

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 6 September 2017

(Extract from book 15)

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 10 November 2016)

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 Barber, 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 — #Mr Barber, Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmr, #Ms Hartland, Mr Melhem, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, #Ms Symes and Mr Young.

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

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 Elasmr 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 Elasmr, 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:

Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁶	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ²	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 ⁷	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ³	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	V1LJ
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁴	Northern Victoria	ALP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Appointed 16 April 2015

² DLP until 26 June 2017

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁴ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁵ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁶ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁷ Appointed 13 October 2016

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, 6 SEPTEMBER 2017

ROYAL ASSENT	4453
ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE	
<i>Membership</i>	4453
ELECTORATE OFFICE BUDGETS.....	4453
PETITIONS	
<i>Elder abuse</i>	4453
<i>Crime prevention</i>	4453
<i>Neighbourhood Watch</i>	4454
PROCEDURE COMMITTEE	
<i>Video on demand</i>	4454
SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE	
<i>Alert Digest No. 12</i>	4455
PAPERS	4455
PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS	4456, 4463
ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE	
<i>Reporting date</i>	4457
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
<i>General business</i>	4457
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	
<i>Reporting date</i>	4457
MINISTERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Shepparton Art Museum</i>	4457
<i>Child protection</i>	4458
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Electorate office budgets</i> .. 4458, 4459, 4460, 4461, 4462	
<i>Hon. Fiona Richardson, MP</i>	4459
<i>Walk the Walk for the Homeless</i>	4459
<i>Bandari Project</i>	4459
<i>Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb</i>	4459
<i>Damien Burke Memorial Mildura to Melbourne</i>	
<i>Relay Run</i>	4460
<i>Rumbalara Elders Facility</i>	4460
<i>Shepparton Aboriginal street art</i>	4460
<i>Equal Love rally</i>	4460
<i>Voluntary assisted dying</i>	4461
<i>Goulburn Valley Health</i>	4461
<i>Mid Valley shopping centre, Morwell</i>	4462
<i>Lamb advertising campaign</i>	4462
<i>Barcelona terrorist attack</i>	4462
<i>Member conduct</i>	4462
GAME MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2017	
<i>Second reading</i>	4467
<i>Third reading</i>	4473
STONNINGTON POLICE RESOURCES	4473, 4484, 4496
ABSENCE OF MINISTER.....	4476
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
<i>Motorcyclist safety</i>	4476
<i>Right to farm</i>	4476
<i>Taxi and hire car industry</i>	4477
<i>West Gate tunnel project</i>	4477
<i>Electorate office budgets</i>	4477, 4478, 4479, 4480
<i>Written responses</i>	4481
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	
<i>Answers</i>	4481
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS	
<i>Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	4482, 4483
<i>Northern Victoria Region</i>	4482
<i>Western Metropolitan Region</i>	4483, 4484
<i>Western Victoria Region</i>	4483, 4484
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	4483
<i>Southern Metropolitan Region</i>	4483
MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS AMENDMENT (AFL GRAND FINAL TICKETS) BILL 2017	
<i>Second reading</i>	4488
AUSTRALIA DAY	4500
STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS	
<i>Department of Treasury and Finance: budget</i>	
<i>papers 2017–18</i>	4511, 4513, 4514
<i>Auditor-General: Technical and Further</i>	
<i>Education Institutes: 2016 Audit Snapshot</i>	4511
<i>Department of Economic Development, Jobs,</i>	
<i>Transport and Resources: report 2014–15</i>	4512
ADJOURNMENT	
<i>Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services</i>	4515
<i>Ageing strategy</i>	4516
<i>Foster carers</i>	4516
<i>Eastern Freeway</i>	4517
<i>South Yarra Primary School</i>	4517
<i>Energy supply</i>	4518
<i>Hume City Council</i>	4518
<i>Bayside bay trail</i>	4519
<i>Belmont High School</i>	4519
<i>Responses</i>	4520

Wednesday, 6 September 2017

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 9.35 a.m. and read the prayer.

ROYAL ASSENT

Messages read advising royal assent to:

25 August

Local Government (Central Goldfields Shire Council) Act 2017

29 August

Jury Directions and Other Acts Amendment Act 2017

Justice Legislation Amendment (Court Security, Juries and Other Matters) Act 2017

Public Administration Amendment (Public Sector Communication Standards) Act 2017.

ELECTORAL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Membership

The PRESIDENT — I have a resignation submitted to me and the Speaker from Mr Russell Northe, the member for Morwell in another place. He has indicated that he wishes to formally tender his resignation from the parliamentary Electoral Matters Committee, effective immediately.

ELECTORATE OFFICE BUDGETS

The PRESIDENT — I wish to make a brief statement in regard to an article that appeared in the *Herald Sun* this morning. I would just indicate to the house that if this article is accurate, then the allegations are deeply disturbing to me. There are no grey areas in our regulations and processes in respect of members or their electorate staff in submitting invoices for payment and confirming that work has been done or services have been provided. The story in the *Herald Sun* does not include any names, which makes investigation of these allegations more challenging. However, if the allegations are true, they involve criminal actions that constitute fraud. The Parliament has commenced an investigation, and if we can establish the veracity of the fraudulent practices outlined in the *Herald Sun* article, the matter will be referred to external agencies. This is not conduct the Parliament would simply investigate internally.

I understand the *Herald Sun*'s reluctance to name names, but the problem with media stories from sources and about individuals that are not named is that they leave a cloud of suspicion on all MPs and all parties. I have already begun a review of printing invoices, and we will pursue other lines of inquiry in relation to that story from this morning.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Elder abuse

Legislative Council electronic petition:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that elder abuse, also called 'inheritance impatience', is a growing concern. Estimates suggest that up to 14 per cent of our elders aged over 65 years, experience some form of elder abuse. Elder abuse is often financial, but it can also include physical, emotional, psychological and even sexual abuse of a person who, because of their circumstances and because of the abuse, find it difficult if not impossible to reach out for help. Such abuse is often by a family member in situations where the elder is socially isolated. These elderly Victorians must surely be among the most vulnerable people in our state. They deserve our support and protection.

Recent inquiries have been undertaken by the Parliament of New South Wales and the Australian Law Reform Commission while another inquiry is in progress by the Parliament of South Australia. These inquiries should form the basis for an inquiry by the Parliament of Victoria.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council establish a committee to inquire into the issue of elder abuse in Victoria.

By Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (112 signatures).

Laid on table.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan).

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)
(48 signatures).**

Laid on table.

Neighbourhood Watch

Legislative Council electronic petition:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the decision of Premier Daniel Andrews and the state Labor government to cut the funding to Neighbourhood Watch. Community organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch play an important role in community safety, never more so than now with the skyrocketing crime in Victoria under Daniel Andrews.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Andrews Labor government to admit its mistake, match the commitment of the Liberal-Nationals coalition commitment to provide \$2 million over four years to reinvigorate, support, and expand the Neighbourhood Watch program across Victoria.

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

Laid on table.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Video on demand

**Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan)
presented report.**

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be published.

**Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I
move:**

That the Council take note of the report.

This is a report that I think will be of much interest to many in the chamber and in the Parliament, and indeed in the community. The Procedure Committee has been looking into the issue of video on demand for quite some time. I will just quote from the report:

The committee notes that in most jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand some level of video on demand is available to either members and parliamentary staff, or the general public through that parliament's website.

The commonwealth, ACT and Queensland parliaments all provide a video-on-demand service for house proceedings and at least some parliamentary committee proceedings to the general public through their respective websites. The New Zealand Parliament provides video on demand for house proceedings only through its website, and the South Australian Parliament is developing video on demand, likely to be available to the public, for its houses and committees. The Tasmanian Parliament allows internal users only, i.e. members and staff, to view video on demand of question time.

In addition to viewing video on demand the commonwealth and ACT parliaments allow all users to download footage. While the New Zealand and Queensland parliaments allow the general public to view video on demand through their website, they do not provide access to downloadable footage. Similarly, the Tasmanian Parliament does not provide access to downloadable footage. As can be seen, there are a variety of approaches around the parliaments of Australia and in New Zealand.

The committee also found that in order to introduce video on demand of Council proceedings it will be necessary to adopt an additional standing order. The purpose of the standing order is to make it clear that section 74AA of the Constitution Act 1975 applies to persons republishing video on demand. Section 74AA provides protection against actions or proceedings for persons who transmit or broadcast recordings of Council proceedings with the authority of the Council.

The report recommends:

That the house adopt proposed new standing order 20.03 to come into effect upon a video-on-demand service for house proceedings of the Legislative Council, accessible by internal users only ...

and:

That the government enter into discussions with the Parliament in relation to funding that would be required for the Department of Parliamentary Services to expand the video-on-demand service so that it is accessible by the general public.

I would like to thank the members and staff of the committee and also the members of Hansard who have met with the committee many times and who I know have run some forums in the Parliament for members to bring us to the stage where we now can introduce a new standing order to have video on demand in the Legislative Council.

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I
am very happy to very briefly speak on this report from
the Procedure Committee. Ms Pennicuik has
extensively outlined the details of video on demand
around the rest of the country. The coalition supports**

the initiative. It is this house in this Parliament that introduced electronic petitions, and hopefully we will now be in a position to finally introduce video on demand. I certainly encourage Mr Jennings, the Leader of the Government, to bring forward the motion which would enable this to be put in place. I think the work of the Clerk and his staff and the IT department in relation to creating a solution that allows this to happen at no additional cost and within existing budgets in a way that is a trial but that still allows members to access the video footage of their contributions in this house has been excellent. This is something that we should enable as soon as possible. I certainly commend the report to the house.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I support Procedure Committee report number 3, *Video on Demand*, dated September 2017, that has been put down today. This is well overdue, and I think it will have support right across the Parliament ultimately but certainly in this place now. The recommended standing order 20.03 for video on demand would allow for the republication of audiovisual proceedings of the Council that are provided by the Hansard broadcast archive. I note that the recommendations are sensible recommendations. The truth of the matter of course is that other parliaments, federal and state, undertake these video-on-demand arrangements, and it ought not be beyond the capacity of our Parliament to do the same. In that sense I think we should proceed and proceed quickly. There is no reason to shillyshally or delay on this matter.

Motion agreed to.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 12

Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) presented *Alert Digest No. 12 of 2017, including appendices.*

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's Office — Report, 2016–17.

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

Banyule, Casey, Monash, Moreland, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse and Yarra Planning Schemes — Amendment GC72.

Boroondara Planning Scheme — Amendment C250.

Brimbank Planning Scheme — Amendment C150.

Darebin and Manningham Planning Schemes — Amendment GC42.

Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme — Amendment C161 (Part 1).

Melbourne Planning Scheme — Amendment C245.

Victoria Planning Provisions — Amendment VC139.

Wangaratta Planning Scheme — Amendments C61 and C67.

Road Safety Camera Commissioner — Report 2016–17.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Building Act 1993 — No. 87.

Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987 — Nos. 88, 90 and 91.

County Court Act 1958 — No. 92.

Electricity Safety Act 1998 — No. 85.

Gas Safety Act 1997 — No. 89.

Local Government Act 1989 and City of Melbourne Act 2001 — No. 86.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 —

Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 86 to 88 and 92.

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

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 —

Ministerial Order 1038 — Teaching Service (Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances, Selection and Conduct) Order 2017, dated 28 August 2017.

Ministerial Order 1039 — School Council Employees (Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances and Selection) Order 2017, dated 28 August 2017.

Radiation Act 2005 —

Guidelines for the Verification of Identity under section 67A, dated 20 July 2017.

Specification of Security Standards for Security Plans and Transport Security Plans under section 67N, dated 20 July 2017.

Additional Matters to be Addressed for Security Plans and Transport Security Plans under section 67C, dated 20 July 2017.

Water Act 1989 — Groundwater Management Plan for the Katunga Water Supply Protection Area 2006 — Amendments 2017, dated 22 August 2017.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Clerk — I have received the following letter from the Attorney-General relating to the resolution of the Council of 9 August 2017 relating to the Attorney-General's decision not to refer Jason Roberts's petition for mercy to the Court of Appeal. The letter is as follows:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 9 August 2017, seeking the production of documents concerning the Attorney-General's decision not to refer Jason Roberts's petition for mercy to the Court of Appeal.

The Legislative Council's date for production of the documents by 4 September 2017 does not allow sufficient time for the government to respond to the Council's resolution. The government is in the process of collating and considering the relevant documents for the purpose of responding to the order. The government will endeavour to provide a final response to the order as soon as possible.

I have also received the following letter from the Attorney-General:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 23 August 2017, seeking the production of the business case for the Victorian Heart Hospital, and all correspondence and departmental briefs to or from the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Premier and Cabinet about the Victorian Heart Hospital.

The Legislative Council's date for production of the documents by 5 September 2017 does not allow sufficient time for the government to respond to the Council's resolution. The government is in the process of collating and considering the relevant documents for the purpose of responding to the order. The government will endeavour to provide a final response to the order as soon as possible.

I have also received the following letter from the Attorney-General:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 9 August 2017, seeking the production of a copy of the Office of Correctional Services Review into the Brighton siege.

The government has identified three documents that fall within the scope of the Legislative Council's order, and has assessed these documents against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege.

The government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to the three documents in full, on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my

letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedule refers to the documents that are in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Mr O'Donohue (Eastern Victoria).

The Clerk — I lay on the table 71 documents in full and two documents in part received in response to the resolution of the Council on 24 May 2017 relating to the listing of Anakie Youang on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. I have also received the following letter from the Attorney-General:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 24 May 2017, seeking the production of certain documents relating to the listing of Anakie Youang on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.

As the Council is aware, the order arises in the context of the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet reconsidering whether Anakie Youang is an Aboriginal place that requires its retention on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register.

Response to the Council's order for production

The government has identified 122 documents that fall within the scope of the Legislative Council's order, and has assessed these documents against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege.

In final satisfaction of the Council's order, the government has determined to produce 71 documents in full and two documents in part, which are enclosed.

Accordingly, the government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to parts of two documents, and to 49 documents in full, on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016.

In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedules refer to the documents that are produced in full and in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

Reconsideration of whether Anakie Youang is an Aboriginal place

I have also been advised by the Department of Premier and Cabinet that, on 16 August 2017, a delegate of the secretary of the department reconsidered the earlier registration of Anakie Youang, including whether Anakie Youang was an Aboriginal place.

The delegate determined that Anakie Youang is an Aboriginal place as it is a place of spiritual, contemporary and anthropological significance to Aboriginal people including, but not limited to, Wadawurrung people. On the basis of that determination, the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 required the secretary to retain the listing of Anakie Youang in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register. I understand that the

reasons for the delegate's decision were recently provided to the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation (being the relevant registered Aboriginal party for the area including Anakie Youang) as well as representatives of Aerolite Quarries Pty Ltd and Delacom Pty Ltd (being the entities responsible for an operating quarry on land forming part of Anakie Youang).

To assist the Council's consideration of these matters, the government has determined to produce a copy of the delegate's reasons for retaining Anakie Youang on the register. To ensure that matters of particular sensitivity to Aboriginal people and traditional owner groups are not revealed, certain Aboriginal cultural heritage information has been redacted from that document. Nevertheless, the document outlines the evidentiary basis and rationale for the delegate's decision, and the process that was followed and context in which the redetermination proceeded.

In addition, some of the documents produced by the government contain the personal information of individuals. In the interests of personal privacy, those details have been excluded.

ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Reporting date

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — By leave, I move:

That the resolution of the Council of 14 September 2016 requiring the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee to inquire into and report by 1 October 2017 on fuel prices in regional Victoria be amended so as to now require the committee to present its report by 31 March 2018.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

General business

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

That precedence be given to the following general business today, Wednesday, 6 September 2017:

- (1) notice of motion 455 standing in the name of Mr Davis in relation to the production of certain documents relating to the Pride Centre business case;
- (2) order of the day 3, resumption of debate on the Game Management Authority Amendment Bill 2017;
- (3) order of the day 1, resumption of debate on the Major Sporting Events Amendment (AFL Grand Final Tickets) Bill 2017;
- (4) notice of motion 441 standing in the name of Mr Davis in relation to increased crime in Stonnington;

- (5) notice of motion 456 standing in the name of Mrs Peulich in relation to the retention of Australia Day celebrations on 26 January; and
- (6) order of the day 30, consideration of minister's answers to a question without notice and a supplementary question in relation to 500 Startups.

Motion agreed to.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Reporting date

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

That the resolutions of the Council of 16 September 2015 and 12 April 2016 requiring the Family and Community Development Committee to inquire into and report by 8 December 2017 on perinatal services be amended so as to now require the committee to present its report by 31 March 2018.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Shepparton Art Museum

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I would like to update the house on a significant milestone that has been achieved for the Shepparton Art Museum project, and I know this is of great interest to a number of members in this chamber. Back in March 2016 it was my great pleasure to announce a \$10 million funding grant from the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund towards the Shepparton Art Museum project. This \$34.5 million project, co-funded with the commonwealth government and Greater Shepparton City Council, will see the old Shepparton Art Museum relocated to the more prominent and accessible location of Victoria Park Lake.

This is a very exciting project. The redevelopment will deliver a new art museum with increased capacity to showcase its unique ceramics, Indigenous and multicultural collections to Victorian, interstate and international visitors. Over the construction phase the project will inject \$34.5 million into the local economy and create 72 direct and 109 indirect jobs. Once operational the museum will increase visitor spending in the region by \$6.25 million per annum and provide 23 direct jobs by the 10th year.

Minister for Planning Richard Wynne has today announced approvals for amendment of the Greater Shepparton planning scheme to fast-track the

redevelopment of the Shepparton Art Museum, and the new location by Victoria Park Lake I think is going to be transformative for Shepparton. I would encourage members to look at the designs that are available on the project website because I think it will create a wonderful connection between the centre of town and the lake. This decision by Minister Wynne is a great step forward in the delivery of this project.

The museum is already one of Shepparton's leading attractions, and the government is working to strengthen Shepparton as a cultural destination, creating more local jobs, boosting visitor numbers and attracting business investment and consumer spending in the region's retail, hospitality and accommodation sectors. It will also encourage budding local artists, with a new space for work and professional development opportunities and workshops.

Child protection

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is recruiting more child protection practitioners to protect Victorian children from abuse and neglect. The 2017–18 Andrews Labor government budget funded 450 new child protection practitioner positions, and already more than 100 positions have been filled as part of the department's ongoing recruitment campaign. This is the greatest ever expansion of our child protection workforce. There has been an increase of almost 20 per cent in the number of child protection practitioners during our term of government, and there are now more than 1600 practitioners working with vulnerable children and young people across the state.

There can be no greater responsibility, no greater calling, than to create better, happy, more productive lives for Victoria's children. Dedicated child protection practitioners play an incredibly important role in our community. Not only do they intervene to care for children and young people but they also work closely with families and carers to ensure a nurturing environment is provided. Being a child protection practitioner is challenging but also tremendously rewarding work.

On Monday, the first day of National Child Protection Week, I met with social work students at RMIT University to encourage them to consider a rewarding career in child protection, and whilst there I announced that we will be doubling the number of places in our vacation employment program from 40 to 80 places. The vacation employment program gives students paid real experience and knowledge in our child protection

workforce and has led to ongoing roles for many of them.

Our \$1.9 billion investment in ending family violence and our many reforms across the social services sector mean that many more career pathways have opened up to those studying community services disciplines. Our government's reforms present many new opportunities for young people and those seeking a career change who are inspired to protect and support the most vulnerable in our community.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Electorate office budgets

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Another day and another Labor rorting allegation. More corruption from the Labor Party — it is just what we expect from Daniel Andrews and this Labor government. This is becoming a habit. The Labor Party are absolutely addicted — they are addicted to using taxpayer money to feather their own nests.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order!

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — Time and time again we have had the red shirts prior to elections working out of electorate offices where the member did not even know who they were and was signing forms blankly. They fought all the way to the High Court to stop the investigation into those red shirts. Well, the fact is that \$400 000 later it is being investigated and the truth will come out.

We have had the former Speaker and the former Deputy Speaker rorting their second residence allowance, living miles away from their electorates. Now we have the purchasing of memberships and the stacking of branches on the back of false printing invoices from the Labor Party. So the key question is: what does Daniel Andrews know and who is it in the Labor Party that is stealing from taxpayers — taking taxpayers money?

Clearly Daniel Andrews is complicit in this. He led the use of the red shirts and he condoned those two members living miles and miles from their electorates, and now we have this oversight of rorting and stealing taxpayer dollars. Labor is an absolute disgrace, and Victorians know that.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! Can I just remind members of what the President said earlier in relation to this matter. When Ms Woolridge was making a contribution I did call order a number of times asking for other members to actually keep it quiet. So I ask those on the other side as well to do the same thing and be courteous about it.

Hon. Fiona Richardson, MP

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Seeing as it is the first time that I have spoken this week I want to add my condolences to Fiona Richardson's family, in particular to her children. Knowing firsthand what it is like to lose a parent at a young age I know it is an awful thing, and there are no words other than that our hearts genuinely all go out to them.

Walk the Walk for the Homeless

Mr LEANE — On another matter — and it is something that Minister Richardson would have supported as well — on Friday morning Major Brendan Nottle from the Salvation Army will start a walk up to Canberra in a call for a national approach to homelessness, which has only got to be a good thing. We all should get behind Brendan Nottle. He is a great man and a great Melburnian, and no-one understands homelessness issues probably as well as he does, so we should all follow him on the way up, support his call and do whatever we can to raise awareness of what he is attempting to do.

Bandari Project

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — It gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognise a wonderful community project between my home town of Port Fairy and a small village in Tanzania. Volunteers organised by Seif Sakate, from Tanzania, and his wife, Catherine Ryan, from Port Fairy, go over twice a year to work in Seif's village in Tanzania. The project is called the Bandari Project and was founded in 2014 by Seif and Catherine. The name Bandari means port in Swahili, and this made the connection with Port Fairy.

The Bandari Project is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to provide a quality education to disadvantaged children in the village where Seif was born and raised. The main focus is to recruit children who come from poor families that cannot afford a good education and offer a safe and engaging learning experience. So far a kindergarten, a second classroom, a toilet block, a chook shed, a vegetable plot with water tank, a playground and a slab for a third building have been built.

In times when we see charities syphoning off most of the money donated to them, this grassroots project in Tanzania gives us pride in our charitable community. Well done, Seif and Catherine.

Electorate office budgets

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — After perusing the front page of today's *Herald Sun* Victorians are entitled to ask, 'Just how corrupt is the Andrews government?'. After the great red shirt rort of 2014 and the subsequent rorting of taxpayers money to stop the Ombudsman investigating its corruption, Victorians have a right to know if their government is comprised largely of crooks.

I challenge each and every member of the government in this house to seek leave to stand to publicly deny that they are one of the corrupt Labor MPs referred to in today's *Herald Sun*. Victorians have a right to know if these allegations are true. If so, they want to know who the crooked MPs are.

These allegations — from within the ALP, I might add — are of shysterism of the highest order. This is theft, pure and simple. Victorians are entitled to know who the thieves are — who the charlatans are — who have pirated taxpayers money for their own corrupt purposes. Here is an opportunity for members opposite to clear their names once and for all. They should stand up and declare their innocence — if they can. Victorians deserve an honest, truthful government, not the corrupt, crooked rabble that we have now. We in the west thought the corruption of the Brimbank council was bad, but it is now clear that that was only the beginning. Labor, thy name is corruption.

Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — On Saturday I had the privilege of attending the Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb. Career and volunteer firefighters from all around the country, New Zealand and the US remarkably ran up 28 flights of stairs in turnout gear with their breathing apparatus, which amounts to about 25 kilos. Apparently the average time is about 4 minutes. I think I am pretty good if I get from my office into the chamber in the 3 minutes while the bells are ringing, let alone with that amount of stress. This year the Firefighters Charity Fund Melbourne is aiming to raise \$500 000 for Lifeline and the Black Dog Institute to improve support services, fund research and remove the stigma and raise awareness of mental illness.

Damien Burke Memorial Mildura to Melbourne Relay Run

Ms HARTLAND — The other thing that happened on the same day was the Damien Burke Memorial Mildura to Melbourne Relay Run. This was to highlight the fact that emergency services workers come under enormous stress, suffer badly from post-traumatic stress disorder and are at high risk of suicide. A group of firefighters, police officers and other emergency services workers ran from Mildura to Melbourne to highlight the issues and to continue to raise money. It was quite a remarkable effort, and I admire all the work that career and volunteer firefighters do for us across the state.

Electorate office budgets

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — The revelations in today's *Herald Sun* have uncovered yet another Labor rort. We have had the red shirts using taxpayers money to campaign for the Labor Party and then the government spending hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to cover it up. They have fought tooth and nail and have lost multiple court cases in trying to cover up their disgraceful stealing of taxpayers money. We have had the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker rorting the second residence allowance, claiming money so that they could live at the seaside. This government is rotten to the core, and this has now been exposed for all to see.

Each Labor MP opposite must declare if it is they who are rorting taxpayers money to branch stack. Each Labor MP must also declare if they are aware of which of their colleagues are responsible for this disgraceful rorting. Taxpayers money being used by Labor Party powerbrokers to pay for ALP memberships is nothing short of disgraceful and exposes the corrupt core of this government. Daniel Andrews must say who in the Labor Party is responsible for stealing taxpayers money — who are the crooks, the thieves, the charlatans and the pilferers.

Rumbalara Elders Facility

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) — I rise to speak of my visit to Shepparton last week where I was lucky enough to visit the Rumbalara Elders Facility.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! Mr Morris, the President made a comment earlier this morning and I have repeated the same comment. You pointed to Mr Gepp. I think you had no

right to, and I ask you to withdraw your question, saying, 'Is it you, Mr Gepp?'

Mr Morris — I withdraw.

Mr GEPP — The detailed thought that has gone into the Rumbalara Elders Facility has even gone down to the shape of the building. It is shaped like a turtle. At my visit I met Uncle Ron Thompson, a proud Noongar man and a keen artist. Uncle Ron presented me with a painting for my office wall. We enjoyed a great chat, and I would like to thank him for his generosity and wish his Kangaroos a better year next year.

Shepparton Aboriginal street art

Mr GEPP — While in Shepparton I also visited the first stage of the Aboriginal street art project. The Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, the Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative and local families were consulted, and it was decided that the first two portraits would be of William Cooper and Sir Doug Nicholls. The families were present, and it was indeed an honour to meet Uncle Lance James, a descendant of William Cooper, and Uncle Robert Nicholls, who is a descendant of Sir Doug Nicholls. Congratulations to local artist Adnate on these magnificent portraits of proud, strong Aboriginal people.

Electorate office budgets

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) — Every day in the media we hear about the latest crime spree that is going on in Victoria, whether that is home invasions or carjackings. Today it is a different type of crime spree that we are hearing about. It is the Labor Party rorting their printing allowances to get cash to pay for memberships ahead of the preselection round that the Labor Party is undertaking. It is no wonder this government is soft on crime. They want to make sure that everyone is nice and soft so they can do whatever they want — to take money from the public purse, from the taxpayer, at every opportunity. Whether it is the red shirt brigade, the dogs and the chauffeur scandal or the second home allowance scandal, there is no end to what this government will do at any time on the taxpayers money. The sooner Labor Party members come clean and profess their innocence the better for everyone, because this stinks right to the core of the Labor Party.

Equal Love rally

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — On 26 August I was heartwarmed and very excited to attend the Equal Love marriage equality rally and mass illegal wedding in Melbourne. I have attended these

rallies and illegal weddings since they first started following the change of the Marriage Act 1961 by the Howard government in 2004. It was just fantastic to see tens of thousands of people pack out the streets of Melbourne. You could not see the start or the end of the rally as it progressed down La Trobe Street, down Elizabeth Street, up Bourke Street and back into Swanston Street. It is so heartwarming to see people from all walks of life and all age groups turning out on the streets of Melbourne in support of the 'Yes' campaign, even though of course I am of the view that we should not be spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a postal survey. I know this is before the High Court now, and it will be interesting to see what the result of that challenge to it will be, but the message that was sent by the rally on 26 August was one of mass support for the 'Yes' campaign from the people of Melbourne. I thank Australian Marriage Equality and Equal Love for their work on this issue over the past decade.

Electorate office budgets

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I too, like my colleagues and most Victorians, was absolutely horrified to read the front page of the *Herald Sun* today, which reveals more roting by this Labor government. It is incredible to think that we have got roting going on to the extent that is reported in today's paper where there are whistleblowers that have come out saying hundreds of thousands of taxpayers dollars have been siphoned from MPs' printing budgets to pay for party memberships.

This is not the first time that whistleblowers have gone to town on their own party. We have had whistleblowers tell us that members rorted the entitlements by providing electorate officers to the ALP in the red shirts campaign in 2014. While I am on 2014 I will come to another rorter, the former corrections minister, who said back in 2014, and I quote:

It is central to the public's faith that their taxpayer dollars are spent for the good of the public and not for the good of politicians, or their mates and friends.

What a load of hypocritical MPs are these government members! They continue to rort. If it is not Ted and Patch in the chauffeur-driven car or the second residence allowance, it is this Premier, who continues to protect his MPs. As one government minister said, 'The fish rots from the head'. Well, Premier, you have got a hell of a stink going on in your party and in this government, and it is not good for the Victorian taxpayer or democracy.

Voluntary assisted dying

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I rise today to bring to the attention of the house a letter co-signed by 101 Victorian oncologists — that is, 101 Victorian cancer specialists — who are urging this Parliament to vote against the proposed assisted dying legislation. Among the most notable signatories is Professor John Zalberg, OAM, who was the director of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre for 17 years and is now Professor of Cancer Research at Monash University. The letter includes signatories from every major city hospital and every regional area across the state, including Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Warrnambool, Shepparton and Traralgon. Around 30 signatories are from Peter Mac and 25 are from Monash, and around 20 are professors or associate professors.

The letter highlights how assisted suicide is in conflict with basic ethical principles and the integrity of medical practice, and how there is no safe system possible that can protect vulnerable populations. The signatories call for improved funding for palliative care services, which is currently around \$65 million per year behind what it needs to be in order to ensure dying Victorians are adequately cared for in their homes with adequate supports for both them and their families. We would be wise to listen to their message, which is crystal clear: there is no safe system for assisted suicide and the Victorian Parliament should reject the proposal being put before it.

