the community. Specifically for rail projects there must be meaningful, comprehensive, early and continuing community consultation and the provision of clear, accurate and timely information must be mandatory. Such projects must accommodate forecast rail traffic over the long term for at least 50 years. The projects must conduct sufficient property acquisition from the outset to allow for an easement of sufficient width for all the tracks required to accommodate rail traffic over the long term.

The Victorian Greens are committed to transparent and open government. When ministers and agencies hide documents about projects that affect the amenity of neighbourhoods and the livability of people’s homes, this is not beneficial to democracy; indeed it is clearly secrecy in aid of managing the messaging around the government’s agenda. The house has an important role to play in scrutiny of government. I certainly take the point in Mr Leane’s contribution about those matters that may be confidential. Certainly the Greens do not have a desire for the explicit details of people’s backyards to be a public matter, and nor should they be. If I was one of those residents, I certainly would not want the specific details of my backyard released in a public forum. However, there are a range of documents that support this project, and given the Greens’ view in relation to scrutiny of government, transparency and openness and in terms of forwarding this principle, the Greens supported the documents motion back on 24 February 2016 and we will do so again today with this particular documents motion.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (11:01) — This is one of a succession of motions from Mr Davis on this subject. Indeed around the traps today this is being called the sky rail documents motion part 2. But this is not *The Godfather Part II*; this is not an improvement — this is *Police Academy 2*. The first one was bad enough, but this is even worse. We went through this whole tawdry debate two weeks ago, and this is just going over old ground.

Mr Davis likes to pretend that he is in this chamber proposing motion after motion on documents to protect the citizens of Melbourne. What he is really doing is using this as yet another vehicle for expressing more hyperbole, more exaggeration, more myths around this project. The real motive for this motion is that

Mr Davis will oppose this project at all costs. Mr Davis will do all he can to try to sully this project. He is not about delivering projects, as Mr Leane indicated. We can look at his track record and see that the coalition government delivered nothing. What he is about is pulling down projects, as I have said on a number of occasions. Mr Davis demonstrated when he was in government that he was a flawed minister, but he is an excellent opposition shadow minister. He is obsessed with pulling down and criticising projects, not about doing anything constructive.

Other members of the opposition every now and then put forward motions that actually have a substantive component. It is not often, but it has happened. However, Mr Davis perennially comes into this place with motions that have nothing to them other than calling for more and more documents. This is not motivated by the interests of the people in the areas that he has discussed. There are 50 documents on the public record. There has been far more documentation and far more disclosure in relation to this project than for any major projects in the previous term of government. The people that he is purporting to protect are not wanting more and more lengthy government documents.

What Mr Davis is doing is trying to create an atmosphere where no matter what is disclosed he is trying to create myths about what is potentially not on the public record. This is all about Mr Davis making unfounded assertions about the project based upon mistruths, based upon claims about documents that are not in the public realm, knowing full well that on the substance of the various issues he has raised, such as noise, amenity, freight and air quality, there is extensive expert documentation already on the public record rebutting the claims that he is making.

There is a great irony in those opposite continuously coming into this place on opposition business days and moving document motion after document motion. As I said, it is very rare in this place that we deal with any motions of substance, any motions where those opposite put forward a policy of their own for debate on its merits. What we have opposite is a constant string of motions around documents they would have never in government produced for the public record. The irony here, as Mr Leane pointed out, is that when it came to their own projects they disclosed far less than this government has. If you compare what was put on the public record for the east-west project — a pamphlet — with 50 documents already on the public record from the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA), it makes clear what a joke this kind of motion is.

Then there is the irony of shadow ministers opposite constantly putting forward motions claiming documents that they know full well are often the subject of being commercial-in-confidence or of having executive privilege, when they themselves were often the worst offenders in the previous term of government when it came to disclosing anything for the public record. The irony that I just referred to is extremely relevant here in that it calls into question what this motion is really about. This is not about the opposition seeking additional relevant information for accountability purposes. This is about the opposition seeking to criticise a project that the community has embraced, based upon myths and exaggerations. I will point out in a moment some of the myths that are being peddled, but that is what this motion is about.

There is a vast amount of information on the public record, and there has been a vast amount of public engagement. There have been public meetings and there have been websites that have actually won awards. I have been at award ceremonies where LXRA websites have been nominated and won awards. So the public engagement process has been extensive. Indeed the Auditor-General in a report from earlier this year commended the LXRA for showing leadership in government for public participation.

Now those opposite are very good at coming in here and sniping at the delivery of major projects. I will be the first to admit that delivering a major project is complicated. It is complicated, but those opposite have a policy both in government and in opposition of doing nothing. Let us see when the community makes a judgement on this government what they prefer. Let us see whether they prefer a government that does nothing or whether they prefer a government that deals with the difficulty and complexity of actually delivering projects. Those opposite have almost nothing to point to in their previous term in government, and I suspect they will have almost nothing to point to at the upcoming election in terms of what they would seek to achieve in the following term of government. But with a state growing at 150 000 people a year and Melbourne growing at more than 100 000 people a year, it is not enough to sit on our hands. Doing nothing is easier in one sense. It means there are no project management complexities. It means there are no public participation complexities. Doing nothing is simple in one sense, but it is not an option for this community, and it is absolutely crystal clear from engagement with the community that they do not want a government in this environment to sit on their hands.

So we have this motion in the face of 50 documents having been released to the public. This motion

condemns the government and condemns the Leader of the Government for failing to provide even more information, but let us look at what is on the public record and let us look at what the opposition has said in response to information that is on the public record.

Let us look at noise. Noise has been an issue that Mr Davis has raised in the public realm on a number of occasions. There are a number of expert reports in the public sphere on this issue. As Mr Leane indicated, one of the most telling public instances of commentary on this issue was on the Channel 7 news, where an expert engineer said that there will be no additional noise and that in sections it will be quieter. The news item segued immediately to Mr Davis, who said it is very clear that the sound will boom out over long distances. ‘Boom’ and ‘long’, I might say, are non-technical terms. What we have from Mr Davis is hyperbole, what we have is exaggeration and what we have is inaccuracy. This is what we find from those opposite on issue after issue.

Another example is the straddle carrier and the fearmongering that those opposite, including Mr Davis, have peddled on this issue. Again there are expert reports in the public realm. There is the straddle carrier advanced engineering document. Experts contributed to that document; experts confirmed the use of this technology. And what do we get in the face of that expert opinion that is put in the public realm? From Mr Davis in *Hansard*:

It is very clear that people are at risk ... If one of these 420-tonne beams lands on a train, hits somebody's car or comes onto the side of a house, it will cause devastation.

That is the level of debate we have. We have on the one hand experts saying the noise will be quieter in sections and experts supporting the use of the straddle carrier and we have on the other hand the opposition peddling myths and the opposition peddling fear. What they are all about is doing nothing in government and in opposition opposing everything and taking the easy way out.

As I said, when we get to November next year it will be very interesting to see if they propose any major public transport solutions for this city. The community wants action. If those opposite come back with nothing more than a project which had a pamphlet supporting it and which was subsequently shown to deliver 46 cents in the dollar in public benefit, those opposite will find that the politics they think is working in their favour in fact is not.

Let us look at another issue: freight. The opposition went out fearmongering in my electorate in Gippsland claiming that freight trains would not be able to travel

on the elevated corridor. Again they ignored the report of experts, which detailed that the corridor could take freight rates heavier than Australian axle load limits. Again it was a completely inaccurate representation of that issue.

Mr Gepp — A fabrication.

Mr MULINO — A fabrication. The opposition claimed that the elevated rail would require too many trees to be cut down. Again, there was an expert-based comprehensive trees and vegetation report. Experts wrote that report; it is in the public realm. Mr Davis then said, and again I quote from *Hansard*:

What has occurred in recent weeks is the stripping out of literally hundreds of trees, many of them very large, established trees ...

I have no idea whether he has read the 50 reports — he may have, and he may be wilfully stating inconsistent ‘facts’ in this place — but what is absolutely crystal clear is that no matter what is on the public record Mr Davis’s approach would be to come in here and fearmonger about things that he asserts are not on the public record. That is his whole mode of operating in relation to this issue. In the public community he peddles fear and in this place he mischaracterises issues. In this place he says things in direct conflict with experts. I will leave it up to the members of this place and I will leave it up to the members of the community to decide who they want to trust.

The fundamental issue here is that of course governments should be held accountable for the delivery of major projects. This government has been complimented and this government has been given awards in the public realm by independent organisations in relation to the level crossings project in particular. This government has been complimented in an Auditor-General’s report in relation to public participation. We will stand by our record when it comes to the way in which we have engaged with the public. When you look at community sentiment reports, the level crossings project is running at very high levels of support. We stand by the accountability and the transparency that this government has demonstrated on this project.

What this motion demonstrates to me yet again — and it is one of a succession of motions, as I indicated, on this project — is that it is not about a genuine desire for more information, because even when information is put in the public realm and it is verified and written and sourced by experts, those opposite contradict it flatly anyway. This motion is not about getting more information into the public realm. This motion is about

continuing a hysterical campaign of criticism at all costs, and they do this in relation to every major project that this government is prosecuting.

Look back at their track record: a handful of level crossings removed and no major projects undertaken, and the major project that they put on the public agenda had a shocking business case and a shocking public policy justification. Let us look at our track record, the track record that we will take to the public: a highly transparent process and dozens of level crossings removed or well underway. What has occurred in this term when it comes to level crossing removals is far, far greater — orders of magnitude greater — than what any government in recent times has managed to achieve. That is what the community expects in the face of growing congestion and population growth. They want governments to manage transparency, they want governments to engage with communities and they want governments to appropriately help those who are adversely affected. What they do not want is for governments to take the easy way out and do nothing, because after a while that is not the easy way out for the community; that makes the quality of life far worse for the community. As Mr Leane indicated, we are going to be opposing this motion, and I urge all others in the chamber to do likewise.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (11:17) — I will sum up very briefly. This is a very reasonable motion in the context of the contempt of the government for the chamber. We know that only one document has been provided. We know that there are many thousands of documents. We know that some of them have been obtained by other means, but nonetheless they ought to have been provided to this chamber in an open and transparent way. This is about the documents, and it is actually about transparency. It is actually about seeing what is a very important aspect of this in terms of the chamber's scrutiny of government role.

I make one thing very clear: the opposition supports level crossing removal, but we do not support the imposition of bad policy on communities. We actually support the use of rail under road. I make the point that if the government wanted to use a sky rail option, it could have gone to the election with that. It did not; it actually went to the election hiding its policy. Indeed people like Mr Dimopoulos in the Assembly in emails to local residents openly indicated to them that it would be rail under road, clearly misleading them.

I also want to make the point here that some of the documents that have not been provided relate directly to safety and some of the safety assessments that are a

very important part of any major project. The government has not been open and transparent on many of these safety issues. People are at risk along the corridor. I make the warning here very clear that if the project in some way goes astray, that could put at risk cars or a train or indeed a local house and the community. We need to be very careful here.

The government ought to have put those safety documents in the public domain through that resolution made back in February 2016. This is an arrogant government and a government that is doing the wrong thing. It ought to have provided these documents. I think this is a very moderate motion in those circumstances, and I think the government needs to heed that and respond with the documents by 14 November, as is sought.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 26

Atkinson, Mr	O'Donohue, Mr
Bath, Ms	Ondarchie, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Bourman, Mr	O'Sullivan, Mr
Carling-Jenkins, Dr (<i>Teller</i>)	Patten, Ms
Crozier, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Peulich, Mrs
Davis, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Dunn, Ms	Ramsay, Mr
Finn, Mr	Ratnam, Dr
Fitzherbert, Ms	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Hartland, Ms	Springle, Ms
Lovell, Ms	Wooldridge, Ms
Morris, Mr	Young, Mr

Noes, 14

Dalidakis, Mr	Mikakos, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Elasmar, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Gepp, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Shing, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Jennings, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Leane, Mr	Symes, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Tierney, Ms

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (11:25) — I move:

That this house notes the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government, including, but not limited to —

- (1) the Ombudsman's investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rorts scandal;
- (2) the Fair Work Commission investigation into the former Government Whip, Cesar Melhem;
- (3) the Victoria Police investigation into the rorting claims of a second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker;

- (4) the IBAC investigation into the Deputy President and printing invoices for membership scandal; and
- (5) the IBAC investigation into Victoria Police's handling of the collision involving the now Premier's taxpayer-funded vehicle in January 2013.

The Minister for Health, Ms Hennessy, may think otherwise, but the Andrews government's favourite four-letter word is 'rort' — that is the fact of the matter. I understand that Ms Hennessy is now doing a little bit of work for the Northern Territory tourist commission, but we will leave that where it is.

Victorians from one end of the state to the other are asking themselves: 'Is this government corrupt? Do we have a mob of crooks on Spring Street running this state?'. Increasingly the response to that question is yes. The Andrews government has been in office now for almost three years — God, it seems like a hell of a lot longer! They have built up quite a reputation for themselves — an extraordinary reputation for incompetence, an extraordinary reputation for waste and an extraordinary reputation for shysterism. It is the latter — the shysterism, the shonkiness, the dodginess, the sniffiness — that we are having a look at in this motion here today.

It is something that I have been concerned about for a very long time, and it falls in with my other great concern — that is, the attitude of Australians and indeed Victorians to government in general. There is no doubt that the average voter, the average Australian — and I do not use that term in a pejorative sense, because to be an average Australian is a great thing and something that everybody should be very proud of — does not have a very, very high opinion of politics and politicians. I used to say when Mother Teresa was alive that if she came to Australia today she would be hailed as one of the great humanitarians of our time and a living saint but if she announced the day after that that she was entering Parliament she would become a dirtbag in the view of the average Australian. That is unfortunately the truth of the matter. People out there think we are all on the take — they think we are all thieves and shysters — and they think the country is full of thieves and communists. Looking at the Andrews government, you can understand why they have that attitude.

Arrogance and bullying are two things that are clearly marks of this government and particularly this Premier, who has bullied, I think, just about everybody he can find from his own cabinet ministers to people on the street. His arrogance knows no end. His arrogance is quite extraordinary. Here is a man who in his own mind can do no wrong. Here is a man who knows everything

about everything. This is our Premier, Daniel Andrews. How dare anybody question him on anything? He is the depository of all knowledge —

Mrs Peulich — Repository.

Mr FINN — 'Repository'; I am sorry. It could be the depository as well!

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr FINN — I know there are a few people, Mr Ramsay, who would like to make a deposit in or around the Premier, but in fact he is the repository of all knowledge. How dare anybody question him at all? The fact of the matter is that he leads a government which is very, very open to charges of corruption. He leads a government that, if it was in Queensland, would already be under investigation by more bodies than you could poke a stick at. In fact if Daniel Andrews was the Premier of Queensland, he probably would have been sacked by now and there would have been an investigation, but unfortunately — and I say that advisedly — he is the Premier of Victoria, and we are stuck with him. He is absolutely getting away with murder.

Mrs Peulich — And he will increase that.

Mr FINN — He will increase that — my word he will. You think he is bad now. What would he be like if he won in November next year? God help us all! What would he be like as Premier of this state, given how he treats his own people, members of his own party, if he happened to fall over the line next November?

Mrs Peulich — He is frightening.

Mr FINN — It is frightening.

Mrs Peulich — No, he is frightening.

Mr FINN — He is very frightening. In fact I saw him yesterday, and I complimented him on the Halloween costume that he was wearing. He informed me that in fact he was not wearing any costume at all. But that is another point altogether.

This government is a government that, as I said, is open to charges of corruption. Certainly when people look at this government it is not surprising that they have no faith in politicians, because this Andrews government has given nobody in this state any reason to have faith in this Parliament, it has given nobody any reason to have faith in the government and it has given nobody any reason to have faith in members of this Parliament. That I think is very, very sad indeed, because

everybody in this country — everybody in this state — has a right, I believe, to have a belief that the government and the Parliament are doing the right thing by them. Everybody has that right. But they cannot and do not have that right here in Victoria, because they know — indeed we all know — that the first and foremost beneficiary of everything that this government does is itself. That is what it is all about. They are all about themselves. They do not care. They do not care about the people of this state. They do not care about, it seems, their own reputation. All they care about is winning a quick vote. All they care about is looking after their mates. And God knows, have we not seen a few incidents of that over the journey.

And of course right now with the Northcote by-election in full swing we see a Premier who should be on the Olympic diving backflip team, he is doing such an extraordinary job of backflips on just about every issue known to man.

Mrs Peulich — It's called lying.

Mr FINN — Unfortunately, Mrs Peulich, I cannot use that terminology because —

Mrs Peulich — I can.

Mr FINN — Yes, I think you just did, and I hope Hansard picked it up. But I cannot use that because that would be grossly unparliamentary, and that is something, as I am sure the house would be aware, that I would never indulge in; that is for sure.

But we have before the house a number of issues under discussion at the moment, related but not limited to the Ombudsman's investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rorts scandal. The Ombudsman has this under investigation, so I am a bit loath to go into too much detail, but I think the people of Victoria have a right to feel that they have been cheated. I think the people of Victoria have a right to feel that they have been ripped off. It is clear, even from the most cursory glance at what has happened here, that there has been shysterism afoot by this government. In fact they would not be the government without the sort of shysterism that we are talking about. But putting that aside, as I said, that is a matter for the Ombudsman, and I am sure she will do a very good job in reporting on this. What I think is probably worse than the red shirt scandal is the attempts by this government to cover up — the attempts by this government to hide what they have done.

Mr Ondarchie — Guilty.

Mr FINN — They are guilty; indeed they are very much, Mr Ondarchie. They are the guilty party.

Mrs Peulich — The guilty party is back.

Mr FINN — The guilty party is back, Mrs Peulich. The guilty party is most certainly back. And I tell you what, those of us who were elected in 1992 — Mrs Peulich was one of them, I was another and there are a few of us still left around the place — well remember the strength of the 'Guilty Party' television and media campaign. That was directed at a Premier who was not corrupt. Certainly she was incompetent, and her government was incompetent. They had no idea what they were doing. They in fact stuffed the state.

Mr Ondarchie — Tony Sheehan.

Mr FINN — Well, Tony Sheehan, Tom Roper — you name it. They were all there.

Mr Ondarchie — Peter Spyker.

Mr FINN — I will get to him in a minute. I well remember the day I found out that Tom Roper had been made Treasurer. I had to check the diary. I looked at the calendar, and I said, 'It's not April the 1st, is it?'. I could not believe it. But back then you had people like Peter Spyker. He was I think the transport minister back in those days, and he was just hopeless. I mean he was a nice chap, but fair dinkum, he had no idea what he was doing. But nobody was saying back then that Tom Roper, Tony Sheehan, Joan Kirner, John Cain or Rob Jolly —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — Haermeyer was after them; that is right. He came in in 1992 as well I think.

But nobody was saying that any of those ministers prior to 1992 were corrupt. They were saying that they were guilty of gross incompetence that left the state almost bankrupt — very close to bankrupt. In fact if the cabinet of the day had been a company board, they would not have just been sacked, Mr Ondarchie, they would have been locked up. They would have been charged, and they would have been locked up for trading while insolvent. That is the fact of the matter. What was happening back then was just extraordinary. We had train drivers being paid with cheques from the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria and all sorts of weird and wonderful things going on.

So we had that classic example of what the Labor Party does while they are in government, and they were most certainly guilty of gross incompetence and of trashing

the state and its reputation. We well remember — and I am sure Mr Ondarchie does; he will join me in saying this — ‘What is the capital of Victoria? About 7 cents’. We remember those jokes. It was an embarrassment as a Victorian to travel interstate, because wherever you went people would drag that out and have a good laugh at your expense. But there were never at any time accusations of corruption on the part of the Cain or the Kirner governments.

Move on to 2017 and look at the Andrews government. It is not just the same level of incompetence as the Cain and Kirner governments but another level of corruption that we are seeing. It is not just corruption but a cover-up mentality. There is the fact that they have not only taken the Ombudsman to the Victorian Supreme Court — you would have thought that any government that was trying to hide what they were doing would be happy enough with taking the matter to the Victorian Supreme Court — but of course when they lost in the Victorian Supreme Court, where did they go? They were off to Canberra.

Mr Ondarchie — With whose money?

Mr FINN — You suspect that Mr Andrews has always wanted to go to Canberra, but in this instance he went to Canberra using our money. He went to the High Court of Australia, and I would be fascinated to know how much this government has spent of taxpayers money taking this matter to the Supreme Court of Victoria and to the High Court of Australia. If it is not in the millions, I would be staggered, because we all know that QCs do not come cheap. We all know that our brothers and sisters in the legal fraternity know a good gig when they see one, and this most certainly was from their point of view a good gig, but it was not a good gig in the view of the Victorian taxpayer. We have a situation here where not only has the Andrews government ripped them off — ripped off the Victorian taxpayer — it has then, to add insult to injury, used the victims’ money to try to cover it up.

Mr Ondarchie — It sounds like a joke.

Mr FINN — Well, if Monty Python came up with it, you would not believe it, would you? You would not believe it. If P. J. O’Rourke wrote a book about it, you would say, ‘That’s a bit far-fetched’. You would. But here in Victoria it is reality. Comedy is reality in Victoria, because here is a government that has no qualms at all, not a worry in the world, about ripping off the taxpayer — to the tune of God knows how much — and then trying to cover it up by spending 10, 20, 30 times as much. It is a fascinating way to do

business, but that is the Andrews government here in Victoria.

One of these days the truth will come out about this. It may well be post-November next year. It may well be the Guy government that exposes the truth as to what the Andrews government has been up to over the past three years. You cannot begin to imagine what they are going to get up to over the next 12 months, because we know that, come election time — and I am sure even the Greens will agree with me on this one — the ALP will do anything and they will say anything. As we saw at the last election, they will rip the taxpayer off using staff, who nobody has ever seen before and probably has not seen since, to bolster their campaigns. They will put them in the marginal seats. Possibly, at times, when they are not dressed in red shirts, they may well put them in firemen suits and firemen helmets and put them on polling booths — all courtesy of the Victorian taxpayer. So if they did that prior to the 2014 election — that is when they were in opposition — can you imagine what they are going to do in government in the lead-up to the 2018 election?

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — Well, the old story is that the Labor Party gets 97 per cent of the vote at the Fawkner cemetery booth — you might remember that, Mr Ondarchie — and the other 3 per cent, I am not sure, might have fallen down a hole.

Mr Ondarchie — Literally.

Mr FINN — Quite literally. We have a government here that is prepared to do anything to stay in power — or anything to get elected, as it did prior to 2014. But we know that over the next 12 months we will have to watch this crowd like a hawk. Let me warn the government — let me warn the minister and let me warn other members of the government in the chamber — that we will watch this government like a hawk, because we know that the Andrews government cannot be trusted by anyone to do the right thing. If you are talking about trust and the Andrews government, boy, have you come to the wrong place, because there is no connection between the two at all. It is something that you would only dream about, and then you would probably have to get some psychoanalysis afterwards to recover from it.

Speaking of psychoanalysis, I move on to the Fair Work Commission investigation into the former Government Whip, Cesar Melhem. Now I have to say that I did not know Mr Melhem prior to him coming into this Parliament.

Mr Ondarchie — I did.

Mr FINN — Mr Ondarchie tells me he did, and says so quite knowingly, I have to say. He is looking and shaking his head over there like a man who knows what he is talking about. Mr Melhem of course was, prior to his election to Parliament, the state secretary of the Australian Workers Union (AWU). Oh, dear me. You have got your shonks and you have got your shysters. I am not sure which category the AWU fits into, but it may well be both. I am not suggesting that the AWU is perhaps in the category of criminality in the same way that the CFMEU is, but certainly the AWU is renowned for shyster deals, for all sorts of shonkiness, for bags of money, for branch stacking, for all manner of ungodly acts that they have been up to. You just have to have a look at the foundation of an organisation that is in the news at the moment, an organisation called GetUp!. GetUp! is an extreme left-wing organisation which is all about supporting extreme left-wing candidates, surprisingly enough. It was founded with a very large donation by the Australian Workers Union. Now this was when Mr Melhem was assistant secretary of the AWU. Who, I wonder, at the time was the state secretary of the AWU?

Mr Ondarchie — Bull?

Mr FINN — No, it is true. It was none other than 'Bull', Bill Shorten — the man who says he wants to be Prime Minister at the next election, whenever that might be; the man who says, 'Trust me. I want to do the right thing by Australia'. Here is the bloke who was the boss of a union that you can only trust to do the wrong thing — and they do, on a constant basis. They are a group of individuals that you would not turn your back on in a pink fit, because you know what would happen: they would do you in. Of course Mr Melhem is renowned in Australian Workers Union circles as somebody who I think they would describe as 'a very good leader' of the AWU. They might regard it as a compliment but I do not, because I think to describe somebody as a very good leader of the AWU is to make all sorts of allegations, said and unsaid, about that person.

Mr Melhem probably has got a fair bit to answer for at some stage. It may well be, if the Fair Work Commission has its way, that he will have an opportunity to answer various allegations. It may well be that he will not recall.

Mr Ondarchie — I'm sure the Clean Event people don't see him as a good leader.

