

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Wednesday, 8 March 2017**

**(Extract from book 5)**

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## **The Lieutenant-Governor**

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

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(from 10 November 2016)

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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
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Minister for Planning .....	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary .....	Ms M. Thomas, MP

### Legislative Council committees

**Privileges Committee** — Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, 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 Elasmr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

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

# participating members

### Legislative Council select committees

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

### Joint committees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee** — (*Council*): Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O’Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

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

### Heads of parliamentary departments

*Assembly* — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

*Council* — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

*Parliamentary Services* — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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**Deputy President:**

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**Deputy Leader of the Government:**

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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 <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>1</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew <sup>4</sup>	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 <sup>3</sup>	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	VILJ
Elasmarr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 15 April 2015

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 27 May 2016

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>4</sup> Appointed 12 October 2016

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;  
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;  
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;  
SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs



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**Wednesday, 8 March 2017**

**The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 9.36 a.m. and read the prayer.**

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! This morning I was disconcerted when I came into the chamber because I saw a fashion statement that is actually not acceptable in the Parliament, particularly one of the two scarves being worn by members. I note that Mrs Peulich is also wearing a scarf; what team is that?

**Mrs Peulich** — Team Peulich.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Mr Ondarchie has also unsettled me this morning. Nonetheless, he is drawing attention to the need to recognise women's sports and the exceptional athletes participating in various sports, some of whom were on the front steps of Parliament House today as part of International Women's Day. One of the comments I made, which I am sure many members will share, was that it is fantastic to see that women's sport is no longer a single column of four or five paragraphs but in fact is starting to get good coverage in the back pages of the media. That is a really positive thing. I thank Mr Ondarchie for unsettling me; and Mrs Peulich is wearing a wonderful scarf.

**PETITIONS**

**Following petitions presented to house:**

**North-east link**

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Banyule, Nillumbik and Victoria draws to the attention of the house that serious traffic congestion is affecting the amenity and safety of residents in Banyule and Nillumbik due to the lack of the north-east link. These roads include Main Road, Bolton Street, Fitzsimons Lane, Rosanna Road, Greensborough Highway, Yan Yean and Plenty Roads.

The north-east link is the final connection between the Metropolitan Ring Road (M80) and the Eastern Freeway/EastLink (M3) and is locally known as the 'missing link'.

The petitioners therefore request the Legislative Council of Victoria to urge the government to immediately plan, fund and construct the north-east link without further delay.

**By Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (63 signatures).**

**Laid on table.**

**Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan).**

**Youth justice centres**

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws attention to the Legislative Council that the residents and council of the City of Wyndham were never consulted about the Andrews Labor government's unfair decision to build a prison in Werribee South for violent youth thugs. Due to the recent mass escape from Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre, the following violent crime spree and the way the Andrews Labor government has lost control of crime in our community, we are seriously concerned at the risk to our families and our children, especially in Werribee South, Point Cook, Werribee, Hoppers Crossing, Wyndham Vale, Laverton, Tarneit, Williams Landing and Truganina.

The petitioners therefore request that local members Tim Pallas MP, Jill Hennessy MP, Minister Jenny Mikakos and Premier Daniel Andrews reverse this unfair decision that puts our community in danger.

**By Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (372 signatures).**

**Laid on table.**

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

**PAPERS**

**Laid on table by Clerk.**

Auditor-General's Report on Managing Public Sector Records, March 2017 (*Ordered to be published*).

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

Alpine Planning Scheme — Amendment C38.

Baw Baw Planning Scheme — Amendment C89 (Part 2).

Colac Otway Planning Scheme — Amendment C92.

Melbourne and Moonee Valley Planning Schemes — Amendment GC40.

Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme — Amendment C227.

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme — Amendments C272 and C328 (Part 2).

Latrobe Planning Scheme — Amendment C90.

Melbourne Planning Scheme — Amendments C288, C290 and C310.

Monash Planning Scheme — Amendment C132.

Mount Alexander Planning Scheme — Amendment C81.

Port Phillip Planning Scheme — Amendment C146.

Stonnington Planning Scheme — Amendments C247 and C253.

Surf Coast Planning Scheme — Amendment C113.

Swan Hill Planning Scheme — Amendment C71.

Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme — Amendment C157.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Country Court Act 1958 — No. 5.

Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 — No. 4.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

### Membership

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! At this juncture I will read a letter that has been sent to me. It states:

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation from the joint investigatory Accountability and Oversight Committee.