Goulburn Valley Health

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — In June this year the *Shepparton News* broke the news of paediatric beds at Goulburn Valley Health being reduced from 12 to eight beds. This information came from a health insider within GV Health and was confirmed by Sandy Chamberlain, the redevelopment director. Naturally this caused great concern in our community and prompted both Suzanna Sheed in the Assembly and me to ask questions of the Minister for Health in Parliament. The questioning resulted in a backflip from the minister and a commitment to retain 12 paediatric beds in the children's ward. Following the minister's commitment constituents raised further concern with me that the funding of the four extra beds in the children's ward might result in reduced bed capacity in another area of the hospital. I sought further clarification from the minister.

However, the health minister's reply to my question shows the contempt she holds for the Shepparton community, with the minister responding by accusing

those who raised this concern of political pointscoring — an appalling accusation in relation to concerned Shepparton residents who were just asking a question. But this is the modus operandi of this minister, attempting to make herself out to be the goddess of health provision by throwing a small bone towards a hospital redevelopment that ignores the urgent need for radiotherapy, a helipad, better mental health services and specialist consulting suites at GV Health. And when the community ask a simple question the minister uses the opportunity to attack them. What a disgrace she is — an utter disgrace. Rest assured, Minister, despite your snide comments the community knows that I proudly support GV Health and the provision of quality health services in my community. It is a pity the same cannot be said about the minister.

Mid Valley shopping centre, Morwell

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — Last week I spoke with Latrobe Valley shop assistants, managers and business owners about their perspective of law and order, in particular at Mid Valley shopping centre in Morwell. A common theme was that even though they think that our police do a tremendous job under trying circumstances, many staff are concerned about their own personal safety and the increase in petty theft. Many were concerned about exiting the centre and walking to the car park at the end of the day. For safety reasons staff have been advised to hold their car keys like a weapon for self-protection. They have been advised not to wear their name badges outside. I was told that the bus stop area is extremely unsafe. One shop assistant is contemplating leaving her job; she is too scared to go to work. Others refuse to work the late shift.

Some highlighted the recent closure of Hazelwood as a factor and others commented that shops within the centre are starting to close down due to a lack of safety. Positive solutions include the use of CCTV cameras and the need for an additional police presence in shopping centres to act as a deterrent to would-be hoodlums. For decades Mid Valley has been a wonderful place to shop in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, a place in which I have spent many hours over the years. The Andrews Labor government needs to provide adequate police resources to tackle crime in our regions, to enable shop assistants and business owners to get on and do what they do best in our rural communities — that is, serving their customers in safety.

Electorate office budgets

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Labor red shirt rorts, rorting of the second residence allowance, rorting of ministerial chauffeurs and now rorting of parliamentary printing budgets — secret business kickbacks to unions — demonstrates that corruption is deep in Labor's DNA, and the Premier, Daniel Andrews, is running a crooked outfit and needs to come clean and have a cleanout.

Lamb advertising campaign

Mrs PEULICH — On another matter, Meat & Livestock Australia has released a creative TV advert to promote the consumption of lamb, but it has regrettably caused offence to many in the Hindu community by inaccurately associating Lord Ganesha, a Hindu god, with the consumption of meat and wine. There is always cause for concern when religions, religious practices or people's values and views are unfairly or inaccurately depicted. In this instance I would like to see the Victorian Multicultural Commission take a lead by engaging with the meat and livestock association to see if these matters can be resolved without further grief.

Barcelona terrorist attack

Mrs PEULICH — On another matter, I would like to place on the record the condolences of the coalition in relation to the Barcelona terrorist attack, which occurred on 17 August. Some time has passed; however, 15 people are dead and hundreds are injured, and I would like to commend the Spanish community both here and abroad for the shows of unity, including a march through Barcelona that focused on unity and on not caving in to terrorism. Of course we extend our sympathy to all of those who lost loved ones, suffered injury or simply were moved by this deplorable act of terrorism.

Member conduct

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — Today the *Herald Sun* reports that hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars had been siphoned from the electoral printing budgets of Labor MPs to pay for party memberships, and the whistleblowers are from their own party. Talk about mangy dogs circling a dying carcass. This is fraud at its worst. This is another example of the corrupt rorting that continues unabated by Labor MPs in the misuse of their electoral entitlements. Labor ministers have fallen by the wayside as the rorting and misuse of taxpayer dollar entitlements seeps into the DNA of the Labor Party,

aided and abetted by the Premier. What I want to know and what the taxpayer wants to know is: who are the rorters? Who are the branch stackers? Who are the factional warlords masquerading as MPs, and who are those in the red shirt brigade using the office of MPs as electorate officers? In essence they are just red army campaign workers.

The Andrews government has tried to intervene in the Ombudsman's investigation into this corruption but has failed, and thankfully so. This corruption and rorting will reach a crescendo as factions line up for Labor preselections, and the stinking, rotting sideshow will bare its corrupt soul for all of us to see.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I move, in an amended form by leave:

That this house —

- (1) notes the Andrews government's stated commitment to openness and transparency, in particular its stated commitment to provide full business cases for important government projects;
- (2) expresses disappointment that the Minister for Equality, Martin Foley, refused to provide the Pride Centre business case at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing held on Wednesday, 31 May 2017, despite a request for the business case to be provided;
- (3) in accordance with standing order 11.01, requires the Leader of the Government to table in the Council by 12 noon on Thursday, 21 September 2017 —
 - (a) a copy of the full business case prepared for the Pride Centre;
 - (b) copies of all agendas and minutes of meetings for any advisory committees, the minister, departmental officials or the Victorian commissioner for gender and sexuality that considered, examined or discussed the Pride Centre and any consultancies, advices or studies that were obtained for, or formed part of, any decision-making or discussion concerning the Pride Centre;

and any response should conform with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a).

This is an important motion, and I make the point from the start that the opposition supports the Pride Centre and sees it as an important signal to the community and also as a significant economic opportunity because it can add to tourism and it can add to the sense of pride and outcome for the LGBTI community. That is precisely why we are bringing this motion today. We see having the Pride Centre on a sound financial footing as an important outcome for the longer term. The

coalition traditionally likes to see things on a sound financial footing, and that is so in this case in particular.

I hasten to add that the state government has, as the first point of the motion makes clear, a longstanding — it says — 'commitment to openness and transparency' and to providing full business cases. I could cite many quotes.

Daniel Andrews said on 21 August 2013:

Let us run through a few ... deficiencies in this project. As I have said, there is no business case ... There is no business case other than a short form business case ... There is no business case ...

Tim Pallas, then shadow Treasurer, said in May 2014:

There is no business case and no justification ... nothing to progress its design.

He said there was no:

... process for public consultation, no possibility of construction starting in 2016 ...

Then he went on to talk about the need for business cases. Well, there is a need to have things on a sound financial footing. In this instance there is a business case, but because of the community involvement I think there is a very good argument for those large donor organisations to have full access to that business case and to see that business case and for the LGBTI community and the broader community to see the basis and the soundness of the business case, to see any strengths and weaknesses in it. I believe it is very much in the public interest that that business case is made public.

I will give one example. The Victorian AIDS Council is the largest of the organisations that will be assisting in this particularly important Pride Centre. It is an organisation that has over many years, through good, prudent financial management and particularly through its fundraising activities over decades, amassed a significant nest egg which puts it and a number of its activities on a very firm footing and which enables it to act independently from government in the interests of the broader community. Organisations of that type that are putting money into this centre have a legitimate right to see the details of the business case and actually understand that the money that is being put in through their hard work at a community level is secure and that it is getting the very best possible outcomes for the community. So it is from a positive position that I seek that business case to come into the public domain through this documents motion.

Point (2) in my motion makes the point that the Minister for Equality, Martin Foley, did refuse at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing to provide the business case. The Hansard transcript of that PAEC hearing on 31 May shows a series of questions put to Minister Foley by the opposition members and a refusal to provide an admission, first, that there is a business case — this is not something that is in doubt — and a flat refusal to provide that business case.

I note the involvement of Development Victoria in this project. Development Victoria will have looked at the financials of much of this and how a good financial and community outcome can be achieved. That material should also, pursuant to point 3(b) of my motion, be in the public domain. I believe the work of the advisory committees, Development Victoria and others around the Pride Centre ought to be in the public domain and we ought to see the viability of these points.

It is not my intention today to make a long contribution on this motion. I hasten to add that there has been some public comment, and I draw the attention of the chamber to an article by Rebecca Urban in the *Australian* of 9 August which pointed to concerns held by Transgender Victoria executive director Sally Goldner and comments she made about the ‘Victorian corporate gay and lesbian centre’, as she called it. Again it is important that all members of the LGBTI community are able to have confidence.

I note Jude Munro’s comments about some of the to and fro that has occurred on a number of these points, and I take them in good faith. But again transparency would be the best outcome here. The best outcome would be to have these financial matters, particularly that business case, in the public domain so that the large donations and the support that will come from community organisations can be tested against the financial process that is involved here.

I think it is a reasonable motion. It is in the public interest for these documents to be available. It is in the interests of the LGBTI community, in my view. It is in the interests of the Victorian taxpayer. I think a better and stronger Pride Centre will result from these documents being in the public domain, pursuant to this motion.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) — In responding to Mr Davis on behalf of the government in respect of his motion, I say that government members will not oppose his call for documents. It is a position that the Labor Party has taken, at least since I have been in this house: whether we are in government or in

opposition, we support calls for paperwork, but we do respect the view that whether or not we are in government, governments have the right to hold back some documents that are commercial in confidence or have cabinet privilege. That has been the consistent position of the Labor Party, no matter which side of the chamber it has occupied. But the inconsistency of the Liberal-National parties has been glaring in my time here. When Mr David Davis was the Leader of the Government in this house he denied this chamber hundreds and hundreds of documents. I think if there was a —

Mr Davis — Not a single document.

Mr LEANE — Mr Davis says that not a single document was withheld from this chamber. That is an amazing statement from Mr Davis. A number of us were here in the last term of government, and we saw that the rule for the previous coalition government was the 21-19 rule. There were 21 government MLCs out of 40, and that rule was applied in all aspects of transparency. I can remember instances when there were calls for documents around the east–west link business case and a 12-page glossy brochure was produced. If you did not count the covers and the full-page pictures of trams and other items that had nothing to do with a road tunnel, there was very little detail in what was described as a ‘short-form business case’.

There were also many, many occasions on which the previous coalition government refused to hand over paperwork to the chamber. The 21-19 rule meant that there were no consequences to that. If there had not been that rule and if the rule of thumb that has been used in this term of government had been applied at the time, Mr Davis, as the Leader of the Government, would have been suspended from this house at every sitting. He would never have been here if the rule that is being applied in this term of government had been applied in the previous term of government. He would have been kicked out of this chamber every week.

It is a bit rich for Mr Davis to give us a preamble around transparency with a call for documents. When he had the opportunity to hand over government documents, he basically did not.

Mr Gepp interjected.

Mr LEANE — Mr Gepp, his record was amazingly bad. His strike rate was awful. As I said, it is a bit rich for us to get a preamble from Mr Davis about transparency. This government has handed over more documents to both chambers than any other

government previously. We stand on our record. We have a proud record on transparency to this chamber and also to the people of Victoria.

Mr Davis's motion is calling for documents around the Andrews government's Pride Centre. I am very pleased — I am actually going to compliment Mr Davis after being quite uncomplimentary to start with — that Mr Davis made it clear that he personally supports this centre. I know Mr Davis has a track record around equality. As I said, I have been in this chamber for a long time and I have witnessed that. He has a track record around supporting equality and speaking against prejudice, so I will give him credit for that. I am also glad that Mr Matthew Guy himself on Joy FM in recent months provided his support for the Andrews government's Pride Centre. I am pleased that this is an opportunity for there to be bipartisan support, as indicated, for the establishment of the Pride Centre.

This centre will house advisory, health and supportive services and feature community spaces to provide a safe environment and to showcase LGBTI culture and history. Any way we can break down any form of prejudice against people for, as I see it, a part of their make-up as a human being, something they are born with, I think is a good thing. The centre will also serve as a hub for LGBTI groups and organisations. They will be able to share resources, share ideas and do further work in supporting equality, diversity and inclusion across the state. That is another great thing and something that we should all be supportive of, and I am glad that we are all supportive of it.

In March this year Minister Foley, the Minister for Equality, announced that the Victorian Pride Centre will be built in Fitzroy Street in St Kilda. The investment from the Andrews Labor government to develop the Pride Centre will be \$15 million, and also additional funds have been leveraged out. I want to acknowledge and show appreciation to the City of Port Phillip, which is contributing the land for the Pride Centre at 77 Fitzroy Street. That is a very generous contribution, as that land is valued at over \$12 million, and it shows that particular council's commitment to equality and to facilitating opportunities to advance pride in their community, in particular among young people in their community, to help break down prejudice and the effects that prejudice has on the mental health of those people.

Negotiations between the Victorian Pride Centre board and the Victorian AIDS Council on potential investment in the Pride Centre is well advanced, and obviously that is a fantastic thing. This being a central hub, the Victorian AIDS Council would be a very

important stakeholder in it, so we welcome those ongoing discussions. Hopefully they will come to fruition in the near future. The Pride Centre is going to be built with an aim to sustain itself — to meet its operation costs through revenue from sources including car parking, rent from retail tenants and the leasing of event spaces. I think that is a fantastic way to go forward, and I am sure they will be able to work in a way that will be self-sustaining.

The Victorian Pride Centre (VPC) Limited is an independent and not-for-profit company that has been established to develop and operate the Pride Centre in partnership with the two levels of government involved, those being the council and obviously the Andrews state government. The board will be chaired by Jude Munro and comprise a team of high-calibre directors who come with a wealth of knowledge and experience to bring this centre to fruition. The next steps will be to conduct site assessments, develop and finalise building designs and work with the local council on planning permits. In time the Pride Centre will have a virtual presence to ensure that everyone who may be isolated by distance or socially has a better chance to engage with the centre. Outreach in all centres that are developed in this area need to be established with, as I said, the opportunity for people who may not be able to physically be at the centre to access their services and advice online.

As I said, I think it is a really fantastic thing that we do have support across the chamber for this centre, and we should continue in that vein, I hope, well into the future. When these places are established there is always room for improvement, there is always room to increase services as times and attitudes change, and I hope that into the future there is support across the chamber for that. Mr Davis did touch on some consultation issues, as he sees them, but consultation with the LGBTI community has underpinned the development of the Pride Centre and will continue way into the future. The LGBTI community consultations included a community survey in February last year. A workshop was run in November last year by a number of consultants and with the VPC Limited board. The workshop involved over 50 organisations, so I think we accept the importance of consultation and we accept that the people who will be involved and have ownership of this centre are the linchpins of what is actually going to be developed there. Obviously consultation with the St Kilda community and local traders will occur as part of the planning process. I am sure the Pride Centre will be looked upon as a cornerstone for revitalising Fitzroy Street.

Getting back to some of the reasons why the Pride Centre is very important, LGBTI Australians are at risk of suffering from a range of mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, which can lead to suicide. The rate of suicide attempts for same-sex attracted Australians is up to 14 times higher than their heterosexual peers, which is a sad thing and something that needs to be highlighted. Work needs to be done in this area.

I am confident that the community will come on board with centres like the Pride Centre and that there will be a change of mindset in the world we live in which stresses that people are born with their sexuality in the same way they are born with their nose size or their foot size. That is what makes them human beings. We would all be outraged if there was discrimination against people with small noses and —

Mr Barber — Red hair.

Mr LEANE — Red hair; that is a good point. I was trying not to go there, Mr Barber, but as we are talking about pride, I am glad that you are proud of being a redhead — and so you should be, because we are all born with that; that is who we are. We are all born with different coloured hair, we are all born with different sized feet and we are all born with a certain sexuality. Therefore we should all be treated with respect. Currently there is a debate around the survey for same-sex marriage. I think same-sex marriage is going to happen.

Mr Gepp — It should happen.

Mr LEANE — And it should happen. For future generations it will mean nothing. When my niece married her girlfriend a couple of years ago, they had a ceremony in the backyard.

Mr Davis — Did she get a warning about the uncle?

Mr LEANE — None of that. Something I took away from that occasion was that one of my brother's sons, who was about 10 years old and was sitting in front of my brother and me, looked around at the end of the ceremony with a bit of a strange look on his face and said to his dad, 'Okay, do we get to eat now?'. I think that just shows that for the next generation this will mean nothing. It might be a big deal for some people now, but in generations to come up it will not mean anything. I hope places like the Pride Centre can play a small part in all of us getting to that point in the future. As I said, the government members of Parliament will not oppose Mr Davis's motion.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — The Greens will also not oppose the motion put forward by Mr Davis today. The motion starts out by asking that the house:

notes the Andrews government's stated commitment to openness and transparency, in particular its stated commitment to provide for business cases for important government projects.

I agree that the Andrews government has made a point of saying on many occasions that it is and it will continue to be open and transparent, though I do not know that that has necessarily been the case. There are a lot of documents that have been called for that have not been produced — for example, there is secrecy surrounding the West Gate tunnel. I could name a large number of projects for which there has not been full openness and transparency. The Greens always call for openness and transparency in any expenditure of taxpayers money.

Having said that, on this particular issue of the establishment of the Pride Centre, which the Greens fully support, I would say that the government has been reasonably open and transparent. It has engaged in a lot of consultation with LGBTIQ groups with regard to the location and functions of the Pride Centre. It has been open to the public about the fact that it is putting up \$15 million to help establish the Pride Centre and that it will then operate into the future without government funding. I think that is all fairly well known.

The second part of Mr Davis's motion expresses disappointment that the Minister for Equality, Martin Foley, refused to provide the Pride Centre business case at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing. I feel the minister could have provided that business case at the hearing. If he could not provide the business case at the actual time of the hearing, he certainly could have provided it to the committee at a later date.

The motion also calls for a copy of the business case prepared for the Pride Centre and copies of all agendas and minutes of meetings for any advisory committees that were part of the decision-making or discussions concerning the Pride Centre. The Greens will not oppose that. I am not sure that the level of detail that those documents would go into would shed a lot more light on what is already public or what will be in the business case. Nevertheless, we will not oppose the call for that detail.

As I mentioned, the Greens are very supportive of the establishment of a Victorian Pride Centre. This is something that has been called for by LGBTIQ organisations over a number of years, in particular in

the lead-up to the last state election when the Greens fully supported calls for the establishment of a facility or centre where different organisations could be co-located and could work together in.

It has been a longstanding Greens policy for such a centre to be established in Victoria or in Melbourne. One of the groups that I understand will be major tenants of the Victorian Pride Centre will be the Victorian AIDS Council. Mr Davis mentioned they will be the major tenant, and I think they are contributing up to \$10 million to the establishment of the Pride Centre. The major tenants will also include Switchboard, Joy FM, the Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Minus18, the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives and the Midsumma Festival. There are also 60 smaller organisations that are being consulted with regard to whether they would like to be involved in the Pride Centre to utilise space for such things as hot-desking, musical and arts practices, training, counselling and storage. There is also hope that the Pride Centre will include a cafe, a car park and a function space on the site and that these would be ways of cross-subsidising it, because it will need to be fully self-sustaining.

The Pride Centre will be relocated at 79–81 Fitzroy Street, which is the old Monroes restaurant. I know the site well. I have been to Monroes restaurant many times in the past, and it is a great site for the Pride Centre in the heart of St Kilda. Congratulations to the City of Port Phillip for donating the land. They have done that on the basis that it will be used by the Pride Centre for the next 20 years. It is a great place for the Pride Centre to be. Of course the annual gay and lesbian Pride March is held in St Kilda at the end of January or early February every year as part of the Midsumma Festival. At the moment the City of Port Phillip's council building on the corner of Brighton Road and Carlisle Street, St Kilda, is lit up in rainbow colours in support of the 'Yes' campaign. St Kilda in the City of Port Phillip is the natural home for the Pride Centre, and it is great to see it there.

The Greens will not oppose the motion for the call for documents for the business case, as we say all documents with regard to expenditure of public money should be available to the public.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — In conclusion, I thank the parties for their support for this motion. I do believe it is very positively in the public interest and the interests of the LGBTI communities that these documents, particularly the business case, be in the public domain. I simply do not understand why Minister Foley would not have agreed to have that made available to the major groups that Ms Pennicuik

has listed, which are major donors for this important centre. As was pointed out by Mr Leane, it is true that I have been a long-time supporter of the LGBTI community, and I take this chance to put on record in this chamber again my support for marriage equality.

I note some other comments made by Mr Leane about document provision in the previous government. I make the point very clearly here that we at no point refused documents — documents were provided in many cases, including more than were provided by the previous Labor government. It is important to also put on record that where documents were not provided the Council was respectfully brought into the government's confidence and the fact that on a number of occasions we asked the Council not to insist on the provision of documents. On each and every occasion where we did not provide documents we provided an explanation and indicated that we believed that it was not in the public interest and respectfully asked the Council not to insist. On no occasion did the Council seek to insist on the provision of those documents. That is the respectful way in which governments should behave with the Council and the provision of documents, and I would contrast that with the approach of the current government.

But in terms of this motion, which is the matter for today, this is an important motion. It is a motion that will see a better outcome for the community and importantly put the Pride Centre on the strongest financial footing into the long-term.

Motion agreed to.

GAME MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 August; motion of Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria).

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Hunting is an important cultural and recreational pursuit that contributes significantly to the Victorian economy, and particularly to rural and regional communities. While we respect the fact that many people in the Victorian community have deeply held and divergent views about some forms of hunting, our government believes that hunting in Victoria should remain a safe, responsible and sustainable recreation.

Game hunting delivers significant social benefits and offers the community a valuable opportunity to engage in outdoor activities with friends and family. Hunting

continues to grow in popularity too and does make a significant contribution to the state's economy. Since 2001 the total number of game hunters has increased by around 70 per cent, from 29 500 to now over 50 000. Of the 50 000 hunters now registered, almost 35 000 are licensed to hunt deer, 25 000 can hunt ducks and 28 000 can hunt quail. Many of the state's hunters do come from country Victoria, with three Gippsland postcodes topping the list of most licences held — Traralgon, Bairnsdale and Moe — followed by Werribee and Wodonga.

In 2013 the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries commissioned research by RMCg, EconSearch and DBM Consultants into the economic value of hunting. The total expenditure for hunting game animals was estimated to be \$282 million, and when pest hunting by game licence holders was included the estimate was \$417 million. Forty-two per cent of this was for off-trip expenditure items and 58 per cent was for on-trip expenditure items. Forty per cent of this expenditure occurred in metropolitan local government areas and 60 per cent in regional Victoria.

The direct gross state product impact of game hunting by game licence holders in 2013, including the game animal groups of deer, duck and quail, was estimated to be \$118 million with flow-on effects of \$177 million, giving a total contribution to gross state product of \$295 million. There are an estimated 1115 full-time equivalent jobs generated directly by hunting-related expenditure, with a further 1268 jobs stemming from flow-on employment. When pest hunting by game licence holders is included, the figure for the total economic impact of all hunting efforts by licence-holders rises to \$439 million.

Hunting activity is concentrated in certain areas, with the highest concentration of hunting being around Mansfield, where hunting accounts for 2.5 per cent of the local government area's economy. Hunting is also economically significant in Murrindindi and Gannawarra. Ensuring that hunting continues to be a safe and sustainable recreation for future generations is a key focus for our government. In Victoria, with our deer, quail, duck, pheasant and partridge populations, we are considered to have fine hunting opportunities. We understand the importance of education, awareness, communication and compliance, and that is what our government has been focusing on since we were elected.

In the 2016–17 budget \$5.33 million was set aside to deliver the *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan* (SHAP). The plan is supporting government agencies to work with hunters to improve the promotion of responsible

hunting, provide better hunting opportunities and ensure our game species do remain sustainable. The Australian Deer Association has been supported to coordinate its members participating in controlled culls of invasive deer species on public land and some private land. Funding has also been provided to the Firearm Safety Foundation (Victoria). The foundation educates gun owners and shooters about responsible and safe storage, handling and usage of firearms. This four-year plan sets out a multimillion-dollar investment to support Victoria's 50 000-plus game hunters.

The plan marked a significant milestone for game hunting in Victoria. It is the first time that such a plan has had funding allocated by government. This is in contrast to the initiatives of the former government. Our plan is funded, and our plan is now being delivered. We are providing quarterly updates to hunters through online channels of progress on the items that are outlined in the *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan*. They are practical objectives, and they are being delivered by my department, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and Parks Victoria as well as the Game Management Authority (GMA). Hunting opportunities are available on both public and private land, which is why the coordination and proper operation of these agencies is so important.

The changes proposed in Mr Young's bill seek to immediately expand the GMA's current objectives and functions. The bill seeks to add five new objectives in order to expand the GMA's current objectives. They are to optimise the social, cultural and economic benefits of game hunting, support the development of recreational game hunting, support the development of commercial game hunting, work cooperatively with game hunting bodies and exercise its powers in any manner it considers best achieves its objectives.

These objectives in many respects reflect the arrangements that the government has put in place in establishing the new Victorian Fisheries Authority, and they are also consistent with the objectives of the government's *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan*. The SHAP's objectives are to promote responsible hunting, grow hunting's benefits, improve hunting opportunities and ensure sustainable hunting. Sections 5 and 6 of the Game Management Authority Act 2014 already provide the GMA with a broad objective and function to promote sustainability and responsibility in game hunting in Victoria.

The bill would expand the existing function relating to the promotion of sustainable and responsible hunting to specifically reference recreational and commercial activities. While the government understands the intent

of mirroring the Victorian Fisheries Authority, which was established by our government this year, we believe that the investigation of and support for potential commercial game hunting opportunities would be best achieved through the current and future work of my department's game policy unit.

Mr Young's bill also proposes the addition of four functions similar to those in the Victorian Fisheries Authority Act 2016 to the GMA, including to educate game hunters and the public about rights and obligations in relation to game hunting; to monitor investigate, enforce and promote compliance with the GMA act; to provide advice to the secretary on the development of game-related strategic policy or legislation; and to administer grants approved by the minister in relation to game and game hunting.

The GMA already actively promotes sustainable and responsible game hunting. These amendments seek to permit the GMA to support the further development of game hunting and its flow-on benefits in addition to its regulatory functions, including licensing, compliance and enforcement. At present the GMA is fundamentally a regulator. While Mr Young argues that the suggested amendments are consistent with other similar authorities, like the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), it is important to recognise the difference in that the VFA has been established with a size and scale that is considerably greater than the GMA.

The GMA is not currently equipped to deliver on the additional objectives and functions proposed by Mr Young. Allowing the GMA to plan and adjust in the event that the Parliament agrees to any new responsibilities would be important to its ongoing success as a regulator and as a government entity. It is important to recognise the additional costs associated with the bill, and I do make the point that these are not fully understood, nor is funding for these additional functions secured.

The government also has some concerns about the commencement date that is proposed in the bill. At present I do not believe that the government, the GMA board or the staff at the GMA have the time that is required to ensure the appropriate governance and resourcing arrangements are in place to support the changes that Mr Young proposes in relation to the organisation's objectives and functions. These, I think, are things that we would certainly want to understand more fully before making a final decision on this bill.

So, if I could conclude, the government is not today in a position where it can support this bill in its current form. But what I would indicate to members and to Mr Young is that, should the bill be successful in its

passage in this place, the government would reserve its final position on these matters for any prospective debate in the other place.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to stand and make a contribution on the Game Management Authority Amendment Bill 2017. This, as has been outlined, is a private members bill proposed by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and in particular Daniel Young. It seeks to amend the Game Management Authority Act 2014 in order to match the objectives and functions of that act with the objectives and functions of the recently established Victorian Fisheries Authority.

The bill creates four new objectives: optimising social, cultural and economic benefits of game hunting; supporting recreational game hunting; supporting the development of commercial game hunting; and working cooperatively with game hunting bodies in territories and the commonwealth. These are consistent, as is outlined, with objectives of the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

It also seeks to amend the functions of the Game Management Authority, inserting a new function to inform and educate game hunters and the public about the rights and obligations in relation to game hunting. It seeks to simplify the functions of the authority in relation to compliance. The bill will also create new functions for the Game Management Authority in providing advice to the minister or secretary assisting in the development of strategic policy or legislation, particularly in relation to game management in Victoria. It administers grants approved by the minister in relation to game and game hunting. As I have said, it is consistent with the fisheries equivalent body; there has been reasonable feedback on this.

The coalition will not oppose this bill and notes that this is brought in a constructive mode by Mr Young to the chamber. I note that Field and Game Australia has welcomed the amendments. The Liberals and The Nationals as a coalition have a strong position supporting lawful and responsible hunting in Victoria. We believe the role of hunting is significant in key pest management. It is curious that we had a deer come into the middle of the Melbourne suburbs recently. Whilst that is an anecdote, it points very directly to the huge numbers of these creatures that are present in parts of our state. There is obviously a significant tradition, as well as social opportunities, associated with hunting, and we recognise particularly the economic contribution that hunting makes to our state.

In government, between 2010 and 2014, we took a series of steps. We created the Game Management Authority in 2013, and that move was broadly and resoundingly welcomed by the hunting community after many decades of neglect by the previous Bracks and Brumby governments over 11 years. We commissioned an independent report on the economic impact of hunting in Victoria in 2013, which confirmed the massive contribution that hunting makes to communities across Victoria: \$439 million in 2013.

I notice some of the figures that the minister put on the record, and I welcome those figures. That economic impact of hunting in Victoria report showed that about 3500 full-time jobs come either directly or indirectly from hunting. That study found that there are 46 000 game licence-holders, 51 per cent of whom live in Melbourne or the wider Port Philip region. The contributions to local economies throughout country Victoria are significant not only through hunting, but camping, purchase of equipment, vehicles, fuel, accommodation and other expenditure related to these legitimate pursuits.

Much of the spending does occur in Melbourne, but the *Estimating the Economic Impact of Hunting in Victoria in 2013* report showed that about 60 per cent of spending occurs in regional Victoria. Outside of Melbourne the report highlighted the wider Gippsland region as receiving the next highest expenditure — \$76 million in 2013, driven mostly by the hunting of deer and other pest animals.

As I have said, this is a bill that the coalition will not oppose. As I say, we have a very proud record on supporting legitimate hunting, and I compliment the previous Minister for Agriculture, Peter Walsh, on his foresight in the commissioning of the *Estimating the Economic Impact of Hunting in Victoria in 2013* report. The coalition was determined to lead in this area but welcomes further contributions on this matter. As I said, we will not oppose this bill.