Mr FINN — I am sure they do not, but it may well be that he does not recall. My recollection — and I have not got a great memory, but it is a damn sight better than Mr Melhem's — is that he said that quite a bit when he appeared before the royal commission. He said, 'I don't recall'. He did not recall much at all, in fact. Indeed, if they were faced with the sorts of difficulties that Mr Melhem was faced with at the royal commission, I would suggest that most people would not actually recall what they were involved in, nor would he want to.

But here we have a bloke, the right hand of Bill Shorten, who came into this Parliament and was immediately appointed as Government Whip. He jumped the queue —

Mr Ondarchie — He got the numbers.

Mr FINN — He got the numbers. He is clearly very good at getting the numbers. There is nothing like a good branch stack, is there? My word, there is not. He is damn good at getting the numbers, is Mr Melhem, and he did it on this occasion to become Government Whip. This surprised us on this side of the house because we are genteel people over here. We do the right thing. We respect others. If somebody has ability, then we —

Ms Lovell — We recognise it.

Mr FINN — We recognise it. If they do not have ability, then we obviously do not recognise it. But we have in this situation Mr Melhem coming into the Parliament, straight out of the AWU office, the back of his car full of brown paper bags presumably — for lunch, because it is important that you do have lunch; as Christine Nixon once said, 'You've got to eat' — and within minutes being made whip. He did not last all that long as whip, it has to be said. Talk about a meteoric rise! He was up there, and he was down like a shooting star; he was a shooting star, and he crashed big time. My understanding was that he was not very, very pleased with the way he was dealt with by the Premier. It may well be that he was another victim of the Premier's bullying tactics. That may well be the case. If so, the irony should not be lost on anyone. For Mr Melhem to be a victim of bullying by the Premier is ironic indeed.

But here we have Mr Melhem, with all his connections through the AWU and the federal Leader of the Opposition. I do not think it is unparliamentary to suggest he is dodgy, because it is pretty true. I think there are a lot of people who Mr Melhem could tell us all about. I am quite looking forward to his book when

it comes out. I think it will be a ripper. There is another chap called Bob Kernohan —

Mr Ondarchie — Big Bob Kernohan.

Mr FINN — Big Bob Kernohan. He could tell us a fair bit about Mr Melhem. One of these days I am going to buy Bob a beer and perhaps he will tell me all about Mr Melhem, in which case I will come in here and share it with the chamber. That is going to be something that people should not miss.

So there we have Mr Melhem. I am not exactly sure about his legal status at the minute. I do not think he has been charged with anything. I do not know if he is going to be charged with anything, but I would hate to see his lawyer's bill. No doubt the AWU will be kicking in for that anyway.

Then we move on to part 3 of this motion — the Victoria Police investigation into the rorting claims of the second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Again, I do not know about the status of the Victoria Police inquiry into this matter, but what we do know is that the government has lost a Speaker and it has lost a Deputy Speaker for exactly the same thing.

When you hold the position of Speaker, Deputy Speaker, President or Deputy President, it is a position of authority. It is a position where you are expected to uphold the standards of this Parliament. You are expected to be almost pure in every way. Well, what did we see in the other place? We saw both the former Speaker and the former Deputy Speaker go out of their way to rip off the taxpayer in quite imaginative ways. I will give credit where it is due. I have to say that I would never in a million years have come up with the way they ripped off the taxpayer. Perhaps my mind just does not work that well. It certainly does not work that way, but maybe it does not work that well. Perhaps they regard it as a badge of honour to come up with imaginative ways to rip off Victorians. They did that, and Mr Languiller has said that he has paid it back. I am not sure whether that is the case; I have not seen any evidence that that is the case.

I was just talking about you, Mr Melhem. He has just walked into the chamber. That is disappointing because I just had a fair discussion about Mr Melhem. He has joined us now, and that disappoints me enormously. You really should read the *Hansard*, Mr Melhem.

Mr Melhem — Did you say nice stuff?

Mr FINN — Oh my very word. Mr Melhem, I would suggest to you that what I said about you was the

nicest thing that anybody has said about you for a very, very long time —

Ms Springle — Oh, that's nice.

Mr FINN — Yes, it is, and it is true. But going back —

Ms Springle — True? That's nasty.

Mr FINN — No. You should hear what the others say about him — I tell you what. No, it is true. Going back to the former Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, both of them of course resigned over this abuse of their position. The former Deputy Speaker was particularly reluctant to resign and even more reluctant to pay back the money, and I suspect — and please prove me wrong if you will or indeed if you can — that that money will never be seen in the coffers. I do not suspect that the former Deputy Speaker would be in any position at all to pay that back anytime soon or indeed ought to be in any position to pay that back anytime soon.

The fact of the matter is that both of those individuals, the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton, are still members of the Legislative Assembly. They are still members of the other place. They are still being paid every fortnight to be members of Parliament. What we are seeing is a government that is still relying on their votes to remain a government. We saw a Premier who pursued in the course of the last Parliament one member to the ends of the earth. He pursued him to the ends of the earth because of a bit of petrol and the use of a car. Here we have two members who have ripped off the taxpayer to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and this arrogant Premier says, 'That doesn't matter'.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — That is what he says: 'It doesn't matter'. Here we have Mr Nardella. He supposedly left the Labor Party — or did he? I do not think he did, because anybody who is wandering around here knows that he still eats with the Labor Party, he still drinks with the Labor Party —

An honourable member — He votes with them.

Mr FINN — He votes with the Labor Party —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — Well, I am not sure about that; we will leave that alone. He is of the Labor Party, by the party, and he is still supporting the Labor Party to stay in government. So when you are talking about rorts, when

you are talking about the purity or otherwise of the Andrews government, just remember that. They are staying in government by virtue of the votes —

Mr Ondarchie — Tainted votes.

Mr FINN — Tainted votes indeed, Mr Ondarchie. They are staying in government by virtue of the tainted votes of two rotting MPs that they have not got the guts to deal with. What a pathetic deal we have seen dished out to Victorian taxpayers as a result of this. The people down at Ocean Grove might have got a boost to their tourism campaign —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — Well, I know. I am not talking about him, but everybody knows where Ocean Grove is now. Indeed the caravan park down there —

Ms Lovell interjected.

Mr FINN — Except Don. Don did not know where the caravan park was, but everybody else does. So we have this extraordinary situation where two Labor members of Parliament, two rotting Labor members of Parliament, are actually propping up this government and propping up this Premier who gets up there and likes to be holier than thou. He is far from it. What a shonk! That is what he is, and that is what this government is based on. It is very sniffy. It is —

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Electricity supply

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (12:00) — My question is for the Minister for Health, represented in this house by the Minister for Families and Children. In the heatwave of 2009, 361 mainly elderly residents died of heat stress during blackouts and brownouts. Fortunately since then we have had fewer hot spells and good electricity supply, but as we know, this may change this summer.

One benefit of our electricity smart meters is that they can isolate homes from blackouts and brownouts, and a ‘do not disconnect’ register currently exists for this purpose and is principally used for people on dialysis. So my question is: will the minister extend the reach of the ‘do not disconnect’ register to the elderly who are registered for home care? This would prevent the devastating consequences of 2009.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:01) — I thank the member for her question. I can advise the member that broadly speaking the government has had community awareness campaigns preceding every summer to highlight the risks of heat stress to vulnerable members of our community, including the elderly. The Minister for Health and I have both been involved in getting that message out in terms of ensuring both that the elderly are properly hydrated and that they stay indoors or seek places that are cool environments. We have also had an extensive community awareness campaign around the risks of leaving young children, and pets as well, in locked motor vehicles. I look forward to highlighting these risks to the community ahead of our upcoming summer.

In relation to the specific matter that the member has raised around the ‘do not disconnect’ register and those members of the community who might be using dialysis machines, I will refer that specific matter to the health minister and provide the member with a written response.

RSPCA Victoria

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (12:02) — My question today is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, recently the government announced that it will establish a new dedicated public sector group called Animal Welfare Victoria to bring together all aspects of animal welfare, including research, policy, education and compliance. Minister, if there is to be established a body responsible for compliance with, presumably, direct government oversight and accountability, will the government now remove the enforcement powers currently held by the RSPCA?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:03) — I thank Mr Young for his question about Animal Welfare Victoria. The government is committed to animal welfare, as is Victorian industry and as are members of the Victorian community; I think that is well-established. Good animal welfare practices are incredibly important for our industries to maintain their social licence but also to maintain their support from both domestic consumers and also international markets.

What we have announced is that we will establish a dedicated public sector group that we will be calling Animal Welfare Victoria. It will bring together all aspects of domestic animal and animal welfare research, policy, education and compliance. I will be responsible for this group as the Minister for Agriculture, and animal welfare officers will continue

to operate through the RSPCA, Agriculture Victoria and local government as is currently the arrangement.

Supplementary question

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (12:04) — I thank the minister for her answer. Minister, the mere establishment of this body suggests that current animal welfare compliance efforts are inadequate. If the RSPCA are not performing to a standard expected of the large investment made by government, why are we persisting with a compliance body outside of government oversight and accountability?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:04) — I thank Mr Young for his interest in the performance of our various organisations that are responsible for ensuring compliance with animal welfare standards. I think it is certainly fair to say that in recent years the community's interest in animal welfare matters has become much greater. In our agricultural sector the preparedness of people to perhaps report animal welfare issues is different to what it was historically, and the number of reports the department receives has been on a steady increase. Ensuring proper resourcing of that is incredibly important, and overwhelmingly — certainly in our primary production — farmers have practices that support very good animal welfare standards, and they are very proud of these and they absolutely should be. Ensuring compliance and ensuring that standards are maintained and improved where possible is really important. Ensuring that both my own department and the other agencies that have those enforcement responsibilities are properly resourced is also a priority for our government.

Kuark forest timber harvesting

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:06) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Today VicForests was intending to proceed to log the Princess Cut coupe in the Kuark forest, near Orbost in East Gippsland, until the successful court injunction. This old-growth forest comprises trees that were already mature when Europeans first arrived in Australia. It is a very significant habitat for rare and endangered species and a priceless example of both warm temperate and cool temperate rainforest. More than 6400 Victorians have contacted the Andrews government calling on them to not log the Kuark forest. Why are you permitting VicForests to have coupes like this listed on the timber release plan and to cut roads through these forests despite ongoing legal challenges and the clear evidence that this old-growth forest is of exceptional ecological significance?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:06) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question and the 6400 people who have sent an email on this matter to me and to a number of my colleagues. In relation to the Princess Cut coupe to which Ms Dunn refers, VicForests will be applying some additional measures to support the harvesting that is to be undertaken. So I can confirm for Ms Dunn that VicForests will be protecting trees over 2.5 metres in diameter to ensure the protection of the understorey and that VicForests will remove from the harvest plan any areas of assumed old-growth forest, as mapped by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) using canopy analysis. This is in addition to the usual preharvesting surveys that occur. DELWP compliance officers will also be in the coupe to ensure compliance with the standard provisions in the code of practice.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:08) — Thank you, Minister, for your answer. VicForests has been readying its business for a December 2017 audit in eastern Victoria against the Forest Stewardship Council-controlled wood standard. Could the minister please advise how she expects VicForests to be compliant with the controlled wood standard, considering VicForests will imminently log Kuark forest, which is some of the most ecologically significant old-growth forest in eastern Victoria?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:08) — As I indicated in my substantive answer, areas that are assumed old-growth forest, as mapped by DELWP, will be removed from the harvest plan. So we are certainly conscious of our responsibilities here, as are VicForests and as are their contractors.

Ms Dunn — But you're cutting roads through it.

Ms PULFORD — Look, I think all members of this place are well aware of Ms Dunn's views on and interest in this matter. I have outlined the arrangements that have been put in place. Ms Dunn may not personally prefer that course of action, but certainly sufficient measures are in place to ensure the protection of the understorey, and the mapping work that DELWP is doing using canopy analysis is informing areas where harvesting can and cannot occur.

VicForests

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:09) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. In its 2016–17 annual report VicForests has disclosed that it received \$5.9 million in payments from the Andrews

government, including \$4.8 million in grants for its role in the Leadbeater's possum recovery program. Without these payments to shore up the balance sheet VicForests would have recorded a before-tax loss. Minister, do you accept that VicForests would be a loss-making enterprise if it were not for the generosity of the Victorian taxpayer?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:10) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question. As Ms Dunn would no doubt be aware the reduction in available ash sawlog, with which members here are very familiar, and operational challenges arising from such a high number of Leadbeater's possum detections have been impacting VicForests's operations. The VicForests annual report does outline the work that VicForests has been doing to support the recovery effort of Leadbeater's possums and the income derived in exchange for that considerable amount of work.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:11) — Thank you, Minister. Considering VicForests's core business is logging the remaining native habitat of the critically endangered Leadbeater's possum, could the minister advise why the Andrews government bestowed responsibility and millions of dollars of grants last financial year for protection of the Leadbeater's possum on this state-owned enterprise?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:11) — VicForests continues to play an important and active role in supporting the long-term recovery of the Leadbeater's possum. I would indicate that between February 2015 and June 2017 VicForests helped detect 420 new Leadbeater's possum colonies — something I would have thought Ms Dunn would welcome. I would have thought Ms Dunn might also welcome the work that VicForests have done in providing the nesting boxes that have proven to be quite an important and successful part of the government's activity to recover the Leadbeater's possum population.

Auslan training

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (12:12) — My question is for the Minister for Training and Skills. Minister, from next year no Victorian government subsidy will be made available to Auslan courses, leaving students wanting to study the language having to fork out more than \$5000 each. Minister, why are you cutting support to this vital course?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:12) — I thank the member for her question. This is an issue that has been raised over a considerable amount of time. I am dealing with this issue at the moment with the department, and I will be able to provide you with some further advice shortly.

Supplementary question

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (12:13) — Thank you, Minister, and we look forward to receiving that advice. Minister, did you consult with anyone from Vicdeaf before cutting funding for Auslan courses, and on what dates did those consultations occur?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:13) — I thank the member for her question. In fact I have not undertaken consultations with anyone in these areas because this is not the role of the minister. There is a process in place within the department that deals with these issues, and they provide briefs to me. That is what occurs, Ms Lovell.

Prisoner drug and alcohol testing

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:14) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, there has been a significant drop in the number of prisoners being tested for drugs and alcohol within correctional facilities during 2016–17. Are you able to provide the house with the specific number of drug and alcohol tests conducted in 2016–17 and the reason why there has been a significant decrease?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:14) — I thank the member for his question. I do not have the specific figures in front of me at the moment, but unlike the previous government this government is transparent when it comes to drug and alcohol data. There was not one piece of data that the previous government allowed the community to have in relation to the operations of the corrections system. We have changed that. We have made sure there is clear information published on a regular basis that is online for all to see, which was not the case in terms of the previous government and certainly was not the case when Mr O'Donohue was the minister.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, the minister was only on her feet for 30 seconds. I am more than happy for her to peruse her possible parliamentary question (PPQ) folder to identify that information. I am actually very confident that the minister does have that information, because the minister had that information yesterday in the Parliament.

The PRESIDENT — Has the minister completed her answer?

Ms TIERNEY — Yes, I have.

The PRESIDENT — It is not a point of order. You can use your information to debate the matter further, but it is not a point of order as such.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:16) — Minister, a subset of that data has revealed breathalyser tests have decreased by 50.9 per cent in just one year. Your departmental advice indicates a reduction at Langi Kal Kal. However, it does not provide a breakdown per correctional facility. As a subset to the data referred to in the substantive question, are you able to provide the house with how many breathalyser tests were conducted at each correctional facility and how that compares with the previous financial year?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:17) — I thank the member for his question. Again, that is a very specific, very narrow line of questioning that is highly operational, and I do not have that information with me, but I will see what I am able to provide.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, the minister had this information yesterday, because she clumsily left it lying around the Parliament for all to see. So again I would ask the minister to check her PPQ folder, because I would hate for her to mislead the house in saying she does not have that data.

The PRESIDENT — I have already indicated that that line of argument is not a point of order. As Mr O'Donohue knows, it does not come into our standing orders at all in terms of how I might deal with that matter. The information you put to the house can be pursued in other ways. I flag that I will actually be seeking written responses to those questions.

The Bubble student support centre

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:18) — My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. The Bubble at Federation Training was opened to 'help students stay on track with their training', providing important tutoring and training advice. Minister, what assessment of the impacts on students did you make as minister before deciding to defund the Bubble centre?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:19) — I thank Ms Bath for her question. This has been a question that has been raised by Ms Bath several times, and indeed I believe that there has been

correspondence from a particular student in relation to the Bubble, Ms Pasquill, and I have also responded to her in writing in relation to a new model that has been adopted at Federation Training. I believe that in terms of the issues that have been raised there has been a subsequent follow-up from Federation Training to the student and she has been provided with tutoring one-on-one on many occasions. It is my understanding that the student concerned has been very appreciative of the efforts that Federation Training has made. In terms of the Bubble itself, it was Federation Training —

Ms Bath — On a point of order, President, my question went specifically to what assessment was made, and the minister for the first minute or so has been talking about a specific example. I would ask you to bring her back to my question.

Ms Shing — On the point of order, President, while Ms Bath was calling a point of order, for the benefit of those opposite who were perhaps doing more talking than listening, the minister began responding in terms of the Bubble whereupon she was cut off. Perhaps with the remaining 2 minutes and 45 seconds that the minister has she might be permitted to answer the question in silence, lest anybody opposite miss the point that the minister was beginning to actually go to.

The PRESIDENT — The minister still has a significant amount of time available to complete her answer, and I am sure that she will address the substantive question.

Ms TIERNEY — I was about to indicate that Federation Training believes that the model that supported the Bubble was not the best model to service the needs of students at Federation Training, so they shifted the model to an embedded-service model. You now have support staff actually in the classroom.

Ms Bath — Do we?

Ms TIERNEY — I am advised that that is the case and that it is working well. The only person who has raised this issue is the student that has been identified previously in this chamber and the person that I have referred to in terms of correspondence to her, and at all times she has indicated to me that she has been very happy with the service that has been provided by Federation Training. I really do believe that this is really —

Ms Shing — Mischief.

Ms TIERNEY — Mischief — that is right, Ms Shing. This is mischief-making, because I have not received any further concerns or complaints from this

particular student. I really do think that we are attempting to fuel flames. This does not surprise me, because this opposition has got form in this area. They completely trashed TAFE. They have tried to trash the reputation of Federation Training. They ripped millions of dollars out of the system, and indeed we have got a lot of people who are committed in the community to transforming Federation Training into a TAFE that Gippsland deserves, not one that you continue to trash and that you continue to try to kick and keep kicking. We want you to turn this thing around and make sure that there is a way forward where you can be a partner in this instead of wanting to trash Federation Training at every opportunity.

By trashing Federation Training you are denying opportunities for regional kids to get the best skills and training in this state and denying them the opportunity of getting a job close to home. I cannot believe the absolute hypocrisy of the people on that side when it comes to Federation Training and when it comes to Gippsland. We are on board in making sure that we have got very serious consultations that are underway at the moment, and I have asked for a strategic plan to be developed. Not only that, I have made sure that the skills commissioner is making sure that he has Gippsland as a priority in terms of a workforce forecast report.

Supplementary question

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:24) — I note the minister's response, but I am sure that there are some major inaccuracies in it. As a user of the Bubble before you defunded the program, nursing student Shelley Pasquill subsequently requested maths tutoring assistance on numerous occasions from Federation Training but was told that there were 72 requests for assistance and only four staff available, so she received nothing. This is in contrast to the promise that was made that more staff would be available for all Bubble students. Last week Shelley failed her maths exam by half a mark. Minister, with students like Shelley missing out on vital support, will you now reconsider your decision to axe funding for this vital program?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:25) — Can I start by saying that I did not axe funding for this particular program — I did not. We have also funded skills and training centres throughout Federation Training. Leaving that to one side — and can I apologise because I do not necessarily want to drag a particular student in on this, but the fact of the matter is that she is here, as I understand it, and her name has been referred to — my understanding is that when Ms Pasquill first found out that she was to sit a

maths exam she did seek and did receive one-on-one tutoring. I understand that in that maths test she performed in an exemplary way, and in fact I do not think anyone can actually do better than the result that she got — so much so that she offered her thanks to the tutor involved. Not only that, she provided flowers to the tutor involved. I am getting a little bit tired of this sort of muckraking.

Corrections system

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:26) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, the latest report on government services reveals that the day-to-day operating costs of housing a prisoner in Victoria are 38 per cent more than the national average and 73.61 per cent more than in New South Wales. Minister, given the benefits of economies of scale that smaller states do not have, why are our prisons costing Victorian taxpayers so much more to operate than our interstate counterparts?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:27) — I thank the member for his question. This was of interest to me when I attended the corrections ministers forum earlier this year. It is through conversations but also of course through discussions with the commissioner for corrections that I understand the general position is that our costs are higher by and large because we provide a lot more services than other states. We provide a lot more health and mental health services that are not provided in other states. There are a whole lot of other programs that are just not in existence or, if they are in existence, are pared down significantly in other states. So I think you will find through conversations with anyone within Corrections Victoria, Mr Morris, that that is the case and that we have got a corrections system that is a lot more developed, a lot more sophisticated and indeed the envy of other jurisdictions.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Mr Dalidakis, I do not want to hear a reference to any other individual again.

Supplementary question

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:28) — Thank you, Minister, for that response. Minister, given these enormous cost differences, will you now adopt the coalition's policy of an urgent audit of prisoner costs, including a review of all prisoner luxuries?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:29) — I thank the member for his question. This government is vigilant in terms of ensuring that taxpayers money is spent appropriately. Indeed that was found to be true in terms of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings. We went through a number of issues at the time, and there has not been further follow-up from those opposite in relation to that. We are considered, as I said, to be at the higher end of provision of services in our prisons, and we do that for the right reasons. We do it because these programs that we provide are directed to ensuring that there is a serious chance that people will be able to transition back into their communities in a seamless way. So that is why we have health and wellbeing —

The PRESIDENT — Thank you, Minister.

Jasvinder Sidhu

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:30) — My question is to the Leader of the Government. Minister, Mr Jasvinder Sidhu was employed as a ministerial adviser when the Andrews Labor government came to power. Can you advise the date he subsequently left that position?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:30) — I thank Mrs Peulich for her question. I do not know these details. I have not been directly involved at any point in time in relation to his engagement or the manner by which he left the employment of the government, but I am happy to receive some advice on that matter.

Supplementary question

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:31) — My supplementary is: can you confirm that the current Consumer Affairs Victoria investigation into Mr Sidhu's so-called Let's Feed charity includes the period of time Mr Sidhu was employed by the Premier, Daniel Andrews?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:31) — I am not in a position to be able to confirm any details in relation to the matter because I am not advised of anything in relation to any inquiry or any investigation. I certainly do not hold the information in relation to his terms of engagement, as I have already indicated in my substantive answer, and I definitely am not in a position to be able to bring those two issues together.

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (12:31) — In respect of today's questions I require a written response to Ms Patten's question, just the substantive question to Ms Mikakos, and that is two days as it involves a minister in another place; Ms Dunn's first question to Ms Pulford, the substantive and supplementary question; Ms Dunn's second question to Ms Pulford, the supplementary question. I accept that the minister did provide responses, but there were some specifics in those questions that the minister might consider. Ms Lovell's question to Ms Tierney, just the substantive question; Mr O'Donohue's question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary questions; Ms Bath's question to Ms Tierney, just the substantive question — all of those, being within the responsibility of a minister in this house, are one day — and Mrs Peulich's question to Mr Jennings, the substantive and supplementary questions, two days. I am mindful that any investigation by a government department might elicit the information sought by Mrs Peulich, although it did refer to a time frame, and in that sense it may well be possible for the minister to satisfy the member with an answer.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Questions on notice

The PRESIDENT(12:33) — I have also just received my usual communication from Mr Rich-Phillips — he is an impeccable letter writer. He has sought the reinstatement of a number of questions. They are 11 481, 11 486, 11 488, 11 494, 11 503, 11 509, 11 511, 11 517, 11 526, 11 531, 11 533, 11 539, 11 548, 11 553, 11 555, 11 561, 11 570, 11 575, 11 577 and 11 583. I have looked at those answers and note that, in the same vein that I remarked on the answers provided yesterday, I am not satisfied that Mr Rich-Phillips's questions in each of these cases has been satisfied to the expectation of the house, and therefore I would reinstate all of those questions.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:34) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Planning, and it is in relation to a site at 40 Mount View Road, Boronia. My question is: how many or what range of dwellings will be developed at the site and will the development be in accordance with the local provisions of the Knox planning scheme?

Western Metropolitan Region

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (12:35) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Luke Donnellan, and concerns the discontinuation of the VicRoads licence testing service centre off Ballarat Road in Sunshine. This has been raised in this place before, but we are still not getting the answers we need. VicRoads have announced they will discontinue the licensing services at Ballarat Road after they move into the new regional office at Clarke Street, Sunshine.

The closure of these services has been of great concern to constituents and businesses in the Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Brimbank and Moonee Valley areas. The closure will force them to travel further distances to access these services at alternative VicRoads locations offered only in the outer fringes. Population growth and increasing road congestion only add to the adverse effects of the closure, not to mention the impact it will have on people experiencing unemployment and other forms of disadvantage. So my question is: in the interests of retaining an important service for the local community, will the government consider reversing the decision to discontinue the VicRoads licence testing service centre at Ballarat Road, Sunshine?