I wish to express my gratitude to the committee chair, Mr Neil Angus, deputy chair Ms Jaclyn Symes and other members for their support. I commend the committee for the professional and collegiate manner in which we operate.

In addition, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the secretariat executive officer, Mr Sean Coley, research officer Mr Matt Newington and administrative officer Ms Esma Poskovic. Their exemplary service and friendly smiles, at each and every meeting, are gratefully appreciated.

This letter is signed by Melina Bath, a member for Eastern Victoria Region, and the date of the letter is 7 March.

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

That Mr O'Sullivan be appointed to the Accountability and Oversight Committee.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MINISTERS STATEMENTS

### TAFE funding

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) — I rise to update the house on the Andrews government's Stronger TAFE Fund program, for which I announced a total of \$24.3 million in funding over three years at regional TAFEs last week. On Tuesday I had the pleasure of joining the member for Bendigo West in the other place, Maree Edwards, at Bendigo Kangan Institute to announce \$12 million of Stronger TAFE funding. Whilst at the campus I also announced

\$1.7 million from the Andrews Labor government's TAFE Rescue Fund to kickstart the development of a detailed feasibility study and masterplan for the revitalisation of the Bendigo city campus.

On Wednesday I joined my colleague in this house, a member for Northern Victoria Region, Jaclyn Symes, at GOTAFE in Shepparton to announce \$6.9 million of Stronger TAFE funding. This funding will help GOTAFE's campuses in Wangaratta, Benalla and Seymour. I also had the opportunity to tour GOTAFE's Skills and Jobs Centre, one of 30 across Victoria. The centre has been involved in GOTAFE's youth unemployment program, a fantastic program set up to tackle high youth unemployment in Hume.

Finally, I also announced \$5.4 million for Wodonga TAFE as part of the Stronger TAFE Fund. Unlike the coalition, which cut hundreds of millions of dollars from the training sector and ignored regional Victoria and industry needs, we are working to make industry-relevant training accessible to every Victorian. This funding will ensure that Victorian TAFEs have the resources needed to address industry skill gaps, deliver new innovative training and help grow enrolments across the state. It will allow TAFEs to focus on what they really do best, and that is training students.

### International Women's Day

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — It is International Women's Day today, and so I wish all members a happy International Women's Day and take this opportunity to update the house on a number of fabulous things that women in agriculture are doing. Women in agriculture are not just helping to shape the agenda, they are setting it in their own right. We are consistently seeing more young women than men enrolling in a degree in agriculture, and I think we can all look forward to seeing even more young Victorian women entering leadership roles and taking this important sector forward.

Today marks the announcement of finalists in the 2017 Victorian Rural Women's Award. This year's finalists include Catherine Jenkins from South Purrumbete, who wants to complete a feasibility study and develop an Australian dairy women's network; Kirsten Abernethy from West Melbourne, who wants to build a platform for women in fishing to focus on people development and capacity building; Lisa Brassington from Frankston South, who wants to reduce on-farm waste and lost income caused by waterbirds and bats; and Joelene Williams from Lake Boga, who wants to attend the International Conference on Area-wide Management of Insect Pests and apply what she learns to help develop

the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Industry Development Committee's regional action plan. The winner will be announced here at Parliament House on Wednesday, 22 March 2017.

The Andrews Labor government is also very proud to support Museums Victoria's Invisible Farmer project, which is being launched today. Invisible Farmer offers women in agriculture the chance to tell their stories or those of other inspirational farm women. An important partner is the ABC, and they are calling for stories from across the state. I would encourage everyone to have a look at this wonderful initiative.

I can also announce today that the government is supporting the 28th annual Women on Farms Gathering, which is to be held in Harrow on Friday, 24 March 2017, to honour and celebrate the important role women play in agriculture and in our rural communities.

### **International Women's Day**

**Ms MIKAKOS** (Minister for Families and Children) — On this International Women's Day it gives me great pleasure to update the house on what the Andrews Labor government is doing through my portfolio to support Victorian women. Sadly one of the hidden issues affecting one in four Victorian women is family violence. This is why our government has made the biggest ever investment in family violence through, and this is why we have released our 10-year plan to end family violence. We have also committed to implementing each of the 227 recommendations of the family violence royal commission, yet sadly the opposition is yet to commit to doing so as well.