I also note the clean bill of health, as it were, that was given to the Game Management Authority Amendment Bill by the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee. As I said, we will not oppose his bill. We put on record our very strong support for those sporting people and the significant economic impact of hunting on the Victorian community, noting the opportunities to expand tourism and to support regional communities in particular.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — The Greens will oppose this bill for the same reasons that we opposed the original legislation that created the

Game Management Authority under that coalition government referred to. Our problem with this approach in creating a standalone Game Management Authority is that it inevitably becomes both a regulator of activities that definitely need regulating — as we learned most notoriously in New South Wales — and at the same time a promoter of those same activities and finds it almost impossible to be both a regulator and a promoter or, if you like, to be both poacher and gamekeeper. No pun intended, but I just thought —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BARBER — The pun was intended, but I just thought I would get a smile out of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party if I used it.

Mr Young interjected.

Mr BARBER — He has used it before, so I am way behind.

This is a most serious issue because when this approach was tried in New South Wales the regulatory body very quickly found itself in ignominy — in fact in illegality — and virtually, if it was not referred into the realms of corruption, with those directly responsible, including board members, having to actually resign their positions. From what we have learned so far, the same sorts of problems have already arisen with Victoria's Game Management Authority, created by the coalition, given a nudge along by the Labor Party and now openly being converted into a promotional body by this amendment from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. They seek to change the objectives to say 'Support the development of recreational game hunting' and 'Support the development of commercial game hunting'. That, of course, means to promote those things and promote their expansion.

I will just go a little bit back in the history of so-called game management or what you might call public land hunting in Victoria. Duck shooting is notoriously unpopular across all electorates, city and country. Those who oppose it vastly outnumber those who participate in it. Time after time after time, as recently of course as last duck season, we see massive illegality, never mind cruelty, operating out there on the wetlands on open day and really in the glare of the media, which very quickly uncovers the sorts of illegal and cruel hunting practices that are going on. It does not seem to matter how much controversy this industry attracts; the people in it are completely incapable of cleaning up their own act internally. And of course the regulator — well, where was it?

Interesting statistics have been coming out on deer populations and deer hunting levels just recently. We see more and more and more anecdotal information about deer populations absolutely exploding. How did we get ourselves into that situation? For many, many years from the 1970s through to relatively recently the laws and the policies that were in place were designed to in fact promote and increase the hunting opportunities for deer — that is, by neglect or in some cases by actual restriction on hunting numbers and hunting methods to actually increase deer populations until they got to the point of being in absolutely explosive numbers. Those were the settings that hunters got to decide for decades, and now that our public land — even our private land and even our suburbs — is completely overrun with this feral species they are ready to change tack. Now they are ready to let more hunting. In fact they are following the deer numbers and looking for more and more and more access to increased areas, ultimately national parks. Just like in New South Wales they want to do a giant land grab and turn public land areas into effectively private hunting reserves.

I do not want to have to put on a yellow jumpsuit every time I go bushwalking in the Victorian Alps because there are hunters and bullets flying in every direction. This mob here in Victoria are much smarter than those in New South Wales, where they went for the big lunge for power, got control over massive areas of public land and then suddenly found themselves incapable of even regulating themselves — and the whole thing got scrapped. At the very time we were seeing that experience and learning those lessons, the National Party was trying to set up the same set of arrangements here in Victoria, with the Labor Party of course following it.

This mob are a lot smarter. They are doing it piecemeal; they are doing it bit by bit. First they want to get hold of those areas that are just simply listed as game reserves and generally used for duck shooting for a small part of the year. They want them to become their own private game hunting reserves 24/7.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr BARBER — Ask the neighbours of those reserves if they want bullets flying all days of the year or if they want to hear lead landing on their corrugated iron roofs and running down the gutters. When the full plan for the takeover of public land by hunters is exposed of course there will be a backlash, but at the moment they are just edging it in bit by bit. This bill itself is an example of that — simply taking another small baby step towards the regulator in fact becoming

the promoter. For that reason we will be opposing the bill.

We have a major problem with deer on public land. Their impact on ecosystems is approximately similar to that of a giant feral goat. They selectively target certain plant species and eat those out, they chop up the ground, they are getting into suburbs, they are causing traffic accidents — those deer are well and truly around the fringes of country towns and in suburbs now. What is the solution to that? Are we going to have the shooters out there blasting away in Ringwood all night, every night? No.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BARBER — It is clear that amateur hunters are completely not up to the task of getting rid of this major feral animal problem that they, through their lobbying, in fact created. If we are to actually get this problem back down to even the levels we have seen in past decades, we are going to need a highly organised, highly professionalised, well-funded and well-paid workforce who can do this as professionals. That is where these minor programs of amateur hunters in a park here and there have really produced very little, and there is nothing they can say. They are not coming forward with a suggestion that they can somehow mobilise enough hunters to reduce these populations. In fact the evidence that we have right in front of us is that they have been completely incapable of that. This is simply a political ploy to get access to more and more public land for the benefit of hunters. Inevitably, because of this risk of bullets flying around in places where families and individuals might be trying to enjoy peaceful communion with nature, that policy is simply not going to work, and the Greens are going to call it out.

I think that is enough. We are not proposing to take this bill into committee. I think we know what Mr Young is already going to say about it, but I will be very interested to see how the Labor Party comports itself in relation to this bill or, for that matter, if the bill might actually happen to pass the upper house, what the government does with it in the lower house.

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) — I would just like to make a few remarks and express my gratitude for the support of some members of the house on this bill. It has been quite a work in progress to get to this stage, and I would just like to thank all of the people from my team — all my staff and my colleagues who have been a part of that and who have been supportive of what we are doing in the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party along the way. Indeed I thank the

constituents we are doing this for — the hunters, their families and anyone who enjoys the outdoors — and the stakeholder organisations that have been part of it. I express my gratitude for the support from the likes of Field and Game Australia, the Australian Deer Association and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia.

It is great to hear summaries such as those that the minister, Ms Pulford, put forward on the statistics of what hunting is to this state. It is quite unreal when you hear some of those numbers: how many hunters there are, the increasing number of hunters and the financial contribution that hunting makes to the state, mostly in regional areas. I cannot express how important it is that the distribution of those funds is very much anchored in regional areas, and certain areas take great benefit from that. The number of jobs created from that expenditure is quite significant. There are thousands upon thousands of jobs created from the hunting industry. It is great to see so many people involved with it, because it is something that has gone out of fashion over the last period. It used to be a part of everyday life that people hunted. Just about everyone in here would have had a grandfather who at some stage had a shotgun in the house, and it was something that everyone accepted.

That trend changed and people gave it away, and now it is coming back in a really strong way as a recreational activity — and a great recreational activity at that, one that gets you outside and promotes healthy exercise, a connection with nature and the opportunity to do some good work in conservation. That really is the other factor that needs to be talked about in relation to hunters. Yes, we do a lot of work in rural pest management — in removing pests from the wild places in Victoria — but also there are activities that hunters do outside of actually hunting, and that goes all the way from restoration of wetlands to clearing tracks and places in the High Country in order to allow access for fire services and the like. So it really is a wide contribution that hunters make to regional Victoria, and it is great to see the number of hunters increasing as a result of that and more people being exposed to hunting.

To the issue of this bill: it has been raised that an organisation such as this cannot be a regulator and a promoter. The purpose of this bill is not to change the functions and objectives of the organisation; it is to expand them. It is to ensure that this body is both the regulator and, in a way, a promoter. We are not taking away any of the regulation aspects of the authority; in fact we would like to see them strengthened. I put most of the issues with regulation down to a lack of funding, a lack of resourcing and a lack of ability for this

authority to actually do real things that make an impact on the regulation of hunting. What we want to see is a recognition of the expanding recreational activity, and the government should be on board with the organisation administering that — having a large part in the expansion of hunting activities — given that that is the attitude they took towards fishing.

Recreational fishing to us is — I have made this point before and I will continue to make it until it sinks in — the same as hunting. You just use a different tool. You are harvesting a wild animal. The government seems to think the way in which an organisation can be structured is appropriate for fishing, yet it will not put its full support behind the same being done for hunting.

Mr Barber raised some issues with expanding hunting into other places on the back of safety concerns. I would just like to say that safety concerns are something that is constantly raised in relation to the hunting sports and all shooting sports. Safety concerns are constantly being brought up. Often it is because incidents have happened, but these concerns are very quickly dismissed in most cases. It is actually one of the safest recreational activities you can do. You are more likely to be injured playing football than you ever are out hunting, and there have been so few instances of accidents that have happened that they are statistically insignificant.

Safety concerns are something we do take seriously. Victoria Police are always involved in auditing what happens with hunting and the expansion of hunting into new areas, particularly with hunting clubs and sporting shooting. So it is something that is taken very seriously and something that is addressed all the time, and I reiterate that it is actually one of the safest sports you can partake in.

It is widely recognised that deer are a problem. It is safe to say that no-one is denying that. Recently we had an inquiry into pest management and the use of hunters, and the focus of that inquiry, not deliberately, turned to deer just as a result of the overwhelming amount of evidence presented to it having a relation to the problem of deer. The statistics on the deer harvest and the number of deer around are quite astounding, and Mr Barber pointed out some of the increases in those numbers over recent times.

Mr Barber — An explosion.

Mr YOUNG — It is an explosion of population, and you have to really drill down to the reasons behind this. There are certain explosions of populations in areas where you cannot hunt. There are things you can

do to use hunters to address the problem of the rising population of deer, but we are just not doing them. It is very widely known that areas in which you can hunt contain less deer than areas where you cannot, when you get up into the High Country of Victoria. So there are things we can do to put hunters out into the field to have an impact on pest management.

Mr Barber raised the point that we would be unable to mobilise enough hunters to have an impact. If you look at the figures of how many people are out hunting and how many deer are being taken, it would be financially impossible to mobilise enough professional hunters to have the same impact as hunters already do have for free, so it is just not something that is achievable in the short-term. It may be in the future but it is not now, so we may as well be using the resource that we have — that is, recreational hunters who are willing to get out and do the job that we cannot afford to do otherwise.

Finally, I would just like to say thank you to everyone who has worked on this bill. It has been a great opportunity for me to be here, and I am enjoying being able to get around and speak to so many people about what we can do to improve the administration of hunting in this state. There are some very funny characters around who have vast and great ideas about what we should do, and this is definitely the first step towards that. So the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will not stop. Even if this bill is unsuccessful, we will continue to advocate for hunters. We will continue to make things better. We will continue to put legislative pressure on this place in order to provide a better outcome for the hunters of Victoria.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 18

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

Noes, 16

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

Pairs

Atkinson, Mr	Eideh, Mr
Ondarchie, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Peulich, Mrs	Shing, Ms

Motion agreed to.

Read second time; by leave, proceeded to third reading.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

STONNINGTON POLICE RESOURCES

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house notes —

- (1) the most recent data released by the Crime Statistics Agency Victoria on 15 June 2017 that shows crimes across Victoria are up 18.17 per cent;
- (2) crime in the Stonnington City Council area has risen 22.4 per cent since the Andrews Labor government came to office;
- (3) the crime wave engulfing Victoria is putting at risk Melbourne's reputation as the world's most livable city;
- (4) the concern of the community about the Andrews Labor government's failure to control law and order in Victoria;

and calls on Premier Daniel Andrews and the state Labor government to make community safety their number one priority to get the crime wave under control.

This follows my motion on Stonnington on an earlier general business day, and that was:

That, given the 22.4 per cent increase in crime in the City of Stonnington under the Andrews Labor government, the general disorder, attacks and threats to residents and traders in particular in Chapel Street, Greville Street and Toorak Road and the lack of local police resources, this house calls upon the Andrews Labor government in consultation with Victoria Police to —

- (1) act to immediately increase available police resources at the Prahran police station, including the provision of an additional available police car;
- (2) commit to the provision of expanded CCTV capacity in Chapel Street, Greville Street and Toorak Road;
- (3) immediately reopen the police cells at the Prahran police station closed by the current government in June 2015;
- (4) commit to a local policing policy where additional police are available on the beat in Chapel Street, Greville

Street and Commercial and Toorak roads and in the surrounding residential streets;

and calls upon the Minister for Corrections, as the minister representing the Minister for Police, to report to the house in detail on the government's response to this motion within 60 days of its passage.

I will précis what I said in my earlier contribution and make a few additional points and then conclude, allowing others to speak.

Stonnington is not alone in the increase in crime that has occurred under the Andrews Labor government. The increase is 22.4 per cent.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Mr DAVIS — As Ms Crozier said, it is indeed out of control in this important part of Melbourne that we represent.

The community have come to me and other representatives in the area making very clear points in written statements and verbally at public meetings across a wide variety of fronts. It is very clear that there is inadequate police resourcing. I heard at a meeting hosted by the traders group on Toorak Road that there are insufficient resources. The police were quite clear on this. They talked at length about the carjackings, which are new crimes, and they gave advice about CCTV, which traders and others should put into operation. I have since raised that matter with the council because there will need to be some coordination of that, but I primarily believe it is a state government responsibility to ensure that CCTV is available in adequate quantity. I think you could detect the frustration of the police at the meeting. Police want as much CCTV as possible, because it does deter some crime on the one hand and it does help solve crime on the other hand.

It is equally true that the tone of crime has worsened as the quantity has increased. Reported crime is up 22.4 per cent, as I said, in the City of Stonnington, but it is very clear that the threatening and violent nature of some of the crime has actually qualitatively changed in the last two and a half years. We have discussed in this chamber — and I made a number of points earlier about this — the government's weakening of bail laws, the inadequacy of their response on parole and their failure to respond properly to the Apex gang and to put the additional resources that are needed into policing. It is clear that the government has begun to act on police, but this has taken some time, and now there have obviously been youth justice issues, a number of which Ms Crozier has very strongly prosecuted and held the government to account on.

Mr O'Donohue has taken significant steps to have a number of aspects of the Crimes Act 1958 strengthened, bringing forward penalties, for example, for ramming police vehicles and other key measures of that nature. So there is a functional side to this and a response that can occur, but there is also importantly a very human side. Tony Fialides and other traders along Toorak Road have faced the onslaught of multiple robberies and a violent, thuggish approach that is just extreme and way beyond the pale. They are not alone; a number of others that I have spoken to have faced these very significant threats as well. The government has been too slow to move, and that is why I am bringing this motion on behalf of my community and the community in the City of Stonnington in this case.

It is interesting that in the last few days there have been further cases come to the fore. A young woman, Jodi, rang in to 3AW. The interviewer said, 'Jodi, what's the word on the street?'. Jodi said she was feeling a little shaken. She said about 15 minutes earlier on tram 78 on Chapel Street she witnessed two drug-affected people screaming at each other. One man spat at the other. She said:

The tram was full of schoolkids; it was really, really tense. I'm quite heavily pregnant ... It was just awful.

She said she had lived in the area for 12 years and had never experienced anything like it, 'so brazen, in broad daylight'. She did not understand and was very much overwhelmed by it. The interviewer asked if there were two groups of thugs affected by drugs. She said one drug-affected man was on the tram, and then a young man and woman got on the tram 'yelling at each other'. A young boy looked at her for guidance as to what to do. She looked back to him with reassurance that this would be over soon and it would all be okay. The tram moved two or three stops and the man and woman got off. The man then bashed the doors wildly. The tram driver got up and asked if all passengers were okay.

This is also about the work environment for staff on public transport and the safety of kids in Chapel Street who are going home from school in daylight hours on the route 78 tram, heading towards Richmond from St Kilda. She said:

I have caught that route I can't even tell you how many times. I don't actually drive so I tram everywhere around Melbourne.

She said that out of all her experiences on trams this is probably the worst she has ever experienced. She called 3AW straightaway. By that time she had got off the tram to catch her breath but needed to get back on

another tram to get home. She said, 'Hopefully it won't happen again'. Jodi said:

In that moment I was thinking maybe there needs to be security or something.

The interviewer said protective services officers are required and expressed the hope that her next trip will not be like this one. I only bring this up because it is a very poignant and current case study of the effect that people are experiencing. This is true along Toorak Road. It is true along Chapel Street. It is true along Greville Street. A number of the people that I have spoken to in Greville Street have faced extraordinary threats, and extraordinary violence has occurred. There are antisocial activities of a significant kind and there is an increase in robberies.

The police gave advice to the traders — not just to the traders but to those who were a number of streets back from the main roads — that you need to be very careful about locking up the back of your property. You need to make sure that people cannot get around behind your property, because they will smash their way in in home invasions, and this is part of what we are actually facing. This is what the police were saying to traders, and it is certainly the experience of so many people.

I know some wish to dismiss this. Some say that it can all be treated easily and we should all just take it very easy and go forward. I say that they are not the victims. They are not the people who have been hurt, they are not the people who have been threatened and they are not the people who are afraid. In this motion I bring forward the requirement for CCTV coverage. As I said, I have spoken to the council and it has raised this matter in its request to the government for additional CCTV coverage. I have also asked for additional police resources, and that is why I have brought these matters together in the motion.

In June 2015 the current government closed the Prahran police station cells, and I have the FOI request that lays out the steps there. I am not impressed by this particular approach. I note that in that period in 2015 the decision was made by the police to close that station, and it is clear there was not sufficient support for it to stay open from higher up. In relation to the urgent building works, I say get on and reopen these cells. They actually provide an important additional local facility. They mean that police are not taken out of the local area. The capacity is there to manage this. Let us be quite clear. These are not some Dickensian cells. This police complex at Prahran was opened in 1978 so it is actually relatively modern. I have seen those cells. Mr O'Donohue was with me at the time that we saw them, and it is very clear that those cells are not things

that should be closed. They should be available to police.

As of 15:35 hours on 24 June 2015 the cell complex at Prahran is closed until further notice due to ventilation issues —

that is 24 June 2015. On 26 June 2015:

Further to the previous message, the cell complex at Prahran will be closed indefinitely pending the carrying out of urgent building works.

I say, two and bit years is long enough for urgent building works and it is time to reopen the cells. At this stage it goes on to say that the date of reopening is not known.

A further message will be broadcast when further information is received.

There was an examination done and it was concluded that the cells were cold, and that is a key reason why they were closed. I say that people are put in the cells for good reason. They talked about hypothermia, but this issue had not arisen previously. It seems to me that there is every capacity for those cells to be reopened and to strengthen the local policing effort. The government should get on and do it. With the crime wave that is occurring in the Stonnington area there is no excuse for the cells to remain closed as the government appears determined to do.

I have also called for the government to commit to a local policing policy whereby additional police are available on the beat in Chapel Street, Greville Street, Commercial Road, Toorak Road and in the surrounding residential streets. I have spoken to many traders and local people who have not had a quick police response. Overwhelmingly the police do the very best they can, and I have the highest regard for them. But they do not have the resources. It is clear that there are only two cars in the north of Stonnington, one on the Malvern side and one on the western side, and that is insufficient. If one of those is out on another job, there is insufficient capacity to respond. Person after person after person, trader after trader after trader have made it clear that those additional resources are required.

It is for those reasons — for the safety of the community — that I have brought forward this motion. I urge members in the chamber, including those who represent the area, to support this motion. It is a constructive way forward. It sends some clear signals to the government and indeed points to the need for the government to work in consultation with Victoria Police. It sends a clear signal about what is expected in our community and the additional resources that are

required, the additional steps that need to be taken: reopen the cells; more CCTV; additional resources in the form of a car; additional local policing policy; and a report by the Minister for Corrections to this chamber in 60 days as to how the government has implemented these requests from the chamber.

This is legitimate. The fact is that crime is rising and the tone, shape and nature of that crime is changing very, very much for the worse under this government. A stand needs to be made. Enough is enough, and this motion makes it clear that in the City of Stonnington there should be a very strong response.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

ABSENCE OF MINISTER

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I inform the house that Minister Tierney is unwell today and that I will happily answer any questions that are directed to her during the course of question time.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Motorcyclist safety

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — My question is to Minister Pulford representing the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Country Victoria is becoming the killing field for motorbike riders. We see increasing reports of accidents involving motorbikes on roads in my region. The chance of being killed while riding a motorbike is 18 times greater than while driving a car. Thanks to a lack of repairs by VicRoads, our country roads are a maze of potholes and a deathtrap for motorists and motorbike riders. I note many measures to make motorbike riding safer have been taken in other states and overseas, including making it compulsory to always have headlights on, which it is in Europe but not in Australia; better road conditions; mandatory training on the open road; making it compulsory to wear protective clothing such as gloves and jackets but not jeans and jumpers; and a review of open-faced helmets. My question is: does the minister have a plan to save the lives of motorbike riders by introducing any of these measures or at least by improving the conditions of our country roads?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Purcell for his question and his interest in the minister's plans for making our roads safer, particularly in relation to motorcyclists. I will provide Minister Donnellan with Mr Purcell's question and seek a written response.

Right to farm

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — My question today is to the Minister for Agriculture. A recent media article discussed peri-urban right-to-farm issues and the lack of a cohesive response to these problems. As Melbourne grows, more and more land that was previously rural is being turned into peri-urban areas, which brings with it tree changers and the inevitable complaints about farming activities that were occurring long before the tree-changer types moved in. With Melbourne's food bowl being largely located in these areas it is a cause for concern, as a slip-up could lead to the dire consequences of a reduced availability of food and increased prices. My question is: what plans are in place to develop a cohesive plan to deal with the right to farm and general farming issues in the peri-urban areas?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Bourman for his question and his interest in the interface between different land uses, in particular the need to ensure that we have ongoing food security, plus of course the significant opportunities that exist for producers in being able to provide food not only to a local population but to the world.

Members may recall that a little over 12 months ago we went through a period of some really intense and unpleasant disputes. There was a great deal of activity through the courts and a great deal of upset and expense caused for communities that were wanting to fight different types of agricultural activity on the land. There were similar challenges facing producers who were producing as they always had or trying to adapt their production methods to improve their businesses' profitability and productivity, and these things were coming into conflict in a really awful sort of way. Members will recall the dispute around the Happy Valley piggery and I am sure members will recall the matter of David Blackmore's farm, as they certainly received a lot of attention and a lot of publicity at the time.

The Minister for Planning and I at that point established an advisory panel to look into this question in detail for us. We made public some months ago now the findings of that report. It is, I think, a very helpful guide for us in terms of how to simplify and streamline planning processes in areas that are zoned for farming, and we have been working really hard to implement the recommendations of that report. What I can indicate to Mr Bourman is that in the next couple of weeks we will be putting the results of that work out for public consultation, so Mr Bourman will very soon be able to see what it is that we are proposing.

There has been extensive consultation with industry groups, with community organisations and with local councils that have an interest in these issues in the peri-urban areas — not just the peri-urban areas around Melbourne’s perimeter but those around the perimeters of some of our other larger regional centres. Striking a balance in this area is really difficult, but I think we have found a way, aided by the work of that advisory panel, that will make things much simpler for producers and much clearer for communities that might have a concern about the impact of agricultural activity on amenity in residential areas.

Mr Bourman — The minister has actually more or less answered my supplementary question and I will have to wait two weeks to find out, so I have no supplementary question.

Taxi and hire car industry

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — My question is also to Minister Pulford representing the Minister for Public Transport — and this has not been a conspiracy with the crossbench, Minister. I understand that the Victorian government’s now uncapped Fairness Fund was established to provide targeted support to taxi and hire car licence holders who needed it most. However, there is a growing concern that some Victorians who may have been eligible have missed out. For a number of licence-holders, applying for the Fairness Fund was an extremely complex task due to factors of disadvantage such as poor mental health and low levels of literacy. Access to application assistance was limited. For example, WESTjustice was flooded with over 1000 phone calls yet only had the capacity to meaningfully assist around 150 people. All of these factors and the absence of an appeals process have left some licence-holders in a very desperate situation. My question is simply: how is the government supporting taxi and hire car licence holders who may have been eligible for the Fairness Fund but due to these factors of disadvantage and lack of available support were unable to meaningfully access it?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her question. Members in this place had been involved in extensive debates and consideration of the legislation that established the revenue for the government in terms of being able to then enable funds to flow, compensation to flow, through the Fairness Fund. We are certainly very keen to make sure that people for whom that has been established are able to access it. In terms of the details, it is not my portfolio. I am not familiar with that, but I thank you very much for bringing that to my attention. I

will seek a formal response from Minister Allan for you.

Supplementary question

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer and for her willingness to provide some clarity around this. In addition to providing that clarity, I wonder if the government will consider extending or reopening the application period to allow for those who require application assistance to receive the meaningful support they need and deserve.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will also seek a formal response from Minister Allan to this question on this very important matter.

West Gate tunnel project

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My question is also to Minister Pulford on behalf of Mr Donnellan, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. My question today is for Minister Donnellan. During the campaign against the east–west link the ALP argued that the then government should release the business case for the project. Now the government is doing the same thing and refusing to release the Allard report, which deals with traffic modelling into the West Gate tunnel, to the West Gate tunnel inquiry and advisory committee. My question for the minister is: how can you expect the committee to do their job without all of the information?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am feeling sort of popular and sort of not, because I am getting all the question but most of them are not for me! I will, as I offered for Mr Purcell and for Dr Carling-Jenkins, also seek a response from the responsible minister.

Supplementary question

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — Minister, why was the government prepared to release the Allard report into the metro rail project but not into the West Gate tunnel project?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will also seek a response from Mr Donnellan for Ms Hartland.

Electorate office budgets

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — You will be very pleased to know that my question is to the Leader of the Government. Minister, the report in

the *Herald Sun* today details allegations of state Labor MPs fraudulently producing invoices for printing they have not had done in order to siphon off taxpayers money to be used for party-political purposes. What do you know about these allegations?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I thank Ms Wooldridge for her question. Ms Wooldridge's question actually contains very detailed allegations; in fact I think the allegations are clearly made — the connection between what might be fraudulent behaviour and the purposes for which money might have been used. The allegations are made, but they are allegations.

In terms of the evidence that supports those allegations, I am not aware of any evidence that supports those allegations. I am certainly aware of the allegations. I certainly confirm on behalf of the government that if those allegations are true then that behaviour is untenable and not to be defended, but I think the veracity of the allegations should be tested by the evidence.

The President has already indicated to us today that the Parliament takes this matter seriously, that the Parliament would expect relevant invoices to be reviewed across the Parliament and that it would take action accordingly. If any member of the public, including the opposition, the *Herald Sun* or anyone else, has evidence that actually backs up these allegations, then I would encourage them to transfer that evidence to the police. I have indicated through my answer my degree of knowledge about the matter. I know of the allegations; I am not aware of any evidence that supports those allegations.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Minister, when were you first made aware of the allegations?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I was first made aware of the allegations when I saw my social media Twitter feed at probably around 10 o'clock last night. That made me aware of the allegations.

Electorate office budgets

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is again to the Leader of the Government. Minister, given that a senior Labor MP and your pick for Deputy President of the Legislative Council, Mr Eideh, has been named as using F & M Printing to generate false invoices, have you spoken to Mr Eideh

about the systematic rorting of taxpayer dollars, and if so, when?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — The only person who I understand has claimed on the public record that Mr Eideh has actually used this printing facility is the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, and he did so under privilege in question time earlier today.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My supplementary question to the Leader of the Government is: given the allegations against Mr Eideh, does the government have confidence in Mr Eideh to remain Deputy President of this house?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — My answer would be that I stick by the series of answers I have already given. The real issue about this allegation is whether it is backed up by evidence and that evidence is scrutinised appropriately. The conclusions that should be reached about the tenure and viability of any member of Parliament in relation to fraudulent activity should be tested by the evidence. I am very happy for the evidence to be tested in relation to this matter and to make a determination based upon that evidence.

Electorate office budgets

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is again to the Leader of the Government. With the exception of Mr Eideh, are you aware of any other Labor MPs who have used F & M Printing, and if so, who?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I am not aware that Mr Eideh has used F & M Printing. I am not aware of that, so the assumption in your question is a false assumption, because I am not aware of the evidence that actually backs up the allegation. Similarly, I am not aware of any evidence that backs up any allegation against any other MP or about the use of that printing facility, because I have not seen any evidence to back up that allegation. That allegation may be true; I am not aware of it.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I ask the Leader of the Government, given his answers: what measures will the government take to satisfy itself that no other Labor MPs are involved in this rorting scandal?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I thank Ms Wooldridge for her question. In relation to this, whether it be Mr Eideh or any other MP who has an allegation of this nature made against them drawn to the attention of the community or the Parliament, it would be the government's expectation that each and every member, of any political persuasion, would appropriately open up their books in relation to the invoices and the procedures that have been applied by their office and share them with the Parliament, and if relevant then a determination would be made by the Parliament, by the member themselves or by the evidentiary path for them to be investigated appropriately and with full force. The government has that expectation of its members. If and when those allegations are raised about those members, we will raise them directly with those members to clear the air.

Electorate office budgets

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, when were you first made aware that the printing firm F & M Printing had been used by state Labor MPs to fraudulently produce invoices to siphon off taxpayers money for party-political purposes?

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, President, I fail to see how this question has anything to do with my portfolio responsibilities as the Minister for Families and Children or Minister for Youth Affairs.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — On the point of order, President, standing order 8.01 provides that questions may be put to ministers in respect of matters with which they have a connection, and through the course of this question and the supplementary question it will become apparent where the connection to Ms Mikakos is.

The PRESIDENT — I am concerned that this question as posed is outside the minister's ministerial jurisdiction. I have had the courtesy of being shown the substantive question and the supplementary question. The supplementary question would be relevant to the minister's responsibility as a member of Parliament, but I do have concerns about the substantive question in terms of the way it is phrased. Mr Rich-Phillips, I will give you an opportunity to rephrase the question. I realise the sensitivity of this matter, but I do so today on the basis that it is a matter of concern for all members of Parliament and I think we do need transparency. Whilst the opposition may not have been satisfied with the Leader of the Government's answers, I think he certainly provided the house with answers that were

apposite to the questions that were asked and he detailed the extent of his understanding of the matters, which effectively all of us have only become aware of either very late last night or this morning. I do again point out that the story is not sourced in terms of naming any people, and that makes it rather difficult, but in this instance I am prepared to allow a rephrase of the question if you can, Mr Rich-Phillips.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — The question is to the Minister for Families and Children. I note that previously on 2 September Minister Mikakos has answered questions in respect of the activities of her ministerial office and her electorate office. In the context of having previously answered questions about her ministerial office and her electorate office, I ask: can the minister provide an assurance that neither her electorate office nor her ministerial office has been involved in using F & M printing to siphon taxpayers money off for party-political purposes?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — In terms of the preamble to the member's question, I am not quite clear what the precedent is that he was referring to on 2 September, so I am really unclear as to what the reference is in terms of the precedent that he was claiming there. But what I can say in relation to this matter is that these are very serious allegations that have been raised. These are very serious allegations. It is important of course —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! At the moment the minister has not had a chance to venture into her answer, so I do not want her verballed. The minister to continue, without assistance.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, President. It is important, as the Leader of the Government has already stated, that if there is evidence of any impropriety involving any member of Parliament this evidence is produced, and of course the President has indicated that the Parliament has already commenced its own investigation into these matters. In relation to the printing business that the member has referred to, I personally had not heard of this printing business prior to it being raised in the Legislative Assembly question time just a little while ago earlier today. I certainly would categorically refute any assertion made by the member that I have in any way partaken in what has been alleged by the *Herald Sun* newspaper today. I have absolute confidence that any investigation conducted by the Parliament would in fact confirm that.