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (12:36) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Planning, and it is in relation to a memo I received from the Peshurst wind farm proposal community engagement committee, which has provided me with a letter from RES. It has formally advised the committee of the decision to discontinue any further development work on the proposed Peshurst wind farm. This is quite a substantial wind farm that had a permit, and in light of the recently passed renewable energy target I have to ask the question: why would an investor like RES not want to continue an investment in that wind farm at Peshurst, which is one of the largest proposed in Victoria? The question I put to the minister is: is there some reason why an investor would not want to invest in wind farm technology in Victoria, given very strong opposition by the local Peshurst community, and can he advise me what was the basis of the withdrawal of RES from that project?

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (12:37) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Victoria has set a new record, with food and fibre exports reaching \$12.8 billion — the biggest total in the state's history.

A key strength of the Victorian food and fibre sector is its diversity and reputation for producing high-quality, clean and healthy food for key export regions such as Asia. On my visit to the Mallee last week I noticed many crops starting to turn that wonderful golden colour. According to the 2016–17 *Victorian Food and Fibre Export Performance Report* released in October, Victoria accounts for 25 per cent of Australia's food and fibre exports, despite taking up just 3 per cent of the country's land mass. My question to the minister is: with the drier start to spring and a bumper sorghum harvest looking likely in Queensland, what does this mean for Victorian wheat exports and, most importantly, jobs in my electorate?

The PRESIDENT — It is very broad; it is not really a constituency question.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (12:38) — My matter is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and it concerns the sky rail corridor and the failure of members of this chamber, the Leader of the Government in particular, to provide sky rail documents. He will need the assistance of the Minister for Public Transport in the provision of those documents. The chamber has just carried a motion in very strong terms indicating that it wants those documents in the next two weeks. What I am asking here is: will the Minister for Public Transport assist the Leader of the Government in every way that is material to comply with the directions and the decision of the chamber, again, that those documents should be provided?

The PRESIDENT — That is not a constituency question. It is ruled out. You are asking a minister to ask another minister to comply with a documents request.

Mr DAVIS — No. I am asking the Minister for Public Transport herself: will she assist in the provision of those documents? The chamber has made a decision. This minister will require the assistance of the other minister in doing that work. It is directly in my electorate. It has a huge impact; it cuts a swathe right through the middle of my electorate. I cannot think of anything that is more constituency-related than a massive elevated rail through the middle of one's electorate.

The PRESIDENT — We have prosecuted this many times: we have sought this and we have had a motion on it. Based on my benevolence to Mr Gepp today I will let you go, but I ask that you tighten the

constituency questions; you know the rules for constituency questions.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (12:40) — My constituency question is also for the Minister for Public Transport. My constituent also happens to be the very keen bike-riding mayor of Banyule. His question to me was quite simple and my question to the minister is quite simple: where is Victoria's cycling strategy, which has been promised but not yet published by this government, despite consultation occurring back in 2015?

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (12:41) — The question I have today is for the Minister for Industry and Employment, Minister Carroll in the other place. In addition to the work that he has already undertaken in the portfolio since being sworn in I note that he has been part of visits to the Latrobe Valley, and I note that this is in continuance of the economic facilitation fund and the further work that has gone in as part of our record investment of \$266 million over and above the additional funding we have put into our schools, infrastructure and services.

In this regard I note that there are a number of job-creation opportunities that have continued and that as it stands employment data would indicate that there are more jobs now in the Latrobe Valley than there were this time a year ago, which would tend to indicate that we have continued to make up for changes. I ask how we can continue to grow employment in this area to make sure that we capitalise on private and public sector growth throughout the Latrobe Valley region in the coming months and over the next financial year.

The PRESIDENT — Look, again, this is a very broad question. The constituency questions are getting out of hand in terms of what a constituency question is about, which is to ask a question about a project or a specific matter within the electorate. What is happening now is that there are a number of contributions — and Ms Patten's also was pretty close to the edge of that envelope as well — where in fact we are trying to look at broad, statewide issues and somehow just make them relevant in the last little pitch of the constituency question. That is not what constituency questions are about, so I would ask members to familiarise themselves with the guidelines on constituency questions.

Ms Shing — On a point of order, President, in my question I did actually refer to the work of the Latrobe Valley Economic Facilitation Fund, which is very specific to the Latrobe Valley region, as well as the work that has been undertaken in the Hazelwood post-closure environment as part of what the private and public sector employment growth has been.

The PRESIDENT — Yes, I know. Everybody is very clever with their constituency questions to mention a locality but then go in a totally different direction.

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:43) — I hope my constituency question hits the sweet spot right in the middle. My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Public Transport and relates to the Ballarat bus network. The government today have released a media release trumpeting the Ballarat bus network; however, local members would know and members of this house would know that the Ballarat bus network is in fact in absolute disarray. The question I would ask the minister is: will the minister take heed of local bus users, constituents of mine, and undertake an actual review of the mess that is the Ballarat bus network and actually consult with bus users to ensure that the Ballarat bus network does meet the needs of its users?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:44) — My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask if an immediate review and refinement of traffic management can be carried out to improve the increased traffic congestion in Eltham from the Bolton Street upgrade works. Residents have taken to Facebook to voice their anger and frustration over the long delays they are seeing commuting to and from Eltham given the roadworks underway. VicRoads has closed the northbound lane on Bolton Street and traffic is being funnelled along Main Road. This was okay in the school holidays when traffic was lighter, but the current closure is causing massive traffic issues. Residents are saying that Fitzsimons Lane is even more congested and getting into Eltham is nearly impossible with traffic at a near standstill in the evening peak. Others argue 5-minute trips are taking nearly 30 minutes, while it can take 20 minutes just to travel 1 kilometre. Residents describe the traffic as a 'completely gridlocked nightmare'. We need to actually have some better traffic management of this situation over the coming months as Bolton Street works continue so that residents can actually get around and to and from the suburb of Eltham, and this needs to be managed appropriately immediately.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (12:45) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Families and Children. The population of Melbourne's outer west is booming. Wyndham is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia, and the Werribee Mercy Hospital has one of the busiest maternity departments in the state. In short the City of Wyndham is bursting with young families and clearly young children. The problem is that both the quality and quantity of kindergartens leaves a fair bit to be desired. What does the minister intend to do to provide satisfactory preschool services for the Wyndham communities?

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Debate resumed.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (12:47) — I will endeavour to make my points as quickly as I can. We will see how we go. Prior to question time I was referring to the government and the Premier relying on tainted votes to remain in office, with the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker remaining in the Parliament and propping up the government with their votes. I remember that for a very, very long time during the course of the Baillieu government and the Napthine government the then opposition leader, Mr Andrews, carried on like a two-bob watch about one tainted vote, as he described it, back in those days. Here we now have a Premier who is reliant upon two tainted votes —

Mr Ondarchie — And one in here.

Mr FINN — And one in here indeed — two tainted votes to remain in government. So it seems to me that the hypocrisy of the Premier has to be seen to be believed. The hypocrisy of the Premier is right up there with his arrogance and his bullying. He is building up quite a reputation for himself on a number of fronts. So I am very much hoping that we might see a bit of consistency from the government on this at some stage and indeed that Mr Languiller and Mr Nardella may be actually held accountable for their actions and actually kicked out of the Parliament. My understanding is that the police investigations are continuing, so it may well be that after the police have made a decision, we will then have the government in a position to act upon the recommendations of Victoria Police.

But it is a sad, sad thing — a very sad thing — when we have two high officials of this Victorian Parliament, people who were charged with the responsibility of upholding the highest possible standards of the

Parliament, forced to resign due to their own misdeeds. I think that is very sad indeed and reflective of a culture, a mindset, within the Labor Party that it is okay to rip people off, that it is okay to rip the taxpayer off, and I think that is a very, very sad reflection on the Australian Labor Party, it is a very, very sad reflection on the Victorian government and perhaps most of all, because of his protection of those two members, it is a very sad reflection on the Victorian Premier. He really needs to practise what he preaches in this regard. He should act to expel Mr Languiller and Mr Nardella not just from the Labor Party, as I understand that Mr Languiller is still in the Labor Party, but from the Parliament as well. That is something that I do not expect will happen, but it is something that the Premier certainly should take on board.

We move to item (4) of this motion:

the IBAC investigation into the Deputy President and printing invoices for membership scandal ...

I am aware, of course, that the IBAC investigation into this matter is ongoing, so I am loath to go into the details — I do not think that would be a very good idea, as I do not want to spend the next three or four years in jail. I will just mention that, as far as I can see, Mr Eideh has made one particularly big mistake: something that the rest of us actually take for granted, but in his case it was a big mistake — he trusted his office manager. Because he was not from the western suburbs of Melbourne, Mr Eideh did not realise what Mr Mammarella was capable of doing. He was not aware of the culture of corruption within the ALP of the western suburbs; he was not aware of what happened.

Mr Eideh should have learned from history, because if he had looked at what happened a few years ago just down the road a little bit at an office in Keilor, he would have seen what happened to Justin Madden, a predecessor in Western Metropolitan Region, who basically handed his office over to his office manager in much the same way that Mr Eideh did to his office manager. Of course Mr Madden ended up with the same problems, the same difficulties, because in that situation Mr Madden handed it over to Mr Hakki Suleyman, who is, I think it would be safe to say, a big wheel in the ALP in the west and in fact is largely responsible for the preselection of any number of MPs, federal and state, to say nothing of local councils right throughout the west of Melbourne.

In fact at one stage we had the Brimbank City Council scandal hit us, and of course Hakki Suleyman was very much at the heart of that. That was a very sad reflection on the attitudes or mental processes of the ALP in Melbourne's west. I think the Brimbank City Council

scandal in itself was something that brought disgrace not just upon the council but upon local government in this state and most certainly upon the ALP. Mind you, not that they ever apologised for it — in fact the Suleymans are still at it.

Mr Ondarchie — Suleyman empire.

Mr FINN — The Suleyman empire continues in its own way. We see, for example, Hakki Suleyman's daughter representing the ALP in this Parliament in a particularly safe Assembly seat that, you would have to say, if merit had anything to do with it she would not hold. But you have got to pay your debts, and anybody who knows where the bodies are buried has to have his debts paid particularly quickly. We well remember what Ms Suleyman did when she was mayor of Brimbank City Council.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I draw the member's attention to his motion, which has no reference at all to Mr Suleyman or indeed to the member in the other place, and of course accusations against a member in the other place would require a substantive reference in a motion. So I think that in that sense it might be better to be a little bit more compact in terms of the motion. I think the points have been made. I have actually been a bit concerned about the references to Mr Suleyman in the past context, but I have allowed those to proceed. The matter has been covered, and I think perhaps there are other matters that the member might well cover.

Mr FINN — I take on board what you say, President, but I also point out that the first line of the motion says:

That this house notes the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government, including, but not limited to —

and then lists the matters that you referred to.

Mr Ondarchie — It is broad.

Mr FINN — It is a very broad motion; it could cover just about anything. But I was just referring to the mistake that Mr Eideh has clearly made in trusting his office manager in much the same way that Mr Madden trusted his office manager some years ago. I personally — and I do not know whether it is the right thing to say — do not believe that Mr Eideh is corrupt or in any way underhanded; I find him quite a decent chap, to tell you the truth. But I think he made a very, very bad mistake when he trusted an operative of the western suburbs ALP, because I tell you what, there are some shonks out there — I cannot begin to tell you — and a lot of those shonks are responsible for putting

people into Parliament, ministers of this government and federal shadow ministers —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr FINN — Indeed. Indeed the federal Leader of the Opposition, Bull Shorten, is somebody who has got, let us say, debts to pay that I would not want to be carrying around. I would not want to be carrying those debts around. But he has got them, and no doubt he will pay those debts if he becomes the Prime Minister of this nation. God help us all if that were to occur.

Mr Gepp — On a point of order, President, you brought Mr Finn back to his motion just a few minutes ago, and again he has wandered down a path of talking about people who are not contained in the motion. I would ask you to bring him back.

Mr Ondarchie — On the point of order, President, this is a wideranging take-note debate that goes to the heart of the rorting in the Andrews government and that of the western suburbs of Melbourne. When Mr Finn is talking about the western suburbs of Melbourne he notes the members that exist in the parliamentary process for the western suburbs of Melbourne. It is quite relevant to the matter before us.

The PRESIDENT — At the moment Mr Finn is getting towards the end of his contribution, and I think he has acknowledged my request. He will contain the remarks, I am sure.

Mr FINN — Thank you, President. Yes, I was just expressing my concern about the influence of corrupt elements within the ALP in the western suburbs and their influence within the government, which may or may not be seen to be borne out in the actions of the Premier or the ministers of the government. That is of course very central to this motion that we are debating here today.

To move on to item (5) of the motion, it reads:

the IBAC investigation into Victoria Police's handling of the collision involving the now Premier's taxpayer funded vehicle in January 2013.

I have to say that as I have gone around over the past week or two this been something that has been somewhat of a barbecue stopper. Unfortunately I have not been to too many barbecues of late, but certainly if I had I am sure it would have stopped them. This is a barbecue stopper. This is something that people are stopping me in the street to talk about. I can understand that, because I recall some years ago I was involved in a pile-up on the West Gate Freeway.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — Indeed; now it is just normal. But it was a pile-up in those days, and the government car that I was driving was a write-off. I was very lucky to actually get out as uninjured as I was. The police at that time were exceptionally good — exceptionally efficient. They breath-tested me, and they breath-tested I think the several other drivers that were involved in the incident. That was fine.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (14:02) — As I was saying before lunch, I was involved in a traffic accident some years ago — a big pile-up on the West Gate Freeway on one of the off ramps there. Each of the drivers in that particular accident was breathalysed, and a very strong investigation was conducted by Victoria Police as to exactly what happened. In fact I was told by one officer of the law that —

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Mr FINN — No, I passed the breath test with flying colours, let me assure you. There was not a drop of alcohol in my blood, which disappointed me enormously — a little bit — but anyway, that is beside the point. A little bit later on I met with an officer of Victoria Police, who explained to me that the reason that they had investigated this so thoroughly was that I was involved in it and I was a member of Parliament. I thought to myself, ‘Well, that’s a bit odd. Shouldn’t everybody get this sort of treatment for this sort of behaviour?’. It just baffles me to think that I had been given, certainly, the breathalyser treatment, the investigation, the interview afterwards and all that sort of thing, so why would the Leader of the Opposition’s wife not get the same thing? That just does not seem fair to me, and it does seem a little bit odd. I have to say that the fact that Daniel Andrews’s wife was not breathalysed just does not pass the pub test. A lot of people out there are raising their eyebrows at that and saying, ‘What is going on there?’.

That is just another element of the government’s way of dealing with things that makes people believe that something is just not quite right — in many instances, more than not quite right. In fact during the lunchbreak I was out speaking to a rally on the steps. People from Essendon had gathered at the rally on the steps of Parliament to protest against the government’s plan to build a dirty great ditch through the centre of Essendon instead of doing what has been suggested by the council and doing the Buckley Street —

Mr Gepp — On a point of order, Acting President, not for the first time has Mr Finn in this so eloquent speech strayed a long way away from the motion. Before lunch he was brought back to the aspects of the motion, and I would invite you to do the same again.

Mr Ondarchie — On the point of order, Acting President, sometimes the truth hurts. Let me just say that this is a wideranging motion, and I refer Mr Gepp to the very start of the motion, which talks about:

... the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government, including, but not limited to ...

This take-note motion is a wideranging motion, and Mr Finn should have the capacity to stray within the boundaries of that first bit of the motion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — I do not uphold the point of order, as it is a wideranging motion.

Mr FINN — Thank you, Acting President. The point that I was making with regard to this is that, for example, the people who were out the front, the people from Essendon, regard this government as being exceedingly dodgy. They are talking about consultation about the Buckley Street level crossing. There has been very little consultation, if any. A decision has clearly been made. The minister has not been telling the truth to the people of Essendon. The local member has just disappeared altogether; we do not know where he is. The minister certainly has been misleading the people of Essendon, and that just adds to the general feeling of people in the community that this government is not quite right, that this government lives off, well, dishonesty, I think it would be safe to say; it breeds standards that one should not be encouraging.

What we should expect from our government is what we would expect from anybody else. Whether we be in business or whether we be an employee working for an employer, we expect some respect; we expect a high standard of treatment. I suppose in terms of governments what we expect is a higher standard than perhaps we would get elsewhere, because the government has a responsibility in many ways to lead from the front, but unfortunately with regard to a whole range of issues, many of which I have canvassed today, this government is not doing so.

In the Ombudsman investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rort scandal, Labor has failed — totally and absolutely failed. This government is shameful with regard to this. There was the Fair Work Commission investigation into Cesar Melhem and the failure there. What is going on? Can people explain

exactly who has done what to whom and how many times and what is going on there? No, they cannot — another failure.

Then there is the Victoria Police investigation into claims of the roting of the second residence allowance by the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. I do not wish to interfere, of course, in a police investigation, but the fact of the matter is that the former Speaker and the former Deputy Speaker have lost their jobs for roting the taxpayer, yet they are still sitting in the other place, using their votes to prop up the government. What does that say about the government? The fact that we have a Premier in this state who keeps his job courtesy of two tainted votes — two votes of roters sitting over there in the other place. That, to my way of thinking, is shameful and it reflects badly not just on the government but on the people in the government.

I mentioned the Deputy President and the printing invoices for membership scandal. Again we have that influence of corruption and that influence of shysterism within the government, this time coming from the western suburbs of Melbourne. I am unfortunately only too familiar with the level of corruption that is within the ALP in Melbourne's west. That is on display whichever way you look at it in terms of preselections and in terms of some of the candidates they put up. Indeed some of the members of Parliament that come from the west will tell you that the ALP in the west has a real problem. In fact the Labor Party in Tarneit and Werribee, for example, cannot find a local to represent them. That is a problem, particularly for them and particularly for the people of the local area. I think it is a form of dishonesty in its own way to say that you represent people but refuse to live there, and that is what is happening.

The ALP in Tarneit is in the process, I understand, of choosing a candidate who has just come from interstate and who has landed in Tarneit via Williamstown. She lives in Williamstown, I understand, as do a good number of ALP members of Parliament. It is just like a little commune down there in Williamstown. They seem to gather together and then go back to their electorate from time to time — if at all. That is again taking the constituents of those electorates for a ride. That is again showing contempt for the people who elected them, in much the same way that they have shown contempt for the people of Victoria for the past three years, because whichever way you look at it the past three years in this state have been very dark years. They have been very black years in terms of honesty and transparency. They have been very, very dark years.

I cannot recall any government that has the sort of record on honesty and transparency that this government has. I cannot recall any government in my lifetime which could be accused of being totally and thoroughly corrupt. I cannot recall one; I do not recall one at all. As I said, that is something that not only reflects badly on the government but also reflects badly on each and every one of us —

Mr Gepp — Richmond won a flag under this government.

Mr FINN — Richmond did win a flag under this government, and that is to the club's credit. I would suggest that if the government is trying to claim credit for Richmond's flag, then I think I might send Dustin Martin and perhaps Jake King around to see you one night and you can explain to them that Dusty had nothing to do with it. But that is by the by.

What we desperately need in this state is a government that is going to be straight with the people. What we desperately need in this state is a government which is going to be up-front with the people, which is going to be honest with the people, which is going to treat the people of Victoria with the sort of respect they deserve. That government will be led by Matthew Guy, because that is something that the people of Victoria crave. That is what they crave. They crave somebody who is going to be honest, who is going to be up-front, who is not shifty, who is not involved in the sort of shysterism that we have seen from the ALP right across the board —

Mrs Peulich — It does not leave many on that side.

Mr FINN — Well, there is a whole range of things, Mrs Peulich. The people of Victoria know that they have just a little over one year to wait and then they will have a new government, and that is something that they are excited about. Certainly it is something that I am excited about and it is something that I believe every Victorian who believes in honesty and decency in government is excited about. I wish I could tell you exactly; I think it is about 387 days, from memory. It is not far to go now, but for many Victorians it is too long. We look forward to the day — very soon — when we will once again have a government in this state that we can be proud of.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT (ADVERTISING) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 18 October; motion of Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria).

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (14:15) — I am pleased to give the government's position on Mr Bourman's private members bill, the Firearms Amendment (Advertising) Bill 2017. I can indicate that the government and Mr Bourman are not too far away at all around intent and with what Mr Bourman is trying to achieve with his private members bill, because there is a government bill in the Assembly which tries to facilitate ways for good licensed firearm owners to be able to put their firearms up for sale. The problem the government has with Mr Bourman's private members bill is that advice that we have had from Victoria Police indicates a concern around the way that Mr Bourman proposes that some individuals may be able to advertise their firearms for sale — for brokers as well, but mainly in an individual fashion — and that that could lead to people being identified. The fact that an individual had a number of licensed guns on their premises could lead to any unsavoury characters in the community abusing that knowledge to the point that they may actually commit a burglary and cause an individual's guns to fall into the hands of people we do not particularly want to have them in.

As the minister indicated, we as a government respect Mr Bourman's intent. In saying that, we do not support this bill at this point in time. We are willing to work with Mr Bourman and his party to find a more sensible and practical way for licensed gun owners to put their guns up for sale. The government will continue to work with Mr Bourman and his party to find a way to facilitate that.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (14:18) — The opposition will not oppose Mr Bourman's private members bill, the Firearms Amendment (Advertising) Bill 2017, that is before the house this afternoon. It is a very succinct piece of legislation, having only four clauses, and seeks, as Mr Bourman outlined in his second-reading speech, to enable the sale of firearms online, not just in magazines.

The opposition notes the position as articulated by Mr Leane, and whilst respectful of that perspective, we would hope that the implementation of this legislation, if it passes the Parliament, would be accompanied by education of and engagement with firearm owners to mitigate the risks that Mr Leane has referred to.

I have just one other point on Mr Leane's remarks. Whilst there is a bill in the other place, it is a much more expansive bill. It deals with a range of issues, and my understanding is that it is different. The bill before this place is this bill today. The opposition will not oppose Mr Bourman's legislation. Just to quote from the second-reading speech, it says the bill will:

... allow licensed shooters to sell their legally registered firearms on the internet subject to the same terms and conditions as if you were selling it face to face or via a printed magazine. You must be appropriately licensed, you must complete the transfer through a licensed firearm dealer, you must get a permit to acquire and you must store your firearms to the satisfaction of the legislation.

I understand that this procedure is allowed in other states in Australian jurisdictions, and I am not aware of the adverse consequences that Mr Leane referred to as having materialised in those other jurisdictions, although I am happy to be provided with information to the contrary. On that basis, this is a very short bill. It seeks to do a relatively straightforward thing, and the opposition will not oppose it.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (14:21) — The Greens will not be supporting the bill put forward by Mr Bourman today. I am actually quite surprised at the comments made both by the government and by the opposition with regard to this bill. The government is saying it is not very far away from where Mr Bourman is with regard to his bill, and it raises the issue, which I think is an important issue with regard to this bill — and I know that Victoria Police have raised this concern too — that the bill, the way it is presented to us, could enable people to identify the whereabouts of firearms. We know that the stealing of firearms from registered firearm holders who do not necessarily keep them as secure as they need to is a problem. So that is good that the government has recognised that.

I am not sure that there is anywhere we could move with regard to the existing legislation. I will talk about the legislation in the other states because Mr Bourman talks about that in his second-reading speech. I am not sure there is much room for us to move away from the existing legislation under the Firearms Act 1996. We would support keeping that, and in fact we would support tightening it slightly to bring it more in line with the New South Wales legislation with regard to the process that a person must go through if they are wanting to purchase a second-hand firearm.

I am surprised that the opposition would support this bill given the flaw in it, in clause 3(2), which substitutes the current section 101(3) of the Firearms Act 1996

with regard to the publishing of a firearm for sale. It states that in order to do so, where the firearm is being offered for sale must be in the advertisement. I think that is a flaw in this bill that does raise a lot of concerns, I am sure, with the police, and it would with the community as well.

I have had a look at section 101 closely since this bill has been presented. Just going to Mr Bourman's second-reading speech, he says at the start of one paragraph: 'Technically, you may only advertise a legal firearm via a printed shooting magazine'. Well, there is nothing actually in that section that says that. Section 101(5) says:

Subsections (1) and (2) do not apply to the publication of an advertisement in a magazine published by an approved club or in a commercially published firearms or shooting sports magazine.

It does not say that has to be a printed one. In fact many of them are online, and I have had a look at some of them in researching my contribution on this bill.

The other thing to say is that I am not sure if in Victoria there is a prohibition on not being able to advertise via a magazine online. If there is a prohibition, it is clearly not being adhered to. If you go to usedguns.com.au, you can see private ads, not through a dealer. There are many dealer ads; the majority of them are actually dealer ads. Whether they are from Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland or anywhere, they tend to be dealer ads; they tend to outnumber the ads by private persons. There is certainly one here, just by way of example, which is a semiautomatic Norincoo, model SKS, for \$1000 — one of the sorts of weapons I wonder why people actually need to have at all. Certainly semiautomatic weapons are meant to be covered by the national firearms agreement, but here it is online for private sale.