One of the biggest issues facing Australian women at the moment is access to affordable and flexible child care. For this reason I have been advocating to the Turnbull government for some time in relation to my concerns regarding its proposed changes to child care that will see the most disadvantaged women and children in our state lose access to subsidised child care, despite vulnerable families being the most likely to gain from quality education and care. I have written to the federal Minister for Education and Training about these matters on a number of occasions — including in late February — as well as to Victorian federal senators. The Turnbull government's changes to child care are tied to savings to be achieved by slashing the family tax benefit, which again targets the most disadvantaged.

The changes will also be a missed opportunity to address the lack of access to child care for women in regional Victoria, with the proposed legislation making

it very difficult for existing kindergarten services in regional areas to provide wraparound hours for kindergarten-age children. This will be a lost opportunity for families and children in rural townships such as Donald, Birchip, Charlton and Rutherglen, where many women struggle to participate in the workforce because of a lack of child care. If the Turnbull government fails to invest in the continued funding of 15 hours of kinder, this will be at a cost to children's development and at a cost to Victorian women in additional childcare fees, and it will threaten the jobs of many early childhood professionals.

By contrast, our government's investment in the new kinder ratios saw close to 900 additional kinder jobs created. Most of the various workforces in my portfolio are heavily feminised, whether they be early childhood professionals, maternal child health nurses, child protection workers or community service workers, including in the family violence sector. In our first budget we delivered on funding to the social and community services pay equity case. We also delivered the funding that saw kindergarten staff achieve a boost to their pay, including pay parity with primary school teachers. Sadly the Turnbull government oversees a childcare system where childcare workers are amongst our lowest paid professionals. So on this International Women's Day, I thank all of these women for their commitment, their professionalism and the important work they do in our community.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Despite the gallop you actually did still run over time.

### **Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund**

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Regional Development) — I rise to update the house on two recently funded tourism projects from the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF), which is a fund dedicated to growing the visitor economy across regional Victoria. Last Wednesday I was joined by Sharon Knight, the member for Wendouree in the Legislative Assembly, at Hop Temple in Ballarat to announce the establishment of the Australian Craft Beer Centre of Excellence. The project will create 25 new jobs, benefiting beer enthusiasts, locals and tourists alike keen to sample the region's finest brew. The total project cost is \$1.2 million, with \$500 000 funded through RTIF. The new Australian Craft Beer Centre of Excellence will include a craft brewery, a beer-tasting and bar area, a teaching space and a function area, which will attract a broad range of visitors. A key feature of the centre will be the brew space, where small brewers will be able to receive advice on how to improve their technique, develop their business and test

the market, which will help niche brewers to expand. The centre is working closely with Federation University, which has been leading brewing education for more than 45 years, to develop suitable training courses that will be delivered through the centre.

The second project Ms Shing and I announced last Thursday was the Walhalla Goldfields Railway project. Fifteen new jobs will be created from a \$300 000 grant that will bring more visitors to Gippsland, boosting the local economy. Walhalla Goldfields Railway will use the grant to restore and convert a 1926 Melbourne tram into a self-propelled rail carriage, enhancing the historic tourist experience. A 1926 tram body will be fitted with a rail motor and the track will undergo infrastructure upgrades to improve the range of services available. This will mean that the railway can operate seven days a week. Walhalla Goldfields Railway is a not-for-profit organisation, whose dedicated volunteers have completely rebuilt the railway over the last 25 years. The organisation is providing the remaining \$150 000 to deliver the project. It is estimated that this project will increase the number of visitors to Walhalla by more than 15 000 and increase the amount spent in local businesses from \$2.4 million a year to \$3.3 million a year.

## MEMBERS STATEMENTS

### International Women's Day

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) — Today is International Women's Day. This year's theme is 'Be bold for change', which calls on everyone to make a better, more inclusive and gender-equal working world. My region has a history of strong and influential women pushing the boundaries, creating success and enacting change. For example, we have had strong female representation in all levels of Parliament for more than 20 years. Sharman Stone very successfully represented the Murray federal electorate from 1996 until 2016. The lower house state seat of Shepparton has been held by women since 2002: first by Jeanette Powell and then by current member Suzanna Sheed. The state upper house seat has had extremely strong female representation since 1996, first under the old boundary of North Eastern Province with Jeanette Powell from 1996 until 2002 and then by me from 2002 until 2006. Since 2006 Northern Victoria Region has been represented by Amanda Millar, Donna Petrovich, Kaye Darveniza, Jaclyn Symes, Candy Broad and me.