Supplementary question

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. Minister, have you spoken to your electorate office staff and ministerial office staff today to ascertain that they have had no involvement in this matter?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — This is a ridiculous allegation that the member has made, because we have got the party there with direct connections with mobsters and the Mafia coming into this Parliament and attempting to throw mud not just at members of the Parliament but now at all of our staff as well. They are coming here and throwing mud at members of the Parliament and parliamentary staff and ministerial staff. If the member has any evidence at all to back up the insinuation he has just made, then I would certainly invite him to produce that evidence.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! This is obviously, as I said, sensitive. There was no allegation that I heard against Ms Mikakos. The question was had she spoken to her office to satisfy herself that there had been no use of that printer or that any particular arrangement that might have related to the article this morning had occurred. That was the question. It was not an accusation against Ms Mikakos. That needs to be understood very clearly in the context of today, because if it is seen in a different light then that certainly raises the temperature in a way that is most unhelpful to looking into this matter in a fair and reasonable way to everyone concerned.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — It might have been by way of interjections, but I did not hear them. The question was in order as such.

Electorate office budgets

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Leader of the Government. In response to a number of questions from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jennings said repeatedly that he was happy for the evidence to be tested. Minister, as minister responsible for the state's integrity framework, will you now refer these allegations to IBAC so they can be tested?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — The reason why I winced at the question was that I was being invited to actually talk about letters that get sent

off to IBAC that may or may not invoke the jurisdiction of IBAC. Can I say to you that the real issue in relation to invoking IBAC's jurisdiction is providing evidence. When the Leader of the Opposition in the other place sent his letter to IBAC he knew that in fact the nature of the letter would not invoke IBAC's jurisdiction because he did not give details of the nature of the engagement, the financial elements of it and the policy considerations that may have given rise to corrupt practices occurring. So the real issue there is that the evidence did not exist in the referral.

If I were to send a reference to IBAC today based upon the evidence that is available to me, in fact IBAC may make that conclusion — even though they may be interested in this matter if in fact the evidence was brought to bear. So the critical issue is: what is the evidence the opposition brings to bear to actually back up these allegations? Whether it is for IBAC or the police or indeed the Department of Parliamentary Services to take on these matters, the issue is the evidence that is brought to bear. The President has already indicated today that the Parliament will assess any evidence in relation to what it knows about invoices in this matter.

The government's expectation will be clear to any government member. It is that they disclose any relevant information about any matter that may give rise to concern; that should be assessed, and if that evidence exists, then it should be passed on to the appropriate investigative body. I would indicate that if there is fraudulent behaviour, the best port of call is the police, but I think we need to actually base this upon what evidence is secured and what evidence is understood, and then transmit it to the relevant agency.

At this moment I do not have any evidence that would actually invoke the jurisdictional responsibility of IBAC, just as with Mr Guy's letter. He knew when he sent the letter to IBAC that the evidence in it would not invoke IBAC's jurisdiction but that if he had compiled the whole box and dice of the story, then that may have invoked their jurisdiction. There is no simple explanation of this. Mr Rich-Phillips may be very unhappy about this, but he knows this because he has an understanding about the integrity system and the way in which it interlocks. I perhaps rely on his knowledge rather than the opposition's knowledge or what might be popular commentary outside this place.

Supplementary question

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for his answer, but the minister is being disingenuous because he

knows that IBAC is not there as a prosecutorial body. It is there to investigate, and it has the power to gather evidence for the purpose of ultimate prosecution. But given the nature of the minister's answer and his suggestion that he does not have evidence to refer to IBAC and given the allegations have been made, what action will he now take to gather evidence for that matter to be properly investigated, given it relates to his party and his members?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — Already on three occasions, I think, during question time I have indicated to you that my expectation is for members of the government to participate openly and positively. That is an action that I have taken and I will take.

Mr Rich-Phillips — What inquiries will you make?

Mr JENNINGS — I have already indicated to you that I have taken action, and I will continue to take action to make sure that relevant evidence is provided. If and when there is any veracity in that evidence, then we will definitely ensure, through the Parliament and through other relevant agencies, that that matter is investigated. So our active consideration is to make sure that there is nothing to hide from government members and that they participate with a process to disclose the truth. But let us not jump three or four steps ahead of what that evidence may lead to.

Written responses

The PRESIDENT — Order! In respect of today's questions I require a written response to be provided to Mr Purcell's substantive question to Ms Pulford within two days; Dr Carling-Jenkins's substantive and supplementary questions to Ms Pulford, again involving a minister in the other place, two days; Ms Hartland's substantive question to Ms Pulford, two days; and Mr Rich-Phillips's supplementary question to Ms Mikakos, that is one day.

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, President, just in relation to this matter, I am mindful that you suggested that somehow the question was within the standing orders and there was a reference to precedent, but it was not very clear as to what that was. I make the point that members of the opposition regularly make FOI requests about ministers' expenses. In fact they would have already available to them all printing details of all ministers in terms of ministerial office printing expenses. These are matters that are already transparent and available to members of the opposition, so if they have allegations to make, then they should produce the

evidence, because they already have that information available to them.

In relation to the other aspect of the question that related to Parliament, President, you have already indicated your own process that you have underway in relation to this matter, so I do believe that the matters have been acquitted for that reason.

The PRESIDENT — Can I indicate that my processes are at a very early stage because, as Mr Jennings has indicated to the house, I do not have a lot to work with just yet so I need to go through things. It is true that ministerial offices are often subject to FOI requests. Members of Parliament's offices are not subject to FOI, and therefore that information is not available. But that is neither here nor there in terms of this point of order, which again was not a point of order but a further explanation to the house.

The reason why I have asked for the supplementary question to be answered in a written response is that the question was quite clear and simply asked if the minister had made any contact with her office to satisfy herself that none of her staff had been involved in any practices that might have aligned with the articles that were mentioned today. There was not an allegation, either specific or implicit, in that question. The question was: has the minister contacted somebody? And that is a fair and proper question that did deserve an answer.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

The PRESIDENT — Can I indicate that Mr Rich-Phillips has written to me seeking the reinstatement of questions 11 476, 11 498, 11 521, 11 543 and 11 565. I have had those questions checked by the clerks, and it is my view and theirs that the responses are not adequate in respect of the questions posed, and therefore I will reinstate those questions.

Ms Wooldridge — President, on a point of order, you were on your feet, so I did not want to disturb you, but I just wanted to raise my second question to Mr Jennings, where I asked if he had spoken to Mr Eideh about the story in the *Herald Sun* today. I put it to you that the Leader of the Government did not answer that question, and in fact in a subsequent interjection the Leader of the Government said he did not answer that question. So I ask if you would consider reinstating that question for answer by the minister.

The PRESIDENT — I am aware that Mr Eideh is not available today because of a personal matter, and I

do not know whether he in fact conveyed to the Leader of the Government at some stage that he would not be available today. I do not know whether that constitutes the contact or whether you are seeking more assurance of what, if any, other matters might have been discussed, if indeed there was contact.

Mr Jennings — President, on the point of order, I do not believe Ms Wooldridge deserves a supplementary answer, but let me give her one. Let me separate the issues. I chose to talk about the fact that her leader is the only person that I have publicly attributed the naming of Mr Eideh to in relation to this matter. That is the issue that I chose to respond to, and I was directly responsive to the question.

Ms Wooldridge — Not to the question I asked.

Mr Jennings — Yes, the question you asked included the fact that you asserted that he was named, and I responded, ‘Who named him?’. Separate to this matter, I can confirm to the house that I have spoken to Mr Eideh today.

The PRESIDENT — Can I just indicate that earlier the Leader of the Government had not been provided with the answers to questions that actually are available today. As a courtesy to the house I invite the minister to advise the house of those questions so that everyone has them.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) — I have 39 written responses to questions on notice: 11 027, 11 063, 11 316, 11 328, 11 352, 11 380, 11 400, 11 401, 11 403–5, 11 407, 11 452–5, 11 460, 11 462, 11 463, 11 478, 11 480, 11 484, 11 487, 11 500, 11 502, 11 507, 11 510, 11 523, 11 525, 11 529, 11 532, 11 545, 11 547, 11 551, 11 554, 11 567, 11 569, 11 573, 11 576.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question today is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: why is there such a short time frame for community consultation on the important north-east link project options, and will consideration be given to further extending this consultation project? It was just a month ago that the government announced that four corridors were being considered. It has provided no details on costs, environmental impacts or property acquisitions. Initially the government gave just a 12-day public consultation period for residents to attend meetings and

outline their concerns. This has now been extended until the middle of this month. Banyule City Council is strongly critical of the community consultation time. They want to write to their residents to confirm which route they would prefer and the key issues about the extension, and have asked the North East Link Authority to allow more time to do this. This is a vital project for residents in the north-east who battle daily severe congestion. So I ask the minister, please, can that consultation period be extended?

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Two weeks ago the minister announced the introduction of legislation for Victorian renewable energy targets, the largest renewable energy auction in Australia and the awarding of contracts for two large-scale solar plants to power Melbourne’s tram network. It is the first such time renewable energy targets have been enshrined in state legislation anywhere in Australia. The winners of the tenders to build new large-scale solar projects were the Bannerton solar park, near Robinvale in the Sunraysia district, and Numurkah Solar Farm, near Shepparton. Both are in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region. Can the minister inform the house about this announcement, tell us how many jobs this will bring to northern Victoria and advise us of any additional investment this fantastic project will attract?

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Sport and relates to his visit last week to the Shepparton sports stadium. The City of Greater Shepparton has forged a reputation as the home of major sporting events held outside metropolitan Melbourne, which will be further enhanced with the soon to be opened Greater Shepparton regional sports precinct redevelopment. Despite being left virtually unchanged since its opening in 1972, the adjoining sports stadium hosts over 230 000 players and visitors each year and injects an estimated \$6 million into the Shepparton economy.

The Greater Shepparton City Council’s *Shepparton Sports Stadium Future Direction Plan* provides detail of a proposed \$18.4 million four-stage redevelopment, incorporating an independent economic and social assessment and benefit analysis. The analysis found the redevelopment will benefit sports participation rates by 50 000 and generate an additional \$5.7 million into the local economy each year. Considering that the minister has now seen the need for the redevelopment firsthand,

will he give a commitment to work with the Greater Shepparton City Council and provide a substantial contribution to the total cost of the \$18.4 million redevelopment of the Shepparton sports stadium?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Luke Donnellan. Constituents in my electorate are looking forward to the Andrews Labor government's western roads package. The package, which is an Australian first, is a \$1.8 billion investment that will combine eight high-priority road upgrades, with maintenance on more than 700 kilometres of road stretching from Werribee to Footscray, delivering new high-quality roads and maintenance of the existing network for years to come. The roads include Dunnings Road, Palmers Road, Derrimut Road, Leakes Road, Dohertys Road, Princes Freeway and Duncans Road. As a result of this project commuters can expect to reduce their travel times between home and work. The question I ask the minister is: what is the current stage of the western roads package and what is the intended schedule for the project's implementation and conclusion?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. The permanent residents of Wantirna Park caravan park are desperately trying to seek alternate arrangements for accommodation as their eviction date of November 2017 gets closer. Some residents have sites available to relocate their homes to, but no funds available to pay for the relocation. Will the minister consider no-interest loans for those residents seeking that type of assistance?

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Health. As has been reported, on 2 September a family from my electorate was informed by Ballarat hospital that a loved one had passed away. The family was then contacted on 4 September to inform them that the man was in fact still alive. Ballarat hospital does an excellent job in providing high-quality health care to our community. The hardworking staff at the Ballarat hospital provide important health services to our community, for which we are most fortunate. This case is of course terrible for the family involved and simply should not have occurred.

A full investigation must take place into how this mistake occurred and to ensure that there are no systemic issues that need to be addressed. Safer Care Victoria should investigate this specific matter to ensure such an incidents do not occur in the future. Ballarat hospital provides incredibly important services to our community, and a full investigation will ensure that the community continues to have faith in the care at Ballarat hospital. Will the minister direct Safer Care Victoria to investigate this matter to ensure it does not happen again?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. I refer the minister to her correspondence to the member for Mordialloc in the Assembly, Mr Tim Richardson, reference MN031753, received 7 August 2017, and in particular to the reference to my constituent Mr Simon Johnson. Mr Johnson has a planning permit from the Kingston City Council to build his family home in Parkdale. Despite Mr Johnson having a lawfully approved building permit, United Energy has been demanding for some time that Mr Johnson, a private citizen, make a contribution of \$70 000 to Downer EDI Limited, a company working on behalf of United Energy, to offset and upgrade the electricity asset belonging to United Energy.

Now this seems extraordinary to me. I do not see a basis in law for it. I ask the minister to review the situation and to assure herself that this approach is not a breach of the third line forcing provisions of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 and to make sure that Mr Johnson is not seen as being victimised for his strong campaign against sky rail along the Frankston line.

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Education, and it concerns South Yarra Primary School. I have raised the issue of overcrowding and the population growth in and around South Yarra a number of times in this chamber, including in questions to the minister where I have sought his commitment to visit the South Yarra Primary School community. I have also sought a master planning process to deal with the long-term population growth. But there is a crunch point coming next year. What I am seeking for him to do is review these matters and make sure that there are sufficient resources, including portable classrooms, available for the massive growth in population — with

94 enrolments, additional, in this period ahead. What I seek from the minister is information as to what steps the community should take to —

The PRESIDENT — Time!

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My constituency question today is for the Minister for Health. It concerns public perceptions of Bellarine Community Health Ltd after the organisation was last week shamed by a newspaper into apologising to palliative care patients for giving them just four days notice via a letter that as of last Monday they would no longer have access to on-call nurses between 4.30 p.m. and 8.00 a.m. It then reversed its extraordinary decision.

Only this morning we have seen the chair of Bellarine Community Health step down from her position. We have seen over a number of months now the member for Bellarine, Lisa Neville, almost running a war campaign against the community health centre. I appreciate there has been a chequered history with Bellarine Community Health, and I understand a forensic audit of Bellarine Community Health Ltd has been completed. The question I am seeking an answer to from the minister is: will she make that audit available to the Parliament and also will she make the outcome of the audit available to the public to give some confidence to those living on the Bellarine that in fact Bellarine Community Health Ltd is providing an appropriate health service?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the question I asked on 20 June this year, the answer to which I have just received. My question came from a deep concern about the health of my constituents living in the vicinity of the Ravenhall tip. I am loath to suggest the minister does not care about the locals' health, but her response could easily be taken that way. The minister has come nowhere near answering the question. That being the case, I ask the minister again: will she conduct an investigation into the health impacts on communities surrounding the Ravenhall tip that will include investigation into leukaemia, Parkinson's disease, chronic breathing complaints, asthma in children and all forms of cancer?

STONNINGTON POLICE RESOURCES

Debate resumed.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the motion moved by Mr Davis. In doing so I note that it is not surprising that the opposition keep hammering away about destroying the reputation of this great state and Melbourne. Part of the motion, point 3, states:

the crime wave engulfing Victoria is putting at risk Melbourne's reputation as the world's most livable city ...

They keep at it again and again and again, trying to paint that dark picture about life in Melbourne and in Victoria. They say that the opposition now would like to run Victoria Police, so basically they are saying that the Chief Commissioner of Police and all the officers of Victoria Police do not know how to do their jobs but these guys opposite know better. They want to run the operations of Victoria Police. They know better, apparently, because they are the experts about where police resources should be deployed.

Then they want to talk about resources. I will go into great detail later on about how much money they invested in resources for Victoria Police over the last four years they were in government. It actually was not much; I think it was something to do with some lockers. They had not invested in a single additional police officer in Victoria. They were barely catching up with replacing the people who were actually retiring or leaving the service. When it came to additional investment in police resources, the number was zero.

When we came to power the Andrews Labor government invested over \$2 billion. More than 3500 sworn police officers will be added to the police resources in Victoria to fight crime. They will be additional. They will not be to replace the people who are leaving the service due to retirement or for whatever reason. They will be additional — a net increase.

We have been lectured by the other side about investment in fighting crime. Basically they have decided it is a good headline for the *Herald Sun* and 3AW and therefore they have said, 'Let's run with it. Don't let the truth stand in the way of a good story. Let's run with it. Let's play on the fear of Victorians instead of offering a real solution and basically dealing with the facts'. We have seen today that the facts do not mean anything. They just create enough hysteria to drive fear into the community and in the hope that they might get a jump in the polls, because they think that is a good thing.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Mr MELHEM — I get it. Do you know what? We have had for years a police minister who has stood up and said, 'We have got a problem'. She has actually recognised that we have got a problem. And guess what? She is actually doing something about it. So we are not pretending that there is not a problem. We actually accept that, yes, there is a problem. But we are doing something about it. So get with the program and support the initiatives the Labor government has put in place.

Moving on, I will talk about the numbers and about crime specifically in Stonnington in relation to the actual figures. In the last quarter the figures have gone down, but we ignore that. For years you did nothing to improve things. People did not wake up and say, 'Oh, there's a change of government. Now we'll go and commit crimes'. It is a cycle. Since 2011 we have got it that the numbers have climbed up. It takes a while. There is no magic wand that you can use and say, 'Okay, we're going to stop it. Now it's going to stop'.

You put programs in place and start delivering. I think Mr Davis talked about Apex earlier. There was a real problem. We had a real problem with a group of young people. Unfortunately when they or they with their parents arrived in this state, they formed what is called the Apex gang and they created some serious problems and committed some serious crimes. We are talking about teenage kids between the ages of 11 and 17 or 18, and it was a real problem in our state.

But guess what? Victoria Police were given all the resources they needed to basically crack that thing wide open and deal with it head-on. The police commissioner, who I have a lot of respect for — the other side do not, because they do not have any respect for anyone in the Victoria Police — said, 'We have finally broken the back of Apex', particularly the ringleaders and particularly the adults who were actually taking advantage of these young kids to get them to go and commit crimes. Their view was, 'We'll give you a bit of money, you go and steal a car or break into a house, because if you get caught you're not likely to go to jail'. If these adults — these unscrupulous people — got caught, they would more than likely receive a serious jail sentence, so they had been using these young people. So it was not just about arresting these young kids; what the police were focusing on was how they could catch the real criminals — the adults who were using the young kids.

And guess what? I think Victoria Police did a fantastic job, because most of these people have now been

locked up. Apex is a thing of the past. We have not heard about Apex in the last few months. That is because of two things. The Premier of this state, Daniel Andrews, said to Victoria Police — and he implemented it — 'Whatever resources you need I will give you. You ask and you will get'. That is exactly what happened. The credit also goes to Victoria Police, to its command and to its entire membership. They went out and made sure that they delivered the goods. That is why we have seen the end of Apex.

Now, are we going to see the end of crime in this state forever? No, we will not. Crime is unfortunately part of human nature, but we will try to reduce it, we will try to prevent it — we will try to do that. There are hundreds and hundreds of thousands of crimes committed in this state every year — various crimes, different crimes — so let us not pretend. I wish we could. If you are a religious person, heaven is meant to be crime free, but it does not apply on earth. Unfortunately crime will always be around. The only thing we can do is look at how we can prevent it, how we can reduce the number of crimes and how we can reduce the human impact on our citizens. That is why we have a police force. That is why we invest in our police force and we go and change laws to deal with these matters. There has been a series of bills before this house in the last two years to basically deal with these matters, like the carjacking bill, the home invasion bill and the various pieces of legislation that we have put in place. Various powers were given to the police as well to deal with these matters. The opposition decided to ignore that.

Ms Crozier — You are closing police stations.

Mr MELHEM — I think we invested more in police stations than you ever did in your four years. If you want to talk about that, I think we can actually talk about that. That is the other argument. Let us not talk about the airy-fairy stuff. We are talking about a 24-hour station versus my numbers. I think Mr Finn talked about that the other day in relation to Caroline Springs. When I met with the police force there I said, 'What would you like? Extra members to be on the street and their cars patrolling the streets?'. We talked about the 88 extra police officers to be deployed in the west, and the sergeant said to me, 'I don't want to be open 24 hours. I don't want people sitting behind their desks. I want people in their cars patrolling the streets. That's where I want my members to be.' Because guess what? If a crime is committed next door, you do not go and run a kilometre to the police station and say, 'Can you please come?'. No-one is going to sit there. They should be outside; they should be in their cars patrolling the streets.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Mr MELHEM — No, that is the word of the sergeant in charge of the station. His comment was, ‘I am not really interested whether the station is open 16 hours or 24 hours. If I have the choice of whether to get an extra 10 coppers in their cars patrolling the street or to have them open the station for another 8 hours a day, I would rather have them on the street’. That is basically what our experts are saying.

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

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I go back to the motion, in which we had Mr Davis calling on the Andrews Labor government and asking the Premier what he is doing. His motion asks that the house:

... calls on Premier Daniel Andrews and the state Labor government to make community safety their number one priority to get the crime wave under control.

Before I do that I want to recap what I was saying earlier about when this mob on the other side was in government. In 2012–13 they spent \$0.7 million — that is, \$700 000 — and the new investment was for new lockers for police stations.

Mr Gepp — New lockers?

Mr MELHEM — Yes, new lockers. That was their record for the year. Over the four-year period that number grew to \$7.7 million, so that is pretty good. In the budget for 2012–13 was the \$700 000 for the new lockers, then in 2013–14 there was an election coming up, so they thought, ‘We’ll increase the figure’. So there was an additional \$46 million, but half of that was for IT work. That really did not go down well. So basically we are getting lectured by the other side about investment and trying to do something about crime, even though the statistics tell us the rising crime rate in Victoria commenced in about 2011. Yet there was not much investment at all in trying to fight these crimes. In 2014–15 the investment dropped to \$23.9 million, and with the first year of the new Labor government the investment grew to \$84 million in 2015–16. In our first budget we put in \$84 million, then another \$141 million in 2016–17, and it is forecast to be in excess of \$2 billion over the out years.

We went to police command, we went to the Police Association Victoria, and we talked to various stakeholders and asked, ‘What do you need to address this chronic issue?’. I thought for a minute that the police association would put a log of claims in and have some ambit numbers and so forth, but to their credit

they did not. They came to the state government and said they would like to see over the next four years a certain number of extra police officers, which was to the tune of about 3500. Police command concurred with that, and then when they got the response from the government that we were going to deliver that I think they were a bit stunned, but I suppose they were not surprised because they had dealt with the Premier, and he actually meant what he said to them. He said, ‘You tell me the figures and what you need to make your job easier, to make sure you are able to fight this crime, and I’m going to give you the tools, the equipment and everything you need, including the laws, to try to reduce the crime rate in Victoria’. And they put that proposal to government, and the government endorsed that.

Let us look at some statistics, which I think Mr Davis talked about. They say police arrests continue to reach new peaks. Obviously the 540-odd additional net increase to police numbers is paying off. There have been 9.9 per cent more arrests than in the year before — 73 174 offenders arrested, up from 66 612 the year before — and there has been a 58.6 per cent increase in police arrests since the year to March 2013, so the police are actually arresting more people, which is a good thing. It is a good thing in a way; at least we are arresting people. The bad thing is we do not really want to arrest anyone. We do not want anyone to go and commit crimes, but when they do at least the police are there making the arrests.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2017 there was a 4 per cent increase — or 20 714 more offences — on the same period last year, and there was a 2.5 per cent increase in the offence rate per 100 000 of population. This increase is largely due to property and deception offences, which rose by 4.5 per cent and comprised 60 per cent of all recorded crimes. There was also a 5.4 per cent drop in overall recorded offences from January to March. It gets ignored that the crime rate is actually dropping. We do not like that; because it is good news it gets ignored. October to December 2016 was the second quarter in a row when there was no rise in crime.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr MELHEM — I am going backwards now, Mr Davis. For October to December a 0 per cent rise in crime was recorded, so we are seeing improvement. The year to December 2016 showed a 10 per cent increase in recorded offences and an 8.1 per cent rise per 100 000 of the population, but in the year ending September 2016 we saw an 11.6 per cent rise. If we go back to the year to June last year, the figure was a

13.4 per cent rise in recorded offences. So you can see things are improving. Family violence is beginning to stabilise for the first time in recent years.

Mr O'Sullivan interjected.

Mr MELHEM — I feel safe in my house, Mr O'Sullivan, and most Victorians do, but there are a lot of Victorians —

Mr O'Sullivan — You're one of the lucky ones.

Mr MELHEM — You are right, because some of it is real and some of it is a perception that they do not feel safe. Motions like this by you people do not help. They create a sense of fear. There is definitely a sense of fear in the community about crime rates. Instead of standing here and assuring Victorians that we are doing what we need to do to make sure that their safety and their children's safety is protected and that we are working on improving their wellbeing and safety, they thought, 'No, we're just going to pour some more oil on the fire and ignore the magnificent job that Victoria Police are doing and the recent statistic that the overall crime rate is dropping' — and hopefully will continue to drop. 'Instead what we will do is pour some more fuel on the fire. Let's do that, because that might win some votes'. That is the only reason you are doing it. There is no other reason.

Going back to the motion, it talks about the need for extra police. Under the staff allocation model the government provides police with total numbers and a budget, and then it is a matter for the police commissioner and his or her commanders — executive officers — to allocate resources. It is not up to the minister, it is not up to the shadow minister, it is not up to the Premier — it is not up to politicians — to actually allocate where police members should be serving, whether it is in Stonnington or in Brimbank. It is a matter for police command. Basically Mr Davis wants a politician to say to the Chief Commissioner of Police, 'Move aside. We will tell you where to allocate your members. We know better than you. What the hell do you know? We actually know where the police members should be. We are crime fighters'. Well, I am sorry — you are not. You are not crime fighters. You have got no idea. So let the experts deal with that situation.

To me, they are doing a great job. The stats already speak for themselves. The measures that have been put in place are already working. They are not working at the rate we would like. That is a fair comment; I will accept that. But let us not say to police command, 'You don't know what you're doing. We want to tell you

where these resources should be allocated'. That is a very irresponsible thing for politicians to do, but I suppose being responsible is not something Mr Davis and his colleagues would like to be.

As I said earlier, the additional 546 police officers are actually paying dividends. I want to talk about Stonnington, which was the subject of this motion. I note that the notice paper has various notices of motion in relation to this for every city council area. Looking at the recent statistics, crime in Stonnington has dropped 10 per cent when looking at January to March this year compared to October to November last year. Nowhere in the motion is there a recognition that the crime rate has dropped. Has crime stopped in Stonnington? No, it has not. I wish it had. We would all like to have zero crime, but as I said earlier, unfortunately that is not going to happen, whether we like it or not. What we can do is see how we can minimise it, how we can reduce it. If we could eliminate it, that would be great. If you have the answer, we are happy to listen.

The reduction in crime is due to the hard work of the police in the local area. Mind you, it is my understanding that these numbers are now below what they were in December 2015. In the January to March 2017 quarter we saw a 12 per cent decrease — by 226 offences — in overall property and deception offences in the City of Stonnington when compared to October to December 2016. The southern metro police region, which covers Stonnington, has a new crime team — which Mr Davis failed to talk about — targeting networked offending in the area and especially focusing on jewellery store burglaries. We all know about that. It is a major issue to address, and that is what the southern metro police region command and members are focusing on. There is now a team dedicated to focusing on these particular crimes, because people are entitled to trade in their businesses without the fear of someone breaking in and trying to rob them. I think they are entitled to feel safe. There is no question about that.

What this government is trying to do and will continue to do is make sure we can give them that feeling of satisfaction and protection they need. Are we able to guarantee 100 per cent that this sort of thing will not occur again, whether it is in Stonnington or any other place? No, we cannot. If we are going to be honest with ourselves and our constituents, we cannot give that guarantee, but we can give the guarantee that we will put the resources in the field to make sure we stop these things happening in the first place. That is the commitment that has been given by the state Andrews Labor government, and that is what the southern metro police region is working on.

As part of the 3500 new police officers there will be more and more police stationed at the direction of the police commissioner and his command in places like Stonnington in the Southern Metropolitan Region, like there will be in my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region. As these new police members are recruited, finish their training and come online, there will be more resources actually put in place.

Mr Davis talked about CCTV and community crime prevention. He failed to mention that the community safety statement provided \$19.4 million over two years to support the Victorian community crime prevention program. This includes the graffiti prevention grants and youth crime prevention programs. It also continues the Community Safety Fund and the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund. I encourage Mr Davis to talk to and encourage people in his community to apply for a grant from the Public Safety Infrastructure Fund. The fund is open to applications until 25 September. These grants provide up to \$250 000 to local councils which they can put towards urban design initiatives and technology, and that could include CCTV, lighting and many other measures. Basically I encourage Mr Davis to talk to his community about applying for a grant to enhance their safety.

Mr Davis also talked about the Prahran police cells. There has been further improvement there, but this has been ignored by him. The question here is whether we run the argument and continue the campaign to drive fear in our community. We can do that; it is easy.

Mr Finn — You don't have to drive it; it's there. It's already there.

Mr MELHEM — It has always been there, Mr Finn. You know that you and I are good Christians. We believe in heaven. The only place where there is no crime is in heaven, but unfortunately we do not live in heaven; we live on earth. Unfortunately there will always be crime on earth, so let us not pretend we are living in a world without any crime.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Maybe that is another job I should look at. Maybe you and I can open a new church.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — What we can do is work together to try to improve the life of our citizens by reducing the incidence of crime. I say to Mr Finn that he needs to acknowledge for once in his life that we are investing in and we are going to have another 3500 police officers,

of which 547 are already on the front line. There are another 3000 to go; they are coming through the pipeline. We have strengthened various laws to deal with these crimes, whether it is carjacking or home invasions, and that is paying dividends. For once it is clear from the crime statistics that the crime rate is heading in the right direction — that is, downwards, not upwards. I think it is time to recognise that.