Looking at handguns, I think many people in the community would be horrified to see the number of semiautomatic pistols you can actually find online in private ads as well, not through dealers. I think this bill is a solution looking for a problem. I am concerned that those ads are allowed at all and that they are not all done through dealerships, as really the intention of the legislation is.

If we look, for example, at the process for purchasing a firearm in Victoria, you must possess both a current firearm licence and a permit to acquire from Victoria Police. In Victoria you need not wait for a Victorian firearm licence to be approved before applying for a permit to acquire. Now, I would say this is not the case actually in New South Wales, in Tasmania or in

Queensland. If you look at their legislation, you actually do have to be a licensed firearm holder, so you do have to have applied to the police for a licence and be in possession of a licence before you can apply to purchase a firearm, but not in Victoria. In fact I think Victoria needs to catch up with the rest of the states with regard to that. We should not be able to obtain a permit to acquire a firearm in Victoria without a licence, so that is a loophole that needs to be fixed. Perhaps the government could bring an amendment to the legislation it has in the lower house to actually bring us into line with the rest of the country on that. I think most people in the community would be disturbed to find that in Victoria you do not actually have to have a licence to get a permit to acquire a firearm. In all other states there are processes for purchasing a used firearm that involve having to attend a licensed firearm dealer and/or a police station to actually take possession of the firearm and fill in the paperwork.

I am not sure what this bill is trying to achieve, but I certainly would not like to see firearms starting to be advertised on Facebook et cetera, which is also where we could head. It is interesting that I have just received some answers to questions on notice which were in fact reinstated by the President because they were not answered properly in the first instance with regard to the number of firearms that are registered in Victoria. In the year 2014–15 there were 767 304 firearms registered in Victoria. In the following year, 2015–16, there were 792 845 firearms registered in Victoria, which was a 10 per cent increase in that time. In both years the ratio of firearms to licences was about 3.6 firearms per licensee, so on average each gun owner — if you just make that an average — owns about 3.6 firearms. But I have mentioned in this place before that of course the average does not cover everyone. Some people will have fewer guns and may only own one or two. But there are a number of people — and this was revealed by the Australian Institute of Criminology a couple of years ago — that actually own very large numbers of firearms, particularly on rural properties but not necessarily, and that is a concern. My colleague David Shoebridge in New South Wales raised this issue last year in the Parliament of New South Wales. Their research in terms of the number of firearms in New South Wales, for example, last year found there were 850 634 registered firearms in New South Wales and that some particular firearm dealers and collectors owned between 71 and 300 guns each.

I have said in this place before that there needs to be something in the legislation as well to put certainly a cap on the number of guns you can own if you want to own more of them. Mr Shoebridge is suggesting five

guns. I am not sure whether five is the right number, but it would be a good number whereby a person who wanted to purchase a firearm had to go through a higher hoop than in the original statement that was made with regard to attaining a licence for a firearm, just to make sure that people are not amassing caches of firearms, which is happening. Of course when that does happen, as Mr Leane pointed out, if people who are not necessarily in the business of owning registered firearms but are in the business of stealing them and using them for nefarious purposes find out where those caches are, that is a very concerning situation.

Now, the police have raised many times their concerns about the numbers of guns that are in circulation in the community. Their concern is that when they stop vehicles, for example, the number of times there are firearms in those vehicles has increased. Mr Bourman in his second-reading speech said something like:

There are those that will use this opportunity to bore us with their usual ideological dribble about how law-abiding firearm owners are bad, whilst refusing to support tightening laws on actual criminals ...

That is incorrect. He is possibly directing those comments at someone like me, who is a strong advocate for stronger firearm control, but I do not refuse to support tightening laws on actual criminals. He also said:

... despite all evidence to the contrary that we have the best gun laws in the world and cannot weaken them, but the reality is that we law-abiding shooters aren't the problem and over-regulating us will not do much more than make people feel like something's been done.

I would say that is ideological drivel and that firearm holders are not overregulated — they are appropriately regulated. I have already pointed out following my research into this bill where the legislation in Victoria needs to be tightened up to fall into line with other states with regard to a person who does not have a firearm licence being able to apply to purchase a firearm. I do not think that is appropriate, and that needs to be fixed. I got this off the police website, so I am presuming it is correct.

Mr Bourman interjected.

Ms PENNICUIK — Mr Bourman might want to have a bit of a backhander at the police, but it is the police that are actually raising concerns about his bill and the ramifications of it. It is the police that have been raising concerns about them being the first responders, as everyone likes to talk about, at incidents involving firearms. They have raised publicly their concerns about the increasing number of firearms they are

finding when they stop vehicles, so I do not think it is appropriate for Mr Bourman or anyone else in this place to be dismissing the concerns of the police in this regard just because they want to own more firearms and actually weaken the firearms laws.

There was a report released just last week pointing out where firearms laws have been weakened across Australia since the 1996 firearms agreement, including in this state, where under the previous government there were some amendments made to the Firearms Act and the requirements of sporting shooters were loosened. The whole point of the requirements on sporting shooters and hunters going back to 1996 was to actually prove that they were engaged in those activities and not just joining a sporting shooters club — and never actually participating in the club — so that they could have a firearm licence and purchase firearms. It was to make it difficult to get a firearm license and purchase firearms. That is the point; it is not meant to be easy. So when people like Mr Bourman and Mr Young come in here and say that it is too difficult for them and that they are law abiding — it is meant to be difficult. It is not meant to be easy to purchase a firearm. That is the point — to show that there is a legitimate reason. It is the most basic bar that we could expect people to have to climb over to be in a position to have a firearms licence and possess firearms.

The other furphy, of course, that we are always told is about law-abiding gun owners not using them. Of course they do not use them in a criminal way; nobody is arguing with that. But the problem is that the more guns that are in circulation, the more people who are injured or killed by them, and that is the inescapable evidence from around the world. I do not understand why the government is indicating that it needs to move in this direction, and I am totally surprised that the opposition would be supporting this legislation. The Greens will not be supporting it.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (14:37) — I thank the government and the opposition for their contributions. I note that the government said that they are very close and that there are police concerns and things like that. I would just point out that first of all you can advertise in printed media and that if the concerns were justified, then we would know it. Also, as every other state can advertise on the internet, if their concerns were justified, then they would manifest themselves there. Clearly they are not.

I am just going to finish off with a very short statement: what I am actually trying to do is, ironically, help the national firearms agreement by aligning our state with the rest of the states. What we have got is a case of our

state being out of step, and we just need to bring it into line. Anyone who supports the national firearms agreement, ironically, should support this.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 21

Atkinson, Mr	O'Donohue, Mr
Bath, Ms	Ondarchie, Mr
Bourman, Mr	O'Sullivan, Mr
Carling-Jenkins, Dr	Patten, Ms
Crozier, Ms	Peulich, Mrs
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Davis, Mr	Ramsay, Mr
Finn, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Fitzherbert, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Wooldridge, Ms
Lovell, Ms	Young, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Morris, Mr	

Noes, 19

Dalidakis, Mr	Mulino, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Dunn, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Elasmar, Mr	Ratnam, Dr
Gepp, Mr	Shing, Ms
Hartland, Ms	Somyurek, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Springle, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Leane, Mr	Symes, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Mikakos, Ms	

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

The PRESIDENT — The question is:

That the bill be now read a third time and do pass.

House divided on question:

Ayes, 21

Atkinson, Mr	O'Donohue, Mr
Bath, Ms	Ondarchie, Mr
Bourman, Mr	O'Sullivan, Mr
Carling-Jenkins, Dr (<i>Teller</i>)	Patten, Ms
Crozier, Ms	Peulich, Mrs
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Purcell, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Davis, Mr	Ramsay, Mr
Finn, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Fitzherbert, Ms	Wooldridge, Ms
Lovell, Ms	Young, Mr
Morris, Mr	

Noes, 19

Dalidakis, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Dunn, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Elasmar, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Ratnam, Dr
Gepp, Mr	Shing, Ms
Hartland, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Somyurek, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Springle, Ms
Leane, Mr	Symes, Ms

Melhem, Mr
Mikakos, Ms

Tierney, Ms

Question agreed to.

Read third time.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan):

That this house notes the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government, including, but not limited to —

- (1) the Ombudsman's investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rorts scandal;
- (2) the Fair Work Commission investigation into the former Government Whip, Cesar Melhem;
- (3) the Victoria Police investigation into the rorting claims of a second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker;
- (4) the IBAC investigation into the Deputy President and printing invoices for membership scandal; and
- (5) the IBAC investigation into Victoria Police's handling of the collision involving the now Premier's taxpayer-funded vehicle in January 2013.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (14:50) — In response to Mr Finn's motion, where he tries to beat up a crisis in the government, I can only say that it must be hard in opposition. I have been through it before, and I think it is a bit of a shame that the opposition is dwelling on beating up individuals' circumstances and cases and trying to imply that that represents a crisis in the government. I have got to say, as a member of this government, I am very proud of this government's achievements and very proud as a collective of what we have achieved. You need only go to Minister Mikakos and the work that she has done in early learning and in youth affairs, which has been second to none. Record spending on kindergartens and record spending on services in that area is just a simple example of what makes a good government.

Mr Finn's premise is that because there are a few individual cases that he can point out, there might be some concerns and there is a government in crisis and it is a bad government. We completely refute that.

We can point to runs on the board as I speak. We believe we are a government that is getting it done. We came to government with a vast array of election commitments that are all close to being fulfilled, and we are working on the remaining ones. We came to government with a very ambitious program in infrastructure and in services, and we are getting that

done. We came to government with an ambitious program around building new facilities. New hospitals have opened as early as this part of our term. We have had record spending on schools and, as I mentioned before, not only in schools but in early learning centres as well. We have reopened TAFEs that were closed, and we are proud of that. I was personally very proud to see the Lilydale TAFE reopened after it was unfortunately closed, leaving people who lived in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne without a TAFE to attend.

We are proud that we have embarked on a very large and ambitious public transport infrastructure program. A number of level crossings have been removed; early to mid-next year there will be many more removed. We have embarked on a huge project, the Metro Tunnel project, to increase the internal capacity of our fixed rail network by 150 per cent. Governments should have great ambitions, and our ambition in the future is that, like some of the great cities in the world, the network capacity afforded to us will mean we will not necessarily have to have a train timetable in the morning and afternoon peaks. People will be able to turn up at a station on the metropolitan train line and know a train will be coming in a few minutes. They will not have to worry about checking when they are coming, as they will be able to jump on one. If they just miss one, they will only have to wait a few minutes to be able to board another one.

We have embarked on programs in education, in roads and in public transport. The thing that makes us very proud as well is that with the large infrastructure program we have embarked on and the ambitious increase in services they of course create jobs for Victorians. In creating jobs for Victorians we are very proud to ensure that everyone — all Victorians, no matter who they are — have the opportunity to be able to put their hands up for the work which we have created. We are making sure that our large infrastructure programs have quotas, as in the 10 per cent apprentice and trainee guarantee, so young people have an entry-level opportunity to start their careers on our projects.

We are very proud that we are putting in Indigenous employment percentages.

Ms Patten interjected.

Mr LEANE — Well, I am enjoying it. As I said, Victorians are sometimes underemployed. We are very proud of our Indigenous employment percentages. We are working with returned veterans at the moment. We are working with some of the refugee groups to ensure

they all get an opportunity to at least start on the entry-level jobs on our projects. But not just that: some of them are qualified engineers from other countries. They might need some assistance in our new TAFE system, which we have rebuilt, to complete modules so as to be able to work as engineers on our big jobs. We are very, very proud about that.

We are very proud that we came to government with a very large program around domestic violence, which I suppose is an area political parties had not embarked on because it was not electorally popular. It is an area that people have not wanted to speak about for years, but it is a huge issue in our community. I am very proud of the work we have done on that. I am proud of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and I am proud that the recommendations are being implemented.

There is so much, as I have said, and more. As I said, I am proud to be part of this government. I believe this government will go down as being one of the greatest Victorian governments. It is a great reforming government. I believe the Premier and the lead ministers will go down as being great leaders and great ministers into the future.

As I said, I do sympathise with the opposition. The opposition have a job to do; I know it is hard. It must be pretty hard in opposition to be opposing this particular government. As I said, maybe they think attacks on individuals might give them some currency. It may; it may not. As far as we are concerned, we are just going to get on with the good work we are doing. We are going to go out and be proud of the good work we are doing. We are proud of our ministers and proud of our Premier. We will go to the election with the runs on the board, and if the good people of Victoria believe we deserve another go, we will appreciate that because we know we will be able to achieve so much more on top of the great work we have achieved so far.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (14:59) — I rise in support of Mr Finn's motion, which identifies a number of integrity crises which have been a hallmark of the Andrews government, including but not limited to the Ombudsman's investigation into Labor red shirt electorate officer rort scandals. On this one in particular the government had a sophisticated scheme of scamming the public purse — parliamentary office budgets — in order to pay for political organisers for the 2014 state election, who then organised the Community Action Network on behalf of the Labor Party. The government spent hundreds of thousands of dollars obfuscating, blocking and challenging in the courts the right of the Ombudsman to undertake an

investigation — a motion which was passed by this chamber. This investigation is proceeding.

We have ample evidence that I have certainly received from within, from good, honest young Labor Party members — I am sure there are good members in every political party — who basically thought they were doing the right thing, because people in positions of authority, members of Parliament and those who worked in their offices were the ones who recruited them, put the scheme in place and put a lot of pressure on members of Parliament to pay for these organisers, many of whom were not actually working in the electorates of the sponsoring member. That clearly is a breach. Whilst it is a fine line between what is considered to be representing and engaging with the community and undertaking parliamentary duties, when they are actually not working in your office or not working in your electorate it is a clear misuse of public funds.

I am certainly looking forward with great anticipation to the report of the Ombudsman and indeed to finding out who orchestrated and who the architect was of this roting scheme, because it certainly was not the people who were the victims. The organisers themselves felt that they were doing the right thing because they had received orders from above. We will see more of the red shirts on the ground in the future, and we have to ask the question: how many of them are actually paid for out of Labor Party funds, how many are volunteers and how many are actually being paid out of parliamentary office budgets?

The Fair Work Commission is also investigating the former whip, Cesar Melhem. I will not comment much on that except to say that I am intrigued by the sophisticated and elaborate practices that occur between large businesses who benefit from government contracts — such as, for example, some of the projects that are being pursued by this government — and the main unions of the employees employed by them.

I remember reading the evidence of the royal commission. I cannot recall, because I am just standing here on my feet without my notes because I was not planning to speak on this motion today, but I think there was an agreement that \$300 000 would be paid to the Australian Workers Union as a bit of a side deal, a sweetheart deal, and all they had to do was figure out a clever way of moving \$300 000 from the company to the union. I recall from the evidence that the three clever ways were: one, paying for training that was never delivered — \$100 000, I think it was; two, paying for advertising in the union magazine that never ran; and three, paying for very expensive dinners at a very

expensive union fundraiser. I would imagine that this is just the tip of the iceberg.

These side deals give the union undeclared money not only to support membership recruitment within their own faction — and we have seen an abundance of that sort of activity being exposed currently, especially as reported in the context of Labor Party preselections, which can be pretty competitive — but also to pay for various elements and various campaigns that suit those unions and for backing their candidates and their members of Parliament in their elections. These are not often moneys that are declarable, and should the Premier be moving to reform the donation laws, we would all expect that those donation laws would apply to unions and also to third parties such as GetUp!, which is in receipt of a substantial amount of money to wage campaigns often on behalf of the Labor Party cause. That will run its course, but again I imagine this practice is the tip of the iceberg.

The third part of Mr Finn's motion refers to:

the Victoria Police investigation into the roting claims of a second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker ...

I just place on record that I have never been in receipt of a residence allowance or an overnight stay allowance. I have always been 100 metres short of an overnight stay allowance. When we bought our most recent house about three and a half years ago it never occurred to me to think about buying something that was 100 metres further so somehow I could access it. I just find this extraordinary. It takes me a long time to get here because we have got a shocking road connection. It takes me longer to get to Parliament from Dingley Village, which is 28 kilometres away or thereabouts, than it took my former roommate Donna Petrovich, who lived in Kilmore. Let me tell you that when Parliament rises at midnight or sometimes 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the morning it is not very pleasant nor very safe to be driving home at that hour of the night. You fall asleep for that microsecond, and you think, 'My God, I could have wrapped myself around that pole'. I have had to literally wind down the window and turn up the radio or slap myself around the face in order to keep myself awake, but it never dawned on me to actually cheat the system.

But not only were these people claiming a second residence allowance that they were not entitled to according to the definition; they actually were not living in those residences. That is an even bigger roting. In actual fact local reports from Mordialloc have on a number of occasions forwarded me photographs and information about Mr Nardella actually living in

Mordialloc. I will not say with whom, but he has, however, been seen — again, coincidentally — in his pyjamas taking out his rubbish wheelie bin on a Monday morning or whichever day they take out the rubbish. So he was not only rorting the second residence allowance but he actually did not live where he claimed to live and he indeed refuses to pay it all back.

And what has happened? He is still sitting there, and the government is still prepared to accept his tainted vote and embrace him in its bosom. He sits there in the dining rooms cosy up to all members of Parliament like he is just another member of the flock. The Premier, when in opposition, said that the standard you accept is the standard you are prepared to walk by. Well, he is walking by a lot of very shonky practices which he not only tolerates but, we suspect, approves of and condones and may have even been the architect of. At least the former Speaker, Mr Telmo Languiller, had the good sense to repay the money. Given their positions as the Presiding Officers who enforce the rules that the rest of Parliament has to abide by, they needed to be squeaky clean and setting the standard — not of course engaging in such disreputable conduct.

The fourth part of the motion is that:

the IBAC investigation into the Deputy President and printing invoices for membership scandal ...

We do know that the Deputy President, Mr Eideh, has stood down. He stood down pending the investigations. He actually called for an audit of his office at the time when this was exposed and is not averse to the IBAC investigation. I know that Mr Eideh is probably quite a wealthy man in his own right. I would be very surprised if he himself was scamming the system for membership, but there are no surprises when it comes to the rest of the Labor Party. I guess if he is not the one responsible, then clearly a very close examination of the role of his staffers needs to be undertaken. I will not comment much on that. Obviously IBAC has an important investigation to undertake, and I am sure that they will get to the bottom of the facts — remembering of course that it was the coalition that set up IBAC and the current government opposed it all the way.

Lastly, the motion refers to:

the IBAC investigation into Victoria Police's handling of the collision involving the now Premier's taxpayer funded vehicle in January 2013.

Again, it is police protocol and practice that anyone involved in an accident is mandatorily tested for alcohol. No-one should be exempt from that. In fact I must say I chuckle whenever I get caught up on the

road at 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning and I am breathalysed. Never once did I think that this should not happen. Whilst most people do not drink at 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning, some may be suffering from the previous night's activities. Police are doing their job, and they should have been doing their job in this instance. Now, I am not sure exactly what transpired for the police to not follow protocol, but I would be very concerned that special treatment was being meted out to a driver of a parliamentary vehicle — so someone with a special level of duty and responsibility — and the wife of not only a member of Parliament but the leader of the state opposition and of course the alternative leader.

These are just some highlights of the rorting that is endemic in this Labor government. They do not think twice about flushing down the loo \$1.3 billion not to build a road, based on a contract that they were prepared to tear up, which they said would not cost Victorians a single dollar. Well, it did not cost them a single dollar; it cost them \$1.3 billion to not build a road that Victoria needs. The reason they did that was to appease the Greens in the inner metropolitan seats in the lead-up to the 2014 state election, just like we are now seeing the Premier backflipping on a whole range of promises he had given Victorians in order to appease the Greens and left-wing voters in Northcote in the Northcote by-election.

He promised not to bring in euthanasia, and what we will begin debating in the upper house tomorrow is the so-called Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017, a bill — without pre-empting debate on the bill — that makes no provisions for protecting people with mental health disorders by compulsorily referring them for assessment and treatment before they can participate. It is a bill that may equally apply to prisoners or people who are in secure mental health facilities. If they get a diagnosis of a 12-month life expectancy, they would be eligible for this. What now? As a state are we going to reintroduce death chambers? This is a horrendous bill. It is a horrendous government. They have no morals. They will trade anything in order to secure their own political hides. Now we also hear that they are going to introduce drug injecting rooms in Victoria. I was a party to inquiries into both those matters. It is an absolute sham. On the one hand we agree that we can kill off people, but on the other hand we are saying, 'We're going to agree to drug injecting rooms because it's going to save lives'. When you actually dissect the details, the facts just do not stand up to scrutiny.

I am appalled at the performance of this Premier and this government, and I have served under many former Premiers and governments. I have been here for

21 years. I served under former Premier Jeff Kennett when I was first elected, under opposition leaders Napthine and Doyle, under premiers Bracks and Brumby, Ted Baillieu and Denis Napthine — a lot of premiers — and I have never seen one without any moral compass like the Premier of death, Daniel Andrews, and this government. The Premier is prepared to turn a blind eye to rotting and prepared to trade off or backflip on any promises that are made in order to save his political skin and his majority in his party. Let me say I pray for this man to be rolled, even only to be replaced by another Labor leader. With those few words, I commend the motion to the house and pray that Victorians have an opportunity to vote in a decent coalition government.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (15:14) — I rise to speak in support of Mr Finn's motion:

That this house notes the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government, including, but not limited to —

followed by five specific points. I want to elaborate on some of the other crises that we are seeing in the Andrews government and more particularly some of the crises we are seeing in the electorate of Western Victoria Region.

I note that once again we are coming up to our fire season. Many in the coalition were just briefed on the upcoming fire season, and we do know there is a significant fuel load out there particularly in country areas of Victoria and that there is potential for a significant upcoming fire season. However, that is not something that appears to be front of mind for this Labor government, under which we have seen the sacking of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) board and CEO, along with a myriad of other senior firefighting personnel across the state of Victoria. One would have thought that we do not live in a place where fire risk is significant, but of course we know that Victoria is one of the most fire-prone places in the world, so one would think that any responsible government would want to place the safety of their citizens and indeed the strong and cohesive functioning of their fire services at the front and centre of their minds. However, that is not what this government is doing.

This government is, rather than putting the lives of Victorians first, putting the wishes of militant union leaders first. It is Peter Marshall, the secretary of the United Firefighters Union (UFU), the man whose name cannot be spoken by the Premier in this Parliament, whom the government is favouring over ordinary Victorians and of course our hardworking CFA volunteers. There have been recent revelations of shocking sexual harassment, bullying and even

allegations of rape and other very, very serious criminal behaviour by some in the CFA and allegations that the UFU, the militant union, are attempting to have this type of behaviour hidden and not brought to light to ensure that victims of these types of behaviour receive the proper recourse. This is what we are seeing from this government. We are seeing a government that is more interested in clinging to power rather than serving Victorians as it should.

I am deeply concerned about this upcoming fire season and the functioning of our fire services, because there is a wholesale lack of respect from this government for our CFA volunteers — the people who go out and fight fires day in, day out and keep our communities safe. That is why we on this side of the house are proposing, if we are elected at the next election, to have a royal commission into the fire services in Victoria to provide certainty to Victorians about how it is that we can press forward and ensure that all Victorians are kept safe. I have heard the Premier on many occasions just say, 'We are fixing it', but he is not actually doing anything. He is just talking. He is doing nothing at all to try and address the very significant concerns and the disgraceful behaviour we are seeing from the UFU. We have seen nothing about him trying to fix it, which is nothing short of shameful.

This is just one of the crises that we are seeing from this government. Another crisis that we are seeing from this government is a crisis of confidence from the people of Ballarat about what is happening at the railway station precinct in Ballarat. What is happening at the railway station precinct is an abysmal mess. Just yesterday there was a significant crowd of concerned people who gathered at the railway station to go about bringing to the attention of the government the lack of disability access at the train station. Of course as I was sitting in Parliament yesterday, I was unable to attend. However, I did see a very informative video on the Ballarat *Courier* website about a gentleman from Ballarat, Mr Gary Fitzgerald, who at various times is described as the Ballarat council watcher. I watched him on a mobility scooter trying to manoeuvre from the area at the railway station precinct where the multi-deck car park is going to be to where the trains depart to Melbourne. It was a lengthy trip, it was an uncomfortable trip and it was a trip that people with disabilities should not have to make if this government were serious about redeveloping the site to ensure proper access for everyone — of all abilities.

The further areas of crisis this government is in relate to the many and varied investigations that are currently being undertaken by the Ombudsman, by IBAC and by various other bodies into the rotting of public moneys.

We in this place are in a privileged position, and it is one that we should be treating with due respect. We need to respect the fact that the community at large should have confidence in the fact that we are going to be spending their money — taxpayers money — in a way that is going to receive good value for money. Purchasing Labor Party memberships with taxpayers money is nothing short of disgraceful. It is a shocking scam. It is a horrible waste of taxpayers money, and it is potentially criminal behaviour to be rorting taxpayers money to stack branches in the ALP to try and fix preselection outcomes. That is what we are seeing from this government. So for those opposite to stand up and say ‘This is not a government in crisis’ is a bit like the knight in *Monty Python* who says he has just got a flesh wound despite having lost both arms and having blood pouring out of him. They are near enough to fatal injuries that are being exposed in this government, and yet it is just clinging to life.