The current Greater Shepparton City Council includes four women, three of whom — deputy mayor Kim O'Keeffe and councillors Fern Summer and Seema Abdullah — were the first three candidates elected. In

the education sector, Wilmot Road Primary School principal Jenny Manuel was recently awarded a Victorian Education Excellence Award for Outstanding Primary School Principal and the late Aunty Mary Atkinson drove improvements in educational outcomes for the Indigenous community.

Women who have made a significant contribution to Australian sport, such as Olympic hockey star Louise Dobson and Kate Palmer, the CEO of the Australian Sports Commission, hail from Shepparton. And these are just to name a few. There is no shortage of women enacting change across my electorate, and I am proud to be from a community where women are making a mark across all sectors of the community.

### International Women's Day

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I too rise today to speak on International Women's Day. In my portfolio of innovation unfortunately the tech sector is sadly falling behind. The gender pay gap, by the way, is at an all-time high of nearly 19 per cent, and one in three women retire with no super. The superannuation gap is about 46.6 per cent, on average. The average Australian male retires with \$197 000, while the average woman retires with only \$104 000. In the tech sector in particular this gap is more prevalent than in most other sectors. With 14 per cent of digital technology graduates being women, 30 per cent of female digital technology workers leave the field within 10 to 15 years of service. Of course in my portfolio, as I have mentioned, I see inequality in this area every day.

Let me take this opportunity to thank very publicly and acknowledge the huge effort and work undertaken by Carol Schwartz, AM, founding chair, and also Amy Mullins, executive director, of the Women's Leadership Institute Australia. They created the panel pledge to address long-term problems of underrepresentation of women in professional public forums, both as speakers and as panellists. This is why last December I became the first member of Parliament in Australia and the first minister of any government, state or federal, to take the panel pledge. This means that unless there is a 50-50 gender balance at any conference or speaking engagement that is offered up to me, I will not participate. Furthermore, we will not fund any conferences that similarly do not meet that initiative.

### Australian International Airshow

**Ms PENNICUIK** (Southern Metropolitan) — The Australian International Airshow was held at Avalon from 3 to 5 March. The air show has been around for

years and is very popular. Many people in the community though are becoming concerned that it is promoting military might and arms dealing in addition to the thrilling aerobatics that have always been a part of it. The international air show website advertises it as the 'ultimate family adventure', marvelling at the latest military jet fighters, bombers and attack helicopters.

The Medical Association for the Prevention of War asks:

Is it wise to encourage our children to delight in our ability to harm others? An ability we should ideally use reluctantly, and as a last resort? Secondly, the international arms trade, which is larger and more corrupt than ever before, has become a scourge in other parts of the world.

The flooding of the Middle East and Africa with weapons has contributed to the scale of armed violence there, with disastrous humanitarian consequences, as well as diverting funds from health and education —

and other public purposes —

and restricting development.

Our region has been largely spared this, except in the case of Papua and New Guinea where tribal battles and criminal raids now use military assault weapons ...

Almost 500 Victorians have signed a petition drawn up by the Medical Association for the Prevention of War calling on the state government to stop the arms trade event that is being held in conjunction with the Avalon air show. The petition reads:

Avalon air show used to be just an air show, and now it promotes military might and weapons dealing. An expanding arms trade ultimately harms communities and nations. Please return it to just an air show, and stop the arms trade being promoted at this event.

It is time to withdraw government sponsorship and stop the weapons dealing at the Avalon air show in 2019.

### Ouyen lake

**Mr O'SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) — Last week I visited the Ouyen community with the member for Mildura, Peter Crisp, to gain an update on the progress of the planning and construction of the lake in Ouyen. The Ouyen Lake Committee had a particularly busy day, with half of the committee hosting Peter Crisp and me while the other half of the committee were down having a meeting with the auspicing agency, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, to work through some outstanding issues.

The committee are well progressed in these preparations and have gone through a number of challenges in getting the lake built. I congratulate the

committee for their perseverance in finding a way for the project to move forward in the wake of all the hurdles that have been thrown up. The committee is increasingly confident that the lake can be constructed this winter and commence filling soon after.

The lake in Ouyen will have significant benefits for the local community, including providing water for the locals and tourists who will be seeking relief on many of the hot days they have up in Ouyen. Economic benefits will flow from the many tourists who will come to camp and enjoy the recreational facilities at the lake as they will spend some of their hard-earned money within the local community.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers in the community, particularly Ouyen Inc and the Ouyen Lake Committee, for all of the hard work they have done, and I look forward to being able to take my speedboat up to Ouyen lake next summer and have a ski.