It is time to recognise that Melbourne, notwithstanding recent events, is still the most livable city in the world, has been for seven years in a row and will continue to be. People are still flooding into Victoria because Victoria and Melbourne are great places to be. Melbourne is a great city to live in and Victoria is a great state to live in. It is one of the best performing states in the country. It has the best economy in the country. I think we need to celebrate these things instead of frightening everyone about the state of affairs in Victoria and to a large extent exaggerating things or making them up — because that is still your agenda.

I had better leave room for other speakers. I have been told I need to wind up, otherwise I will get into trouble. With those comments I will obviously be voting against the motion. I hope the rest of the house will vote against the motion so that we can focus on how we can continue celebrating this great state of ours and how Melbourne can continue to be the most livable city in the world for many years to come.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan).

Debate adjourned until later this today.

MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS AMENDMENT (AFL GRAND FINAL TICKETS) BILL 2017

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 August; motion of Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan).

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — We continue this fine just-in-time philosophy today, which we started earlier in the day. I understand that we have a fair bit of time available to us, but in a desire for expediency and efficiency I certainly will not be taking up the time that is available to me. It is important to be able to debate the bill that is before us.

I say from the outset that it is a fine thing to wish that everyone could attend every sporting event. In fact if we look no further than Friday night's

Richmond-Geelong qualifying final, I believe it is almost a sell-out, with an estimated attendance of 97 000 people. Melbourne being the amazing sporting city it is, I do not think it is too great a claim to suggest that when Richmond is roaring, the level of participation in the population wanting to attend those games is tenfold compared to when people are tearing up their memberships at quarter time. I think we could safely say, and I think Mr Finn would agree with me, that we would have an expectation that if 200 000 people could fit into the stadium we would probably fill the stadium this Friday night.

We would like to see as many members as possible attend the game in person, because there is something about being at a game that elicits that emotional response from being part of every tackle, every goal and every umpiring decision. It is not quite the same when you watch it on TV. I acknowledge the bill before us and I acknowledge that the Greens, who are proposing it, are doing it with the best of intentions. I believe that they have pursued —

Mr Finn — I am not sure about that.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Mr Finn, I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt. I believe that there is a fair degree of good faith in relation to the bill before us, and I think it is important to note that, as per usual with bills that the Greens put up, they have only looked at half the story. Of course the other half of the story is the huge economic inputs that the AFL and the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) are required to contribute in order for our great game to be able to accommodate not just games where as few as 15 000 people turn up, which could have been a Melbourne versus Fremantle game — or just about any game that has Melbourne playing. The point is that we need large crowds and large memberships to help to subsidise the work that goes on with both our stadium management and also the health of the game itself.

When one considers the fact that the AFL has increased the allocation of members tickets to this year's grand final by 4000, which is an increase of over 15 per cent on the previous year — well in excess, in fact — to 34 000 out of 100 000 tickets, it is possible already to appreciate that that is in excess of one-third of the stadium's capacity, so one-third of the stadium's capacity is allocated to members of the competing clubs. And when you take into consideration the economic underpinning of the Melbourne Cricket Ground, one of the seven wonders of the modern world along with AAMI Park, the National Tennis Centre, Lakeside Stadium, the Tootgarook under-18s stadium —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Yes, thank you, Mr Finn — all seven wonders of the sporting world are here in Victoria.

When you consider that the economic underpinning of the cricket ground includes 25 000 tickets for MCC members and 17 000 for AFL members — that takes the tally to 42 000 — and then the 34 000 that are available to competing club members, that makes 76 000 out of the approximately 100 000 that can attend the stadium.

I must declare a pecuniary interest in that I am an AFL member. I can say that the member for Prahran in the Assembly would be happy in the knowledge that as a full AFL member and as a sad and struggling St Kilda supporter I do not take up my allocation for the grand final when St Kilda is not competing, because I want members within the AFL family who are members of one of the two competing clubs to have the opportunity of hopefully seeing their team succeed where St Kilda often falls over at the last hurdle.

Ms Springle interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — It is unruly for me to take up those interjections and I shall not take up those interjections, although I suggest that Ms Springle wear a bit of white with her red and black so that the St Kilda colours are in this chamber.

It is important to point out that on the final day of the AFL sporting calendar we must be able to honour the people who financially underpin the support of the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Again, just to reflect on that for those who have just arrived, there are approximately 25 000 tickets available in the MCC members reserve, and I point out that, in terms of those 25 000 tickets, there are significantly greater numbers who hold MCC membership than that. In fact I believe that there are roughly 110 000 members of the MCC, and goodness knows how many people are on the waiting list. Those members pay an annual subscription fee to be able to attend the MCG on any day of the year that it does not host a declared event — like a FIFA match, a concert or an otherwise private event — so they are entitled to use their members reserve allocation. They pay for the privilege of being a member of the MCC. Similarly, AFL members are also entitled to access their reserve.

Yes, that does have an effect on members of the competing clubs that make grand final day who do not have that opportunity, but that does not mean to say that we should squeeze the AFL or the MCC or the

competing club allocations as they currently stand to make more tickets available. It is wrong to say that club members who contribute financially to their club of choice or who, if they cannot afford an annual membership, support their club by going to the games on a match-by-match basis, somehow have a greater right to be able to attend the grand final than somebody who has contributed through the AFL members reserve or through MCC membership. It is important to note that just being a member of the AFL or the MCC does not actually mean that you have a right to go to the game either. It is also important to note that there are far more members of both of those bodies than there are seats at the ground. Just like anything else, we need to be able to accommodate as many people as we can while understanding that there are competing allocations and competing requirements and requests as well.

I understand that the member for Prahran in the other place — I think this is something you and I will agree on, Acting President Morris — does not like the corporate community, unless of course it is Graeme Wood providing the Greens with \$1 million of funding for their advertising campaigns. I understand that the Greens might eschew the corporate dollar and think that it is a bad thing, but let me tell you that without sponsors the game would be poorer. In fact without sponsors the players would be paid less, and if the Greens truly were a party that supported the worker, they would support our AFL superstars being paid more money. That is absolutely part of having corporate support, because the more corporate support we have —

Ms Springle — That was a leap.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, it was not a leap, because —

Ms Springle — That was a leap.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Well, it is a leap for the Greens who have no corporate expertise or understanding of the business world. The fact remains that the corporate dollar helps to support the AFL industry, so having corporate support for the grand final means that of course there are obligations to support those corporate partners that support the game. Unfortunately this is an important point that the Greens have missed. It is unfortunately part of the make-up of the Greens that they struggle to come to terms with this within their natural tensions, within their —

Ms Springle — It's really hard being the smartest person in the room, isn't it?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am going to take up that interjection. I wish I was the smartest person in the room, but I am not a Green, so it is very difficult to live up to that interjection from Ms Springle. Ms Springle knows that I have a deep affection for her contributions in this place, and I think she is a fine representative of her political party —

Mr Ondarchie — You just reek of sincerity.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, I have had these conversations in private, and I am happy to put them in *Hansard* for the public record. Of course I think the south-east would be better served with an additional Labor member, but having not got the additional Labor member, I think Ms Springle is a fantastic representative nonetheless. But the fact remains —

Ms Patten — You're second best.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Second best. There is no prize money for coming second; just remember that, Ms Springle.

If I can, because I do wish to move the debate along and finish my contribution, it is also worth pointing out that there are an additional 7000 tickets to the grand final that are provided to the 18 AFL clubs in order for them to be able to sell packages and to be able to benefit financially. This is a bit of socialism that the Greens should be up to date with — a bit of spreading of the love across the AFL family. That is why the AFL gives tickets to other clubs that are not competing in what will be the final day in September this year — I think 30 September is the date of the grand final. Nonetheless it is important to reflect that there is always hot competition for tickets.

I want to also point out that I have respect for what the member for Prahran in the Assembly is pursuing. I have in good faith attributed the work behind this bill to the Greens wanting to provide greater access to the game than we currently have. Unfortunately we are limited by a capacity constraint of the stadium itself.

I can tell you, Acting President, that should Melbourne be one of the competing teams in the grand final anytime in the future — and the other team in it be Fremantle — then the member for Prahran would probably get his wish. We could probably open the doors up and give away tickets for free. Unfortunately neither Fremantle nor Melbourne are in the final series this year. As a result, I think it is fair to say that there will be a lockout on grand final day, irrespective of who the two final teams are. I know I have maligned Melbourne unfairly, but really I think I have slayed Fremantle far more than Melbourne. Let me say that

with the climatic conditions that Victoria is experiencing at the moment Melbourne supporters have not lost out because they still have the snow. That is the truth of the matter: they can still go skiing. So just because Melbourne are not competing in the finals series does not mean they have missed out this year.

In summing up, let us look at the facts before us. There are approximately 25 000 tickets available to the MCC. There are approximately 17 000 tickets available to AFL members. On top of that there are approximately 7000 tickets that the AFL provides to the other member clubs that are not competing on the final Saturday in September.

Mr Finn — That would be grand final day.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Yes, the grand final, Mr Finn, which St Kilda has played in and lost on more occasions over the last 20 years than Richmond has. I do know what the grand final is. Believe me, Mr Finn — and I know it is unruly to take up interjections, but I shall on this occasion — the tears of my children at games when we have lost burnt through the seats like acid. As a father I also felt their pain, especially given that I am the one who forced them to be St Kilda supporters and members.

As I was saying, when you add to those figures the 34 000 tickets the AFL allocated to competing club members for this year's grand final, which is, as I said, 4000 up on last year, I think you would understand that the AFL has taken great strides in ensuring that members of competing clubs are there as best it possibly can.

In conclusion I want to point out that there have been some erroneous examples used of overseas finals and questions asked as to why their arrangements cannot be replicated here — for example, the UEFA Champions League final. I do not suspect for a moment that members of the Greens actually know much about soccer, it being an ethnic game, but let me tell you, Acting President, that as a son of football — the world game — I know the Champions League final moves from stadium to stadium every year. There is a massive bid by the home team to win it. There is no ability for members of the stadia to support continued economic growth, which is why they do not use the same allocation of seating for those finals.

It is the same thing with the FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium every year. Wembley does not actually have home membership so it is not treated like the MCC is at the MCG. It is also important to realise that if you are going to compare apples with apples, you need to make

sure that apples are being compared with apples and not with lemons, as demonstrated by the examples used by the Greens.

In finality it is important to note that there are over 100 000 members of the MCC, with 10 000 new applications received annually. More than 240 000 people are on a waiting list, just to correct the figures from an earlier part of my contribution, and it can take over 15 years to become just a restricted member. Of course, as I mentioned earlier, in addition to the MCC members reserve capacity you have the AFL members reserve, which I again declare I am a full member of, and there are almost 55 000 AFL members. Those 55 000 AFL members, just like the MCC members, also have a right to use the facility on grand final day.

We are saying that we cannot support the bill at this point, because if the bill was passed and 50 000 grand final tickets were required to be made available for members of competing clubs, approximately 16 000 tickets would have to be reduced from the allocation to other fans, from the financial support of other economic contributors —

Mr Leane — The numbers don't add up.

Mr DALIDAKIS — As my learned colleague Mr Leane so eloquently put it, much more eloquently than I have been able to in my contribution thus far, the Greens numbers just do not stack up.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise today to speak on the Major Sporting Events Amendment (AFL Grand Final Tickets) Bill 2017. Can I commence by acknowledging the work put in by Ms Springle to bring this bill to the chamber. I sensed through her contribution that she clearly has members and fans at heart.

I rise to follow Mr Dalidakis's personal attack on the Greens, which I found interesting, if nothing else. What I found to be the most incredible, unbelievable and unacceptable part of Mr Dalidakis's condition was that he declared himself to be a saint. I have to say there would not be many people in this place who would think Mr Dalidakis was a saint.

This bill was introduced by the Victorian Greens. It requires the AFL to distribute at least half of all tickets for the AFL grand final to competing clubs. It also requires tickets not to be sold in conjunction with any other package. Currently competing clubs receive about 15 000 tickets and AFL and Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) members receive approximately 50 per cent of the tickets. This change would have a major effect on

those AFL and MCC members. Therefore on this occasion the state opposition will not be supporting the Greens bill.

For me this is a transactional matter between the AFL and its member clubs. The AFL commissioners, to the best of my knowledge, have not received any submissions from member clubs to alter the current arrangements. In saying that, we have very firm views in the state opposition about ticket scalping and the escalating price of grand final tickets. I note that entry level ticket prices for this year's AFL grand final and every week of the finals have been frozen, retaining a 16-year low, after being reduced last year.

I also note, as Mr Dalidakis also mentioned in between slagging the Greens, that supporters of competing teams will receive an additional 4000 tickets to the grand final, with 2000 allocated to each club. Gillon McLachlan, the AFL CEO, made a statement that he continues in his commitment to make AFL games accessible and affordable for many, many fans.

The finals are finally kicking off tomorrow night, after what has been the most inexcusable, stupid by I have ever seen. I do not know why they did it. I suspect it was to allow AFL management to have a holiday on the Gold Coast or something like that. I do not know why they stopped. We have the Adelaide Crows playing the GWS Giants tomorrow in Adelaide. On Friday we have the Geelong Cats playing Richmond. Interestingly enough the Geelong Cats have been awarded a home final, which curiously is at the MCG when their home ground is in fact at Kardinia Park.

Now Gillon McLachlan, who should be playing in the Australian test team because he is the king of spin, is trying to explain why Geelong's home final is at the MCG. Now Gill, I have to tell you, if you have not worked it out yet, if you head down the Princes Highway, Geelong's home ground is at Kardinia Park. I declare a pecuniary interest being an AFL Geelong member and a long-term supporter of that great club. But I have to say, Gill is doing everything he can to make sure Geelong do not progress. On Saturday the Sydney Swans play Essendon at the Sydney Cricket Ground. They have a home final. Port Adelaide have a home final against the West Coast Eagles, so clearly through this finals package, only Geelong has been disadvantaged by the AFL.

Since we have got through this pointless by, we do note that we support the government's position on clamping down on ticket scalpers — those rip-off merchants who are taking money inappropriately from

the fans who want to get extra tickets to the game. We, like the government, denounce that.

The main concern is that the position put by the Greens is a position that should be negotiated by the AFL clubs and the AFL. AFL members and MCC members who have waited many, many years for membership may well be disadvantaged by this recommendation.

I wish all competing clubs in the finals this year — save for the Adelaide Crows, Greater Western Sydney Giants, Richmond, Sydney Swans, Essendon, Port Adelaide and West Coast Eagles — a good final series. Go the Cats! The opposition will not be supporting this bill.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak briefly on the Major Sporting Events Amendment (AFL Grand Final Tickets) Bill 2017. As a crossbencher I am aware of how important these Wednesday spots are for us and how rare they are, where we actually get the opportunity to lead the debate. I recognise Mr Jennings calls them the WOT days — the waste of time days — but I do not agree with that at all. I certainly think that this is our opportunity to drive public debate on important and life-changing issues in our community.

I have to say that when I looked through the notice paper I saw that the Greens have got nine entries under 'Orders of the day', many of which I would support — and obviously I have supported the Greens in the past. I am looking forward to Ms Pennicuik's Equal Opportunity Amendment (Improved Protection) Bill 2017 as I am to the Spent Convictions Bill 2017. I wonder about the fact that on this important day we are talking about increasing the number of AFL Grand Final tickets for the competing clubs. I do not think this will necessarily save a life, or not in any way that I can think of. I understand that they are trying to increase the democratic availability of tickets, but I do not think that this goes towards that. I cannot see that it in any way is protecting the environment, unless we are going paper free on the extra 16 000 tickets.

Listening to Mr Hibbins from the other place when he was first spruiking his ideas about these tickets on radio, he admitted that he had not actually consulted the AFL before making this announcement. He did say he had sent a letter to them but had not received a reply, so he had not actually met with the organisation that this bill affects.

Ms Dunn — Not for the want of trying.

Ms PATTEN — No phone call, no meeting — a letter; I grant you a letter. I am quoting what I heard

Mr Hibbins say on the radio. I think it is important to ensure that you have consulted and to ensure that you have worked with the AFL. I wonder if this could have been resolved by means other than legislation. But as others have said, including Mr Dalidakis, the problem is this is just not achievable. For the 2017 AFL Grand Final, 34 000 tickets out of a possible 100 000 — just over a third — will be allocated to the competing teams and 25 000 will be allocated to Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) members.

Now, these are members who are passionate about the game. There are well over 100 000 MCC members, so this allocation only allows for a small number of those members. I know many of my friends have their children, on the day of their child's birth, signed up on the waiting list for MCC membership. We have got 17 000 tickets awarded to AFL members — again, they are very keen football fans, very keen supporters. The AFL clubs are allocated 6500, and my understanding of clause 7 of this bill is that it will actually not allow — it will ban — those clubs from using those tickets to value-add by adding food and beverages to the tickets and selling them as fundraisers for their respective clubs.

Over 75 000 tickets currently are actually going to fans of the AFL. This would take it up to 90 000. We want 90 000 to go, because at the moment we have got — I will go through the numbers again — 34 000 for competing club members, 25 000 for MCC members, 4200 for Medallion Club members, 17 000 for AFL members, 6500 for AFL clubs and the remaining 16 000 go to the sponsors and corporate boxes. This is not 16 000 seats; this includes all of the corporate boxes there. It is those sponsors that not only help pay the footballers but make this game possible. They make the game possible every week.

If this bill were successful, we would be looking at 75 000 seats, but out of that 50 000 would be allocated to the competing members, leaving us with only 25 000 seats to be divided up between AFL members, MCG members, Medallion Club members and other clubs. It is just not workable. Yes, the AFL clubs have seen their memberships grow, but the MCG has not grown. There are 100 000 seats there, and the numbers just do not add up in this bill any which way. I think if the Greens had spoken to the AFL prior to introducing this bill, the bill may still have been introduced or there may have been another way to come up with a solution to this perceived problem.

In my eyes I do not think there is a problem because the vast majority of the tickets go to AFL fans: AFL members, MCG members and competing club

members. I really struggle to understand the bill. As one of my staff mentioned, 'Mr Hibbins has missed the mark here. In fact it's a falcon'. For those of you who may not know what a falcon is, as I did not until today, a falcon is when a ball hits you in the face. I am sure this bill is well intentioned, but the numbers do not add up. I am pleased to see that Ms Springle will no doubt dispute this in her summing up, but I would suggest that this is a hospital pass from Mr Hibbins to Ms Springle, who will be forced to defend this bill today.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I rise very briefly to speak on this bill. I should declare my interest in this matter: I am a long-term member of the Richmond Football Club. I am very enthusiastic about the Tigers' chances this year, I can tell you — as indeed I am every year until such time as they prove me wrong. I am very hopeful that they will not prove me wrong this year. I have been a Richmond supporter for over 50 years. It saddens me to tell the house that in the course of that time Richmond have won five premierships but I am yet to see one. The only game that I missed out on in 1980 was the grand final, and that was only because I could not get a seat. So I can relate to people who feel the frustration of not being able to get into the grand final on the biggest day of the year.

The fact of the matter is most members of football clubs buy tickets on the understanding that there are no guarantees. For example, the Richmond Football Club has over 73 000 members, which is not a bad effort for a club that has not won a premiership for 37 years. Most clubs have around 40 000 to 50 000 members. This year, for example, if it was a Richmond-Adelaide grand final, you would actually need to have a ground that could hold about 160 000 people to get everybody in, and that is without the hangers-on who like to show up on grand final day.

I might say it would be really good, and we might be able to avoid this sort of legislation in future, if the AFL got its act together a little bit. I know that they love to make a dollar out of this, and I can fully understand that. The AFL is a business; they have a right to earn a dollar — I am not knocking anybody's right to earn a dollar. But when I see the AFL doing what they accuse others of doing — that is, basically legal scalping — and when they say, 'Yes, we'll throw in a ticket if you give us \$4000. We'll give you lunch, we'll give you a few drinks at half-time and we'll give you a ride to the ground from wherever you might be — give us \$4000 to \$5000', it is really frustrating to me. I just wonder how many people who buy those packages are at the G on the big day for the very first time. Is that the first

time, and possibly the last time, they have ever been to the footy?

I have the ability to attend the grand final, but I have not done so. I have not taken it up for many, many years because I could not live with myself if I knew that I had taken the place of a fanatical supporter of whatever club might be playing. I think that if you barrack for a club — you go every week, rain, hail or shine — and your team makes the grand final, then you deserve to be there. As I said, we cannot change the situation to make everybody get in because the place just is not big enough. Whilst the Greens might like us to live in a Greens-Socialist utopia, the fact of the matter is that the AFL is a private company. You cannot tell them what to do. You cannot tell them how they should run —

Ms Springle — Of course you can.

Mr FINN — No. You cannot tell them how to run their business. I know the extreme Socialist Left — these people over here in the corner; they are to the left of the Labor Party in more ways than one in this chamber — think that you can tell private businesses whatever you like, tell them who they can admit, tell them what they can do any day of the week, but that is not the case. We live in a country that is based on private companies having the ability to make decisions which they believe are in their own best financial interests, and the AFL is no exception. I would dearly love, as I said, to see every member of competing clubs able to get into the MCG on grand final day, but it is physically not possible — unless of course we have Gold Coast Suns playing Greater Western Sydney Giants, in which case you could fire a cannon and you would not hit anybody.

Richmond-Geelong this Friday night is going to be a huge game. We will have 100 000 people there. There will be very, very few empty seats at the MCG. I am looking forward to it like you would not believe, and I am prepared to sit in the rain all night if I have to. I was down at the club yesterday —

Ms Dunn interjected.

Mr FINN — My word I'd pay to do it. I was down at the Richmond Football Club, and I bought ponchos for myself and two of my daughters. We will be there on Friday night, and we will sit in the rain if we have to. If Richmond wins, it will be well worth every moment of it. If we lose, I will not be so happy — it has got to be said.

The sad fact of the matter is that you cannot get everybody into the MCG when you want them there.

That is the simple fact of the matter. Legislation like this is not going to change that. You could pass a law every day until you were blue in the face, but the fact of the matter is it would not change the reality of the fact that the MCG just is not big enough for the number of people that want to enter the ground. It was a futile try, I have to say, but a good try. I hope and pray that I can come back in October with a very, very big smile on my face, draped entirely in yellow and black. Just to please the Greens I might even give *Oh We're From Tigerland* a bit of a burst during the adjournment debate.

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank everyone for their contributions this afternoon and their enthusiastic engagement with the bill the Greens have put up that we are debating today. I have to say I find it enormously disappointing that both of the major parties are not supporting this bill, because this is a bill of the people. This bill has come directly from the AFL Fans Association, which focuses on greater access and equity in relation to AFL tickets. So to imply, as Mr Dalidakis did, that the bill does not look at the entire picture is a slight on the best interests of everyday people who love the great game of AFL — which we all know and love.

I would also like to remind the chamber of the roots of this game. I do not often talk about my background with AFL. It has not always been a game that I have loved, but I do have a long history with the game of AFL, right back to when I was a child, because my late father, may he rest in peace, was possibly the biggest AFL fan I have ever met. Actually in his younger years he did play some games with Richmond, Mr Finn, and St Kilda, in the same era as Kevin Sheedy; they played together. He was a very successful player at the club that my son now plays in at Noble Park.

So I grew up going to the football every Saturday without fail. I did not like it, to be honest with you — I actually went on pain of death — but I did go to an enormous amount of games because he loved it so much. He was a man who till the end of his life loved the game so much that he taped the games on his VHS recorder and would play them every night before he went to bed — every single night of his life. So this game is deeply embedded in my bones. My son now plays for the under-19s at Noble Park, and he is also hugely fanatical about this game.

That brings me to my next point, in rebuttal of Ms Patten's contribution that this is not an important bill. I would dispute that, obviously, but I have good reason for disputing that. That is because sport, and in particular in Victoria the game of AFL, is integral to

our social cohesion and the strength of our communities. I was on the committee of management of my local junior football club once upon a time, and I have seen firsthand how that game can change the lives of young people. It gives them focus, it gives them camaraderie and it gives them a community.

In my own family's case — and this is another story that I probably do not really talk that much about — when my son's father, my late ex-husband, passed away, my son was about nine years old. He was a very, very angry young man. His father had been estranged, and it was very confronting for him to have this sort of monumental milestone in his life that he did not feel he had any control over. He was acting out a lot — but he was just a little boy — expressing his grief in a very physical kind of angry way. So we enrolled him in the local under-10s football team, and in all honesty it changed his life. He became happy. It took the sting out of his grief. It allowed him to have an outlet, to be physical, to be with other kids, to start to learn to form relationships and to have a community.

It was an easy transition to put him into that club; it was affordable, it was around the corner and there were people from our community that embraced him. He had never picked up a football in his life. We had actually lived in Africa for five years, and I will beg to differ in terms of Mr Dalidakis's contribution about the Greens not knowing anything about what we call soccer here, or football overseas, because my kids had always played the world game. We came back here, and it was unaffordable at the time for us to put —

Mr Ondarchie — Did he mislead the house?

Ms SPRINGLE — He did mislead the house; exactly right. So football was it. It was \$160 to get my kid into a game, a team sport, where he was going to be able to let out his aggression, be physical, get fit and be with his mates. That is why this bill is important. That is why we should be letting people from any socio-economic background have access to tickets to the grand final, because it is part of our social fabric. People need something to look forward to, and this is it for many, many AFL fans across the state.

On the issue of corporate sponsorship, I would suggest that if Mr Dalidakis had actually read the bill he would know that this does not rule out any corporate sponsorship at all. What it is is a reallocation of tickets. I know there were a lot of people saying the figures do not add up and this, that and the next thing. Well, that is not quite true. What I have here is: competing club members tickets are at 34 000, Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) reserve 25 000, AFL corporate sales and dining

stakeholders 13 000, AFL members Medallion Club 21 000 and AFL club allocation is at 7000. That is a total of 100 000, which is the capacity of the MCG.

What we are saying is that the problem lies within the AFL corporate sales and the AFL club allocation. We are asking for an extra 16 000 tickets to go to your average punter. They should not have to spend \$4000 to get into the AFL Grand Final, and that is the bottom line. This is about access and equity; it is not about anything else. I find it wholly ironic that we are sitting in a chamber full of very privileged, well-off people who are saying, 'Sorry. The average punter can't get access to a ticket. You've got to spend \$4000 unless you're lucky enough to get a ticket from the draw'. I find that offensive, to be perfectly honest.

Mr Finn — That's not true.

Ms SPRINGLE — Really? Corporate packages are up to \$4000 a ticket, thank you very much.

On the issue of whether we reached out to the AFL, which was brought up by Mr Ondarchie and Ms Patten, we did reach out to the AFL and they wholly and completely ignored us.

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms SPRINGLE — That is rude, Mr Finn, but okay.

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms SPRINGLE — There are a lot of people who do not ignore the Greens. In fact there are a lot of people who support the Greens policies.

What I will say is that the Greens were very, very willing to negotiate a transition with the AFL on behalf of the AFL Fans Association. As I said at the beginning of my summing up, this bill has been instigated by the AFL Fans Association. This is not the result of some thought bubble that the Greens have come up with out of nowhere. It actually has a basis in what the AFL Fans Association have been advocating for for many years. If the AFL had taken their fans seriously, they would have come to the party and had a discussion about this. I do not think it is a black-and-white issue — pardon the pun, Ms Dunn — but something we could actually have had a dialogue about. At the moment what we are seeing is a game that is completely coopted by corporate interests, and that is unfortunate. I find it quite disrespectful on behalf of the fans that the AFL were not prepared to at least have a conversation about it. All we are asking for is a conversation. It does not hurt to engage.

In terms of the impact on the financial viability of the AFL, the bill ultimately leaves it up to the AFL as to how the 50 per cent requirement is met and what other allocations — for example, AFL or MCC member, corporate or non-competing club allocations — are reduced. So there is flexibility there for the AFL. To say that there is not is not the case. Also in terms of corporate sponsorship, there are other opportunities available to the AFL through this process to make a lot of money out of corporate sponsorship. This bill does not do anything to impact on that. To say that the Greens are anti-corporate or anti-sponsorship or anti-sustainability of the AFL is actually rubbish.

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms SPRINGLE — No, not really — actually.

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms SPRINGLE — I do not think we are ever going to see eye to eye on that one, Mr Finn.

In conclusion, there is no need to continue to use the AFL Grand Final as a cash cow at the expense of club members. It is also disappointing that the minister has chosen not to use his powers under the act to increase grand final ticket allocations. We are disappointed that the AFL has chosen not to engage, as I said, with the Greens on this bill, despite having been contacted in writing. Whilst we do acknowledge and welcome the extra 4000 tickets provided to members of the competing clubs following pressure from the community, the Greens and the AFL Fans Association would have been prepared to discuss a long-term plan to lift the number of tickets for competing club members.

However, given the failure of the minister to act on the failure of the AFL to put any further ticket increases on the table, we have acted in order to bring this bill to a vote. I urge all members to support this bill and to stand on the side of the loyal club members in their electorates and not with the corporates. I commend the bill to the house.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 5

Barber, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Pennicuik, Ms
Dunn, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Springle, Ms
Hartland, Ms	

Noes, 32

Atkinson, Mr	Mikakos, Ms
Bath, Ms	Morris, Mr
Bourman, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Carling-Jenkins, Dr	O'Donohue, Mr

Crozier, Ms	Ondarchie, Mr
Dalidakis, Mr	O'Sullivan, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Patten, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Davis, Mr	Peulich, Mrs
Elasmar, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Finn, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Fitzherbert, Ms	Ramsay, Mr
Gepp, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Leane, Mr	Symes, Ms
Lovell, Ms	Wooldridge, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Young, Mr

Motion negatived.

STONNINGTON POLICE RESOURCES

Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan):

That this house notes —

- (1) the most recent data released by the Crime Statistics Agency Victoria on 15 June 2017 that shows crimes across Victoria are up 18.17 per cent;
- (2) crime in the Stonnington City Council area has risen 22.4 per cent since the Andrews Labor government came to office;
- (3) the crime wave engulfing Victoria is putting at risk Melbourne's reputation as the world's most livable city;
- (4) the concern of the community about the Andrews Labor government's failure to control law and order in Victoria;

and calls on Premier Daniel Andrews and the state Labor government to make community safety their number one priority to get the crime wave under control.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on behalf of the Greens on Mr Davis's motion with regard to crime statistics across Victoria and in particular in the City of Stonnington. I note that Mr Davis has got similar notices of motion with regard to the local government areas of Monash and Glen Eira on the notice paper as well.