Ms Shing — What was the actual point? It’s just a flesh wound. Can I just put that on the record?

Mr MORRIS — Ms Shing, you may claim it is just a flesh wound, but it is not.

Ms Shing — That’s not my claim. That’s the quote from *Monty Python*.

Mr MORRIS — I understand, Ms Shing. Not only are we seeing investigations about the rorting of allowances purchasing Labor Party memberships, but we are also seeing the rorting of taxpayers money with regard to the second residence allowance. When it was first revealed that the Speaker in the other place had been involved in the rorting of taxpayers money I thought this was shocking — a shocking revelation about the fact that the person who was supposed to be responsible for the allocation of those funds and ensuring those funds for that second residence allowance were appropriately spent was himself rorting it. Not only was he rorting it but then came the revelation that his deputy, the member for Melton, was also rorting the second residence allowance by staying at a caravan in Ocean Grove.

Mr Ondarchie — Allegedly.

Mr MORRIS — Allegedly. But prior to allegedly living in that caravan in Ocean Grove, the member for Melton was living in Lake Wendouree in Ballarat. I struggle to fathom how it is that these members of the ALP, who purport to represent their electorates, choose to live anywhere but their own electorates. We on this side of the house actually pride ourselves on being of the communities that we represent and living in the

communities that we represent. We actually think it is important to live amongst the people who elected you so that you understand what their issues and concerns are. However, what we see from members of the Labor Party is that they would much rather live in seats other than their own. It is generally Liberal seats that these ALP members live in. It is one thing to do so, but it is quite another to have the taxpayer pay you for the privilege of not living in the seat that you represent, which is nothing short of disgraceful behaviour.

I note that there has already been a wideranging debate on this particular issue. I certainly commend Mr Finn on moving this motion, and I look forward to hearing contributions from other members in this house, who I am sure will support this motion as well.

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (15:25) — I rise today to speak on this motion regarding the scandals that have engulfed this term of government. There is a cloud hanging over this government because of the seemingly endless series of scandals that involve not just Labor MPs but Liberal MPs as well. It is not just the government; this motion could equally apply to the opposition and previous governments as well.

At the risk of repeating what has already been said today, I will go through the motion from the perspective of the Greens. This motion begins with:

- (1) the Ombudsman’s investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rorts scandal ...

Whistleblowers have alleged that electorate officers for Labor members were signed up and directed to be community organisers for the 2014 Labor Party campaign. This is obviously a clear breach of the rules governing electorate officers. They were apparently sent off to marginal electorates in red shirts to organise doorknocks for the Labor Party at the expense of the taxpayer, as has already been pointed out. The allegations are now being investigated by the Ombudsman after being referred by this house through a motion put by our former leader, Greg Barber.

An honourable member — Where is he?

Ms SPRINGLE — He is having a lovely time in Darwin, as far as I am aware. The government fought this referral every step of the way. They took it to the Supreme Court and lost. They took it to the Court of Appeal and lost. They took it to the High Court and lost. They then, in what has been referred to as an unusual step by the former Clerk in the annual report of the Legislative Assembly, asserted ‘exclusive cognisance’ in relation to the Ombudsman inquiry in an

attempt to prevent the Ombudsman from investigating lower house members who could be the subject of these allegations.

Number (2) is:

the Fair Work Commission investigation into the former Government Whip, Cesar Melhem ...

Mr Melhem has been referred to prosecutors over accusations relating to corruption.

Number (3) is:

the Victoria Police investigation into the roting claims of a second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker ...

This has resulted in the member for Tarneit and the member for Melton resigning. The member for Melton is now sitting on the crossbench after his initial refusal to pay the money back, and he still has not actually admitted he has done anything wrong. The government is refusing to refer both those members to the Privileges Committee in the Legislative Assembly to further investigate them and to report back to the house and recommend a sanction. The government is hiding behind the fact that there is an ongoing police investigation to justify why they have not referred these members to the Privileges Committee, just as Geoff Shaw was referred in the previous Parliament. But we already know from the report commissioned by the Audit Committee that these two members rorted the system, and any decision to delay the investigation or sanction by Parliament should be made by the Privileges Committee.

The fourth is:

the IBAC investigation into the Deputy President and printing invoices for membership scandal ...

There have been allegations that the Deputy President's electorate office and communications budget was rorted using inflated printing invoices, with the money used to pay for ALP branch stacking. It is appropriate that the Deputy President has stepped aside while these allegations are investigated. The disappointing thing, however, is that it did not take place until we were about to debate a motion in this place forcing him to step down, which he really should have done of his own accord prior to that.

Number (5) is:

the IBAC investigation into Victoria Police's handling of the collision involving the now Premier's taxpayer-funded vehicle in January 2013.

I note that the investigation is actually into the police involved in that matter as opposed to the Premier, and it is appropriate that IBAC conduct that investigation, given their role as the primary independent police oversight and integrity agency.

But this motion could just as easily have included the so-called 'lobster with the mobster' scandal, in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's dinner with Melbourne's leading organised crime figure and the plot to secretly funnel donations and potentially the proceeds of organised crime, as well as more scandals involving the Leader of the Opposition from his time as planning minister in the previous government, such as when he stepped in to approve an apartment tower in Chapel Street, South Yarra, over twice the height that local planning laws allowed, on behalf of a developer who was a donor to the Liberal Party. That developer then went on to make \$36 million from selling that site — a decision which the Greens attempted to stop in this place but which was allowed to proceed by the then Liberal government.

It could also have included the rezoning of Fishermans Bend without a strategic plan in place, which delivered windfall profits to developers, and the Ventnor rezoning, whereby the then planning minister, against the advice of his own department, rezoned land on Phillip Island only to overturn the decision, resulting in a multimillion-dollar legal payout. And of course who could forget the saga involving the former member for Frankston and his misuse of his parliamentary vehicle for commercial purposes?

The laundry list of scandals and rorts shows our political system is broken. Too often decisions are made by MPs for their personal or political gain and not in the public interest. Victoria needs a tougher integrity system for our politicians to hold rorters and dodgy MPs to account, not the weak, ineffective system we have in place now. We can start by overhauling our outdated code of conduct, which has not been updated in 40 years. It is clearly meaningless to many MPs. We can also make our code of conduct enforceable by the anti-corruption body so that MPs who break the rules are held to account and so we avoid farcical circumstances where an MP like Mr Guy refers himself to IBAC knowing full well it cannot investigate.

The Greens have secured an inquiry by the Legislative Council Procedure Committee, in consultation with the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders Committee, into the establishment of an independent parliamentary commissioner for standards in Victoria that would oversee the entitlement system for MPs. Given what has occurred with the former Speaker and former

Deputy Speaker, it is critical that breaches of entitlement are investigated independently and not by politicians themselves.

We welcome the government's announcement that it will reform our weak political donations system after years of pressure from the Greens. It is critical that donations are not just capped but that the sources of those donations are restricted, particularly those from property developers and the gambling industry.

In conclusion, unless we strengthen our integrity system these scandals will continue, casting an ever-increasing shadow over this Parliament. It is time to clean up politics. Motions like this serve little purpose unless the opposition are prepared to bring solutions to the table. Like the government, they will continue to be part of the problem.

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (15:32) — I rise to support Mr Finn's motion 480 in relation to the crisis that is surrounding the Andrews government in terms of the way they conduct their business not only in this house but also in the other house and across Victoria. The motion outlines a range of points in terms of where scenarios have taken place which are really unacceptable to the average person in Victoria. I find that a pity.

In some regards I agree with some of the things that Ms Springle said in relation to this motion and what it means. While this motion is focusing on the government and some of the rotting that we have seen within the government, the flow-on effect is that it impacts all of us. It impacts all of us in many ways, because outside of the Parliament many people do not distinguish between the sides of the house that members sit on. They lump us all in the same category. I think if you were to go and ask many people outside of this building, they would probably throw us all into the same grouping, which I find sad for all of us because it reflects badly on all of us.

I have an example from 2013, when a rating system was done in relation to ethics and honesty. Out of 30 different occupations it was sad to see that state members of Parliament were well towards the bottom. It was even sadder to see that federal MPs were actually rated higher than what we were. None of this reflects well on any of us, but unfortunately the way we see it at the moment is that there have been many examples where this government has brought all of us into disrepute. I have only been here for a year, but there is no doubt that I feel sad, even in the short time that I have been here, about the extent of what has happened in just one year. It is astounding.

Someone said to me at lunchtime when I was grabbing a bite to eat that these things happen so much that it has become normalised. It happens and you see it appear in the newspaper or on the news or wherever it is and people do not bat an eyelid because they are almost expecting it nowadays. I think that is really sad for the Labor Party, but it flows onto all of us. We see groups of schoolkids watching us from the public gallery in this chamber, and at times I think they would wonder what it is all about. That does not reflect well on any of us.

Let us look at some other instances. This motion starts by referring back to 2014, before the election, when the Labor Party put together the Community Action Network. As we have all heard very clearly, there were 26 casual staff employed by members of Parliament in electorate offices who went and worked for the Community Action Network. They put on their red shirts, they went into marginal seats and they campaigned directly door to door for the Labor Party. Those 26 casual staff were meant to be working in the electorate offices of particular Labor members of Parliament, but in many cases those staff members would not even get to meet their MP — their employer. What would also happen is that the MP would sign a blank time sheet and give it over to others within the Community Action Network who would fill out all the details for that government public service employee to go and work for the Labor Party. It is just outrageous that that could have been undertaken.

When the Labor Party were brought to account on that, what did they do? Rather than saying 'Yes, we probably got that wrong. Sorry about that. That was wrong. We'll repay that money because that should have been paid for by the Labor Party', no, they decided they would not do that. So what did they do? They appealed. This matter went to the Ombudsman to be investigated. The government spent taxpayers money to appeal because they said that the Ombudsman did not have the jurisdiction to actually undertake that work. It was then taken up by the Supreme Court, which found that the Ombudsman did have the jurisdiction to undertake the investigation into the red shirt brigade. So what did the government do then? They actually took it to the High Court of Australia. Perhaps it was the vibe that they were looking for. Perhaps it was Mabo, but I do not think it was. How much taxpayers money did the Andrews Labor government spend to go to the High Court so that it could determine whether the Ombudsman had the jurisdiction to look into this issue?

Of course the High Court found that the Ombudsman did have the jurisdiction to look into this matter and so

the Ombudsman is currently looking into it. If the Labor Party are guilty, as I suspect they might be, then no wonder they have gone all the way to the High Court of Australia to try to defend this situation. The decision will be handed down fairly soon. I imagine we will all be sitting around, waiting with much anticipation to find out what the Ombudsman makes of this investigation. That is just one example which happened back in 2014 and that is still going. It is interesting to see that the Community Action Network is still in play in Northcote today.

We also had the situation where the former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly — the person who, together with the President, holds the highest official position in the Parliament, the person who is meant to set the example for all politicians in terms of the way this Parliament works, the person who is meant to set the standard for how things operate in the Parliament and the person who I understand lives in Tarneit, which is about 30 kilometres from Melbourne — said, 'I've actually got a second residence down on the beach and I want to claim a further allowance from the Parliament to have a holiday home at the beach, but I am going to call it my principal place of residence'. The former Speaker said that. Once the former Speaker was caught out on that, yes, he was very apologetic — it is easy to say sorry afterwards — and he offered to repay the money, which I assume has occurred. But again it just shows what an absolute abuse of power that is by the person who was meant to be setting the highest —

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Ms Shing, I do not think you would ever condone that. I certainly hope that you would not. I am sure you would not. Then the former Deputy Speaker, the member for Melton in the other place, decided that he wanted to have a place down at the beach as well. At least the former Speaker had a house. The former Deputy Speaker decided he was going to get a caravan and take it down to the beach and claim that that was his principal place of residence.

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Yes, I did see it out the back in the car park. The member for Melton, the former Deputy Speaker, the second highest position-holder in the Legislative Assembly, showed an absolute disregard of the laws and a disregard of the standard that they are meant to set in this Parliament. It is actually unheard of to have a former Speaker and a former Deputy Speaker both rorting their second residence allowance, because they actually get paid pretty well in those positions. But they both decided

that they were going to take the opportunity to rort the taxpayer because they just expected that whatever they wanted, they should get and the poor old taxpayer would pay for it. It is in the DNA of the Labor Party. They absolutely cannot lie straight in bed. It is absolutely disgusting.

I will now go to other matters that show what happens when the Labor Party gets into power. They just lose all sense of reality, to the point where we also saw the absolute other end of ridiculousness by a minister of the Crown, who gets a car and a chauffeur to drive him wherever he wants to go for business purposes — which is absolutely fair enough — and what did he do? He decided he was going to get his chauffeur to pick up his two little puppies, Pistol and Boo. Was it Pistol and Boo?

Mr Morris — Ted and Patch.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Ted and Patch. Sorry, I had the wrong ones. He decided to get Ted and Patch, chuck them in the back of the Statesman and drive them up to the country ranch —

Mr Morris — Up to Trentham.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Up to Trentham. I think it is pretty unreasonable that you would get the taxpayer-funded chauffeur to pick up your dogs and take them up to the ranch at Trentham for the weekend. I think the driver had to stop halfway and take the dogs out to have a little walk up and down the side of the river just to stretch their little legs a bit. That is what happens with the Labor Party when they get into government. The first thing they do is say, 'How can we rip off the taxpayer a bit more?'. That is just one more example where we have seen this happen. It took that minister a couple of weeks before he actually decided that that was enough. He did not think he had done anything wrong at all. It was only when he got a tap on the shoulder from the Premier's office saying, 'It's time to go, Mr Herbert', that he decided, 'Okay, perhaps I did do the wrong thing'. He then decided that not only would he stand down from being minister but he would leave the Parliament. That was probably the reasonable thing to do. We then got Mr Gepp taking his place. It is nice to have Mr Gepp here today.

We have seen a range of other things happen in terms of the rorting undertaken by the Labor Party. One of the latest ones was Labor Party members using taxpayers money from their electorate offices — money which is designed to operate our electorate offices, to pay for electricity, to pay for phones and whatever else that we do, to pay for some advertising and so forth — to

organise for some printing to be done, but then saying to the printer, 'Don't really do the printing. Just do a couple. I'll pay the bill, but you give that back to me in cash and I'll go out and pay for some Labor memberships for my preselection'. That is an absolute outrage. I do not know how you could even think that up. What is in your DNA that you could sit there and think, 'How can I rip off the taxpayer so I can get that money and pay for memberships for Labor Party branch stacking'? What sort of a person would stand around and think that up, let alone actually do it? I do not understand that.

Then in the last couple of days we have seen evidence of an organisation called Let's Feed, which is purporting to be a charity. The idea for this charity is that they put some tins around in a whole range of shops and places in the western suburbs, where people after they have bought something would pop a bit of their spare change into those charity tins, and Let's Feed would then go and feed the homeless. Sounds like a beautiful concept — a great program to help those homeless people get a feed. But what happened is that apparently a candidate who is running for preselection for the Labor Party was taking that money and using it to pay for memberships so they can do some branch stacking to replace the member for Tarneit.

There must be something about that particular seat. We had the first member for Tarneit decide that he was going to rip off the taxpayer by getting a house down by the beach. Now the replacement for that rorting member for Tarneit is using a charity organisation that is designed to get food for homeless people out in the western suburbs and taking that money to go and buy memberships to do branch stacking in Tarneit. There must be something about the Labor people in the seat of Tarneit. Absolutely crazy.

Mr Gepp interjected.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Melton have been having a crack at it, but I think the Melton people did it through the printing, and if you are in Tarneit you do it through the Let's Feed charity. I could go on and on and on, but I have only got 1 minute 30 seconds so I cannot go into more.

What we are also seeing, which I think is very dishonest of this government, is with the Northcote by-election coming up the Labor Party trying to out-green the Greens. We have seen the Labor candidate come out and say they are a proud vegan, they would go to the op shop to buy their clothes and a whole range of other things that are absolutely greener than the Greens.

There is no doubt we are seeing a whole range of backflipping by this party, by this government, in terms of the by-election coming up in Northcote. We have seen a backflip in relation to injecting rooms. We have seen a backflip in relation to allowing animals to live in rental properties. We have seen backflips all over the place to try and win —

Mr Dalidakis — On a point of order, Acting President, I was listening to what has been a very broad ranging contribution by the member, and I believe he made an allegation in relation to Mr Sidhu. I suggest that he withdraw the remarks that he made, because they are unproven at this stage. They are baseless allegations, and I think you should be very careful about that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — I think I can manage; I do not need assistance. Mr O'Sullivan, you have got 30 seconds, and I think regarding the point made by Mr Dalidakis maybe it is worthwhile clarifying that it is an allegation in a newspaper at this stage. We will give you 35 seconds.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — I thank Mr Dalidakis for bringing that to my attention. It is true to say that they are allegations, and if I did not say that in my contribution, I certainly meant to say that in my contribution.

What we have seen over a long time with this government is that they cannot be trusted. I think within one year the people of Victoria will wake up and decide that they need a better government in this state, and the Liberals and The Nationals will be very proud to provide that to them.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (15:49) — I welcome the applause and encouragement from across the chamber today. I am happy to wait for Mr O'Sullivan and Mr Dalidakis to finish their conversation, which they could well have out in the corridor, but that is up to them. Mr Dalidakis, for the record, has indicated that he is not going to say something. This is a historic day for this Parliament; I suspect even his own party are delighting at that indication that he is not going to say something.

I rise today to support Mr Finn's motion, that talks about the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government. I acknowledge the speakers before me: Mr Finn, Mr Morris, Mr O'Sullivan and others who have addressed this matter. Specifically I want to go to the key aspect of this motion, which is a crisis in the Andrews government.

Mr Finn quite eloquently told us about the Ombudsman's ongoing investigation into the red T-shirt people who came out at election time to campaign for the Labor Party but were purportedly being paid by Labor members of Parliament under their parliamentary budget, many of whom, we are told, actually never met their employees — they signed their time sheets and sent them off into various areas. We saw them in Northern Metropolitan Region. I have to say that there are a few members of the Labor Party in the Northern Metropolitan Region that will have a bit to answer for as this goes on, because as they boasted, some of those field officers in their red T-shirts were being paid by certain members of Parliament and they bragged about it, not quite understanding how this was going to play out, and there is a lot more to be said about that.

This is a government that is absolutely in crisis, but they do not understand that it is about taxpayers money. Let us never forget that the Premier said to Peter Mitchell, the night before the last election, that he would never increase taxes, not one solitary tax — 'I make that promise, Peter', he said, 'to every single Victorian'. Here we stand, almost three years into this rorting, insipid government, and we have seen 11 new taxes introduced. So who can believe them? Who can believe anything that they say? They think it is okay, they think it is quite permissible, to put your dogs in your limousine from down in —

Mr O'Sullivan — Parkville.

Mr ONDARCHIE — No, in Parkdale, and take them up to —

Mr Gepp — Do you need a *Melways*?

Mr ONDARCHIE — Well, if you lived in your electorate, you would not need a *Melways*. The trouble is you live in my electorate, not in your own electorate.

Mr Gepp interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I tell you what, you want to open the door, Mr Gepp, let's go. We'll do that.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! Mr Ondarchie, please speak through the Chair, and Mr Gepp, please refrain from interjecting.

Ms Shing — Please don't point. It hurts my feelings.

Mr ONDARCHIE — Firstly, I apologise to Ms Shing for pointing if it hurts her feelings. Secondly, through the Chair, I do indicate to Mr Gepp that he

would need a *Melways* if he lived in his own electorate, which he does not.

Ms Shing — It's *Melway*. It's singular, Mr Ondarchie. It's *Melway*.

Mr ONDARCHIE — Well, I quoted him, but if you want to interrupt, keep on going — that is okay. So they think is quite permissible to say to your ministerial driver, 'Hey, duck down to Parkdale, pick up the dogs, take them up to Trentham and on the way take them out for the things that dogs need to do, give them a walk — maybe give them a brush and do their nails as well. Give them a bit of a pooch pamper while you're at it, and then, when you've got a chance, duck back to Parliament, pick me up and take me back to the country residence'. They think that is okay. As they sit here laughing about it and joking about it, the sad thing is that they think it is okay to do that. They also think it is okay — the Premier certainly thinks it is okay — to construct an upside-down triangle, make it filled with blue colour, write the word 'Vic' in the middle and say, 'That is the new state logo', and pay \$20 million for it. That is \$20 million for a new logo! This Andrews government are in crisis because they do not understand that it is not their money.

I have to say that there are plenty of year 7 graphic students right now who would have produced a much better logo, I suspect at a much cheaper price. But to spend \$20 million on an upside-down triangle that is blue with the word 'Vic' in the middle, you must be so excited on the other side of the chamber! You can see them running home right now, flagging that bit of paper, going 'Look what I did today at school, Mum' — and putting it up on the fridge at home — 'a new Vic logo, and it only cost us \$20 million'. What could have we done with that \$20 million?

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — I will pick up Mr Morris's interjection. It was designed around putting that logo on Rod Laver Arena at the Melbourne tennis centre to associate Victoria with the Australian Open. And guess what? It would not fit. There was the Premier doing a presser, kneeling down for all the cameras and talking about his \$20 million logo that did not actually fit on centre court. Has he come out once and apologised for spending \$20 million of the taxpayers money? Not once — never has he done that at all.

These guys have got the logo magnetted up to their fridge, and they are going, 'Haven't we done a great job?'. They have probably got a photo of the dogs in limos alongside it and are going, 'Aren't we doing great

things in government?'. Just to add to that, it is the Premier who said, as I said earlier in my contribution, 'No new taxes' — who looked down the barrel of the camera and said to every Victorian, 'No new taxes'. Here we are, three years on — 11 new taxes. They have not once felt ashamed about this because they do not care. They will do anything and say anything, including employing people under the banner of being electorate officers just to get themselves elected. They have form. They have absolute form in that.

But we are seeing some of these challenges not just coming externally to the Labor Party but also coming internally, because it is preselection season over there. Let the battle continue. As members opposite say to me every now and then about information we bring at question time and at other times about what is going on in the Labor Party, we do this quite cleverly, but some of that information has come from your own side. It is not uncommon to be fed information from your own side about what is going on over there. I have got to tell you: while you are spending your time spending taxpayers money and looking across the chamber, you can start by looking internally, because you know it is coming from over there. The factional preselection wars continue and, as Mr Finn rightly says, it is active and alive in the western suburbs.

But let us feed that discussion, shall we, today? Let us feed that discussion today. There are issues going on in Tarneit. Today we discovered that a so-called charity may be just a fundraising arm for the Labor Party. They are not the least bit ashamed about that.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — Ms Shing chooses to ridicule what is going on in this chamber and make light frivolity of this very important matter. They do not care. We know on this side of the chamber and the wider public knows that this rotting, insipid government has to go. They have to go. This is the same government that has form on bullying. It is not just their own; they have bullied out ministers, they have bullied out women, they have bullied out boards and they have bullied out CEOs of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). They go on and on, and they are not the least bit ashamed about it. They are not the least bit ashamed, because this is their form.

If you go down to ALP headquarters, it says, 'Do anything, try anything — just make sure you are elected'. That is the modus operandi of this mob. Victorians are waking up to it. This is the same government that said, 'We're going to scrap a vital piece of infrastructure, Victoria, a vital piece of

infrastructure that would improve productivity, opportunities, investment and trade in Victoria — and it won't cost us a cent. It's not worth the paper it's written on'. 'It will not cost us a solitary cent', said the then opposition leader. Here we are today: \$1.3 billion has been paid to not build the east-west link that is vital. Even their own consultant, even the man the Labor Party engaged to give them advice on a vital piece of infrastructure, Sir Rod Eddington, said, 'We need that road'. They have paid \$1.3 billion not to build it, and they are not the least bit ashamed. They are not the least bit embarrassed about it.

Ms Shing — I am too embarrassed to stay.

Mr ONDARCHIE — As they retreat from the debate today and as they run with the white flags, saying, 'Yes, you have now discovered what all Victoria knows — this government is hopeless', there is a crisis in this government. They have discovered in the last week that there are things north of the Yarra in Melbourne. The Premier and the Deputy Premier have visited an Assembly electorate called Northcote. They have looked up the Google machine, Google Maps, and said, 'There are electorates north of the Yarra'. Suddenly we have found that they are visiting Northcote and promising things where they have never delivered to Northcote in the past. Why is that? There must be a by-election. There must be a by-election in Northcote because that is the only time they show interest in Northern Metropolitan Region.

There is congestion on our roads — Plenty Road, High Street, Donnybrook Road, Mickelham Road — there is congestion in Reservoir right outside Ms Mikakos's office and, I tell you what, she does not even know it is there. I wonder if she looks out the window or if she is even there.

This government right now has the highest unemployment rate in the country and the highest crime rate in the country. Community safety is a major issue. We held a forum in Northern Metropolitan Region last week where people turned up and shared with us openly and frankly their worry about safety in Victoria. And what are we hearing from this government? Not a thing. Law and order is a major concern; we have elderly Victorians and women who are frightened to leave their homes at night because they are uncertain about the safety on our streets. We have police people telling us they cannot send the van out at night because they ain't got anyone to drive it. Police numbers are down; they are falling behind. As the population grows the government are not supporting the community with our emergency services.