### Macarthur Community Health

**Mr PURCELL** (Western Victoria) — I am very pleased to acknowledge the opening of the \$350 000 refurbishment of the Macarthur Community Health centre. About 80 long-term Macarthur and district residents attended the opening, and the refurbishments will certainly be well used by those attending the popular community centre.

### Jumps racing

**Mr PURCELL** — It gives me even greater pleasure to acknowledge the commencement of the exciting upcoming jumps racing season in Victoria. South-west Victoria is the capital of jumps racing, and the huge number of owners, jockeys and trainers are excited about the upcoming jumps season. The season kicks off at Pakenham next Thursday, 16 March, and then heads off to the capital of jumps racing, Warrnambool, on 30 March. My community is already getting excited about the May jumps carnival, and due to the timing of parliamentary sittings this year there will be an opportunity for all members to attend. I would like to invite all members to take the opportunity to join me at this year's Warrnambool May carnival.

### Penalty rates

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) — Today is International Women's Day. How distressing that we should be contemplating the impact of the Fair Work Commission's decision to cut weekend and public holiday penalty rates in industries that have a

high proportion of women. Many women in my electorate work weekends in hospitality, retail, pharmacy, fast food and tourism. Some are young — often students working to earn an income while they study — some are older women with young children who have minders only on weekends and some are women who need to earn higher pay rates to support their family. Weekend shifts are common for people working part time or in casual jobs, and we know that women are much more likely to work part time than men.

The Warrnambool *Standard* quotes the chief executive of women's health and wellbeing at Barwon South West, Emily Lee-Ack, who said that almost 50 per cent of women living in the Great South Coast region already earn below the minimum wage. She expects that cuts in penalty rates will add to the widening gender pay gap. Rural students living a long way from home and attending university or TAFE also work on weekends to pay for rent, fees and car expenses. La Trobe Bendigo student Kate Norton expects to lose \$300 a week. She said coffees will not get any cheaper on Sundays, but young people will find it harder to pay the rent.

These penalty rate cuts will hit women hard, as there is a disproportionate number of women working in these areas.

**Mr Finn** interjected.

**Ms TIERNEY** — The commonwealth has significant responsibilities to support female workers — not to make it harder, which is exactly what these penalty cuts will do, Mr Finn.

### **International Women's Day**

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) — Today of course is International Women's Day, which I celebrated at a breakfast hosted by the Royal Women's Hospital. To me International Women's Day is a day to celebrate and acknowledge women and also a time to highlight unfinished business. The Royal Women's Hospital is dealing with two of these items of unfinished business every day, and they are domestic violence and female genital mutilation.

On the domestic violence front, the Women's has a terrific program which is aimed at detecting signs of domestic violence in their patients, because we know, sadly, that many women will experience their first occasion of domestic violence when they are pregnant or shortly after having their first child. Being the very open minded and creative people that they are, the

Women's also rolled it out to their own staff because they have a significant female workforce.

One of the comments made at the breakfast this morning was that when the late British politician Jo Cox was asked, 'What is the most important thing you can do for women's equality? Is it education, is it health, is it employment?', she said, 'No, it is politics. You have to get women into seats so that they can make decisions and influence policy'.

Today I am wearing a suffragette brooch that is about 100 years old, and I love being able to wear it here. I sometimes wonder what the original owner might have thought of that — the cause she fought for being symbolised in this brooch, which is now worn in this place by a female member of Parliament.

In this place I have voted on bills of primary importance to women, including two bills relating to abortion. Jo Cox was absolutely right: the most critical issue for women's equality is women in politics. I know that all the women in this chamber, regardless of party, support that. It is a cause that all of us have worked for, I think, all of our adult lives, and will keep doing so. Happy International Women's Day.

### **International Women's Day**

**Ms PATTEN** (Northern Metropolitan) — Thank you, Ms Fitzherbert. That was a fantastic contribution. Happy International Women's Day to you too.

I would like also to reflect on the significance of this day, both globally and at home. Women across the globe are still facing unimaginable barriers that we would never think of in Australia. When listening to a woman on the radio this morning, I was struck by her comment that she was celebrating International Women's Day because she was born, because she had received an education and because she had the opportunity to make a living. It is easy to forget that other countries and cultures still practise gender selection, with girls killed or abandoned because they are seen as a burden, and that education for women and simply having work is illegal in some countries. Those fundamental rights remain out of reach for so many women across the globe.