Mr Davis interjected.

Ms PENNICUIK — Mr Davis by way of interjection was just trying to tell me that they were not similar. They look extremely similar to me. In speaking to the motion — and I have made this comment when speaking to other motions put forward by the Liberal Party with regard to crime waves, crime tsunamis, crime surges, crime crises et cetera — I note that Crime Statistics Agency figures have been referred to. I am looking at the figures Mr Davis has put in his motion today. In the first paragraph he says that crime across Victoria is up 18.17 per cent. If you look at the Crime Statistics Agency figures by all local government areas,

in the last year the total is up 3.9 per cent, not 18.17 per cent. I am not sure what he is taking from where, but if you look at the local government areas, it is 3.9 per cent.

Mr Davis also says that crime in the City of Stonnington has risen by 22.4 per cent since the Andrews government came to office. That is not a very precise time frame, but if you look at the period since 2015, the figure is 15.2 per cent. If you go from 2014, which does not really include the whole year because the report covers the period up to March, it is 17.3 per cent, so I am not quite sure where Mr Davis is getting those figures.

Mr Davis — They are Crime Statistics Agency figures.

Ms PENNICUIK — I am looking at the same Crime Statistics Agency figures, so it is a bit baffling. However, the point that I have made many times before is that the Crime Statistics Agency has only been up and running for a few years. If you are familiar with it, which Mr Davis clearly is, or perhaps not clearly, and you look at the classifications — and I have made this point before — there has been quite a bit of reclassification. Certainly some crimes in two or three reporting years had been classified as ‘Other’ but are now classified in a different category. The other thing I would say is that in some crimes which are of very low occurrence — that is, you will only get two or three of those types of offences in a particular local government area in a particular year — if you get one more offence or two more offences, then the actual percentage by which that particular offence goes up will seem very high, but it is only an increase from one or two to three or four. Averaging things out like this is a little bit problematic.

For example, if you break down the actual crime categories that the Crime Statistics Agency released up until March this year, you will find that crime has increased over all offences by 10 per cent in the City of Stonnington over the past year, bearing in mind what I just said about some of the different categorisations and different types of offences. But if you break it down, the number of offences that are grouped as ‘Crimes against the person’ have gone up 2.7 per cent. Offences that are listed under the category ‘Property and deception offences’ are up 11.9 per cent, and that is quite concerning. The highest one of those is the offence of theft, which is up 17 per cent. Drug offences are up 6 per cent and offences that are categorised as ‘Public order and security’ are up 3.1 per cent. Offences that are categorised as ‘Justice procedures’ — many of them are breaches of bail conditions or breaches of

orders — are up 11.6 per cent. So in terms of adding to the general figure, they make that look higher than what it is because what it is is actually a breach of a condition and not a crime that is being committed. I just make those observations in terms of the figures that have been put forward. I am not sure where this 22.4 per cent comes from. There is certainly a rise in crime that has been occurring for about the past three or four years across Victoria but not to the extent that appears in Mr Davis’s motion.

As I said, theft is accounting for about half of the offences in the Stonnington area and this is a concern, but the way to tackle rises in these types of crimes of theft, which are often committed by younger people — not all of them of course, but they often are — is to look to the justice reinvestment type of approach. This looks to the areas where people who are committing crimes are coming from and to investing in those areas rather than just locking people up, which is the other approach that the Liberal Party is always advocating — more people put in jail and more people serving longer sentences. That does not help to reduce crime and does not help to reduce the recidivism rate either.

For example, the Ombudsman in 2015 released a report in which it was reported that half of the Victorian prison population comes from 6 per cent of Victoria’s postcodes — those areas that experience high rates of unemployment and family violence. A similar report released around the same time — the *Dropping off the Edge* report by the Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia — found that one-quarter of prisoners in Victoria come from 2 per cent of postcodes. That is what a justice reinvestment approach to offending, by young people in particular, looks at. It looks at the areas where people that are committing offences are coming from and at putting some extra resources into those areas in terms of education, in terms of assisting people to find employment and in terms of other services that people may need — in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues, family breakdown et cetera — to try to break the cycle.

This is being trialled in some parts of Australia and in some parts of the United States, in particular in Kansas and Texas, where this approach has reduced the crime rate in those states. Advocates and people who have been involved in these programs in Texas have been to the Victorian Parliament to speak to members of Parliament about how this works, and there have been parliamentary inquiries, including a Senate inquiry moved by former Greens senator Penny Wright into justice reinvestment. This is where we need as a community to be focusing our efforts.

The other issues that Mr Davis was talking about in his contribution to debate on the motion that he has moved here today were around police numbers and where police should be deployed in the City of Stonnington. Of course what I would say is that it is not up to the Minister for Police or the government per se to be deciding where police are deployed. That is the job of the Chief Commissioner of Police in consultation with local police regions.

Mr Melhem went to the issue of some of the aggravated burglaries that have occurred around Southern Metropolitan Region in the last couple of years, and certainly in the last year, and to the fact that a particular task force has been set up by southern metropolitan police command to deal particularly with that issue. My point basically there is that it is up to the police to decide where and how to best deploy the police; it is not up to politicians, the police minister, local politicians or the government of the day to be deciding where police should be deployed. That is why we have a chief commissioner who is at arms length from the government to decide on a Victoria-wide basis where the priority areas are for the deployment of police.

The public always wants to see more police, and as I have said before, while we need more police we also need more teachers, more nurses, more ambulance officers, more fire officers and other valuable public servants who assist the community every day. It is probably the case that in many of these areas we never have as many as we might want to have, so that is why it is at arms length from the government as to where police should be deployed — and that is best done by the chief commissioner.

Mr Davis in his motion talked about a crime wave engulfing Victoria and concern in the community about the failure to control law and order in Victoria. That is an overstatement of the situation. There are in some types of offences increases in the types of offences, and Mr Davis does not go at all to the most concerning offence and probably the most prolific offence, which is family violence. Certainly this government with the support of all parties in the Parliament is working very diligently towards improving outcomes for people who are subjected to family violence. It is a long-term project. It is not going to be fixed overnight, but we have had the royal commission and we have got the recommendations, and with the support of everyone in the Parliament the government is working towards them. Mr Davis's motion does not mention that particular offence at all as being a priority that we should be putting all of our efforts towards.

I do not think it is helpful to be characterising a rise in crime in certain offences as a crime wave and I do not think it is helpful to be saying there is a huge concern in the community about the failure to control this crime wave, because that just makes people feel fearful when they do not need to. That is not to say that people are not committing offences or that people are not the victims of those offences, and of course if you are the victim of any offence like that, particularly an aggravated offence, then of course it is a terrible thing to happen to you and it will affect your life perhaps for a long time in many cases. So nobody is suggesting that is not the case, but in terms of the reality, a realistic assessment and a reasonable way to talk about what crimes and offences are occurring and their prevalence in the community, it is best to not sensationalise that and to not overstate the case.

What I would say is that we are all aware of where there are areas of concern in terms of rises in robbery, theft and in some cases aggravated robbery and aggravated theft, and the police are taking those issues very seriously and focusing a lot of their attention on them. So with a lot of these motions that come to the Parliament there are parts of them that you agree with and there are other parts that you are not necessarily going to agree with. The last part of the motion calls on the Premier and the state government to make community safety their number one priority. Of course community safety should be the priority of any government and nobody could disagree that community safety should not be a priority, but community safety is not just about safety from crime or safety from crime committed by strangers, it is also about crime committed by people in the home. It is also about safety on the roads and safety at work. So community safety is a very broad term that would cover a large range of activities that are covered by regulation, enforcement et cetera in the community.

I am not sure whether Mr Davis is intending to bring on the other very similar motions that he has on the notice paper.

Mr Davis — No, they are quite different, as you well know. Do not mislead. You know well that they are quite different. None of the others have got a mention of a prison in them, none of them have got police cars, none have got anything about Greville Street, Chapel Street —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order!

Ms PENNICUIK — Thank you, Mr Davis. I am sure you will be able to sum up. But I take the opportunity, as I am looking at notices of motion 441, 444 and 445, to say they are very similar. The wording is almost identical.

Mr Davis interjected.

Ms PENNICUIK — Mr Davis, if you want to take issue with that, you can do that when it is your turn to speak.

Mr Davis — I will. They are quite distinct. They are similar to each other, but not to this one.

Ms PENNICUIK — It is not clear what the point of these motions is. As I said, there is a need to focus on what the opposition does not. The opposition focuses on tougher sentencing and putting more people in jail, and this impacts in particular on young people. The evidence is very clear around the world that that is not the approach that actually does keep the community safer, if that is what Mr Davis is aiming towards, and that we just need to put more resources into justice reinvestment programs, into rehabilitation programs in prison and with people after they leave prison and also into working with young people who are in danger of entering the justice system — those who are coming out of child protection and the youth justice system, who we know can end up on the well-worn path into the criminal justice system. That is where we should be focusing our effort if we want to make the community safer.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise in reply on this important motion, which points to the problems in the City of Stonnington with respect to crime and general disorder and also calls for additional resources at the Prahran police station, including the provision of an additional police car; a commitment to the expansion of CCTV capacity in key locations; the immediate reopening of the cells at Prahran police station closed by Labor in June 2015; and a local policing policy whereby additional police are available on the beat in a number of named locations and in surrounding residential streets. It also calls on the Minister for Corrections, as the minister representing the Minister for Police in this place, to report on this in detail with respect to the government's actions in response within 60 days.

This is a motion that cries out on behalf of the community to say crime has risen significantly under this government. They have botched —

Mr Gepp — Rubbish!

Mr DAVIS — I take up the interjection. It is not rubbish. It is a fact according to the Crime Statistics Agency's own figures — the government's own figures — which reported crime in the City of Stonnington is up 22.4 per cent since the Labor Party came to power. That is, to take up Ms Pennicuik's point, a very precise date. They came to power in December, and since that point the crime rate has risen. I heard Mr Melhem twist and weave and torture himself to try to argue that when figures are greater than earlier figures, that is not an increase. Of course it is an increase; everyone knows it is an increase. It is a scandal that the government has done very little in response. It has weakened the bail laws. It has got an appalling record on parole. It will not release key information on parole.

I have to say the government has hamstrung the police in their response. I have the highest regard for Victoria Police and the policemen and policewomen who do the work that is required in this state on behalf of all of us. I was at pains in my contribution to point out that when police spoke to Toorak Road traders you could feel the agitation, you could feel the anguish beneath what they were saying and you could feel that they were not able to get out and do the work they need to do and they do not have the resources from government that they need to do it.

Mr Gepp interjected.

Mr DAVIS — No, at first you cut police. That is what you did. You also closed the police cells in this particular area of Melbourne. And do you know what? There has been a massive increase in crime in that area. That is what you did. Your government did it, and you have got to share some of the responsibility.

I make the point that the tone has changed in the area too — the kind of crime that is being committed. These very severe carjackings, the home invasions and the burglaries that are occurring along main streets are very serious indeed. People are being hurt. This is not a matter for trite comment; this is a matter for very serious response. I read out the interview that was on 3AW just a few days ago with a woman on the 78 tram who encountered extraordinary violence. I read out her entire interview because it showed very clearly the sorts of problems that people are facing. She is a local, she is someone who is facing this and she is someone who previously did not face this sort of crime — this sort of violent threat.

The point here is that you have got to take a stand. You either stand with the community against this crime, against this violence and against these terrible activities

that are occurring to people, or you stand with the criminals. That is what I say. I say Labor and the Greens stand on the wrong side of this equation. Labor has not acted in the way it should have acted. Premier Daniel Andrews is responsible for not acting sharply and for not acting when the crime rate went up and when we started to see types of crime — the carjackings and the home invasions — that were not a part of Victoria in the previous period. The difference in the crime rate here compared with other states is significant. Mr O'Donohue has made the point repeatedly that in New South Wales the crime rate has fallen and in Victoria the crime rate has gone up very significantly, and the two states and their approaches stand in stark contrast.

In terms of Ms Pennicuik's contribution, honestly what a pathetic contribution. I do not want to be unkind about this, because I know that she is well motivated. But the fact is that the Greens have no way through here. All they do is wring their hands and say that we should let them out of jail. Then they will be back on the streets terrorising the community. I have heard their responses on a number of these issues. I have heard the member for Prahran in the other place, Mr Hibbins, say at public meetings, 'Oh, we've got to stop recidivism'. Well, hooley dooley! Of course you have to work on recidivism, but sometimes you need some tough penalties to deal with the recidivists. You need to send a very clear message.

Ms Crozier made some points about violent youth offenders and the impact they are having on the community. I say that we have got to take a stand. The stand has to be to support Victoria Police. Mr O'Donohue has made this point very clearly. The police have to have the resources, but they have to have the moral backing too, and it is the role of this chamber and this Parliament to send that message. Mr Melhem tried to say that we were telling the police what to do. No. Of course this needs to be done in conjunction with the police, but you need to provide the police with the resources they need. We know that the police have not had the support that they need under this government, and the community is sick of it. The community is saying, 'Enough is enough'. The community in Stonnington is saying, 'Enough is enough'. They want action. This is a response to that.

I have met with people in Greville Street, I have met with people near Chapel Street, I have met with people on Toorak Road and I have met with individuals right across the Prahran electorate and the Stonnington area, and they are saying, 'Enough is enough'. The community deserves to be safe. The community deserves to have a really clear signal sent from this

chamber. They are as sick of the weakness of this government and, frankly, they are sick of the weakness of the member for Prahran who will not stand up for them and will not stand up on behalf of the community on these important matters. So I say, and this is important, I seek the support of the chamber on this important motion.

Motion agreed to.

AUSTRALIA DAY

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — It is my very great pleasure to move:

That this house supports the retention of Australia Day on 26 January as a day to commemorate and celebrate our past, present and future achievements as a nation and encourages all councils to conduct Australia Day citizenship ceremonies on this special day.

The reason that I brought this motion to the house is the number of people who have actually expressed concern about a disturbing trend of erasing, sanitising or revising history. They want to make sure the adage that 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' is not forgotten. Whilst we as a society have evolved and will continue, hopefully, to improve as a society, to become a fairer and more prosperous society, we should never forget the occurrences of the past, including the injustices of the past, so we can avoid repeating them.

I was also inspired by a letter to the editor in the *Washington Post*. For those who have come from a Communist regime and war-torn countries where history has been constantly rewritten or erased and where monuments and artefacts have been destroyed, these are very precious things. I imagine a lot of people in parts of Syria and Iraq, where precious artefacts, monuments and temples and so forth are being destroyed, feel similarly. The letter in the *Washington Post* was headed 'Toppling monuments, erasing history' and it ends with two lines that say:

It is perhaps a sad reflection upon our past as a nation, but the fact remains that applying the moral standards of today to the monuments of the past may leave us with no monuments at all.

Indeed this is the reason that has prompted me to bring this motion to the house, so that we can reaffirm what we stand for, mindful of the fact that no-one condones the injustices of the past and that we should be a proud nation in terms of what we have become and equally aspirational for what we can achieve in the future.

Australia Day is a very special day for many, many Australians and, let me say, some people from

Indigenous backgrounds and certainly for many people from multicultural backgrounds. For them it is an iconic day. Not only does it mark the landing of the First Fleet in 1788 in Sydney, consisting of 11 ships which left Portsmouth in 1787 and arrived at Botany Bay on 24 January 1788, but also the raising of the flag by Arthur Phillip of Great Britain at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788. Today Australia Day marks this day through community events and ceremonies right across Australia and its territories. In modern-day Australia it is time to reflect on what it means to be Australian and to say thank you to local communities and individuals who have contributed so much to making our society what it is today.

Those who are campaigning for change and, sadly, defacing our monuments, and even calling into question people like Captain Cook, who was basically an explorer who mapped the eastern seaboard of our nation and documented what he had found quite sensitively, want to change the date of Australia Day and abolish citizenship ceremonies on 26 January. Unfortunately there is a bit of a count in terms of the number of councils that have moved similar motions. Others have used the opportunity to move motions to reaffirm the importance of commemorating and celebrating Australia Day on 26 January.

A lack of tolerance and understanding of the importance of Australia's heritage is becoming evident, and our collective history needs to be protected rather than trashed by a misguided minority. The majority of Australians are proud of who they are and understand that there have been mistakes in the past, as there have been right around the world throughout history. We should never allow our values and traditions as Australians to be undermined. Indeed we need to be proud of them and we need to embrace them.

The lack of tolerance of Australian history is a poor reflection on the state of debate, with some employing highly questionable tactics in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of Australians. But, on the whole, I think the vast majority of Australians see this as playing identity politics, often using fake facts in an attempt to guilt trip Australians into capitulating to their view of the world. God help anyone who takes an opposite view. I think the most disturbing element that is coming out in public debate in Australia at the moment is the lack of tolerance for people with a different viewpoint. Often people taking part in public debate are bullied so that there is only one homogeneous view that is expressed in the public domain.

I was even saddened the other day by an Islamic leader who spoke about how they were afraid to take part in

the debate about gay marriage, which the Islamic community on the whole does not embrace — it is against their religion for their religious reasons — because they felt they would be spurned by the left, which had traditionally supported them on other matters. I think that when our democracy comes to that stage there is cause for concern. People get shouted down and called names. Information ends up being invented. Just a few days ago on the issue of the drug injecting rooms being proposed through a private members bill here by Ms Patten, someone on Twitter invented a fact that I had not turned up to a site visit at Victoria Street in Richmond. I do not know that person. They never verified the facts. It was quite untrue, but as a result of that you end up getting trolls and activists, often nameless, who attack you and bully you. So it is okay to bully people who have a particular viewpoint, but of course when the shoe is on the other foot it is intolerable.

People should not be called bigots for holding a particular point of view. They should not be called names. They should not be subjected to dirty play focused on identity politics or to simply having their views condemned even though they are legitimate and would be a reflection of our pluralist society. They often hound conservatives, who seek to protect our values and institutions, and I think unfortunately many of the councils that have moved motions to dump Australia Day commemorations and celebrations and Australia Day citizenship ceremonies have often done so for their own purely political interests without taking on board the broader views of the community.

The City of Yarra has, I believe, referred the matter to a particular advisory committee. That advisory committee was of course appointed by councillors, so it becomes a little circular, a little rhetorical, without really testing the view with the public. If the City of Yarra had gone out with a plebiscite to test the views of their 120 000 residents and everyone came back, or the strongest majority came back, and said that they would prefer otherwise, I could even understand them taking those matters up on their behalf, but this is not the case. People often do not want to do those things because they might find out that the majority does not share their view. Attempting to politicise Australia Day by taking harsh actions to remove citizenship ceremonies is poor form by those councils, and I think it is insulting to many, including those many migrants who wish for nothing more than to fulfil their ambition of becoming Australians on that very special day. The City of Yarra and the City of Darebin have lost their right to host citizenship ceremonies at any time of the year after they voted not to hold them on 26 January, and so be it.

I was saddened to see Stan Grant calling for Captain Cook's statue inscription in Sydney to be corrected in the wake of the removal of statues in the US; such is the power of our social media. This has been referred to an Indigenous advisory committee by Sydney City Council before a decision is made. Again, when we start demolishing monuments, erasing history and sanitising history, we are doomed to repeat it and forget it. I think by contrast what we ought to be doing is making sure that local history is enshrined in public spaces and public places wherever we can so that it is never forgotten and indeed is there in perpetuity. We have seen tactics of intimidation and unnecessary vandalism of our national heritage, including Captain Cook's statue being defaced by vandals.

Banyule City Council — which has lobbied on non-local government issues, such as instituting a nationwide gag on media reporting on prisoners serving life sentences — has backed down on the dumping of Australia Day.

Australia Day is a time to both commemorate those events and people as well as to celebrate our society and what we have become as a nation. Many events on Australia Day are kicked off with a welcome to country out of deference and respect to our Indigenous population, and indeed the incorporation of the welcome to country in many public and civic events is a mark of the respect that we have for our Indigenous population and also an acknowledgement of some of the wrongs of the past. The extension of the welcome to country can make any event all the more special for those in attendance.

We do not show respect for a wide range of views in public debate nor demonstrate the tolerance on which this country has been founded, but we need to do so. That does not mean tolerance for violence or intimidation, as those playing identity politics encourage; it needs to be respectful of our laws and values as a society and in keeping with community standards, which are based on our pluralist values.

On Australia Day we celebrate the achievements of individuals who put their community before themselves through local, statewide and national honours. These people deserve our thanks and to be celebrated on our national day. To do anything other than celebrate these individuals who make our society all the stronger is nothing short of insulting and damaging to our local communities. Councils should continue to conduct and hold Australia Day celebrations on our special day. Central to the Australia Day traditions and celebrations is local government, which is, as you would expect, at the coalface of local communities. There really is

something very special about local celebrations, where those close bonds with the communities are most apparent. Let me say that as a local member of Parliament in the upper house it is my great honour and privilege to attend as many Australia Day events as I possibly can on that day; in fact I would attend anywhere from five to seven depending on how those events are scheduled, and in many instances I will dispatch other members of the family to represent me at events that I cannot make.

There is nothing more moving in my view than becoming an Australian citizen on Australia Day. These occasions, marked with the national anthem and other Aussie songs, give greater meaning to the achievement of so many in each and every single one of our communities that we represent as MPs. What better way is there to say thank you to the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who do so much work for communities and whom we can never repay? The many local communities value Australia Day celebrations held by councils, whether it be in the local park, a community building or a town hall. Free of the identity politics of the left, these local celebrations focus on the achievements of our community. Councils do play a vital part in bringing the community together, and they should continue to do so.

I was heartened to hear — I am not sure whether it was last night or the night before — that the City of Casey passed unanimously a motion reaffirming its commitment to the marking and celebrating of Australia Day on 26 January. This is the time to acknowledge the hard work of our community members and pay tribute to them. This must continue. Unashamedly I stand in support of that. We must continue to hold onto our values and celebrate what is great about being Australian.

I would just like to close by endorsing some of the previous comments made about the importance of history. Margaret MacMillan said:

We can learn from history, but we can also deceive ourselves when we selectively take evidence from the past to justify what we have already made up our minds to do.

R. G. Collingwood said:

History is for human self-knowledge ... the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.

Lastly, Robert Penn Warren said:

History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.

With those few words I would just like to thank those councils and communities that have stood strong in defence of the celebration and marking of Australia Day on 26 January. Let me say as a migrant who came here as a 10-year-old that there is nothing prouder than taking part in Australia Day celebrations on 26 January.

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to support the motion before the chamber. Australia Day is as important and as significant to most Australians as their own birthday. Those of us who were not born here but who are citizens of this great country also celebrate the day of Australia's independence as a historic milestone in Australia becoming a nation with its own unique identity.

For the last 11 years 26 January has been a day I normally spend attending and officiating at citizenship ceremonies conducted by the municipalities in my electorate. Local councils as a rule play a good role in providing their ratepayers and residents with essential services. Recently a couple of misguided and ill-advised Melbourne metropolitan councils strayed into the federal arena of immigration by announcing their intention to cancel citizenship ceremonies on the 26 January. Many people were upset by this move. I know I was. One brave councillor at the City of Darebin was shouted down by her fellow councillors for trying to remind them of their core function: roads, rates, collecting rubbish and infrastructure. I know that councils do much more than that today, but obviously Darebin City Council and Yarra City Council have strayed away from their local government roles.

I will not tarnish the reputation of all metropolitan councils because I know for certain Banyule City Council at its last meeting carried a motion unanimously supporting Australia Day being held on 26 January and citizenship ceremonies continuing at Banyule as before. In my opinion, they expressed a patriotic and sensible view.

I believe I speak for all members on this side on this matter. We in the Labor government support and fully endorse our national Australia Day being held on 26 January each and every year. I hope that sanity will eventually prevail, as it is totally inconsiderate for those councillors to deny local residents and new Australian citizenship applicants a local venue to take their citizenship oaths on our national day. I do not think they know that Australia Day is an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate what it means to be Australian.

Our citizens come from more than 200 countries, speak 260 languages and follow 135 different faiths. The foundation of our success as a multicultural state is the

proud history, heritage and culture of Victoria's first peoples and their continued connection to this land. People from all over the world have chosen to make Victoria their home. They have brought with them their experiences, their cultures and their traditions. I am one of them and proud to be so. Australia Day is about bringing people together to celebrate the values we all share.

The Victorian government acknowledges the pain and suffering endured by the first peoples as a result of the policies and practices of successive governments since 1776. The Victorian government is currently working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to achieve self-determination. The government has listened and heard loud and clear that self-determination cannot be separated from treaty, which is why the government is committed to entering into a treaty process with Aboriginal Victorians. It is only through honestly engaging with the hard truths of Australia's past and acknowledging the loss and injustice experienced by Aboriginal people that we can heal and move forward as a nation.

Generations of new Australians have proudly made the pledge of commitment at citizenship ceremonies around the country on Australia Day. For them it is the opportunity to belong to a prosperous, inclusive country and to entertain a sense of hope in their future. These values are at the heart of citizenship ceremonies held on Australia Day and are an important part of celebrating a welcoming, multicultural and modern Australia.

The Victorian government acknowledges the differences of opinion when it comes to Australia Day celebrations. However, the decision by Darebin City Council and Yarra City Council is so unnecessary. It sends a confusing message to our new Australians, many of them fleeing from political discord. We reaffirm our love and respect for this beautiful, peaceful country by rejoicing with our families and loved ones on our national day of celebration.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I welcome the motion brought by Mrs Peulich in relation to which date it is on which we should celebrate Australia Day as our national day. In fact the debate over whether or not we should change this date has been going on for some time. The Australian Local Government Association in Canberra successfully passed a motion calling on its councils to enter into a debate about whether 26 January should be the date we mark. In fact for as long as I can remember, even going back to the bicentennial in 1988, there has been a debate along the lines of, 'Well, hang on, we're

effectively having an entire year of celebration for the day a penal colony was founded in Australia’.

There are those who are ready to pretty much die in a ditch over 26 January having to be Australia Day, but we know for a fact that 26 January has not always been the date. On New Year’s Day, 1901, the British colonies formed this federation, which really did mark the birth of Australia, the commonwealth and the entity. At that time they were looking for a national day of unity and celebration.

It was not until 1935 that all Australian states and territories had adopted use of the term Australia Day to mark the date. It was not until 1994 that the date was consistently marked by a public holiday on that day by all states and territories. So if members are wanting to defend some kind of tradition, this is a reasonably recent one. Now, I was quoting *Wikipedia* there and there is always a chance for error with that. I see Mrs Peulich has rushed over to the terminal in the corner to fact-check me, and she does have the right of reply afterwards, so if I have been tripped up by *Wikipedia* I am certainly going to get my comeuppance.

But debating whether this is the appropriate day for our national day of unity and celebration is something that people are perfectly entitled to do. I know there are people within the Aboriginal community who have a range of views on this. The City of Yarra went into extensive consultations, but most notably in working hand in hand with its own Aboriginal reference group. Since most local governments are already engaged in efforts around reconciliation, as are every one of us at every level of government, I do not really see what is offensive about local councils traditionally responsible for roads, rates and rubbish adding reconciliation to that list. I know why Mr Elasmr is so upset. He is unhappy because it is Darebin City Council that did it. Once upon a time Mr Elasmr could have directed Darebin council as to what it was going to do next simply by wagging his small finger. But that has changed over time, and it demonstrates that things are changing.

If you are to talk about reconciliation in its broadest forms, you cannot not talk about this. I note the Premier’s comments when he was asked about Darebin council, and I believe the Premier has his own personal commitment to reconciliation. He is putting some of his political capital on the line on that at the moment. But his comments were unfortunately, like so many other people’s comments, basically somewhat insulting to Aboriginal people in that he purported to tell them what they thought about Australia Day being held on this particular day. He said it is our day of national unity. That is a question for every Australian, but it is a

question most importantly for us to consider as we seek reconciliation that is in partnership with Aboriginal people.

It could have been different if we want to go back in history. Captain Cook was given a set of quite specific instructions when he led his expedition to Australia. We know he was not the first European to land on the Australian continent. But he was given a very specific instruction, which was recorded. It states:

You are also with the consent of the natives to take possession of convenient situations in the country in the name of the King of Great Britain. Or: if you find the country uninhabited take possession for His Majesty by setting up proper marks and inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors.

The concept that Australia was uninhabited when Captain Cook arrived has of course been thoroughly consigned to the rubbish bin of history. The landmark Mabo decision 25 years ago in fact demonstrated that there was quite a systematic set of — let us call them — proper marks and inscriptions, in the terms of Captain Cook’s instructions. But also we can see that as we debate, as we do in Victoria today, the concept of entering into a treaty with Aboriginal people, we look more to the captain’s orders where it says:

You are also with the consent of the natives to take possession ...

It is amazing that a military man who was such a stickler for doing it by the book just chose to ignore that particular part of his orders. If he had have taken notice of his orders, we would have had a very different history. We would have had history more along the lines of New Zealand perhaps, or Canada. In New Zealand they celebrate Waitangi Day, marking their very different course.

It is kind of surprising to me that so many politicians and certainly some people in the community have reacted as if this question is undebatable — as if there is simply nothing that anyone could dare to question about Australia Day being on 26 January, even though that is a reasonably recent phenomenon in some jurisdictions. It gets a lot worse than that. Last night, as I am sure many members are aware, a group of right-wing thugs, the United Patriots Front (UPF), decided to in fact invade Yarra council’s meeting — to stop their meeting — because they wanted to make a point.

Mr Ramsay — Weren’t those tactics from you?

Mr BARBER — It was not any old protest. These are a group of people who have got form on the use of violence.

Mr Finn — There were only three of them though.

Mr BARBER — You can make your contribution, Mr Finn, if you want to get up and defend them. If Mr Finn and Mr Ramsay want to get up and defend what the UPF did at Yarra council last night — and there is a good bit of video they can watch before they do that; it only lasts for a few minutes — let it rip.

Mr Finn — Not like you and your lefty mates that bash people up.

Mr BARBER — I think Mr Finn is on record now. He is saying that he does not see a problem with what the United Patriots Front did —

Mr Finn — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Barber has slurred my character and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr BARBER — On the point of order, Acting President, Mr Finn sought to engage me in debate via interjection. That is cool. We can do it like that; I do not mind. But his interjections are now on the record along with my characterisation of them, so I do not really see that there is a problem. I said if Mr Finn wants to defend the UPF, and that is not a slur on his character, as it would be understood —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr O'Donohue — On the point of order, Acting President, I have to concur with Mr Finn that I think the way Mr Barber has characterised the comments or interjections of Mr Finn misrepresents those comments.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — I did not quite hear the allegation. Instead of saying Mr Finn or Mr Barber is in the wrong, I suggest that we review *Hansard*. Then we can come back and I am sure we can sort it out if either party feels offended.