They roll out all this rhetoric about how well they are doing, but they are not fooling a person, because they know out there, as their bills are coming in and the cost of energy is rising and rising. We have companies that are visiting us now that have had 200 per cent increases in their energy costs for their businesses. We have employers that are saying to us, 'It might be easier for us to close the business than to keep it going', because the cost of electricity and gas have gone up so much. You cannot put a new tax on coal-fired power stations and expect the companies to do nothing. This government is absolutely responsible for the drop in energy supply in this state, and they are doing nothing about it. They are talking a lot about renewables, as we should, but they are talking more about it now because there is a by-election in Northcote, and they want to try and capture those swinging voters that may vote for the Greens. There is no integrity in this government.

Traffic congestion is at an all-time high as you travel right around Melbourne. Mrs Peulich tells me about the south-east, Mr Finn tells me about the west and I know from the north that 5.30 in the morning has become the new 6.30. Where people used to get up at 6.30 in the morning in the suburbs to go to work, they are now out of bed at 5.30 and getting on the road earlier to try and get to work because congestion is so bad. And what did this government decide to do? It spent \$1.3 billion not to build a vital piece of road, a road that could improve business, improve productivity and get people home more quickly after work, and this government does not care because they do not realise it is not their money.

As Mr Nardella and Mr Languiller from the Assembly kick back on their banana lounges in their other residences and claim off the taxpayer, nobody on the government side cares. How could they possibly in the period from 2010 to 2014 have a crack at the then Baillieu-Napthine government around the vote of the member for Frankston, saying, 'It's a tainted vote and you should never take it', and then in the lower house with Mr Nardella and Mr Languiller and here in the upper house chamber with one of our own members, they take those tainted votes. The royal commission will have more to say about what happens with one of our upper house members; I am certain of it. I wonder why that upper house member no longer has the position of Government Whip. There is more to this story.

This is a government that is absolutely in crisis. The Victoria Police investigation into the rorting claims of a second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker and the Ombudsman's investigation of the red shirt brigade are being held up by the government. Why would they spend taxpayers money

on taking this through the legal system to stop an investigation? There can only be one logical reason, and that is that they are guilty and they do not want the taxpayer to find out. I am telling you that between now and November 2018 Victorians will well and truly be reminded of this rorting government that has bullied the CFA and tried to marginalise 60 000 CFA volunteers, has spent \$1.3 billion not to build a road and has created an upside-down triangle logo with 'Vic' written in the middle that any schoolchild could make on a computer or their iPad at home — and spent \$20 million to make that logo. Twenty million for an upside-down triangle with the word 'Vic' written in the middle. If I did a quick survey of schoolchildren that visited the Parliament and I said, 'Would you like \$20 million to create a logo like that?', I reckon all the hands would go up. 'I'll have \$20 million. In fact I'll probably have \$200 to do it', but this government spent \$20 million of your money and mums and dads money on that logo; it is inexcusable.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (16:04) — I congratulate Mr Finn for moving a motion that says:

... this house notes the ongoing crisis in the Andrews government, including, but not limited to —

- (1) the Ombudsman's investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rorts scandal;
- (2) the Fair Work Commission investigation into the former Government Whip, Cesar Melhem —

and I am pleased to see he is not now sitting in the chair, which gives me a little bit more gratuitous latitude —

- (3) the Victoria Police investigation into the rorting claims of a second residence allowance by the former Speaker and Deputy Speaker —

and I look forward to making some comments on that —

- (4) the IBAC investigation into the Deputy President and printing invoices for membership scandal; and
- (5) the IBAC investigation into Victoria Police's handling of the collision involving the now Premier's taxpayer-funded vehicle in January 2013.

That is an ongoing investigation, and my preference is not to go into any significant detail on that point. However, I would like to make some comments in relation to, firstly, the Ombudsman's, Deborah Glass's, investigation into the Labor red shirt electorate officer rorts scandal. As my colleague Mr Ondarchie has indicated it is an absolute disgrace that the government is using taxpayer funds to try and stop the democratic process within the court system of allowing the

Ombudsman to investigate complaints in relation to the misuse of parliamentary staff, particularly in activities that are well outside the rules of use of staff in parliamentary offices.

We know this has been an organised action by Labor, and it has been historically over many years, to pool staff for campaign purposes, particularly at election time, and they have basically been caught out. There is no doubt that the Ombudsman has seen fit to act on a recommendation of the Legislative Council to investigate the misuse of staff from Labor members of Parliament.

While I do not wish to go into any detail about the status of that investigation, what I would like to highlight is the fact that I think on three occasions, perhaps four, the Attorney-General has tried to interfere in the Ombudsman's investigation into this rorts scandal. He has done so through Mr Jennings in making an appeal to the High Court — I will stand corrected on that — in relation to this investigation on three occasions, which shows to me that there is some substance to what has been happening and the allegations made in relation to this rorting of electorate officers from Labor members of Parliament offices. Labor obviously does not want to allow the legal process to go forward, does not want the Ombudsman to continue the investigation, does not want the allegations to be proven true, if in fact that is the case, and is trying to impede the process of law through our courts or use the court action to impede the investigation, and also at the same time using taxpayers moneys to try to stifle the normal investigation process by the Ombudsman.

I have seen firsthand evidence through the last state election, where electorate officers were used to help in supporting and running campaigns across Western Victoria Region. On that basis I saw and actually spoke to a number of those staff, trying to identify whether in fact they were working at that time under the auspices of the Parliamentary Services rules and regulations of an employee of a member of Parliament. Of course I was unsuccessful in getting any sort of comfort that in fact they were, and consequently we have seen through Trades Hall and other organisations where these electorate officers have been organised in batches to do campaign work outside the normal working requirements of an electorate officer.

In relation to the Fair Work Commission investigation into the Government Whip, Cesar Melhem, there has been an investigation and again I do not wish to canvass to any great deal the outcomes and ongoing work of that investigation, except to say that the fact

that Mr Melhem saw fit to step down from his position and that his position has been filled by another member of Parliament indicates to me that there was some substance to the allegations and the investigation. Again, it is another indication that when you fill the Legislative Council chamber with Labor Party members that have come directly from unions where they have participated as industrial officers or as secretaries or in prominent leadership positions you invariably get issues coming to the fore of previous activities in those roles, which on many occasions are not legitimate or legal. I think in Mr Melhem's case he had a case to answer and consequently we have seen him step down from his position.

In relation to paragraph (3) of Mr Finn's motion, the investigation into the rorting claims of a second residence allowance, I am a member representing Western Victoria Region and have 75 000 square kilometres of region to represent.

Ms Pulford — Quite a magnificent part of the state it is too, Mr Ramsay.

Mr RAMSAY — It is, Ms Pulford. We do share that responsibility, and as Ms Pulford would well know any night of the week representing our communities we could be in Portland, Hamilton, Melton, Colac or even Ballarat, and of course it necessitates overnight accommodation to say in those far-flung places. Also obviously for members who come from areas outside the 80-kilometre limit it requires us, particularly during sitting weeks and committee weeks, to have a secondary allowance to allow us to be accommodated during those sittings and late nights and long days. In the main most of us are appreciative of the allowance that is given to us to be able to accommodate us during those sitting times and committee times in Melbourne and we do not abuse that privilege.

It is incomprehensible to me that some members of Parliament would abuse an allowance that is meant to be paid to those who are eligible to receive it. We receive it gratefully and appreciatively. I fail to understand how city members in the Assembly who are not even representing their constituents in a region outside the 80-kilometre limit, who are in leadership roles like the Speaker and Deputy Speaker and who from memory are on about \$200 000 to \$300 000 per year, can abuse that allowance, which I think now is \$26 000. It is incomprehensible that those in leadership roles like the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, who as I said earn a considerable wage, would even think to try to exploit that fairly small payment of \$26 000 as a secondary allowance when there is no substance to them seeking the allowance, and extraordinarily enough

they thought they would actually get away with it in small communities.

In fact to do so in the small community of Ocean Grove in my region, where Mr Nardella in the Assembly has seen fit to use a caravan park — and Ocean Grove is a lovely seaside town very close to where I live — it defies description that the locals would not raise some concerns about the fact that, one, he was never seen in the area; two, the caravan park manager did not know he was there; and three, he was so far away from his seat of Melton. It was clear that he would be exposed at some point in time.

Mr Languiller, in the seat of Tarneit in the Assembly, suggested that he was able to receive a secondary allowance for premises in Queenscliff, again in an area of Western Victoria Region, across the bridge from my own permanent residence. That also defies description, even though I understand that Mr Languiller did actually stay there on the odd occasion. Yet again it is not even nearly in the confines of the rules around secondary allowances, given his seat of Tarneit. So a person in the privileged position of Speaker abused the allowance and got found out. To his credit, when he was found out and proved to be guilty he did go some way in trying to make amends by repatriating the taxpayer through the Parliament for those claims that he made, unlike Mr Nardella who continues to this day, as I understand it, unless he has been coerced otherwise —

Mr Jennings interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — Mr Jennings says yes, he has not been coerced. Perhaps he was encouraged to make attrition through a voluntary contribution for his misdemeanours. Nevertheless, the fact that they both were complicit in abuse of, as I see it, a parliamentary privilege does not give them any sort of degree of contrition for their actions. So they both stand condemned. It appears that the Labor Party has excised Mr Nardella, but I suspect not. The umbilical cord is still hanging tight because they need his vote. Nevertheless, these are not happy days for Mr Nardella. I have been to his electorate of Melton on many occasions and Mr Nardella has stopped going to most of the civil engagements in his electorate and is rarely seen now, so I expect a mistake on his behalf is having some major ramifications for his ability to represent that electorate.

I think it is a lesson for us all to make sure that as members of Parliament we are compliant with the rules of engagement and the allowances that we receive. But also I think it perhaps gives some strength to the government's intention to look at, at some point in

time, how those allowances are distributed to members and how the independence of a body would operate in relation to what is fair and reasonable for a member of Parliament to cover costs and make provision for during their lifetime as a member of Parliament and beyond, where possible.

In relation to paragraph 5 of this motion, I guess we will let the investigation by Victoria Police do its duty in looking at the collision of the Premier's taxpayer-funded vehicle back in 2013. There is no doubt there was some breakdown in protocol within Victoria Police in how police responded to that accident, how it was reported and the response that was given. Again, we will be keeping an eye on how that situation progresses.

At the end of the day all these matters just indicate to us that the Labor government cannot be trusted. Some of its members of Parliament are creating significant damage to the credibility of other members of Parliament. I am sure colleagues are giving advice freely to those that are abusing the system — that they are actually having an impact on others within the Labor Party in relation to credibility.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Thank you, Mr Ramsay.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria).

Debate adjourned until next day.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Debate resumed from 18 October; motion of Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan):

That this house notes —

- (1) comments made in this house by the Minister for Training and Skills that 'Apprentices are the backbone of our training system and the future of our workforce';
- (2) the recent *Victorian Training Market Report* which details a 19.29 per cent decrease in Victorian apprenticeships and traineeships since the election of the Andrews Labor government; and
- (3) that apprenticeships and traineeships in Victoria are at seven-year lows.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (16:20) — I rise to speak to Mrs Peulich's motion on apprenticeships and traineeships. We take our information predominantly from data published on the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) site. By using the NCVER data, rather than

relying on the Victorian training administrative data alone, differences in trends between Victoria, other jurisdictions and Australia overall are able to be presented.

The decline in student numbers and enrolments in Victoria in 2016 compared to 2015 can be attributed to both Victorian government and commonwealth government policy changes, but overall apprenticeship and traineeship enrolments declined by 6.2 per cent in 2016 compared to 2015, and they have declined by 19.29 per cent since this government came to office. The bulk of the decline in Victoria came from a decline in traineeship enrolments, which declined by 12.7 per cent between 2016 and 2015. In contrast apprenticeship enrolments declined by only 2.4 per cent over the same period.

It is really interesting when the Minister for Training and Skills says that ‘apprentices are the backbone of our training system and the future of our workforce’, yet what we find today is that these are just weasel words, because she is not proving that by things actually happening in the marketplace. If we look at that detail, the data from the report itself, there has been a 19.29 per cent decrease in apprenticeship and traineeship enrolments since this government came to office, with 82 400 apprentice or trainee enrolments in 2014 compared to 66 500 apprenticeship and traineeship enrolments in 2016. I know Mrs Peulich shakes her head about this. This minister thinks that she is doing a good job; she is kidding herself.

Student enrolments are at a seven-year low. The decrease of 5900 enrolments from 2015 to 2016 represents, as I said, a 19.29 per cent decrease. Quite frankly this minister is failing. If she cannot do the job, she should give it up. In fact if this government cannot do the job, in just over 12 months time they will be instructed to give it up, and a Matthew Guy government will take over.

There was a significant decline in enrolments. Although there was some decline between 2012 and 2013, student enrolments were above 100 000 enrolments — far more than the current 66 500 enrolments we see in Victoria. The focus about this of course is the Andrews government’s decrease of 15 900 enrolments in the period from 2015 to 2016 — as I said for the chamber’s benefit, a 19.29 per cent decrease in enrolments.

When we look at the occupations, we note a decline in enrolments in particular apprentice trades since this government came to office, including technicians and trade workers such as automotive and engineering trade workers. The government may get a bit upset about that

and talk about the automotive industry, but the fact is, albeit we are not manufacturing motor vehicles in this country any longer, we are still servicing, maintaining and enhancing them. We still need automotive and engineering trade workers. There has been a decline in electrotechnology and telecommunication trade workers, food trade workers and sales workers. As an example, the automotive and engineering trade worker apprenticeship enrolments have decreased from 9400 enrolments in 2014 to 8300 enrolments in 2016, equating to an 11.7 per cent decrease.

Electrotechnology and telecommunication trade worker apprenticeship enrolments have decreased from 8200 enrolments in 2015 to 7900 in 2016 — a 4.2 per cent decrease.

Food trade worker apprenticeships enrolments worry me. We are reducing the number of food trade workers and apprentices. The hospitality industry is a strong industry and can be a thriving industry in Victoria, and if we are not backing it up with apprentices in that marketplace, it is going to hurt us. They have decreased from 4500 enrolments in 2014 to 3700 enrolments in 2016 — a 17.77 per cent decrease. Sales worker apprenticeship enrolments have decreased from 400 enrolments, when this government came to office, to 200 enrolments in 2016. Overall, there has been a 2.4 per cent decrease in technician and trade worker apprenticeship enrolments in Victoria. This minister is failing.

Let us look at the vocational education and training (VET) program enrolments state by state. I am talking about enrolments more broadly than just apprenticeships and traineeships, but in a sense it is a good indicator of what is happening in terms of our training and skill development area. When compared to other states, Victoria is one of three with declining VET program enrolments since 2014. It has had the second-largest decline in enrolments across the country. Mrs Peulich often throws her hands up in question time in absolute disbelief about this minister, who is in denial. We could almost call her Cleopatra, the queen of denial, because she fails to recognise that the system is failing; she fails to recognise that she is not doing her job properly.

South Australia is in decline and has had the largest decline in enrolments across the country. The South Australian Labor government has from 2014 to 2016 seen a decrease of 22.25 per cent in VET enrolments. Maybe the Weatherill government in South Australia are training the Andrews government in Victoria in how to do things badly, because the system is failing. With the Victorian VET enrolment numbers let us do some comparisons. In 2014 there were

996 135 enrolments. In 2015 there were 878 375 enrolments. In 2016 there were 815 325 enrolments. It is going backwards, Minister Tierney. It is going backwards, Premier Andrews. By comparison, New South Wales VET enrolments have increased by 18.3 per cent for the same period of 2014 to 2016 while Victorian VET enrolments have decreased by 18.15 per cent for the same period. Interestingly enough, Daniel Andrews may have rolled out his catchphrase for the Victorian registration plates as 'Victoria — the Education State', but according to the figures Victoria is being left behind in terms of vocational education and training when it is compared to the rest of the country.

This government is burying key data showing the extent of its cuts to the Victorian training system. There has been the delay of the 2016 training market report in Parliament, and that published information only surfaced on 12 July this year. I wonder why it was held up. Labor cut \$45 million from the state training budget in its May budget this year. On the last available figures the number of students enrolled in government-subsidised training in Victoria has declined by 122 597 enrolments since this government came to office. I wonder why they were hiding the report. I wonder why they were keeping it buried. One can suspect because it was just bad news.

The then opposition leader, now Premier, talked about TAFE to get himself elected — this is a Labor Party that will say and do anything to get themselves elected. They talked about TAFE, but now that he is the Premier he has not the least bit of interest in helping students get the skills they need to get a job. Victorian students have been left in the dark for nearly eight months because Labor wants to keep its failed TAFE rescue package a secret. The sector has lost more than 122 000 students since Labor was elected, and Daniel Andrews's answer is to cut \$45 million from the training budget. But they do not care.

Let us look at the training figures. In the quarter to 30 March training was down 2.4 per cent from the previous year. Only 2.1 per cent of workers were employed as an apprentice or a trainee and 10 per cent of employed workers within the trade occupations were apprentices or trainees. Who is supporting our younger people? Who is helping younger people to get jobs? There are fewer apprentices available in Victoria because this government has lost its way. When I look at the data that is here in front of us there is no wonder Mrs Peulich made the point in her contribution about this government wanting to hide the data. They want to hide the data because it is just not good news. The minister is failing. Mrs Peulich in her contribution and

also through question time has often said that the minister is not across her portfolio. Well, this evidence simply suggests that what Mrs Peulich has been saying is absolutely right.

How could a government that claims to be so supportive of students and the TAFE system cut \$45 million from the budget? How could they possibly do that? How could they hide information that was due over eight months earlier and not publish it? The minister would claim that you should not compare the National Centre for Vocational Education Research data across Victoria's own administrative data. We know that not to be fact. We know this is another example of the minister hiding behind the failure of her portfolio.

There has been a 19.29 per cent decrease in apprenticeship and traineeship enrolments since the Andrews Labor government came to office. There were 82 400 apprentice or trainee enrolments in 2014; today there are 66 500 apprentice or trainee enrolments. The minister would say, as she does in question time, 'It's not my fault. It was you guys — you left me a bad system'. But the reality is here we are, nearly three years in, and it is going backwards from where it was left for them. The focus is on today's discussion, and you cannot hide away from the facts. There has been a 15 900-enrolment decrease from the time this Andrews government came to office until now, equating to a 19.29 per cent decrease in enrolments.

Why is there not a strategy to help apprentices get jobs? Why is it not tied to ensuring that there are opportunities for our younger people, those who want to return to work and older Victorians through our traineeship system? The answer is simple, and Mrs Peulich eloquently described it in her contribution when she opened this debate: the government has simply failed. How can a government that said 'TAFE, TAFE, TAFE, TAFE' for four years come in and cut \$45 million from the budget? How can a government stand up and say, 'We will fix the system' — that was allegedly broken — 'and we will increase the number of VET enrolments and we will increase the numbers in the TAFE system', when the data available today that stood hidden for eight months proves they have failed? It proves they have absolutely failed.

Quite frankly Victorians are waking up to this. Victorians are waking up to a government that will say one thing but do another. Look at the decrease in trades in Victoria in the 12 months to 30 March 2017 — a 10.4 per cent decrease in trades, a 6.8 per cent decrease in males, a 5.4 per cent decrease in full-time employment. This is the state that has the highest

unemployment rate in the country and also the highest crime rate in the country as well. When is this government going to do something about focusing on jobs for our children for the future?

One would suggest the wrong way to go about this would be to cut the TAFE training budget. One way to deal with this is to come clean with the people of Victoria and say, 'We aren't doing as well as we said we would do'. This is a failure of the Andrews Labor government, it is a failure of the minister and it beggars belief that Minister Tierney would hide the training report that was due eight months earlier. But there is one reality: the government is struggling with how to fix Victoria's training system. Not only are they struggling but I do not think they have got the answers. We are not seeing policy announcements, we are not seeing structural change and we are not seeing increased money in the budget because I think the simple answer to this, Mrs Peulich, through the Chair, is that they simply do not know. Maybe there should be a skilled training benefit appropriate for the minister; maybe we should send the minister to VET to get some help on how to be the minister.

Quite frankly, the numbers are damning — \$45 million cut from the state training budget and a 19.29 per cent decrease in the number of available positions. Victoria has declined in its government-subsidised training since this government was elected in November 2014 by 122 597 positions. That is 122 597 Victorians who could have been given an opportunity to improve their lives. But the government do not care. They are spending \$20 million on an upside-down triangle logo; they are spending \$1.3 billion not to build a road; they are running dogs in limousines; they are rorting the system. They do not care, because this government do not understand it is not about them; it is about Victorians.

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (16:35) — It is with great pleasure I rise to speak on behalf of the government on this motion. What a great opportunity to remind the house of the many investments this government is making to support many pathways through training and skills. The Andrews Labor government is providing practical support to students and employers to keep the skills they need for our economy on track —

Mr Ondarchie — Eyes up!

Ms TIERNEY — Excuse me! You have just spoken for a long time. Can I at least have the opportunity to speak?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! Through the Chair, please.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Mr Ondarchie! The minister to continue.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, Acting President. As a government we identified an obvious way in which we can help support young people to benefit from the unprecedented investment that is being made across the state, and that is the major projects skills guarantee. The major projects skills guarantee ensures that Victorian workers benefit from the multibillion-dollar pipeline of major projects the Andrews Labor government is delivering, giving young jobseekers and workers looking to re-skill the experience and the opportunities they need to kickstart their careers. This is a good, clear demonstration of how government projects can deliver public good beyond the lasting investment in infrastructure. This creative thinking is changing people's lives by generating these extra opportunities. We are making sure that everyone gets a slice of the cake.

The fact of the matter is we are ensuring that support is provided for young people completing their training. We know how important it is for them to stay on track and get their qualification. The Andrews Labor government has invested in 25 apprentice support officers based at a number of TAFEs right across this state. They mentor and help young apprentices with family, work and training issues that could affect their apprenticeship. This year's budget provided \$8.2 million to boost the apprentice support office workers to make sure that apprentices under the age of 25 get the support that they need to finish the training that they are undertaking. We funded this program after it was cut by those opposite, and what a disgrace that was. In further recognition of the importance of trainees and apprentices completing their qualifications, the 2016–17 Victorian state budget made wages paid by employers to displaced apprentices or trainees exempt from payroll tax, and since July 2016 wages paid by employers to a displaced apprentice or trainee have been exempt from payroll tax.

In relation to group training organisations (GTOs), the list of our support continues. The government has committed \$9.3 million over three years to support the employment of apprentices and trainees through the GTOs. GTOs play a crucial role in supporting people to develop the skills they need —

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, the minister is simply reading from a document today rather than making a contribution by way of a speech on order of the day 2. I suggest that for the efficient operation of the house maybe she could just table the document rather than reading it to us.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Mr Ondarchie, I have been watching the minister very carefully. She has been referring to dates and numbers in her notes, but she has not been reading. I ask the minister to continue.

Ms TIERNEY — The fact of the matter is that we have contributed \$9.3 million over three years for the GTOs to employ apprentices and trainees. They do play a very important role in our vocational education and training (VET) system; I do applaud the work that they do in our Victorian system. This money will assist more than 17 000 apprentices and trainees across the state, as the GTOs do play a critical role in helping them find regular, stable employment in this state.

In terms of government projects, we are providing the support that is needed to apprentices and trainees. We are providing pastoral care and support. We are supporting employers who are in the mix, and we are also supporting group training organisations. So we are providing support in a whole range of areas, something that the previous government just refused to do. This government understands that you need to build the training system that supports students, employers and training organisations. You do not go about that by ripping the guts out of the vocational education and training system, which was exactly what the previous government did. They completely stripped the TAFE system to the point where it was not just on its knees but virtually on its ankles, and it was through us making commitments to the TAFE sector and having a reform agenda that we are turning that around.

But we are not resting on our laurels. We understand that a quality system needs to keep up-to-date with changing times. We are creating the skilled workforce for the future to boost prosperity and grow our economy, with a new task force to drive apprenticeships and traineeships. The Victorian skills commissioner, Neil Coulson, is chairing that task force. There are a number of people who are on that task force —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms TIERNEY — I cannot even hear myself think.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! I agree with you, Minister. The minister is entitled to be heard in silence.

Ms TIERNEY — Such is our commitment to apprenticeships and traineeships that I asked the Victorian Skills Commissioner, Neil Coulson, to formulate a task force, and we have had wide representation on that task force. During the work of the task force deliberations they met and consulted with a range of organisations right across the sector. I am very much looking forward to receiving that report, which is imminent. I asked the Victorian Skills Commissioner to develop that task force because it is this government that is concerned about apprenticeships and traineeships in this state, and I wanted him to specifically look at the barriers that are there that prevent apprentices from actually accessing their apprenticeships or indeed completing their apprenticeships. As I said, I will be very much looking forward to receiving those recommendations on how we can ensure that we continue to support every player in this space and drive apprenticeships and traineeships.