We are lucky, but we should not diminish the problems women still face in Australia. We know that preventing family violence starts with promoting equality and respect for women. One in four Victorian women still faces family violence. Women still face a pay gap that could have been closed long ago but remains. In fact it was 99 years ago today that 15 000 women marched

through New York City demanding better pay and voting rights. The theme is ‘Be bold for change’, and I welcome International Women’s Day.

### International Women’s Day

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) — I also join in congratulating and wishing all women in the world and Victoria a happy International Women’s Day. The Andrews Labor government has made that one of the cornerstones of its policies and has made ending violence against women and children a priority. The government established the Royal Commission into Family Violence and adopted every one of its recommendations, committed to ending gender inequality through delivering on the founding reforms of the Victorian gender equality strategy and also invested an unprecedented half a billion dollars to prevent family violence.

Yet we still have a lot of work to do to achieve equality for women, whether that is in the workplace or whether that is gender equality across their life cycle. The economic case is also well made that gender equality is still a big problem, and equality in the workforce in terms of pay gap is still a major issue. Women still receive less pay than men for the same job, and that is something that we need to continue working on. We are lucky in Australia, we have made some headway, but, as Ms Patten said, there are places around the world where women are still treated as second-class citizens, whether that is from a religious basis or from a cultural basis. I think we have a major job on our hands, as a Western society, to make sure we are continually improving the status of women in the world.

I want to congratulate the AFL for launching this year the AFL Women’s competition. One of the benefits of that is that my 15-year-old, who has never played sport, decided this year to take up sport and to play AFL. I think that is a credit to the AFL and its policies, and again I wish all women in Victoria a happy International Women’s Day.

### Pedestrian traffic signals

**Mr RAMSAY** (Western Victoria) — I was very pleased and very proud to be able to stand on the steps of the Parliament this morning to recognise International Women’s Day. I love and respect women, but I have to say VicRoads have lost the plot. VicRoads, along with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, have let a planning permit for the Western Highway duplication go. It would have been a \$672 million project between Ballarat and Stawell. The

planning permit ran out and is not to be extended, so that whole project is bogged down.

**Mr Davis** — It’s a shambles.

**Mr RAMSAY** — It is an absolute debacle, Mr Davis. Now we find out that VicRoads are cross-dressing on pedestrians lights. The Committee for Melbourne has gone bizarre. All of Victoria’s pedestrian crossings could eventually have an equal number of female and male walking signals in a push for gender equality. Are you kidding me? This is bizarre. On International Women’s Day they want women stick figures on walking signals on our pedestrian crossings. That is just absolutely and utterly ridiculous.

The equal crossings initiative is kicking off its campaign this week, with 10 female pedestrian figures to be installed at the intersection of Swanston and Flinders streets. The committee thinks that unconscious bias reinforces stereotypes and influences daily decisions and attitudes and that the equal crossings initiative will draw our attention to these issues. The campaign is backed by the Victorian Governor, Linda Dessau, who I have great respect for, and the chair of the Women’s Leadership Institute Australia, Carol Schwartz. The Lord Mayor and others have said this is political correctness gone totally mad. I am sorry to bring this up on a day like this, but honestly, get a life.

### International Women’s Day

**Ms SPRINGLE** (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I do not think I can compete with that, to be perfectly honest, but I will offer some reflections as the Greens spokesperson for women as I give this topic an awful lot of thought around women’s representation in all walks of life. While there are so many challenges that Victorian and Australian women face on a daily basis, today I would like to reflect on this house and take stock of our own progress. Looking around this chamber I see many women, but frankly not enough. Women’s representation in Australian politics has improved over the past 20 years, but progress has been sluggish.

In Victoria women make up less than 40 per cent of both houses of Parliament. The figures in our federal Parliament are lower, hovering around the 30 per cent mark over the past two decades. The UN regards 30 per cent representation as the minimum level that enables women to systematically influence decision-making in Parliament. The Inter-Parliamentary Union has ranked Australia 50th in the world in terms of women’s

representation in national parliaments. I think we would all agree that 50 is not a great place to be on this list.

The move towards equal participation for women in politics has seen some gains of late, particularly in the wake of the recent local council elections in Victoria. Women now make up 38 per cent of all Victorian councillors. These statistics relate to one particular aspect of Victorian life, but they resonate much more broadly. We must all drive towards equal representation of women and equal decision-making by women in all aspects of life, from the home through to the boardroom and the Parliament. When we achieve this, we will have taken a huge step towards a stronger, more inclusive and more productive society.