Mr BARBER — I concur with that. On a further point of order, while you are reviewing it, the words I heard out of Mr Finn's mouth were 'You and your lefty mates like to bash people up'. That would be at least in the same vein as what Mr Finn is alleging, so if you could review that as well, that would be good.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Thank you, Mr Barber. We will do that.

Mr Finn interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! I just remind both Mr Finn and Mr Barber that they need to refrain from further interjections. Let us

stick to the subject matter. Mr Finn, you are next on the speaking list, so you can go for your life then.

Mr BARBER — Yes, step up to the plate. As I was saying, last night Yarra council was interrupted and shut down by a group from UPF — let us call them protestors and be polite. That is very similar behaviour to what we have observed up at Greater Bendigo City Council, where a similar political strand seems to object to the idea of building a mosque although it is totally lawful to do so. I have also attended those meetings in Bendigo, and I have seen the impact that had on the Bendigo community. It was not a mere protest occurring up there; it was a state of siege. It eventually led to the council having to meet in a side room, where a public gallery was not even available, and if that is not shutting down democracy, I do not know what is.

I know any politician would stand up here and call for a civil debate, but it does not last very long when you start getting very uncivil interjections from other members. Nevertheless, we should agree that the nature of our democracy — what it is that we want to celebrate, what it is that we want to talk about as our common values moving forward — is something everybody should be entitled to have an opinion on.

I am not from a family of First Fleeters, but I do have ancestors who arrived shortly afterwards. I do not know whether the day on which the penal colony was established is necessarily the perfect, right or only day to mark the achievements of Australia ever since then and into the future. For me, one of the biggest achievements we could make right now would be to commit ourselves to that process of reconciliation. We have made some strides, but we have got a long way to go. That ought to be something we are able to talk about whenever we gather and talk about our nation. It ought to be something that we acknowledge when we meet representatives of the Aboriginal first nations and engage with them the way other mature, dare I say it, commonwealth democracies are doing — for example, Canada and New Zealand.

Mr Bourman interjected.

Mr BARBER — Unfortunately we are not doing citizenship today — thank you, Mr Bourman. Unfortunately, though, there is something about this particular proposition that seems to have really brought out some of the fundamentalists — the people who do not just disagree with you but who pretty much do not recognise your entitlement to have an alternative opinion. This debate is not going to go away. You can see it is getting stronger. It was first raised in 1988 when we talked about the bicentennial and reflected on

the last 200 years. You can see that the debate has been raised at various times. It is debated around barbecues every single January on the 26th.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BARBER — I am pretty confident that no matter how much Mr Finn flaps his arms and no matter how much Mr Ramsay yells, this debate will continue. I will end where I started. I welcome this motion being put on the notice paper so that the Legislative Council in the state Parliament can have the debate that is being had in the media, in social media, at barbecues, in the Council chamber and in the national Parliament — thank you very much, Prime Minister. Nations always debate their identities. They debate their futures, they debate their priorities, and this is part of that. There would not be a nation on earth that does not still engage in some sort of debate about its past, present and future. For that reason, I welcome the motion.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I am particularly happy to follow Mr Barber, who has left us with a thought that may stay with me for quite some time, and that is the prospect of a Greens barbecue and what that might entail. How many little burgers can you cook in one afternoon? I imagine it would be a place that would be sausage, chop and steak free, where they stand around perhaps sipping on mulled wine and discussing whether they are ashamed to be Australians or not — that is indeed if they are Australians. I think some of them are still citizens of the Soviet Union — or that might be just in Sydney, I do not know.

It is quite extraordinary that we have in this country people who tell us that we have much to be ashamed of and that this country is something that it is not. The fact of the matter is that, yes, many, many years ago there were problems, there were issues and there were things done that were by any standard totally unacceptable. But the fact of the matter is you cannot change the past; you can only change the future. My old mate Ron Jones, who I see every Australia Day at the Moonee Valley citizenship ceremony, is a Wurundjeri elder. It is always good to see him. He and I often discuss the futility of debating when Australia Day should be and what Australia Day means and so forth. He is just as happy as I am to celebrate all the great things, all the good things, that Australia is. If we wanted to, we could sit around and we could list the things that are wrong with Australia. Australia is not perfect.

Mr Jennings — That is what Wednesdays are for.

Mr FINN — Isn't it amazing? I said 'the things that are wrong with Australia', and right on cue

Mr Jennings stepped into the breach. I want to thank him for that. It was beautiful timing. He has not lost it and I think that is impressive, because timing is everything, as he knows.

Let me assure you, and I speak as somebody who is a long-time member and former executive member of the Australia Day Council (Victoria), that I am exceedingly proud to be an Australian. That is not to say that I believe Australia is perfect — it is not. One of the reasons that I am in politics is to change the things that I believe need to be changed, so clearly there are some things that I do not believe are satisfactory or appropriate. I will very much continue to work to overcome those problems.

I really think that Australia is head and shoulders above just about anywhere else in the world. They say that travel broadens the mind, and I think it is very true.

Mrs Peulich — It broadens the mind and shrinks the purse.

Mr FINN — Well, it does shrink the purse, Mrs Peulich — there are no two ways about that. One of the things that frustrates me enormously is the criticism that invariably accompanies the overseas travel of politicians. I think it should be compulsory for members of Parliament to travel overseas and see what other countries offer their citizens in terms of lifestyle. Also inevitably that brings a fuller appreciation of what Australia offers.

I have to say to you I remember many years ago my first overseas trip. It was a five-week trip overseas. Whilst I am not a huge fan of Sydney, when I looked out the window of the plane as we were flying over Sydney Harbour and saw the bridge and the Opera house, I do not think I have ever been happier, because I knew I was home; I knew I was in Australia.

There are some very nice places that you would really like to see overseas; there is no doubt about that. I have been to the Colosseum, I have been to Rodeo Drive, I have been to London and a whole range of places. The Trevi Fountain and all those sorts of places are all very interesting, but there is nothing like coming home to Australia, because Australia offers people something that is not offered by too many other nations on this earth. It is not for no reason that people are queuing up to get into Australia; we see that every day. That is why we have a border control problem. So many people are trying to get to Australia because it is such a great place.

One of the most important things — no, the most important thing — that Australia offers is of course

freedom. That is something that we should celebrate, not just every Australia Day; we should celebrate freedom every day. We should give thanks to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice — over many years people have paid the ultimate sacrifice — for us to have that freedom. They have paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we can have our own points of view. They have paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we can come and sit in here, we can debate and we can discuss and we can even sometimes have harsh words with each other. Those people laid down their lives, in many instances, so that we can enjoy the freedoms that too many of us take for granted.

Citizenship ceremonies are one of the more pleasurable parts of being a member of Parliament, because they are always joyous events. I am sure that members who attend those citizenship ceremonies on a regular basis will agree with me. We see people gathered from the four corners of the earth, from various nations, and certainly in the western suburbs they do come from right across the globe. One night, as I recall, in Brimbank there were something like 32 nations represented in the group of people who were about to become Australians. These people are totally committed to Australia in a way that perhaps those of us who were born here never fully appreciate. They are totally and absolutely committed and thrilled to be Australians.

That is something that I think many of us who were born here can learn from. We can take on board the enthusiasm and the sheer joy of those people, many of whom have escaped tyranny and many of whom have escaped with their lives alone — they have escaped with nothing. They have come here to build a new life with their families, or they have come here to build a new life and have a family; they are just delighted to become Australians.

So when I hear people, the black armband brigade as they are known, talking down Australia, telling us to be ashamed of ourselves and what we stand for, I say that is nonsense; it is total, absolute nonsense, because what this country stands for is opportunity. What this country stands for is a way of life that is the envy of the world. Most importantly, what this country stands for is freedom. Anybody and everybody who has not had that freedom appreciates it so much more than those of us who just take it as a daily fact of life.

I speak to those people so often and not just at citizenship ceremonies. Out in the western suburbs there are many people who have fled tyranny and situations where their lives are under threat on a daily basis. They are the ones who, more than anybody else,

fully appreciate what Australia stands for. They are the ones who on Australia Day, on 26 January, every year really celebrate. There are a few of us around who might have a barbecue and a few beers — it has been known to happen — but they are the ones who really celebrate what Australia is, because they have embraced Australia. As I have said to candidates for citizenship at these ceremonies over many years, 'If you embrace Australia, Australia will embrace you'. I believe that to be very, very true.

It is wonderful to see people who have come here, often as refugees, to build a new life succeed. It is particularly wonderful out my own way to see the people in the Vietnamese community, who escaped from the tyranny of communism in Vietnam, come here and work hard — and, by God, do they work hard. They work incredibly hard. They built their homes, they built their businesses, and now you see the second and the third generations coming along and they are doctors, they are physicists, they are dentists and they are a whole range of professional people achieving because they work hard. They appreciate what they have got because they have not always had it, and they are working hard. They are the ones, more than anybody else, who celebrate Australia Day with such fervour and enthusiasm, and who can blame them.

When I see councils such as Yarra and Darebin — and such as Banyule previously, until they stuck their finger in the air and realised the wind was blowing the wrong way — making decisions, particularly decisions that are based on the views of such a small number of people, then I say to these councils, 'You're off with the fairies. You've got no idea what this is about. You have got no idea what Australia Day means to so many people'.

I feel sorry for those residents of Yarra and Darebin who will no longer have citizenship ceremonies and Australia Day celebrations on 26 January. They will be the poorer, and they know that. I have spoken to a number of people. As you would imagine, I have a number of friends, particularly in Richmond, who are getting a bit carried away just at the minute. They have expressed to me total disgust at what the Yarra council has done to Australia Day, particularly as it has been done, I understand, after consulting — and what a consultation process this is — 81 people.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — That might be a huge consultation process for the Greens, but let me tell you that for the rest of us that is a con and that is something that is shameful. The anger of many people in the municipality of Yarra and the municipality of Darebin

is palpable. Those councillors will be held responsible for what they have done, because what they have done is damage local government in this state, they have certainly damaged their own municipality and they are causing harm to citizens of their municipality. These people in these municipalities — in Yarra and Darebin — want to celebrate Australia Day. They want to be proud and they want to celebrate what Australia is. I know that two or three barbecues have already been planned for the steps of the Collingwood town hall and the Richmond town hall for Australia Day. So it will be very interesting to see just how many show up to celebrate the great day in Yarra on 26 January.

I commend Mrs Peulich for bringing this motion to the house. I sincerely hope that all good-minded people, all proud Australians, will support this motion. Certainly it gives me a great deal of pleasure in supporting it, urging that the flag fly high on Australia Day and expressing my pride in being an Aussie.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to Mrs Peulich's motion, which reads:

That this house supports the retention of Australia Day on 26 January as a day to commemorate and celebrate our past, present and future achievements as a nation and encourages all councils to conduct Australia Day citizenship ceremonies on this special day.

When both Yarra and Darebin councils decided in their wisdom to not have that reflection on that particular day, 26 January, in relation to Australia Day, I became quite incensed. I felt that this is typical of a Socialist Left-Greens popular council that sees its main aim in life as being to tear down all the traditional values and cultures that makes this nation great for many of the reasons that Mr Finn has just elaborated on in the last 15 minutes.

I also note Mr Barber's contribution. He believes that the national debate about Australia Day is whether in fact we should be celebrating the day on 26 January. He observed that at many barbecues the debate around the barbecue is, 'Should we be having the public holiday today and should we actually be celebrating what's all good about this country on this very day?'. While most may well be having a discussion with a lamb chop in hand around the summer holidays — because that is traditionally when Australia Day is celebrated — I suspect none of the conversation, certainly among the people that I engage with, would be a debate about whether in fact this was the right day to have that celebration.

I also note the contribution from the Greens this afternoon as part of the business of the day has been about the allocation of football tickets. So with all the national agendas and serious issues around the world at the moment — we have got a madman in North Korea looking to use nuclear bombs on the US, Japan and South Korea — we have got federal Labor totally focused on whether Barnaby Joyce is a citizen of New Zealand or Australia. In fact that took up most of question time today, that debate about whether he was fit to be an acting Prime Minister or even fit to be the member for New England, far less the Deputy Prime Minister. That was Labor's priority today.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister's focus was on what to do about these pensioners and more elderly people who are having to actually go to bed at 4 o'clock in the afternoon because they cannot afford to heat their houses. He was talking about the importance of being able to keep some coal-fired generation in existence to provide stable, reliable and cheap energy for households right across Australia for those who cannot afford the escalating prices in energy and power. Some increases have been up to 300 per cent or 400 per cent because of this mad ideology of a Labor government, particularly here in Victoria — and I will get to that tomorrow — in relation to the renewable energy target of 40 per cent by 2025 and closing down coal-fired generation and keeping the gas underground. We are going to presumably rely on windmills to provide the sort of energy generation that will be required with a population growing at 150 000 per year. It is just total madness.

For the Greens to use their councillors in those two particular councils that have been identified to start stripping away what is good about this country and what is important about the values that we hold and the history that is told to us in relation to white settlement particularly is what I call a national disgrace.

Mr Jennings interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — No, the Greens, if you were listening to my contribution. You just want me to repeat it so that I can waste a bit more time, Mr Jennings. I am up to you; I am on your case. I know what you are trying to do. The reality is that it is not going to change what I will say and what will be recorded in *Hansard* in relation to the way the Greens have presented a case to move Australia Day from 26 January. As I said, the national debate provided by the Greens this afternoon was around whether Richmond or Geelong should have a fair allocation of membership tickets in the upcoming finals. Certainly there was nothing about energy and nothing about what is happening in North Korea or in

fact anything of any sort of national significance about our cultural history.

What I would like Mr Barber to perhaps put his energies to is the teaching of Australian history to our Australians, particularly those going through the early learning years moving up into primary and secondary school education. We learn more about the history of nearly every country in the world bar our own country. I am sure that if people were more educated in what happened in our classical history in relation to not only the white settlement but also the Indigenous settlement they would learn that there was coexistence in the main between our Indigenous populations and our first white settlers in creating what a wonderful nation we have as we see it today. That will not hold into the future if we have continued intervention by groups, particularly from the Socialist Left, that want to strip and take away — as I have just indicated to Mr Jennings, which he did not hear — the historical cultures and values so ably demonstrated by Mr Elasmarr, who talked about diversity and unity in purpose in jointly celebrating Australia Day on 26 January together as a nation.

I noticed even last night, when Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) presented its advertising for Australia Day, there was a section of the community, again aided and abetted by the Greens, saying that this tongue-in-cheek advertisement about promoting lamb — which has been a traditional food source for Australia Day for as long as I can remember and has been ably supported by Sam Kekovich over many years on behalf of the MLA and on behalf of lamb producers like me — this tongue-in-cheek skit shows the importance of a diverse and multicultural group of people engaging in a unified way in the act of having a meal and enjoying the fruits and produce of what Australia has to offer in a congenial and friendly atmosphere. But, oh no, again the do-gooders from the Greens and the left have to try to vilify what was supposed to be an advertisement that was promoting diversity and unity and turn it into something that was actually divisive and —

Mr Jennings — In accordance with history.

Mr RAMSAY — I do not know what history you are talking about Mr Jennings, but I am hopeful it is not the same history that Mr Barber keeps referring to. I think it is a sad case when we have two councils — and I suspect this is what spurred Mrs Peulich to move this motion — that want to denigrate the traditional values, culture and history of this great nation by not wanting to recognise 26 January as Australia Day. As Mr Barber indicated, the states and territories agreed in 1935 that in fact the 26th would be the recognised date of

celebrating Australia Day, and in 1994 it was deemed to be a moment in time to celebrate as a public holiday.

One of the concerns I had was about much of the debate — and it may well have been around Mr Barber's barbecue — apparently being about the historic connections of 26 January. I must say though that I agree with Mr Finn in that I do not think the Greens actually have a lot of barbecues. I am of the mind that perhaps their debates would not be about what Australia Day on 26 January might offer in relation to history but more about how many seats they can gain off Labor in those metro marginal seats currently held by Labor, which the Greens might well think they can take off them.

But as history will tell us, in fact it was Captain Phillip who initially looked at Botany Bay as the berthing place for the First Fleet, but it was rejected and moved to Sydney Cove. It was only a small group of sailors who actually dropped on the beach at Sydney Cove, put the flag up and then celebrated with some rum. That is what I remember of the Australian history that I was taught at school. I suspect that is not the history that is being currently taught in our schools. I think we perhaps need to pay more attention to that, and I certainly encourage members in this chamber to do that.

Mr Jennings interjected.

Mr RAMSAY — Mr Morris will agree with this, being a schoolteacher himself. And I might add, Mr Jennings, that I have two daughters as well as a wife who are schoolteachers, so I am pretty well schooled in what is being taught in schools. I can assure you that the sad fact is honest and true Australian history is not being taught in our schools now. The curriculums are being so filled up with gender neutrality and Safe Schools curriculums in the guise of bullying, which we know is more about transgender and gender neutrality teachings, that no doubt our children and students are becoming more confused about their role in life. The curriculum is far less about what actually happened as part of our Australian history.

But having said all that, I want to congratulate the Prime Minister in taking a very firm position in relation to stripping those two councils of the ability to provide citizenship awards ceremonies on 26 January. It is a great shame for those people who live in those council municipalities that they do not have that opportunity now to celebrate the citizenship awards. As Mr Elasmarr has indicated, it gives us as MPs great pleasure to be able to attend the citizenship awards, and they do not just happen on Australia Day. They are actually being celebrated by ceremonies right through the year. I stand

proudly as a member of Parliament in a small way providing support to the ceremonies, conducted mainly by local councils, in welcoming our new citizens to this country. To have two councils now make the decision that in fact they no longer wish to participate in those ceremonies I think is a great shame, particularly for those new citizens and the citizens generally of those two municipalities. I hope good sense and common sense will prevail. Those councillors might rue the day that in fact they made that decision.

The flag itself is very important to our soldiers who have fought in a multitude of wars. I was reminded of that again as I attended, as many of us do, many ceremonies and memorials for our returned servicemen and those who sacrificed their lives in a variety of wars that we have been engaged in over many generations. Of course there is a very strong attachment to the Australian flag by the servicemen who fought in other countries. I see the Australian flag as pivotal to the celebration of Australia Day and 26 January and to the importance of the day itself.

In summary, despite what the Greens and the Socialist Left —

Mr Jennings — Just remember the Aborigines in your summary.

Mr RAMSAY — Mr Jennings, I have not indicated to you in any form that we should not be aware of some of the travesties that have happened in relation to some of the first settlers engaging with the Indigenous population in the way that they did. I make no excuse for that, bearing in mind it was not always just Indigenous first settlers, if I can use that term, that were inhumanely engaged with. It was also white settlers who were at risk, and unfortunately some were killed through that settlement process. And I have no issue about the Indigenous populations wanting to celebrate in their own way their contribution to this country. As we do at every ceremony now, we always make an acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land on which we have settled. We also pay our respects to the elders past, present and future. In that, in my own way, I always acknowledge the contribution that they have made in the settlement and growth of this country, but I do not see that as being a reason that we should change the date — 26 January — to celebrate what is very important to us in the traditional and cultural sense of Australia Day.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — I will make a short contribution in support of Mrs Peulich's motion in relation to Australia Day and 26 January.

Mr Barber — Give us a history lesson.

Mr MORRIS — Mr Barber, I am actually not going to give you a history lesson. I am just going to say that I have been very fortunate to have conducted many citizenship ceremonies in the past, and I have certainly conducted them on Australia Day. I have found them to be well-celebrated ceremonies and ones that certainly have been well attended, and I might say there have been very few times that I have had a tear in my eye in the various jobs I have been in, but certainly conducting citizenship ceremonies have been times when I have thought about the magnitude of what those who are undertaking citizenship ceremonies are undertaking. To say that I am going to give up the citizenship of the place of my birth and take on the citizenship of a new nation is something that I cannot imagine myself ever doing and can only imagine the enormity of others doing it, so I certainly will respect all who have undertaken such citizenship ceremonies.

Australia Day is a day when I know in western Victoria we like to get together and like to celebrate, and one of those things we like to do on that day is welcome new citizens. I think this is something that we as a state and as a nation should embrace, because it is a great celebration of who we are in the great state of Victoria and of who we are in Australia and as Australians that we can celebrate a day like Australia Day and recognise all of our history — every part of our history — and acknowledge the good and commemorate the less good on such a day as Australia Day. So I certainly endorse Mrs Peulich's motion, and I will leave my contribution at that point.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 30

Bath, Ms	Mikakos, Ms
Bourman, Mr	Morris, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Carling-Jenkins, Dr	Mulino, Mr
Crozier, Ms	O'Donohue, Mr
Dalidakis, Mr	Ondarchie, Mr
Dalla-Riva, Mr	O'Sullivan, Mr
Davis, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Peulich, Mrs
Elasmar, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Finn, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Fitzherbert, Ms	Ramsay, Mr
Gepp, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Leane, Mr	Symes, Ms
Lovell, Ms	Wooldridge, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Young, Mr

Noes, 5

Barber, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Pennicuik, Ms
Dunn, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Springle, Ms
Hartland, Ms	

Motion agreed to.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS**Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18**

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — I rise to speak on the budget papers 2017–18, which raise the budget allocation for police and for the fighting of crime in this state.

Wednesday, 26 July, was a very sad day for all Victorians, because it was a day when it was finally confirmed, if we did not know it already, that the Andrews government had lost control of law and order in this state. On the same day it was revealed that fixing the Metropolitan Remand Centre after the 2015 prisoner riot was going to cost the Victorian taxpayer over \$100 million, a terrifying carjacking took place in Williamstown and three dangerous prisoners escaped from Beechworth prison in my electorate. This day reinforced to all Victorians that the Andrews government had lost its authority when it came to maintaining law and order not just outside our prisons but also within them.

In May, as a result of a number of community members expressing concern about a rise in crime paired with a lack of police numbers in Tatura and Murchison, my colleague the shadow Minister for Police, shadow minister for community safety and shadow Minister for Corrections, Ed O'Donohue, and I hosted a community safety forum in Tatura and also one in Shepparton. The attendance of over 100 residents at the Tatura forum reinforced their concerns about the lack of police numbers at the Tatura station coinciding with a rise in crime in the town. Our forum actually caused a visit to Tatura by the Minister for Police, who claimed that reported crime was in fact down in Tatura.

Well, let us have a look at the latest crime stats for Tatura. Assault offences are up by 30.8 per cent, stalking or threatening behaviour is up by 850 per cent, dangerous acts endangering people are up 33.3 per cent and total crime against the person offences in Tatura have risen by 107.9 per cent in the first four months of 2017 compared to 2016. Burglaries are up by 33.3 per cent, cultivating drug offences are up by 200 per cent, arson is up by 16.7 per cent and justice procedure offences, including breaches of orders, are up by 76 per cent. Total crime in Tatura in 2017 is up 16.8 per cent on last year's figures and has increased by 36.9 per cent since the Andrews government came to office. These figures make a nonsense of the police minister's claims of a drop in crime in Tatura and show that she is clearly out of her depth. Since then, we have had a commitment for a return to strength of five police

officers in Tatura and finally a commitment that it will return to its full strength in January next year. The community is very happy with the outcome that we have been able to achieve by putting pressure on the government.

But the rise in crime is alarming not just in Tatura but also in Shepparton. Assaults in Shepparton rose by 3.3 per cent last year, robbery increased by 55.6 per cent, burglary was up by 5.7 per cent and theft rose by 9.9 per cent. Alarmingly, weapons and explosives offences in Shepparton rose by 50.6 per cent in the past year. Total crime in Shepparton increased by 8.9 per cent compared to 2016, and it has increased by 15.36 per cent since the Andrews government came to power. Mooroopna has also experienced rises in crime. The Andrews government's response to these increases in crime has been to cut uniformed police numbers within the Greater Shepparton police service area. In 2014, 87 uniformed police members were stationed throughout Greater Shepparton — at Mooroopna, Tatura, Murchison, Shepparton and Dookie — and two years later there are only 85 members. Whittlesea is another area that has experienced a rise in crime, up 20.55 per cent under the Andrews government. Now we are seeing reports of the possible closure of the Whittlesea police station and also reports of a reduction in police numbers at the station. Last week the police minister responded to the local paper but failed to confirm that the government will keep the police station open, and the community are extremely concerned about that.

Today is an even more sobering day for the Victorian community, as we see Labor rorts of taxpayer funds reported once again — so crime is also up in the Labor Party. Under this government we have seen the crime of stealing dictaphones from journalists, the rorting of taxpayer funds to pay for staff and the rorting of ministerial entitlements to chauffeur dogs around the state, with Patch and Ted being chauffeured around in the ministerial vehicle, and now we see the rorting of taxpayer funds to pay for Labor Party memberships. This government is a disgrace. They should go back to the people and allow them to elect a decent government in Victoria.

Auditor-General: *Technical and Further Education Institutes: 2016 Audit Snapshot*

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — I rise this afternoon to speak on the Auditor-General's report, *Technical and Further Education Institutes: 2016 Audit Snapshot*. As I do, I would like to talk about some history and then about the current reality of the Andrews Labor government. When the Honourable Steve Herbert first

came into office in November 2014, he made some interesting comments. He said that Labor was going to rescue TAFE; Labor was going to grow the training sector. He said:

I'm determined to grow courses and grow provision of TAFE. That's what we were elected to do and we will do it.

They were going to save TAFE. The reality is vastly different. Despite his promises to grow TAFE, we are seeing the exact opposite happening throughout Victoria, particularly in my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region. In fact the numbers have declined. The number of students in government subsidised training in Victoria fell by almost 66 000 between 2014 and 2015, with 20 000 fewer students enrolled at TAFE than when Labor came to office. There has been a drastic decrease in traineeships as well. The number of student contact hours the government is subsidising has fallen by 35 million hours. We are talking about fairly substantial figures. Members will know, because it has been said before, that there are not any 2016 figures because the minister has not released them. After eight months the government still has not released the full-year results for the training sector.

If we look at enrolments, we see they are in decline, particularly in Gippsland. In 2014 student enrolments numbered 16 450. It has gone down to 14 050, which is a reduction of 2400 students enrolled in Gippsland in my electorate. That is not serving students and young people in regional Victoria at all. The examples across the board in other sectors are similar. TAFE enrolments are certainly the hardest hit. While we are still waiting for the data from the Victorian government, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) released its figures only a few weeks ago in relation to vocational education and training across Australia, and they show that the number of students enrolled in all sections of training, not just government subsidised training, in Victoria has fallen by 2.7 per cent. But critically Victoria is the only mainland state in Australia where student numbers have declined.

The government came out and said, 'We will do a quality blitz on rogue private providers, taking dodgy operators out of the market'. That is fair and that is reasonable; no-one wants to see students not being served well by the registered training organisations that are providing the service. But this is only a fraction of the story. The NCVER data also shows that the number of students in the TAFE sector has dropped by a further 58 000 in the past year alone. That is one-quarter of the students enrolled in TAFE in total.

Just after the election the Andrews Labor government said, 'We will have no more redundancies in TAFE.

None'. The reality is vastly different again. Since Labor came to government almost 1000 ongoing staff positions in TAFE have been lost, and there has been a net loss of 620 jobs across the sector. Federation Training in my electorate has had one of the largest staff reductions, with 167 full-time jobs lost in the past two years. The government is neglecting to provide support for Federation Training, and it is left to fend for itself.

In terms of TAFE finances the government will tell you that all is hunky-dory and that TAFEs are turning a surplus. But when we look deeper we know that the government is propping the sector up with hundreds and hundreds of grants. Seven out of the 12 TAFEs, including Federation Training, actually have a structural deficit. If you strip away the extra cash the government has bailed them out with, there is a structural deficit. In total, \$278 million in cash grants were pumped into the TAFE sector alone to keep it afloat. And what has the Auditor-General said —

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

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources: report 2014–15

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I would like to make a few remarks on the 2014–15 annual report of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and in particular some peculiar practices that I have become aware of in relation to the replacement of assets by United Energy. A constituent of mine, Simon Johnson, showed me a range of documents which raise some very, very strong concerns. He has legitimately acquired a permit in order to build a new home with a business at the front. Unfortunately there is a United Energy power pole, which is a United Energy asset, that is leaning and that, in his assessment although he cannot be absolutely sure, is probably non-compliant because it may be leaning greater than the 5 degrees that is allowed. For those reasons he is unable to proceed.

He was most surprised to hear of a third party, Downer EDI, being involved. I am looking at an article headed 'MP accused of making a picket line "go away" for \$25 000 payment to union'. The article refers to a senior executive of the engineering giant Downer EDI revealing to the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption that the company had made a payment of \$25 000 to the Australian Workers Union shortly after the union disbanded a picket line at Essendon Airport in 2012. So there is a bit of history

there. I understand there is also a bit of history in relation to some works that it is doing on behalf of the government or as a result of the government's goodwill.

To cut a long story short, Mr Johnson has had a number of contacts by representatives of Downer EDI demanding a contribution — first of all it was \$100 000, but that was subsequently whittled down to \$90 000 and then \$70 000 — towards the replacement of the power pole, which is neither his asset nor is it on his land. I have never heard of anything like that in all my life. I have now scoured the annual report, which, let me say, is not particularly illuminating. I would imagine as a result of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission that there would be a substantial backlog in the replacement of assets, and it may well be that companies such as United Energy are cash-strapped and that with the current rise in electricity prices they are limited in terms of being able to pass those costs onto consumers. But I have never heard of anything like this before. In a sense it is almost like extortion that a third party can make demands on behalf of another company for contributions, which they have put in writing, mind you, towards the replacement of an asset that the resident does not own and that is not on his land. Regrettably additional conditions have now been placed on Mr Johnson so he cannot proceed unless that contribution is made.