There have been a number of things that have been said in this discussion about a decline in apprenticeships and traineeships. From the outset it is important to note that Mrs Peulich seeks to grab our attention with the headline that there is an alleged decline in apprenticeships and traineeships, but apprenticeships and traineeships are not the same thing, as Mrs Peulich should well know. In fact in 2016 the apprenticeship enrolments were at the second-highest point they have been in the past seven years.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Ms TIERNEY — Shall I repeat that for you, Mr Ondarchie? In fact in 2016 apprenticeship enrolments were at the second-highest point they have been over the past seven years and higher than in any year under the former Napthine-Baillieu governments. I can repeat that: in 2016 apprenticeship enrolments were higher than in any year under the Liberals. You do not hear that from those opposite, do you? No, you just get this constant bantering.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! Mr Ondarchie, you had your turn.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, Acting President. And yes, we are currently seeing a decline in the number of traineeship enrolments, which is consistent with the national decline in traineeships. This is a fact that we do not seek to hide from. As government

members have noted, the decline in traineeships is mainly due to fewer enrolments in low-value and low-quality traineeships offered by shonky private providers that exploited our most vulnerable students — a problem that this government is acutely aware of. It is why we established the blitz on low-quality training providers. It was the right thing to do by our students and it was the right thing to do by our taxpayers.

In terms of the *Victorian Training Market Report: Half Year 2017* from June, of course those opposite will have you believe it is all doom and gloom. But the Victorian training market half-year report shows our Skills First program in action, displaying a positive impact on the training market. When focusing on those courses most likely to lead to improved job outcomes, Victoria had the largest number of students across all states and territories enrolled in Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications. Unlike other states and territories, Victoria is the only jurisdiction that shows an increase in government-funded training by public providers, including TAFEs, and we are up by over 10 per cent in contrast to New South Wales, which is down by 10 per cent.

Skills First prioritises funding for courses that align with industry needs, have strong job outcomes and are linked to government priorities. This report shows — and I will read the numbers — that commencements in apprenticeships at TAFEs are up by over 8 per cent, commencements of students studying in the fields of family violence at TAFE are up by 9 per cent, national disability insurance scheme courses are up by 11 per cent and commencements in infrastructure and rail are up by more than 3 per cent. But Skills First also aims to ensure that Victoria's government-funded VET system is equitable and addresses disadvantage.

Public providers play an important role in supporting students that have additional needs, so we have Indigenous commencements up by 8 per cent, commencements for women up by almost 7 per cent, commencements for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds up by over 14 per cent and commencements for people with a disability up by 2.4 per cent. These are early days, but results like these indicate that we are heading in the right direction. We can see that Skills First is working. It is working for TAFEs, it is working for students and most importantly it is working for people to get the right skills that they need to get a job.

So can we really take this motion seriously? Did the Liberals establish a major project skills guarantee to ensure that Victorian workers benefit from government

projects? The answer is no. Did the Liberals abolish the former Victorian Skills Commission? The answer is yes. Did the Liberals provide a payroll exemption for employers to recognise the importance of apprentices and trainees? No, they did not. Did the Liberals cut apprenticeship support officers? Yes, they did. Did the Liberals provide half-price car registrations for apprentices in the construction industry? The answer is no, they did not. Did the Liberals gut our TAFE sector, resulting in course cuts and campus closures? You bet they did, and they did it savagely.

They do not like hearing any of this. Clearly they do not like hearing this. They do not want to listen to the facts. They do not want to know the numbers. They just do not like hearing the hypocrisy that is being called out in this chamber today, and all I can say is: you cannot hide from the truth. You were an abomination to the VET system, and you have actually got some serious problems in terms of the lives that you wrecked when you were in government when it comes to young people in this state, when it comes to retrenched workers in this state and when it comes to anyone that has got some aspiration to go and join a TAFE and take on a course that leads to a job. You have almost got blood on your hands in terms of what you have done to the VET sector in this state, and it is going to take a long time to turn things around. We are turning it around, and I am proud of what this government is doing — something that you did not do. You wanted to just trash TAFE and put TAFE and kids in the bin forever. You are a disgrace.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (16:50) — Wasn't that something from the minister! I rise to support Mrs Peulich's motion with regard to what we have seen with the decline in the number of students involving themselves in apprenticeships and traineeships. What we saw with that performance from the minister was something else. To describe this side of the house as having blood on our hands was a disgraceful comment. I am not sure that Ms Tierney would be pleased that her boss, Mr Jennings, is in the house here, because the look on his face when that comment was made was one of being aghast.

I do note that this government did come to power saying they were going to make Victoria the education state — I see that regularly on numberplates around our great state — but unfortunately that was nothing more than an absolute scam that was perpetrated by the Labor Party on the good people of Victoria. What we have seen under this government is a —

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Do you like it? I have been described as a real estate agent on several occasions today, Mr Leane. We have seen a 19.29 per cent decrease in the number of Victorians undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships since the election of the Andrews government in November 2014. What we see here as a result of this massive decline in apprenticeships and traineeships is fewer young people having opportunities to train in the many areas and fields where we know we have massive skill shortages. We know that the building industry is screaming out for skilled tradesmen; however, under this government we have seen a massive drop in the number of apprenticeships and traineeships.

I thought I might just go back slightly in time. I know Mr Ramsay is keen to make a contribution, so I will keep my contribution short. There was a time when we did not have a deregulated TAFE system. It was during the Brumby era when then Minister Kosky decided that she would go about the deregulation of the TAFE industry, which is why it is that the former Liberal government had to go through and clean up a horrible mess — a horrible mess — that we were left as a result of the disgraceful actions of that government, having deregulated the system as they did.

I note that the minister referenced ‘shonky operators’ in the field and blamed them for the decrease in the number of people in apprenticeships and traineeships. What the minister does know but refuses to acknowledge is that it was her side of politics that facilitated these shonky operators coming into business. It was under then Premier Brumby and then Minister Kosky that we saw the deregulation of the industry, and that resulted in and is what facilitated these shonky operators coming in. What we have from those opposite is a hypocritical stance, saying, ‘It’s not our fault; it’s your fault’, when of course what we know is that it goes back to Kosky and Brumby, who deregulated the TAFE system which as a result, facilitated all these shonky operators coming in. The minister might say that it is as a result of getting rid of these shonky operators that numbers have dropped. Well, if your side of the house had not have gone through this shocking deregulation, then this would not have happened.

I am very concerned about the scam that is being perpetrated on the good people of Victoria by this government saying that this is the Education State, because what we are seeing is massive reductions in the number of people undertaking training that will facilitate getting them job ready for their futures — for their lives. We all know that to be able to have a fulfilling life one needs to have a meaningful occupation in which to participate. Without giving

people the opportunity to develop the skills — whether through traineeships, apprenticeships or, if people choose, going to university and the like — to be work ready and be able to make a meaningful contribution to the community, we are selling our young people short. That is what this government does on a daily basis: they are selling our young people short by not providing them with the opportunities they should have to train and live a fulfilled life with meaningful occupations and jobs.

I certainly commend Mrs Peulich’s motion. I know Mr Ramsay will make a fine contribution when I conclude. I certainly do commend the motion to the house.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — I call Mr Ramsay.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (16:56) — Thank you, Acting President. It was almost going to be at your peril that you might have contemplated moving to statements on reports 4 minutes early before I could make a contribution, but I am glad that you sought advice from the Deputy Clerk. She very appropriately said, ‘No, I think Mr Ramsay needs to have at least an opportunity to respond to the rant of the Minister for Training and Skills that went for 14 minutes’.

What I do love to see in this chamber is Ms Tierney getting angry. There is no-one in the chamber like the Minister for Training and Skills to get angry so quickly about her portfolio — and it is not passion; it is anger. What flies out of her mouth in defence of her total mismanagement of her portfolio and the untruths that she tries to inject into this chamber in relation to history just demonstrate what a short memory she has. As my colleague said — and basically stole my thunder — it was the bumbling Brumby administration that actually introduced the contestable funding system for training that was foisted upon us.

If you remember, at the time a lot of the private operators, because of that contestable funding model that the Brumby government introduced, actually went by the wayside. What we saw was that many of our TAFEs, which were mismanaged through the Bracks-Brumby era — in fact they could not run a business if it fell on them — were run by demigods of the Labor Party who had no experience in small business or practical skills, as Ms Tierney has already demonstrated by her own lack of ability in that area. They ran these training colleges into the ground. What we had was the contestable funding model that saw private providers, many of them good providers, fall by

the wayside. They were not able to get the supplementary funding that the TAFEs got.

We saw a whole range of traineeships and apprenticeships in the training colleges being given out to those who had absolutely no opportunity to gain a job in the workforce. We saw physical instructor courses and hairdressing and a whole range of apprenticeships that were absolutely surplus to the needs of the marketplace. The poor students went through that training and those apprenticeships and got their certificates but found out once they sought jobs in overpopulated job areas like hairdressing and physical instructing that they could not get jobs. Consequently they wasted a lot of life experience in seeking other forms of employment.

Ms Tierney needs to hang her head in shame in relation to what she has purported in this chamber in relation to her government's lack of responsibility in having provided a model back in the Brumby era but continuing that model where again we are seeing taxpayer funds supplementing TAFE colleges that are pouring out the service delivery of traineeships and apprenticeships that are not meeting the needs of the job market. Again, in the minute that I have, Acting Chair Purcell — and I know you would be interested in this — she was purporting that the Glenormiston College campus now delivers certificate III in agriculture and there were likely to be 150 students enrolled at that campus. Not true. In fact she has not even got the sale of the college through yet.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee: budget estimates 2017–18

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (17:00) — My statement this evening is in relation to the state budget papers. I wanted to make some commentary around an issue that I know people in this house have heard me make comment on in the past, and that is the Ballarat railway station precinct. It is a continuing issue, one that unfortunately the government continues to refuse to address and one that generations of Ballarat residents are going to look back on in wonderment at how a government could be so short-sighted and have such an ill-conceived concept for such an incredibly important precinct.

I want to acknowledge some of the fine work of a group of citizens of Ballarat who have come together under the title of Save Our Station Ballarat. The Save

Our Station Ballarat group have come together to highlight the significant deficiencies in the government's current plan with regard to the railway station precinct.

I wanted to bring one issue to light, and that is the issue of freedom of information. We have freedom of information laws here in Victoria that are there to ensure that there is transparency about the operation of government and government departments in what they do. However, what we have seen from this government is a continual running and hiding and refusing to release information under FOI to the Save Our Station Ballarat group, which is nothing short of disgraceful. The applications that have been placed by the Save Our Station Ballarat group are well and truly overdue for response from the appropriate departments. However, the information is yet to be released. What is holding them back? Well, what is holding them back is the fact that ministers are refusing to release this information to the Save Our Station Ballarat group, despite knowing full well that they should have complete access to it.

The information that is concerning is how it is that the government came to their decision about the railway station precinct and indeed the use of the land. It is simple documentation about a simple issue that the government is refusing to reveal information on. It is not just the FOI request that the government is refusing to engage with; there is also the fact that the disability access for the site is nowhere near what it should be and is not being recognised at all by the government. It is nothing short of shocking that this government, despite trumpeting the spending of millions of dollars on the railway station precinct, is not doing one thing to improve disability access to the site. It is nothing short of a disgrace that this is happening.

What needs to happen at this precinct is very clear. What needs to happen is the government needs to halt. They need to stop. They need to recognise that they have got it wrong. They have made a massive error, and they need to go back and consult with and actually discuss with the community, those who use the railway precinct and those who have some foresight about what Ballarat is going to look like into the future and to recognise that the future use of the site is not going to reach its full potential under the current plan.

It is not only that; the government have also broken several election commitments. They claimed that there was going to be a 3000-square metre exhibition space. There is not. They claimed that there were going to be improved station facilities. There are not. They claimed that there was going to be a new taxi rank. There is simply not. They were dragged kicking and screaming

by the community to announce the new bus interchange at the railway station precinct because they failed to fund it initially. There was an embarrassing backflip from the member for Wendouree, Sharon Knight, and the member for Buninyong in the Assembly, along with Minister Pulford after claiming a supposed win for the community with the funding of the bus interchange, when everybody well knew it should have been funded from the very beginning. The railway station precinct is nothing short of a disastrous mess.

I note that it is not necessarily just one side of politics who are claiming this. There are members of the Labor Party in Ballarat, there are members of the Greens party in Ballarat and there are members of the Liberal Party in Ballarat who are all coming together in a unique coalition, one might describe it as, to fight the government on their disgraceful plan for the site. The government must go back, they must halt their current plans, they must listen to the community and they must come up with a development project that everybody in Ballarat can support.

Fire Services Bill Select Committee: final report

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:05) — Today I would like to make a statement on the Fire Services Bill Select Committee's final report in line with the fact that this week is the first time that the Country Fire Authority (CFA) has released its official response times publicly, which was one of the recommendations made in this report.

It is to the dismay of all of us that we have highly built-up residential areas where large populations live, that have, to be frank, quite lousy fire services response times. In Caroline Springs it is 64 per cent of the time. These are not just the primary responses; these are the customer service responses, where there is a backup truck or appliance that leaves the area it is supposed to cover in order to cover another area. Caroline Springs is a huge suburb that deserves the same fire service as any other inner suburb, but unfortunately their response time is 64 per cent. That is making an important mark. The important thing about time when it comes to fire services is that these targets are not just plucked out of the air; they are plucked from a basis where if you can reach a fire within that time, you can contain the fire, if it is a house fire, to the room of origin. That is why those targets are set.

Caroline Springs is in a position where 36 per cent of the time in cases of structure fire in a particular house the fire will not be contained to one room. There will be a flashpoint, and when there is a flashpoint the other

rooms flash a lot more quickly than they do in the room where the fire originated.

Hampton Park had a response time of 63 per cent. Epping had a response time of 69 per cent. As I said, these are large built-up areas. Some of the regional towns were, unfortunately, a lot worse. I think Moe was in the teens. The response time targets achieved in Moe were, off the top of my head, about 15, 16 or 17 per cent. You can be in the streets of Moe and they would look exactly the same as any street in any Melbourne suburb. It is a built-up area. There are lots of houses, schools and kindergartens. To say it is acceptable, at any level, for the response time targets to be reached only 15 per cent of the time is outrageous.

It is time that everyone took stock of this and accepted that there needs to be reform of the fire services. It is time to stop fluffing around with ideas about having more reviews. When this report was developed every fire service lead person said they had had enough of reviews — they had had a gutful of reviews. For the coalition to come out with a policy that there should be a royal commission, yet another review —

Mrs Peulich — The only way to deal with the crooks.

Mr LEANE — Well, if we are going to accept that, if there is going to be a royal commission, let us look into why previous regimes, previous boards and previous leaders of the CFA did not address these very lousy response times. Let us look into why it was okay for a political party to put out a website called 'Hands off the CFA!' calling for money for their own political purposes. Let us look into why it was okay at Fiskville, where volunteers and professional firefighters were exposed to all sorts of poisons and they were made sick. Let us look into that as well. Let us look into why the previous board of the CFA and the previous administration of the CFA were on a covert operation attacking their own workforce. Let us open it all up if you want to do that.

We would suggest to you that we should all get on with introducing reform and making the community safe, because the main stakeholders are the community.

Country Fire Authority: report 2016–17

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:10) — What a sense of deja vu that I follow Mr Leane's contribution, given that I am going to speak on the Country Fire Authority (CFA) annual report. I see the very thought of me talking about the CFA has made Mr Leane dive for cover and rush out of the chamber,

because he knows that what I am about to say is something that he is not going to be very comfortable with.

Mr Leane did give me an entree — given that he has already raised it, well outside his report of the select committee's work — to speak about the coalition's commitment that if on 24 November 2018 we win the election we will establish a royal commission into the fire services, and appropriately so, because as we know, the current government has tried desperately to introduce legislation into this Council to separate the career part of the organisation from the volunteer part — unsuccessfully, I might add. Certainly it has not responded to many of the recommendations of the select committee that looked into the whole range of aspects of that proposed restructure with Fire Rescue Victoria and the CFA. But that aside, the royal commission, I hope, will actually look at many of the problems associated with the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA), the role of the United Firefighters Union (UFU), the role of current Andrews government —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Order! If I can interrupt you for a second, Mr Ramsay, can I just remind the gallery that no photos are allowed to be taken.

Mr RAMSAY — I am more than happy to come outside at a later time to have photos taken, but not in the chamber. I agree with the Acting President.

As I was saying, I certainly support the Guy government in 2018 introducing a royal commission to look at what is going on in relation to not only the role of the UFU in the current EBA but the role of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and the CFA. It gives us an opportunity to look at why the UFU would see fit to block in the Supreme Court the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's report into sexual abuse, harassment and bullying within the fire services, and also in relation to the inclusion and diversity report. I note that Frances Diver, CEO of the CFA, has reported in her CEO's report in the annual report about the survey work that was done that showed a significant proportion of staff raising concerns in relation to bullying and sexual harassment in the workforce of the CFA and MFB.

So it is not unusual that we would see Peter Marshall seeking to challenge any sort of legal recourse to make both those reports public. A royal commission would have the horsepower to subpoena if necessary and demand that those two agencies present to the royal commission and make those reports public. Then we

could actually see what is going on between the Andrews government and the UFU in relation to what deals are being done and what is being covered up in respect of this very strange and cosy relationship that seems to have started during the last state election campaign and moved through until this year and beyond, and presumably into the next election campaign. It will actually be interesting to see what role the UFU will play in supporting the Labor Party in their campaigning, given the history of the relationship between the two.

The important thing that I did want to flag in the remaining 50 seconds is that certainly in my region we have high fuel loads. We do need to support our firefighters in protecting our communities and responding to fires appropriately. We want to make sure they are well supported, and we also want to make sure that they have a structure that they can work within that gives them that support. We want to make sure that they have the appropriate equipment and training and that they also have the career base support to allow them to carry on their business as firefighters and protect their communities. But this is not going to happen into the future, because currently we have this separation of the UFU demands in relation to an EBA, we have the government's proposed restructure and we have significant turnover of staff.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Thank you, Mr Ramsay.

Mental Health Complaints Commissioner: report 2017

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:15) — I wish to make a few remarks on the mental health complaints commissioner's annual report 2017. I have cause to take a great deal of interest in anything related to mental illness following the recent suicide of a dear friend of mine following a major depressive illness. I also had the opportunity of attending some Mental Health Week events, with 10 October being the 33rd anniversary of the Victorian Mental Health Week, and learning of the staggering results surrounding mental illness in the community.

One in four young people have experienced a mental health issue in the past 12 months — a higher prevalence than all other age groups. Alarming, suicide is the leading cause of death of young people, accounting for one-third of all deaths. Research also shows that 75 per cent of all mental health issues emerge before the age of 25. Here I am talking about a very important issue of mental health and suicide, and I have got Ms Patten giggling at the sidelines.

By treating these issues early, and providing a holistic model of support, the risk of them developing into a more serious problem is greatly decreased.

The Mental Health Foundation Australia is to be commended for some of the work that it does in attempting to deepen the understanding of the importance of mental health and wellbeing by educating the community about the treatment options for mental illness and promoting good mental health and ways to maintain it. As a result of that, I will take it upon myself from now on, moving on, to scrutinise the role and the performance of every mental health functionary, organisation, body and legislation. I was interested in particular in the context of the voluntary assisted dying (VAD) legislation, which fails to make any provisions for the protection of people who suffer from mental health and mental illness. I was disappointed to read this report, the very narrow terms of reference in it and the lack of any mention or certainly any submission to the development of the regulatory framework for the VAD legislation, which will be debated tomorrow.

I note on page 46, however, that the mental health complaints commissioner's office has indeed been working on the national disability insurance scheme (NDIS) following the referral by the secretary of the department, because this was an important issue that was referred, along with recommendations, to the chief psychiatrist for consideration and action. When I spoke with the office of the complaints commissioner, they mentioned that they had not had input into the VAD legislation. I was disappointed that the secretary of the department had not required similar work to be undertaken by the commissioner in the context of this very challenging issue for people who suffer from mental health illness and who may have a 12-month diagnosis.

One of the reasons for me raising this today is to call upon the government to review the Mental Health Act 2014, which I have read today. The Mental Health Act is deficient in terms of coping with the issues that the new legislation and the new framework will present. A complete rewrite will be required, and also the role of the mental health complaints commissioner will need to be dramatically reviewed so that the risks of this new legislation, this new framework, can be considered in advance and appropriate protocols developed so the most vulnerable people can be protected in a society that takes pride in being compassionate and being progressive in looking after its people.

It seems to me that all of the mental health regimes that are in place are totally unprepared for what they may

need to face in a very short period of time. I am again very disappointed that the mental health complaints commissioner, whose work is often driven by the complaints themselves, but not exclusively, has not seen fit to indeed grapple with this very important issue so that they can protect those who are the most precious and the most vulnerable in society — those who suffer from mental health illness and mental health issues. For anyone who knows anything about it, we know that people who suffer from depression — clinical depression in particular — following a diagnosis of a terminal illness can call for suicide and to be killed 15 times in a day. This government has a lot of work to do.

INAUGURAL SPEECH

Dr Ratnam

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (17:24) — I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and pay my deep respects to elders past, present and emerging. I thank them for caring for this country for tens of thousands of years. I will do everything I can to ensure that there is a treaty with our first nations people and that true justice is achieved.

I stand here today humbled, proud and honoured to be a member of this state Parliament for the Northern Metropolitan Region representing the Greens.

I do not stand here alone; I stand on the shoulders of all those who have come before me — those who have sought to serve their communities through political life both inside and outside our parliaments. I acknowledge all those who have had the courage to break new ground — those troublemakers who fought and struggled their way into the halls of power when people like them had not been allowed to enter before. You made it possible for someone like me to stand here today: a migrant from a war-torn country now representing the people of Victoria in the country that I love.

I am here today because I care deeply about our state, our country and this planet. This is a time when so many people seem disheartened about the nature of politics, but I am hopeful that through real leadership, vision and courage together we can reinvigorate our collective faith in democracy. We can restore and renew the significance of what we do in our parliaments and at all levels of government.

In many ways I had no choice in becoming politically conscious and aware. In 1983 Sri Lanka was rocked by

anti-Tamil riots. We were lucky; when the mobs came our Sinhalese neighbours took us in and sheltered us. But children have their own way of knowing what is going on. Amidst the smoke and chaos, I remember seeing the adults cry and knowing in my heart that something terrifying was going on.

Like hundreds of thousands of other Tamil Sri Lankans, our family had to leave our home in search of a more peaceful life. We were some of the lucky ones. We had the option and ability to leave but will never forget all those who were not able to — those lives that were lost in the 30-year war that tore Sri Lanka apart. Growing up with war changes how you see the world. It has helped me understand and value peace and to think about what peace actually means. It made me realise that who we elect as our politicians really does matter. For so many millions of people around the world, the politicians they elect can mean the difference between war and peace, poverty and prosperity.

With our suitcases in hand, our family travelled across the world. We first landed in Canada then travelled once more, making our permanent home here in Melbourne. This city and country welcomed us with open arms and gave us every opportunity to succeed.

When we arrived in Australia in 1989 this country was alight with discussions about multiculturalism. There was an overt recognition of the value and success of multiculturalism and an enthusiasm to celebrate it. Australia was opening up, seeing itself as part of Asia and the world. This newfound celebration of multiculturalism had a profound impact on our lives. We experienced little racism and felt like we had a place here. As a product of multicultural Australia, I will always cherish and defend this amazing and successful aspect of Australian life.

It was the experience of migration that inspired me to get involved in community work. Through our journey and migration across continents, countries and neighbourhoods, I learned that what governments do really does matter. Like so many thousands of migrants who journeyed to this country, my parents worked hard and did everything to make a better life for their children. We had to be pretty independent as kids. We found that in places where we had access to schools that we could walk to or ride to or where the library was close by or where playgrounds or a swimming pool were accessible it was easier to settle and make new friends. Where we had access to great-quality public schools and health care we felt cared for and were able to begin to dream big dreams.

And dream big we did. My brother is now an accomplished doctor, my sister is a highly regarded lawyer and I stand here as a member of Parliament. The credit is not ours; the credit goes to this great country. I will work to ensure that everyone, no matter where you are from or how you got here, has the same opportunity for a happy and prosperous life.

I am a proud product of the state school system here in this great state of Victoria. A big shout-out to Mullauna College, my high school. It served us well and equipped us for a life after school, despite sometimes having limited resources. We had a great-quality education with some of the best teachers you could have hoped for. But when I entered university I was confronted with a reality check: I was told that only a small proportion of people at that university at that time were from public schools. The vast majority were from private schools. I wondered if this meant that people in private schools were somehow smarter, but I learned that was not true. They were better represented at universities because of the resources that those schools could offer their students. With more resources, students get better results.

I became curious about these inequalities that somehow gave advantage to those with more money. It did not seem fair to me.

I decided to dedicate my life to social justice. I became a social worker, first volunteering on the Margaret Oats Collingwood soup van and beginning my career as a drug and alcohol therapist. I saw lives torn apart by addiction and harm come to people because governments were not courageous enough to embrace harm minimisation approaches. The day I lost my first client to overdose was a day that changed me.