### Youth justice centres

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) — Today I want to join with my colleagues Ms Crozier and Mr Finn, who most recently tabled a relevant petition to talk about the proposed Werribee youth justice centre. My leader in the Legislative Assembly, Mr Guy, and others have made strong points about this centre. It is clearly an inappropriate decision that has been made by the government to foist this high-security youth justice centre on the people of Werribee and the people of Wyndham. I know Mr Finn has been fighting the case very hard, as has Ms Crozier. This will compromise the employment zone that was declared by former planning minister Matthew Guy to drive employment in the west. This is one of our fastest growth zones, and this is high-value land — land that should be and has been reserved for specific purposes that do not include a youth prison of this type. It will lead to problems with the adjacent land — the green wedge land.

The government, with its arrogant approach, is again treating the west poorly and taking it for granted. Mr Pallas, the local Legislative Assembly member, is a shocker. Why will he not stand up for his area? We know about the rorting of former Deputy Speaker Nardella and former Speaker Languiller in recent times. The community in Werribee have got every right to be angry. This is not being consultative. It is not right, and it is the wrong place.

### White Night Ballarat

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Regional Development) — Last Saturday night I was delighted to attend the first regional White Night event, which was held in Ballarat, and to press the go button on the slightly terrifying-looking White Knight Messenger. Ballarat is the first regional centre to have been transformed by White Night, which is part of a global

community endeavour. Ballarat's historic streets were amazingly reimagined under the artistic direction of David Atkins, OAM, and it was a sight to behold. We know that Melburnians have embraced White Night, generating economic benefits of around \$17 million a year. Victoria has a great reputation as a creative state and a cultural tourism destination. White Night has certainly become a focus of this.

Ballarat is an arts hub and a perfect platform for installations and performances. Historic architecture serves as an ideal backdrop, paired with wide streets, narrow laneways and locals that embrace this event to a remarkable degree. It was a wonderful and memorable experience wandering down Lydiard Street, Camp Street and Sturt Street, taking in the installations, exhibitions, projections and performances with around 40 000 other locals. There was terrific involvement of traditional owners, the Wathaurong people, and also great involvement by local artists, meaning that this was very much Ballarat's White Night, not somewhere else's White Night inserted into Ballarat. It was a great event, and I have heard more than a few people say it was the best night they had ever seen Ballarat turn on.

### International Women's Day

**Ms CROZIER** (Southern Metropolitan) — I would also like to acknowledge International Women's Day. Like my colleague Ms Fitzherbert, I attended a breakfast this morning held in recognition of women in Rotary, where Kitty Chiller was the guest speaker. In addressing the audience she spoke about women in sport and gender issues. She made the point that she had heard a quote that said that you need to take responsibility for your own potential. I think that was very significant in relation to what she spoke about in her address.

### Government performance

**Ms CROZIER** — Talking of taking responsibility, the government has failed to take responsibility on a number of issues, and I want to refer to the rorting by the former Deputy Speaker and former Speaker. I think it is absolutely outrageous that the Premier has been too weak to stand up to what is morally and ethically wrong. In fact it is no wonder that Victorians are questioning this government, who are making some extraordinary decisions — for instance, yesterday's ridiculous proposition of turning the stick figures in pedestrian crossing lights into females. Honestly, this is condescending, and it is completely ridiculous to have political correctness in this form. I agree with Mr Ramsay and others who have spoken on this — it is political correctness gone mad.

Women do not want to be recognised in this way. They want to be able to cross the street safely, and they want safer footpaths and safer and less congested roads. They certainly do not want legislation that prescribes that 50 per cent of pedestrian stick figures be depicted wearing a dress. It is absolutely ridiculous, but this is the priority of the Andrews government. They have not stood up for Victorians, and it is no wonder that Victorians are leaving them in droves after seeing what a shambolic mess this government is, with the continued rorting, which is symbolic of this Labor government.

## PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

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

That —

- (1) in accordance with standing order 11.01, this house requires the Minister for Families and Children to table in the Council by 12 noon on Wednesday, 22 March 2017 a copy of the business case for the proposed new youth justice facility for Victoria, including any attachments or appendices; and
- (2) any response should conform with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a).