What I am asking for is that the Special Minister of State, the minister responsible for the integrity regime, refer this matter to the Ombudsman. I believe that there is something improper here and that some light needs to be shone on it. The City of Kingston is not able to shed any light on it, according to my resident. He has had representations made by the local Labor member, which were not to his satisfaction. The minister has been fairly dismissive of this particular event, but I am very, very puzzled as to what legal framework exists for this company, Downer EDI, to be making demands on behalf of United Energy for astronomical amounts of money. What I would like to know is how many other customers have been squeezed for money, how many have actually given money and whether they should be entitled to a refund of that money, because I see no legal basis on which that money should be sought, acquired and not refunded.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — I rise to make some comments on the Victorian state budget papers 2017–18. In doing so, I want to make some commentary surrounding one of the particular projects in Ballarat that this government is attempting to

undertake, and that is the redevelopment of the railway station precinct, which has become an absolute dog's breakfast of a project. Associated with the railway station precinct is the lack of a bus interchange, which the government failed to commit to build with the initial announcement of the redevelopment. The government was eventually shamed into announcing some funding for this project but has not yet detailed how it is that this project will actually be delivered.

We have seen \$5 million allocated for the building of this project, and we understand that it is expected to be delivered sometime next year. There are as yet no plans for how the bus interchange will actually work. There are no plans for the additional traffic needs surrounding the site: how the streets surrounding the railway station precinct are going to be able to handle the buses and the like, how the buses are going to enter the railway station precinct and indeed how the site overall is going to be managed.

The community want answers and rightly expect answers to these very serious questions. They need to understand how it is that the government is going to be able to deliver what looks to be almost unbelievable given the amount of funds allocated. The government needs to come clean. It needs to tell the community how it expects people to be able to live with this bus interchange and indeed how it expects to remediate the surrounding traffic conditions to ensure that they will not negatively impact on the surrounding community.

Related to the bus interchange are the local buses and the absolute shemozzle that the government has made of the bus timetabling and the bus routes in Ballarat. The government went through and changed the bus routes and the bus timetable in Ballarat. As a result of that I have been inundated with bus users who are dismayed and concerned about the impact these changes are having. I have had representations from many in Lake Gardens. Indeed I have some correspondence here from the Lake Gardens Action Group 2, who have drawn my attention to the severe inadequacies of the bus network servicing the good people of Lake Gardens. Similarly I have had representations from many in the Buninyong and Delacombe communities, among others, who are just appalled by the way the government has gone about the changes to the bus timetable and routes and their negative impact on the community.

I have not heard one person who is pleased with these changes; however, I have heard from many people who are absolutely dismayed by the way the government has gone about this process. The Ballarat council, which is doing an exceptional job advocating for the needs of the

Ballarat community, recently decided to ask the government to go through and review the shemozzle that is currently the Ballarat bus service. I applaud the Ballarat council; it is doing an exceptional job in standing up for the Ballarat community.

I know there may be some in the state government who want to muzzle and try to censor the Ballarat council from sharing its views and concerns about the way this government is going about these projects. Whether it be the railway station precinct that is being forced upon the Ballarat community, despite the government breaking many, many of the commitments it made prior to the 2014 election, the Ballarat council is very strongly advocating for what its constituents and residents are telling it, and I applaud the council for that. I think it is disgraceful for any state MP to attempt to censor a local government and attempt to get councils to not advocate for their local communities. It is a disgraceful act and one that should not be endorsed by anybody at all.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — I also want to speak on the state budget papers 2017–18. It is not about what is in the budget but rather what is not in the budget. The budgetary figure I particularly want to talk about is the allocation of funds for the government to buy renewable auction certificates. It was only recently reported that the government has now committed out-of-budget funds of up to \$300 million to buy renewable auction certificates. We know that the government wants a renewable energy target set at 40 per cent by 2025. We know that currently the government has a target of 15 per cent. To reach 40 per cent in only eight years would require up to \$5 billion of budgetary funding in order to provide the sorts of subsidies the government is indicating through this out-of-budget figure in relation to the renewable auction certificates.

We know the Mount Gellibrand wind farm, which I am very familiar with, has cost the government in the order of about \$225 million in renewable certificates to Acciona. Given the kilowatts that wind farm produces, we can conclude that for a renewable energy target of around 40 per cent in 2025 they are going to require a forward estimate budget of somewhere in the vicinity of \$3 billion, and that will only accommodate enough power to produce just the 6000 megawatts that will be required, specifically with wind and to a lesser extent with solar, in relation to meeting the target. When you take into account the loss of Hazelwood, which is in the vicinity of 1140 megawatts, the requirement for an additional 6000 megawatts and that there are about

676 turbines currently operating in Victoria with about 1026 approved, we are looking at a requirement in the vicinity of an extra 3000 turbines to be constructed across principally the western Victoria region, given that it appears it is most favoured by the wind farm operators.

As Mr Morris knows, given he is located fairly close to the first wind farm here in Victoria, in Waubra, that will create a great deal of anxiety for many of the communities in regional Victoria. The interesting thing I now find is that the planning approval for 3000 new turbines will rest principally with the minister, whereas before there was actually local consultation and engagement through local municipalities that had the relevant authority status for providing permits for wind farms. Now under the proposed legislation it reverts back to the minister having sole authority to grant permits for wind farms.

Apart from the philosophical disaster of being totally reliant on wind energy to provide energy generation for this state — and we have already seen the follies of that ideological pathway in South Australia — we are already seeing the potential for summer blackouts because of the loss of Hazelwood and potentially the lack of domestic gas supplies to provide supplementary power to a coal-fired power station. We already know that in summer many of the 676 wind turbines in the state will not actually generate any significant power. It will be intermittent; it certainly will not be baseload because there is no battery capacity. With the present fire season indicators showing that Victoria is potentially facing one of the worst fire seasons it has ever faced given fuel loads, we may well not have sufficient energy generation to provide stable, reliable and baseload power to the state to provide even the most basic essential services.

In this budget there is no allocation for the \$300 million that the government has committed to and there is no indication that it will be able to fund the \$3 billion to meet the red tape to 2025.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise to make a statement on the state budget 2017–18. I want to draw the Council's attention to the output initiatives relating to transport and in particular the funding that is being provided for the sky rail between Caulfield and Dandenong — or the removal of level crossings using a technique that nobody expected.

I am in possession of a freedom of information request that I made many months ago which relates to the Community Tender Advisory Panel (CTAP). It contains the terms of reference, detailed documents concerning the sky rail and the minutes of the Community Tender Advisory Panel. The panel was chaired by Steve Dimopoulos, the state member for Oakleigh in the Assembly. Present at many of its meetings was Brett Summers, the project director of the Level Crossing Removal Authority; a government probity officer; and technical project team members. A number of community members were also present, as well as a group called Papaya Consulting, which provided a facilitator for the group.

Unfortunately the government has seen fit to black out huge sections of the freedom of information request. This has obviously been funded through the state budget as part of the sky rail project. The names of the community members on the CTAP have been suppressed in this document. It is also clear that key aspects have been suppressed too, and I will come to those in a minute.

One of the most concerning aspects is that this Community Tender Advisory Panel was told the following directly in writing:

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

That is on page 2 of the minutes from the meeting of 17 August, one of their earliest meetings.

Mrs Peulich — Another consultative mirage.

Mr DAVIS — Yes, a sham consultation process. The community were not aware of the community tender advisory group that had been hand-picked by the state government. This is concerning. On page 3 the document says:

Staff were engaging. Sessions weren't well communicated — made own flyers to promote sessions.

They were told that the session times and dates did not get distributed with the brochure.

All of this is in hard, cold documents — the minutes of the CTAP. It is very clear that this was not a transparent process and it was not an honest process; it was a sham consultation —

Mrs Peulich — It was a Labor process.

Mr DAVIS — Yes, indeed. It takes me back to the time when former members of this chamber conducted consultation around the Windsor Hotel. That is what it

reminds me of. The urban design framework that was put out was again not something that the community had the level of input into that it should have had.

It is interesting when you move through these minutes to see many sections blacked out for a number of pages. If you look at pages 2 and 3 of the minutes from the Clarinda Community Centre meeting held on 14 September 2015, all of the key messages and areas of agreement on the CTAP group discussion right over to page 4 are simply blacked out and redacted. These are massive removals of information. A huge section from pages 112 through 125 has been redacted on the same matter discussed at that meeting. Pages 127 and 128 have also been redacted. There are huge redactions. Page 130 is gone. I note that later material, transcribed CTAP feedback, is a blank page. Then you move over to the next page, and pages 137 to 163 are all redacted in full. None of that information is provided as part of the FOI process.

This is a secretive process. It is a process that is not transparent. It is a process that is not open. It is a sham in every regard. The suppression of names of community members on this panel is extraordinary. They are there to represent the community. Nobody knows who they are except for a couple of names that have leaked out. Jacinta Allan and Daniel Andrews have put forward one of the worst processes we have seen in the history of public consultation.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the house do now adjourn.

Goulburn Valley Health radiotherapy services

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Health, and it relates to the large number of Goulburn Valley cancer patients forced to travel to receive radiotherapy treatment. Minister, will you acknowledge the large number of Goulburn Valley cancer patients who need to travel for radiotherapy treatment and give a commitment to establish and fund appropriate radiotherapy services at Goulburn Valley Health?

Goulburn Valley Health is the main referral health service for the Hume region and services an immediate population of 107 000 people. This number is expected to increase to 116 000 people by 2021. Seventy per cent of the hospital's primary catchment lives in Greater Shepparton, but a significant number of patients also

come from a secondary catchment consisting of Strathbogie, Moira and Campaspe shires.

Recently in this place I conveyed the story of two of my constituents, Shepparton father and son Ken and Chris Keating, who were both diagnosed with different forms of cancer within months of each other. Because no radiotherapy treatment is available at Goulburn Valley Health, both had to travel away from their home and the much-needed family support to receive the treatment they needed. We always knew their story was all too familiar for cancer patients in the Goulburn Valley, but the latest statistics on the number of patients travelling outside of the Goulburn Valley Health catchment to receive life-saving radiotherapy proves the need for local services and shows the contempt the Andrews Labor government holds for cancer patients in the Goulburn Valley.

Over a two-year period of the 2011–12 and 2012–13 financial years a total of 614 cancer patients from the Goulburn Valley Health catchment were forced to travel away from home to receive radiotherapy treatment. Two hundred and four of these people went into the private health system and 411 utilised public health treatment facilities. Two hundred and twenty-six patients travelled to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Bendigo and another 144 travelled to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in East Melbourne. A further 168 patients travelled to one of the three private treatment facilities. Over the period of these two years, 297 Greater Shepparton residents travelled away from friends and family to receive life-saving radiotherapy treatment. Moira residents accounted for 244 of the 614, and 73 patients from Strathbogie were forced to travel long distances for treatment. It is estimated that the total number of patients from the Goulburn Valley has increased each year since 2013, making the need for local radiotherapy services even more apparent.

It is not just the compelling numbers that tell the story but also local health professionals. In reporting the story of the Keatings the local paper interviewed the CEO of Goulburn Valley Health, Trevor Saunders, who was quoted as saying there was ‘strong community support for radiotherapy services in Shepparton’ and that they would help:

... avoid situations where people have to travel to Bendigo and metropolitan hospitals for these services on a regular basis, particularly when they are critically ill.

Minister, the statistics, the health professionals and the community are all telling you the same thing. So I ask you: will you acknowledge the large amount of Goulburn Valley cancer patients that need to travel for radiotherapy treatment and give a commitment to

establish and fund appropriate radiotherapy services at Goulburn Valley Health?

Ageing strategy

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. The action I am seeking is in relation to Victoria’s ageing population and the lack of an ageing strategy. Last week the minister announced the 35th Victorian Seniors Festival, which celebrates the contribution of the more than 1 million Victorians over the age of 60. In the minister’s press release he indicated that his government is:

... working towards an age-friendly and inclusive Victoria for all seniors.

In acknowledging that our population is ageing and that as a consequence our labour supply will contract and our expenditure on health and aged care will increase, simply ‘working towards an age-friendly’ Victoria is not enough. By 2050 the number of people aged between 65 and 85 will double in Victoria and the number of people aged over 85 will quadruple.

New South Wales and South Australia both have strategic plans in place to support the ageing and older workforce and greater senior participation, and these include addressing things like health and wellbeing, working and retiring, housing choices, transport and communities. The ageing strategy that I am seeking is one that goes across all departments, and I ask the minister to publish an ageing strategy in the government’s term of office. There was not one at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

Foster carers

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Families and Children, the Honourable Jenny Mikakos, and I am pleased she is here tonight because she might be able to respond to my action and my comments. The action I seek from the minister is that she guarantee payment of foster carers and respite families, with a one-month cycle, and I will explain why. In my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region, foster care families perform an amazing task and a service to the most vulnerable in our communities — children who have not had the full benefit of proper parental care. Sadly these children are often damaged by past unacceptable parenting, and they need a stable, loving and supportive environment.

Our foster care volunteers become the mainstay of a child’s life, and in effect they function to return that child’s life to normal. An important factor in providing

home-based care for vulnerable children is to be able to provide that safe and nurturing environment and to do so by also being supported themselves. Many carers are highly frustrated with the system, including the role of the Department of Health and Human Services.

One carer recently told me that ‘the system is broken’. This is a well-worn phrase and one that we do hear on occasion, but this carer definitely feels that it is true. Let us look at why. In accordance with the *Victorian Handbook for Foster Carers*, the care allowance contributes to the day-to-day costs incurred while providing care for a child in their home. Daily expenses can include medical bills, activities, education, clothing and items that a carer often finds that they need to pay for. These expenses are in addition to food and household provisions.

Recently Ms Crozier and I attended a meeting in my office and talked to a number of Gippsland foster care families. One foster carer provides regular respite care for a young teenage boy and has done so for a number of years. She was only paid last week; since January she had not been paid for eight months of the year for her service.

Another wonderful foster carer also had a similar experience. She was not paid for seven and a half months, and although she put all of her details in on a regular basis the money was actually incorrect and was short. Another person, who was a full-time carer of a little baby from when she was a few months old, was not reimbursed for six months of the year — six months. Now all of these people tell me that they do not do it for the money, but we need to value these foster care families. We need to respect them, and I ask the minister to guarantee that these people will be paid on a monthly basis rather than having to go cap in hand to actually receive some return for their services inside eight months.

Eastern Freeway

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Any driver who has the misfortune to commute to work on the Eastern Freeway can tell you that it is congested every morning, with the congestion particularly bad past the Melba Tunnel and Bulleen Road and then queuing for sometimes more than a kilometre back from Hoddle Street. VicRoads has found that average speeds are as low as 9 kilometres per hour.

The long-term solution to this problem is of course mass transit. For over 100 years we have been waiting

for Doncaster rail, yet government after government prefers to invest in roads, only to create more traffic. Yet another road project has sprung up with the overpromising name of Streamlining Hoddle Street. In the absence of mass transit this project will not fix congestion on the Eastern Freeway. All it will do is help people get on and off the Eastern Freeway faster so they can spend more time in bigger traffic jams. The only welcome aspect of its implementation at long last is the dedicated 24-hour bus lanes between the Eastern Freeway and Victoria Street.

It is imperative that future mass transit options are not excluded by this project. The action I seek is that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety preserve the median strips of the Eastern Freeway, Alexandra Parade and Hoddle Street to allow for future mass transit options, such as bus rapid transit or, at long last, Doncaster rail.

South Yarra Primary School

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My matter for the adjournment debate tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Education, and again it concerns South Yarra Primary School. Last Thursday I attended a large public meeting at South Yarra Primary School. I estimate around 100 parents were present as well as the school council president and members of the school council. The assembled meeting formed a working party to strongly advocate for additional resources at the school. To refresh the minister’s memory — and I have brought this to his attention a number of times, including in a constituency question today — there is massive growth in enrolments at South Yarra primary — up 80 students this year, and the last figure I heard was that 94 additional students will be enrolling next year. Obviously this is driven by population growth and density. The government has a densification plan, but you have to put the infrastructure in behind it, and South Yarra Primary School is suffering.

I urgently seek that the minister make available three portables to provide additional classrooms for the additional students. If those are not provided, there is great concern that the library and drama facilities and other facilities at the school will be lost because they will have to be turned into classrooms for the additional students. In many respects this is a crisis that needs to be dealt with now. Additionally I have asked the minister on other occasions in this chamber to begin a longer term master planning process to deliver new buildings on the site and to look at the capacity of the site. This is one of the smallest — possibly the smallest, some tell me — primary school site in the state. You

cannot keep packing in more and more kids without additional capacity and additional facilities.

This urgent request for three additional portables is something the minister will need to address. I have already asked in a separate contribution for the minister to come and visit the school community, and I think that would be a very useful education experience — if I can use that phrase — for him, because he would learn about the challenges faced by an inner-city school of this type, where the population density is being massively increased. This will only get worse. The government has removed some of the caps on density in neighbourhood residential zones and general residential zones, so we will see more and more families and development packed into this area in forthcoming years. There will inevitably be more children enrolling, so we need to plan for additional capacity. I am seeking urgent action from the minister to provide three more classrooms for South Yarra Primary School, and I reinforce my earlier request for him to visit the school.

Energy supply

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the action I seek is for the minister not to close down any more coal-fired powered generators and to look, where possible and where it is safe, at unlocking some of the gas reserves we have onshore to supplement our energy needs. I request this on the basis that the Andrews government's reckless drive to a renewable target of 40 per cent by 2025 will change the landscape of regional Victoria, particularly western Victoria, which I represent, forever. The once tranquil hinterlands and pastures of food production land will be churned into a seething mass of industrial machinery that will, as it is constructed, start to choke the traditional use of the western plains and turn them into a concrete and steel mecca.

Not content with having a sensible energy mix of coal, gas and renewables, the Andrews government has been pushed by ideological latte-drinking metro-living greenies to protect its Labor-held seats. The Premier wants to pursue a state renewable energy target (RET) that will lock underground a plentiful supply of cheap, reliable coal and gas. In its place he will pollute the aboveground landscape with concrete and steel wind turbines, which will only provide intermittent power and only when the wind blows.

The scale of the impact of this dangerous and reckless ideologically driven policy needs examination. It pays

no regard to a national approach and no thought to the cost of power for the consumer or the cost to the taxpayer of subsidies. Currently Victoria has 676 wind turbines operating mainly in western Victoria, producing approximately 1265 megawatts. There are currently 1023 approved wind turbines awaiting construction, which are expected to produce 2659 megawatts. Between the constructed and approved turbines there will be a total of 1699 turbines spread across regional Victoria, but that is not even half of what will be required.

If you use the Australian Energy Market Regulator's 2017 report, the government intends and needs to purchase 5400 megawatts of renewable generation to reach its 2025 target. This will overcome the loss of the Hazelwood power station's 1600 megawatts. A rough calculation would then suggest regional Victoria would need to host 3565 wind turbines, mostly in western Victoria, to produce the power required to meet the RET. To put that in a landscape scale, the Andrews government would populate western Victoria with five times more turbines than are currently operating at a cost of \$3 billion to the Victorian taxpayer without any certainty that it will provide reliable power generation, drop power prices or have any effect on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is too big a price for Victoria to pay, and that is why I am seeking the action of the minister to give a commitment to this Parliament that there will be no more closures of coal-fired power stations and that she will look at extracting gas reserves on shore where it is safe to do so.

Hume City Council

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Local Government, and it concerns an issue that has been raised with me by a constituent in Sunbury. The complaint involves a parking infringement issued for a vehicle that was actually parked on the property of this constituent. To say that the constituent is unimpressed would be somewhat of an understatement because the car was actually parked well off the street and on the property, as I said, of this particular constituent. The Hume City Council officer has gone onto this constituent's property and booked his car and then claimed it was on the street. I know, as indeed we all know, that Hume council does not have a huge regard for the people of Sunbury, much less the Sunbury township itself, but for this to happen is, to say the very least, both baffling and amusing.

Having had an experience myself some years ago, I know it is illegal for cars to be parked on nature strips. I do not know why that is the case, but it is. But for

someone to park a car on their front lawn, well within their property boundary, and to be booked for that seems to me a total outrage. It is something that I believe the minister needs to look at. It seems to me that the officer from Hume council has significantly abused his position. The council has rejected my constituent's complaints and appeals. We now have a situation where I believe an individual is being persecuted — I do not think 'persecuted' is too strong a word — for daring to park his vehicle on his own land. To my way of thinking that is insane.

I am asking the minister to conduct an inquiry into this matter — I am very happy to provide the details to the minister — to get to the bottom of this and see if Hume council has indeed abused its position in this regard, and to provide justice for my constituent in Sunbury. This is a matter that I believe strikes at the very core of private property rights in the state. I think people should be able to park their car on their own property without fear of being booked. I ask the minister to investigate.

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, Acting President, in relation to Mr Finn's adjournment, I think the matter he raised on behalf of his constituent is obviously a very valid one and is a matter of concern to his constituent, but he asked that the Minister for Local Government conduct an inquiry into a local parking infringement issue. I would think that this matter would probably fall well outside the ability of the minister to investigate. It really is a local government issue, and I am just seeking some guidance about this. I would have thought this matter really should be outside the minister's responsibilities.

Mr Finn — On the point of order, Acting President, as I understand it the Minister for Local Government is responsible for local government. As this is a local government matter, surely it is her responsibility. The fact of the matter is that local government is a statutory responsibility of state government. She has a legal responsibility for what happens in the local government area, and that is what has happened on this occasion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — I do not uphold the point of order. The minister is the Minister for Local Government and obviously has responsibility for local government issues. I think it is a reasonable adjournment request, and it should go to the Minister for Local Government for consideration.

Bayside bay trail

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The matter that I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Mr Donnellan, in

another place. I have raised this matter on a few occasions at the behest of the now Mordialloc Liberal candidate, Geoff Gledhill —

Ms Mikakos — All your advocacy is on instruction.

Mrs PEULICH — Oh, and I am so obedient! It is a matter that he has taken up on behalf of the community for some time: the design for the completion of the bay trail as it impacts on the Kingston council. He is also a Kingston councillor and former mayor.

In fact there has been a huge backlash by the local community against the proposals by the Labor councillors and the Labor-leaning deputy mayor, Rosemary West, who cannot accept the conclusions of a democratic process, a very extensive consultation, as well as some 3500 petitioners saying that they want the bay trail completed without the narrowing of Beach Road — and they do so for a good reason. Not only would the narrowing of Beach Road place local residents at a significant disadvantage in terms of car parking but it would also affect pedestrians — not just local pedestrians but visitors to the beach — as well as local passing traffic and traffic that uses Beach Road, including cyclists. It seems extraordinary that there would be anyone who would think that narrowing Beach Road was actually going to improve the safety and wellbeing of its users.

This failure to accept the democratic process has seen Cr West, supported by the Labor councillors, embark on this campaign against the local community. Disturbingly they seem to have now won over the minister, who to date has been saying, 'I will take the advice of VicRoads' — and VicRoads has been very sensible to date. It appears now that he may well backflip and endorse the narrowing of Beach Road. Cr Gledhill, who is also the candidate for Mordialloc, wants an assurance, on behalf of 3500 petitioners, that the minister will review all of those decisions before he takes a decision at the behest of a clutch of councillors who cannot accept the democratic process and the extensive community consultation on this very important issue, which does need resolution.

Belmont High School

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — A few weeks ago the Assembly member for South Barwon and I went to our mutual high school reunion. We were in the same year at Belmont High School, which until the last redivision had been in the electorate of South Barwon for many, many years.

It has always been a terrific school. It opened in 1955, and today it is one of the largest in the Geelong region. It draws students from its immediate area as well as a large number from other areas of the city and beyond. Certainly when I was a kid many students bussed in from the Otways. Old friends of mine now make sure that they live in the school zone for their children so that they can also go to Belmont High School, which achieves consistently strong Victorian certificate of education and NAPLAN results.

There has been a steady increase in the number of students in recent years, and I believe this is set to continue. When I was there, there were around 800 students; today there are 1200. The school's strategic plan states that there is significant demand for places from a wider area than Belmont and Highton. So I was surprised to learn from one of my former teachers that the school library is currently unusable because of a problem with excessive mould beneath the floor. It is unsafe for students and teachers, and the library has needed to be closed, presumably on health and safety grounds.

I spent hours in that library — some of them well spent, some of them not — and I know how important it is for schoolkids to have access to all the information and learning, both in books and online, that modern libraries provide. It is not clear how long the library will remain closed. While it is closed I understand there are no library facilities at all for the school. I visited the school the next day, and sure enough the library was closed and literally had tape around it that said, 'Danger'. I understand that it has been like this for some time and that it is unclear when this might be fixed. This is especially concerning with the end of the year approaching and, with that, final assessments and exams.

Despite the closure of the library, in many ways the school was very similar to when I was there in the 1980s. As my former maths teacher told me, the same portables that the member for South Barwon and I used are actually still there; they have just been moved to the other side of the school and painted. The large cafeteria that doubled as a hall was demolished a few years ago to make way for a new building, but the cafeteria was never replaced. Today a portable actually serves as the cafeteria for 1200 kids. I have not seen that, and I have no idea how that could actually work on a practical basis.

It was clear to me that the school buildings have not been maintained as well as the school's academic excellence or its reputation in the community. Everywhere there were what looked to me like bandaid

solutions for buildings, but my immediate concern is the library. The action I am seeking from the minister is the immediate repair of the school library, including full funding for this work to happen, so that there are library facilities for students as soon as possible.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, Acting President, I am just not sure how to raise this, but there are in fact no Labor members present other than the minister herself. To be honest, I think this is a concern.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — What is your point of order, Mr Davis?

Mr Davis — My point of order is that the Labor Party appears to have deserted the chamber and —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Mr Davis, you could ask for the state of the house to be considered, but I do not believe that is a point of order.

Mr Davis — I could ask for the state of the house to be considered, although I am not wanting to have adjournments ruled out and thereby deprive local communities of the representation. It may be that the Labor Party has things to worry about today and has meetings or something of that nature and —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Thank you, Mr Davis. That is not a point of order.

Responses

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I am going to respond to the adjournment matters, but I do make the point in responding to these matters that there are currently only five members of the Liberal Party here. We do not know where the rest of them are. They may well be engaged in other activities, including dining with friends of theirs that we know have some very colourful associations in the community.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms MIKAKOS — Well, you wanted to go there.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Minister, are you responding to the adjournment matters?

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Could we just have some order, please, and let the minister respond.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, Acting President. Tonight I have received adjournment matters from Ms Lovell directed to the Minister for Health, from Ms Patten directed to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, from Ms Dunn directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, from Mr Davis directed to the Minister for Education, from Mr Ramsay directed to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, from Mr Finn directed to the Minister for Local Government, from Mrs Peulich directed to Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and from Ms Fitzherbert directed to the Minister for Education. I will forward those matters on to those relevant ministers, and they will be responded to in due course.

Ms Bath raised a matter for me this evening, and I propose to respond to that matter now. The issue that she raised related to the issue of payments for foster carers, but I think she also referred to permanent carers in the initial part of her adjournment matter. She referred to a number of individuals that she claimed had not received the correct payment. It is very difficult for me to respond on specific matters, because I have no details at all of an identifying nature. I would certainly encourage Ms Bath to provide me with those names and details, and I would be very happy to look into these matters further.

The point that I do make to Ms Bath more broadly, however, is that since the Andrews Labor government have been in office we have put in place a significant investment to support our carers, in particular our foster carers, and we have embarked upon very significant reforms to overhaul our child protection and out-of-home care system. In fact I have spoken in this house on a number of occasions about the great admiration that I have for our foster carers.

Since the 2015–16 budget, we have provided funding of \$116 million to meet the need for additional home-based care placements, including funding for caregiver payments and client expenses. In our first budget in 2015–16 we provided \$31.3 million over four years as the first increase in a decade for foster carer payments. This benefited our foster carers and our kinship carers as well as our permanent carers.

In the 2016 budget there was a further investment, and I in fact went beyond that in making an announcement in September last year of funding of \$19.2 million to provide increased support for carers and children. This related to funding for extraordinary expenses that carers can incur, such as medical costs and transport, counselling costs and childcare costs — those types of expenses — as well as, as part of that package, funding

for additional training opportunities for our carers. This has been particularly important because carers of course need to be properly equipped to deal with traumatised children. The training that is now being offered to carers includes being able to attend group sessions or podcasts or training on things like trauma and other issues that might arise with children in their care.

We have also established new care advisory groups in each department division that are now commencing their second 18-month term of operation. This provides carers with an opportunity to come together and share experiences and also support each other and learn from each other about additional supports that might be available to them.

We also introduced in 2015 targeted care packages for the first time. They are designed to ensure that children leaving residential care and going into foster care or other home-based care placements are provided with wraparound and tailored supports that are relevant to their particular needs. This has meant that as of 30 July this year 405 targeted care packages have been created, enabling these children to access home-based care opportunities such as foster care. I should also add that the budget this year also provided a further \$59.6 million commitment for almost 2000 home-based care placements and an additional 100 targeted care packages as well.

I can assure the member that our government is working very hard to overhaul the out-of-home care system to make sure that vulnerable children do get the support that they need. I make the point to the member that this being Child Protection Week I have been very pleased to talk in the house about the recruitment that we have underway for the biggest ever expansion of our child protection workforce, with 450 additional child protection staff funded in our budget this year. This will also mean that our carers and children in care are able to receive further support and attention. I can assure the member and her constituents that I am determined to do everything possible to make sure that the system does work better.

We are sadly seeing more and more children coming into out-of-home care every year as the community becomes more aware of issues around abuse and neglect. We have more reporting of cases because of issues highlighted by Australia's first family violence royal commission and by issues highlighted by the royal commission underway into institutional child abuse. These issues are leading to more reports, and sadly the demand is increasing.

I certainly want to encourage more members of our community to take up the great rewards and challenges of being a foster carer. That means we all need to work harder to make sure that these carers are in fact supported and feel that their issues are addressed.

Ms Bath — And paid inside eight months.

Ms MIKAKOS — So I do encourage the member to provide me with further details of these matters. The member referred to delays about specific payments. Without the details of that it is very difficult for me to make an assessment of these matters, but I am aware that when these issues have been raised with me in the past there have been issues around inadequate information provided by carers in terms of getting the reimbursements of the extraordinary expenses, but I am very much prepared, as I have indicated to the member, to look into these matters further.

As I have said to the member and to other members who have raised these matters in the house before, it can actually be a more efficient process to raise these issues with me directly out of the house or with my staff, because we can look into these issues very quickly and seek to provide some advice back around these matters. As I have indicated, I am happy to look into these matters further — not knowing the details of it — but I can assure Ms Bath's constituents that we are working very hard to make the system one that is supportive of the needs of both children in care and the carers that look after them in a very selfless manner, I should add.

I also have 17 written responses to adjournment matters that will be distributed to members.

House adjourned 6.15 p.m.