In 2004 a ceasefire was agreed to in the war in Sri Lanka, and I went back to volunteer in the north. I saw the carnage of war and a community ready to rebuild. Constructing buildings is easier than rebuilding hope, and sadly the country descended back into war.

After two years I arrived back in Australia more passionate than ever to create a more peaceful and just world. I continued my work as a social worker in international development, mental health and settlement services for newly arrived migrants from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Through this work I saw how our country seems to have gone backwards in how we regard our diverse communities. Segments of our community are regularly demonised by political leaders and in the media.

Multiculturalism is not just about enjoying a food festival or going to a big event. Multiculturalism is about allowing people to be treated fairly and warmly no matter where they have come from and how they got here. Multiculturalism to me is about being different but not being made to feel different. It is about a genuine care, love and acceptance of who we all are. If we want our state and country to thrive, we need to open our hearts once more. The Australia I know and love is the one that has generosity in its DNA.

I have worked with people who have come to Australia seeking refuge and asylum. It is a speech for another time, but they are some of the most amazing and courageous people I know. We can do better in how we welcome and treat them, and I will never stop fighting for that.

I also began to learn around this time about the threat posed by global warming and climate change. I was confounded by the lack of action. I read more, I talked more to people who were fighting for our environment, and I was so deeply worried. It was equal parts outrage and equal parts hope that made me join the Greens. The Greens were standing up for the values I was fighting for. They were thinking far ahead, to the world that would be inherited by generations not yet born. I found a political home in this party.

I joined the Greens because I wanted to do something. I wanted to help take action on climate change and social justice. I knew and valued the role our political system has in creating social change, and I knew I had to somehow get involved. I also knew that everyone had to get involved and active if we were to save our environment and protect our earth. As I got more involved, I became more hopeful that change was possible. I came to understand the work being done by our Greens councillors at the City of Moreland, Jo Connellan, Toby Archer and then Lenka Thompson, and was inspired by their work to put my hand up for local council elections.

Serving on Moreland council for five years as a councillor and mayor has made me even more optimistic. I want to sincerely thank the people of Moreland for supporting me. Nobody can really prepare you for your work as a local government councillor. I want to acknowledge our councillors across this state for working tirelessly, often with little recognition and reward, for the incredible work they do. I also thank the many community members who volunteer their time to engage with council on local issues. I thank particularly all those who volunteer to be on council advisory committees and groups, some of

whom are here today. Councils could not be nearly as effective without you.

To my Greens team at Moreland — Mark, Natalie and Dale — I know you will achieve amazing change, and I am so glad to have been part of your team.

There is nothing like working in local government to instruct you about what happens when other levels of government get it wrong. And when they do, many of our councils have to step in. I reject the assertion that councils should stick to 'roads, rates and rubbish'. Councils are leading on the big issues such as climate change, pokies and planning, and so much more.

I stand here representing thousands of people who want our governments to do a better job — to care, to take action on the issues that are fundamentally affecting their lives.

I would also like to acknowledge the young people I have met on my journey. It is common today to hear that young people are disengaged from politics or that they are apathetic. I do not believe this. My doctoral research on young people and their attitudes to global citizenship confirmed this for me. Young people are worried about their futures; they want a fairer society and they want to save the planet. And they are willing to work for it, taking to the streets, knocking on doors. My work in politics has only borne this out. It is Australia's young people that are at the vanguard of all of the progressive movements. The Greens would not have achieved the success we have without them.

I would not be here if not for my friends and colleagues in the Greens. Your vision and leadership inspired me to get involved. My beloved Moreland Greens — thank you for helping make Brunswick my home, because when I met you I knew I had found my people. I saw our Greens leaders stand up for people and our planet with courage and dignity in the face of opposition and dismissal. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, first they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they attack you and then you win. Thank you to Bob Brown, Christine Milne, Richard Di Natale and Greg Barber — you are true heroes to me. Thank you to my Greens MPs team for all the work that you do and for entrusting me with your confidence to lead the Victorian parliamentary team. I am so honoured to work with you.

To my dear family, I am here because of your love, support, belief and encouragement. To the Mathers and Sivalinghams — the journey we have been on together is part of my core, and I am eternally grateful for the care and love that we share. To my husband, Colin,

thank you for your unwavering belief in me — for being there with humour, wit and kindness always.

We lost our formidable grandmother this year. To not have her here saddens me, but she is a part of who I fundamentally am now. Thank you, Archie, for teaching me to be an activist and a fighter. Thank you for demonstrating to me that women have every right to a part of our political system.

My parents instilled in us the perseverance to make the best of every opportunity we had. Like so many others, they sacrificed so much along the way. Every migrant to this country leaves a bit of their heart behind somewhere — their childhood memories, their cultural traditions, their community, their family, their friends. Thank you for everything you have done for us and continue to do for us.

My mum taught me how to love unconditionally, and my dad inspired me to care limitlessly. He taught me not to forget the people and causes that everyone else forgets. I will do everything that I can to make sure that no-one is forgotten or left behind and that our future generations are the reason we make every single decision here. Together we can create a community that cares and leave behind a natural environment intact. The earth does not belong to us ; we belong to it. To the people of Northern Metropolitan Region — I am here to serve you and I look forward to working with you and all Victorians.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I move:

That the house do now adjournment.

Gippsland public transport

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (17:40) — The matter which I wish to raise this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, in the other place, and I refer to disruptions which have occurred recently and which will occur as part of upgrades along the Cranbourne–Dandenong route, as well as the Gippsland line, as part of maintenance and upgrades. I note that recent disruptions and delays have caused significant inconvenience to commuters along the Gippsland line.

We have in fact improved and increased the number of services that are being provided for Gippsland commuters who use the line often as a means to travel within the region and not simply as a commuter corridor down to Melbourne, as occurs in many

other parts of the network. In this regard I note that with the replacement of buses throughout the Cranbourne–Dandenong part of the line, as well as with the changes that will occur to the timetable as works occur along the Gippsland line, there is in fact some confusion around when and how services will operate. To this end I would ask that the minister make sure that Public Transport Victoria and V/Line can provide regular updates to commuters using social media, as it does already, but again providing that information to the best extent possible in real time, as well as making sure that additional bus services can be provided to people as part of our broader commitment to connectivity in the regional network development plan.

These things, as far as intermodal connectivity and transport within the region go, will provide us with the means necessary to continue to grow and to provide the best opportunities for employees, for young mums — often with strollers and pushers — and for our older travellers, who are often frail and have particular physical needs, to access buses which are disability compliant and which provide better access.

In this regard I also ask the minister to provide ongoing information and updates to public transport users throughout Gippsland to make sure that they can be as aware as possible of disability-compliant buses and access to vehicles with low-floor or modified fit-outs to enable people in wheelchairs to travel on buses to the greatest extent possible, rather than simply using wheelchair-enabled taxis, the cost of which is met within the cost of a train ticket or bus ticket. We are enabling public transport to be more broadly available to people within the Gippsland area, including as our work goes on to upgrade the Gippsland rail line as part of the \$530 million package secured and committed to by the Andrews Labor government.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:43) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health and relates to the cancer story of Tracey Visser, a single mother of two who resides in Shepparton. Will the minister acknowledge that the need of Goulburn Valley cancer patients, like Tracey Visser, to travel long distances to receive life-saving radiotherapy treatment is unacceptable and in response provide a commitment to establish and fund appropriate radiotherapy services at Goulburn Valley Health?

Tracey Visser is a 52-year-old single mother of two teenage children who resides in Shepparton. Tracey currently runs a small business in the heart of Shepparton that promotes the health and wellbeing of

clients through Pilates-based exercises. At the end of 2015 Tracey was diagnosed with ductal carcinoma in situ breast cancer and underwent two lumpectomy operations in January 2016. While these operations were successful, Tracey's doctors determined that she would require further treatment in the form of radiotherapy to ensure the best chance of survival. Being a long-term resident of Shepparton, Tracey knew that this would mean having to travel and live away from Shepparton to receive the treatment. This situation brought new challenges for Tracey and her family. As I stated before, Tracey is a single mother and the primary carer of her daughter and son, who at the time of her illness were aged 16 and 13. Tracey had no family living in Shepparton, and her children relied on her for everything. She was faced with prioritising her health over the everyday welfare of her children, a situation no parent should have to face.

In July 2016, after fully recuperating from her two operations, Tracey commenced six weeks of radiotherapy treatment in Bendigo. Tracey underwent one 10-minute treatment per day every Monday to Friday before travelling home each weekend to be with her children. Luckily Tracey secured accommodation within walking distance of the hospital, so she was spared the cost of parking her car each day. But having to travel and live in Bendigo took a tremendous financial toll on Tracey. Having to live in Bendigo to get her treatment meant that Tracey was unable to work during the week, only working the occasional Saturday when she was rostered on. The loss of income came with the added expense of increased petrol and food costs, on top of normal living expenses for her children back in Shepparton.

But it was what Tracey calls the emotional cost, the void of everyday support from her loving children, that for her was the greatest cost of all. In telling me her story Tracey made a very pertinent point: if radiotherapy services were available at Goulburn Valley Health, she would have been able to receive her treatment during her lunchbreak and be home each night for her children. I am happy to say Tracey is in remission from her illness, and I thank her for sharing her story with us.

Will the minister acknowledge that the need for Goulburn Valley cancer patients like Tracey Visser to travel long distances to receive life-saving radiotherapy treatment is unacceptable and in response provide a commitment to establish and fund appropriate radiotherapy services at Goulburn Valley Health?

State care leavers

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Families and Children, and the action I am seeking is in relation to Victoria's leaving care age for young people on custody or guardianship orders. Under current Victorian policy about 1800 young people have their custody or guardianship orders expire each year when they turn 18. The consequence of the current leaving care age is that many of these young people suffer poor outcomes and do not transition to adulthood very well at all. We know that the average leaving home age in Australia is 24. Yet for this vulnerable cohort we push them out the door at the age of 18, and that is often to not only their detriment but society's.

Home Stretch, a Victorian organisation, proposes extending this leaving care age to 21 in certain circumstances. This model has proven to be very successful in the UK and the USA, and the results have been really quite startling. In the USA continued care for young people past 18 has for this cohort halved homelessness, doubled education participation, doubled the odds of employment, reduced youth pregnancies by 38 per cent and reduced arrests by 54 per cent.

A Deloitte study that was commissioned to examine this issue in Australia predicts similar social outcomes if we continued care to the age of 21. They predict that you would halve homelessness from 39 to 19.5 per cent, decrease hospitalisation from 29 to 19 per cent, increase education engagement, decrease arrests and decrease drug and alcohol dependency. This would add up to great savings for the state. For every dollar invested in extending home care, \$1.84 to \$2.53 would be returned or saved. Home Stretch estimates that all this could be achieved via an investment of just \$20 million over four years and \$6 million thereafter, with considerable savings overall. I call on the minister to embrace the Home Stretch plan and extend the leaving care age to 21 years for those young people who require it.

Residential planning zones

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (17:49) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Planning, and it relates to planning scheme amendment VC110, whereby the planning minister reformed the residential zones in Victoria, which has been described by many as a retrograde step, winding back many of the important protections that were put in place by the former government. Of particular concern is the number of dwellings that can be built on a particular lot and also the increase in

height restrictions particularly in neighbourhood residential zones, which has caused much concern in many of my communities in Western Victoria Region.

However, the specific action I am requesting as part of this adjournment debate relates to what the minister said he was going to do but has thus far failed to do. The government's own *Reformed Residential Zones* document details what is happening with the residential zones; indeed on page 14 it details the government's action plan. As part of this action plan there are a variety of steps that the government says it will take, and in particular one under the heading '3. Provide further guidance' states:

Prepare new ministerial directions, planning practice notes, and advisory notes to assist council and support implementation of the reformed residential zones.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr MORRIS — The date 30 June 2017 is listed, Ms Shing, as the date for that to be released. However, I do not think it would shock too many on this side of the house to realise that the minister has failed to release the said documentation to assist local councils in understanding and providing guidance to their residents about the impact of the retrograde steps to wind back the protections that were put in place by the former government. The action I seek from the minister is that he immediately release the ministerial directions, planning practice notes and advisory notes so that councils can indeed implement these reformed residential zones and give certainty to residents to understand what impact these changes will have on residential zones in Victoria.

Victoria State Emergency Service Cobram unit

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (17:52) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the action I seek is that the minister accompany me on a visit to the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES) Cobram facility — which of course actually resides in Tocumwal and presents a range of issues and challenges for the local SES crew and the community — to discuss potential solutions.

The SES provides an important service to Victoria in times of crisis, whether it is attending car accidents, violent storms, floods or fires or assisting the local constabulary from time to time. They work closely with local communities via their councils to ensure that we have safer communities and plans in place in the event that things go wrong. Their vital services are crucial to keeping a community safe. As a matter of fact in their annual report released last month it was shown that the

SES had its second busiest year on record. Over 31 000 incidents were attended to by the SES. These included over 23 000 storm responses, over 3500 flood call-outs and 1500 road rescues. These numbers are quite incredible considering there are only just on 5000 volunteers and 200 full-time staff. With climate change causing more severe weather events, there is little doubt that the number of incidents will continue to rise into the future.

With this in mind I would like to bring the minister's attention to an anomaly that does exist in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region. As I mentioned at the start, this is the Cobram SES, but it is actually based across the border in New South Wales. The only SES in the state to be located actually outside of the state, they share their base on the other side of the Murray River in Tocumwal. Their facility is out of space, and most importantly, during times of flood they are at risk of actually being cut off from their base and not being able to serve the Victorian community they volunteer for. Of course this also has an adverse effect on membership numbers when the base is located in another state. As I said at the beginning, the action I seek from the minister is for the minister to accompany me on a visit to the Cobram SES to discuss these challenges with the local SES brigade and the local community and to find solutions to these challenges.

The PRESIDENT — Can I be assured this is not the same action you sought when you raised this matter before?

Mr GEPP — No, not Cobram SES.

The PRESIDENT — Thank you.

Wyndham kindergartens

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:55) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Families and Children. The people of the outer west I think over a long period of time have had a pretty rough deal. A classic example of that is Point Cook, which has been allowed to grow over a period of time — there is enormous growth in that area — without any or with very little infrastructure until the election of the previous government. The then Minister for Planning, Mr Guy, put a great deal of effort into ensuring that Point Cook was looked after. Unfortunately, with the defeat of the previous government, that has reverted to form. So there has been massive growth in the west and, as I say, we have missed out on a great deal of the infrastructure that we need for basic life.

The most important infrastructure for families is what is needed for their kids. In somewhere like Wyndham, for example, there are huge numbers of young families and there are huge numbers of young children, and more babies are being born in Wyndham than in most other places in Victoria. This growth and this demand will continue for quite some time to come. Unfortunately it is not being met at the moment. Williams Landing, for example — and I have raised this in the house on a number of occasions — has no schools at all, which is just an appalling situation. But with regard to the needs of the younger children, the situation with kindergartens is a real problem. It is so bad in fact that mayor Henry Barlow —

Ms Crozier — It has been neglected.

Mr FINN — It has been neglected, Ms Crozier. The mayor of Wyndham, Henry Barlow, actually had to go and publicly express his frustration at the lack of kindergartens and the quality and the quantity of them at a press conference yesterday. That is a major problem that Wyndham faces, and it must be serious for the council to risk embarrassing the government. There are very few councils that are more devoted to the state government than Wyndham, I would have thought, but even they have had to come out and say, ‘Excuse me, this is just not the done thing’. So I am asking the minister to do whatever is necessary to provide adequate preschool services for communities across Wyndham. It is an extremely important issue. It is something that is preying on the minds of many thousands of people across Wyndham and is something that needs her urgent attention.

The PRESIDENT — I am happy with that item as such, but in terms of phraseology I do have concerns when members have used in the past ‘whatever is necessary’ as part of an action. The improvement of the services is certainly a valid action, and I do not have a problem; I am just indicating that members need to be careful about framing an adjournment item by saying to a minister, ‘Do whatever is necessary’. Mr Finn actually did continue to an action, so I was satisfied with that.

Goulburn-Murray Water

Mr O’SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (17:58) — My adjournment item this evening is for the Minister for Water, and the action I am seeking from the minister is to come and meet with me and other impacted irrigators in northern Victoria to discuss the issues in relation to Goulburn-Murray Water. The minister in just the last week has announced another investigation or inquiry into Goulburn-Murray Water

through the establishment of a new advisory panel of experts to provide some advice in relation to the way that Goulburn-Murray Water is undertaking its activities. In the media release the minister identifies that it:

... is the result of the community identifying the need for a clear strategic direction for the region to provide confidence in a sustainable, cost-effective irrigation district and ensure local landholders and growers have confidence to continue to grow their businesses.

Last week I was in Tongala and I met with some irrigators in the dairy industry. They related to me firsthand some of the significant issues that they are facing in terms of the way they deal with Goulburn-Murray Water — in particular, their water fees are significant, and they believe that they are excessive. They believe that the fees under the cost structures of Goulburn-Murray Water are too high, and they believe that there should be an inquiry into Goulburn-Murray Water, in particular to have a look at the cost structure within the organisation itself.

So it is pleasing to see that the minister is undertaking this inquiry into Goulburn-Murray Water to see if there can be a better service provided to the irrigators in northern Victoria, because water is the lifeblood of their activities in terms of growing the food that we eat. Whether that be in the dairy sector or the horticulture sector, there is no doubt that the value of that water is very important.

Ensuring that we get the issues around irrigation exactly right is very important for the future of not only their prosperity but also the state’s prosperity, so I call on the minister to meet with me and impacted irrigators to hear firsthand from people who are actually undertaking irrigation on the ground what their concerns are in relation to Goulburn-Murray Water so hopefully we can get Goulburn-Murray Water into a much better state.

Adjournment interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT (18:01) — I recognise in the gallery Mr Paul Jenkins, a former member of Parliament — unfortunately of the other house, so no applause!

ADJOURNMENT**Adjournment resumed.****Drysdale bypass**

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (18:01) — I would also like to recognise and acknowledge Mr Jenkins in the gallery. It is good to see you here, Paul.

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Luke Donnellan, and the action I seek is for him to request that VicRoads consider the concerns of the Drysdale Clifton Springs Community Association regarding the Drysdale bypass. The VicRoads preferred option is expected to have three intersections with modulated traffic lights, which would almost negate the benefit of having a bypass at all. The Drysdale and Clifton Springs action group has put a great deal of effort into reviewing the proposal and believes it is not the best option. The group has instead suggested a preferred route, involving the upgrade of an existing road system — the Coriyule–Hermsley–Curlewis roads connection.

The group is concerned to the extent that it has written to the Ombudsman to alert that office to the VicRoads decision and the problems associated with it. The main concern is that the proposal will lead to an increase in accidents on that road caused by a new intersection that will be subject to morning and evening sun glare and by new bus stops proposed to be located on the opposite side of the busy highway to the residential area. The group believes that little meaningful consultation was done with the community on the VicRoads proposal.

The group's view is that its preferred route — an upgrade of an existing connection — would remove the need for traffic lights on Portarlington Road and would be safer, with less risk of pedestrian injuries and safer bus connections. The group also believes their proposal is consistent with the City of Greater Geelong's 30-year plan for the region to reduce travel times to and from Geelong for Portarlington, Drysdale, Clifton Springs and Bellarine region residents. Furthermore, the Curlewis Road option removes the potential for motorists to be hit by errant golf balls, which is a risk with the VicRoads option, which is obviously close to a golf course. The proposal would also, importantly, reduce the amount of traffic using the already-congested Grubb Road and passing through Ocean Grove just to get to Barwon Heads.

The action I seek is for the minister to review the decision to construct a new Drysdale bypass road, the

VicRoads preferred option, and consider the option being proposed by the Drysdale Clifton Springs Community Association for the reasons I have just highlighted.

Buckley Street, Essendon, level crossing

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (18:04) — Tonight my adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and it concerns the Buckley Street level crossing. Mr Finn and I both attended a significant rally on the front steps of Parliament House this afternoon. There were scores of people who were very agitated about the government's approach to the level crossing at Buckley Street. I know Buckley Street very well, as Mr Finn knows. Years ago I used to have a business on that side of the city, so I know that area of the city quite well.

What is clear is that the government did not go to the election with the model that it is now proposing. The community believed the government was going to do a rail-under-road solution there, but of course they are not doing that in Buckley Street at all. They have invented a strange and bizarre model that no-one had thought of before, which is a road that dives under the railway in a style that people had not thought through clearly — a trench that goes a different way to the normal and expected trench, which is the rail-under-road trench. I note that the City of Moonee Valley has for many years, as far back as when it was the City of Essendon, had a policy and a proposal in place to see a rail-under-road solution there.

I was also fortunate to attend a large rally at the Clocktower Centre in Moonee Ponds some while ago, where I would say more than 800 people attended to make their view very clear that they did not want the model being proposed by Danny Pearson, the member for Essendon in the Assembly; the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan; and Premier Daniel Andrews. It clearly cuts off the schools from access to Buckley Street. It cuts off the businesses in Rose Street and that area of Essendon from proper access to Buckley Street. Buckley Street, as an east–west road, as people will know, is an important access road for movements there. This will add to traffic congestion. It is a very suboptimal outcome. It has no regard for a longer term solution of removing other level crossings further along the rail line there.

What is also important is that an FOI document I have cited in recent weeks makes it clear that the government has in fact not signed any formal tender arrangements, so the opportunity is there for the government to review its position. That is what I am seeking from the minister

today — that she review the position with regard to the Buckley Street level crossing removal and step back from the strange and unsatisfactory proposal that the government has on the table. I also ask that the member for Essendon stand up and represent his electorate, because he is, frankly, not doing that. But let us be clear: the minister should review her proposal and go back to an accepted solution.

Frankston line elevated rail proposal

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (18:07) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport in the other place, and it is in relation to one of the consequences of sky rail. Everyone would know that I am not a fan of sky rail for the obvious reasons — I do not need to enumerate or list them — of which there are many. Apart from the fact that the government lied before the election, it is basically vandalism on our urban landscape, in particular our coastal landscape. But nonetheless, it is being built and locals will not forget the devastation this has caused not only to many homes and to the amenity of people's lives and property but also to their urban landscape. In the meantime the government promised play parks, playgrounds and even fishing lagoons underneath these ugly structures, and we saw many sketches of the types of activities that could be enjoyed by residents once sky rail was completed.

Now we find out that only \$15 million is being made available to several councils, including the City of Glen Eira, the City of Kingston, the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Monash, and that they will have to fight and put in bids for the \$15 million, which is manifestly inadequate for the devastation and ruination that has been caused by the sky rail development. Clearly much more needs to be made available. I call on the minister to enter into good-faith negotiations and discussions with residents and with those local councils to ensure that the needs for reparation and development of areas underneath the sky rail are adequately funded so as to minimise the negative impact that the sky rail has had since its construction.

State care leavers

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (18:09) — My adjournment matter this evening is to the Minister for Education. Whilst the Andrews government talk a lot about being the Education State, I was very alarmed today to read a tweet from the CEO of Anglicare Victoria, Mr Paul McDonald, who I have great respect for, who said that 70 per cent of young people leaving state care have no education. This is an absolutely

woeful figure — that some of our most vulnerable children in state care are leaving having no education. I think that all government members should be very concerned about that. I note the government has provided a \$5.9 million program for keeping kids in schools and keeping them engaged, which is very welcome of course, but these are some of the most vulnerable children, as I have said. Of course attending school not only provides the education that a child can attain but also socialisation skills and other activities that can be very beneficial to that child's growth and development.

The action I seek is for the minister to outline how the government is going to improve that woeful figure of 70 per cent of these very vulnerable children leaving state care having had no education and what the government is going to do to ensure that those most vulnerable children do actually obtain the education they require and need.

Responses

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (18:11) — We have had adjournment matters this evening from Ms Shing to the Minister for Public Transport regarding updates to users through social media and increased bus use across the Gippsland region; from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Health, seeking additional oncology treatment support in Shepparton and for Goulburn Murray Health itself; from Ms Patten to the Minister for Families and Children, with a request for the leaving care age on a custody or guardian order to be extended from 18 to 21 if requested; from Mr Gepp requesting the Minister for Emergency Services to come and tour the Cobram State Emergency Service facility as the facility needs more space, is in a flood-prone area and can be cut off from the local community; from Mr Morris to the Minister for Planning, asking for the immediate release of the planning note to councils for residential zones; from Mr Finn to the Minister for Families and Children, asking the minister to provide adequate preschool services across Wyndham; from Mr O'Sullivan to the Minister for Water, asking the minister to come and meet with him specifically and a number of irrigators that have been affected by Goulburn-Murray Water; from Mr Ramsay to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, asking the minister to have VicRoads consider the Drysdale Clifton Springs Community Association response to the bypass that is currently proposed; from Mr Davis to the Minister for Public Transport, asking the minister to review the position of the Buckley Street level crossing; from Mrs Peulich to the Minister for Public Transport, something to do with fishing lagoons and other things; and from Ms Crozier to the Minister

for Education, asking the minister to outline how the government will improve the percentage for educational outcomes of vulnerable children.

President, I can also tell you that we have no responses to table otherwise.

The PRESIDENT — On that basis the house stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 6.13 p.m.