I am moving this motion in my name because I think it is very concerning for the community of Werribee and the surrounding areas that they have had very little input into this decision. The government will say that they are consulting — they say that the community will have input — but we know that that has not been the case, because this decision was announced without that community having a full understanding of what is going on. For those reasons it is right that the community have a proper understanding of this business case. I know that Mr Pallas in the Legislative Assembly has had significant backlash for this decision, because I was actually out in Werribee just a few days after Minister Mikakos announced it. It was very clear that the community did have concerns, so it is very important that the community be informed about why the government has actually made this decision and that they understand why it has been made.

In various contributions in this place the minister has spoken about the business case and why the government has undertaken to have a new youth justice facility on the Werribee site. She has spoken about accepting the review that was conducted by Mr Comrie and its recommendations, some of which were around design specifications with respect to this new facility and the various requirements regarding what was considered important for where a new facility should be sited. But in some of her remarks there was also

mention that the government has given careful consideration to a range of sites in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria through the development of its business case. I think this is what the community really want to understand.

They have been told by the minister and the Treasurer about the 16 sites that have been considered, and the Treasurer has spoken about this in the Parliament. The community rightly want to understand where those other sites are and why in the business case the site of Werribee is deemed to be the most appropriate. The government say there is ongoing consultation with the community and that they have met with the council and stakeholders and are continuing to meet with them, but this is all too late. This has not been done in a considered fashion. It is really trying to fix up a mess that they have created themselves for that community, who have concerns about the site, the location and the government's reasoning for putting it in Werribee South.

You can even see that in the Treasurer's words this week when he spoke on ABC radio. He could not answer yes or no to a question on whether the government would change the location of the proposed youth detention centre from its preferred location. The government have continually said that this is the preferred location, but when they go to speak to the council or to community members and other stakeholders, they have asked those people to identify alternate sites within the City of Wyndham. I think it is very confusing for the community.

Frankly those people should not be doing the government's work on this. It is the government which has got the business case and has identified the other sites that have met the criteria that the government deemed to be appropriate for a facility such as this. It is really up to the government to then go to the community and reassure them that this is the best site, but to date the government have not been able to do that. In fact they have actually been quite dismissive. As I said, the government has come late to the party, if you like, to try and reassure the community, but the community is not buying that at all. The community still want to know where those other sites are and why this site was deemed to be the preferred location. That is why this is an important motion to have the business case released, so the community can understand and it is out in the public domain why this site was actually chosen.

The minister has said that there are quite specific criteria that need to be met, and some of those criteria have been released — finally, after questioning. The

government say they have consulted various people in relation to the design and development of a new site. In a contribution on 21 February Ms Mikakos said, ‘The business case gave us the preferred location’. That is clearly why this location has been decided upon, but it was decided upon before going to the community, and the community need to understand what is in the business case and why that site was actually selected by the government over the other 16 sites that have been highlighted by the Treasurer.

Those other sites are potentially not too far away or could have met the relevant criteria that the government deems to be important and has highlighted — such as being close to education, schools, public transport and the courts, and soil testing — to see whether a site is appropriate. If all of those things for all of those other sites confirm that those sites do not meet the criteria, then that is what the community want to understand. That is why it is important to have transparency and the ability to understand what has been undertaken through this consultative process that the government say they are doing with the community. They say they want the community to understand the reasons and to hear from the community about their concerns. The community must understand what is in the business case in the interests of the public. That is why I have moved this motion — to understand what exactly is in the business case, to give the community reassurance that another site could not be equally appropriate and to give the community the reassurance for all of those recommendations that have been made.

I know that the government have been speaking to community members and have said that they would provide a summary of the business case, but if you go back to the debate about the east–west link, the Premier, then opposition leader, said that was not good enough. He did not want a summary; he wanted the full thing. Well, you cannot have it both ways. The Premier is in a bit of strife at the moment — we know that — but this decision is like so many other decisions that have been foisted upon communities. I believe the government has an obligation to make it very clear why this site was chosen over 15 or so others. If they say they had 16 sites in that business case and they determined why this one was chosen, then the public and the community, especially in the Werribee and the Wyndham areas, need to understand that fully.

That is why I have moved this documents motion today. I am not going to have a long debate about this, but I do want to say that the community still has many concerns, and they still remain. I think it is appropriate that they understand the full decision process that was undertaken by the government, because it appears that

it has been rushed and that the government are trying to do this to try and solve a problem that has been of their own making through the crisis that unfortunately we see in the youth justice system.

**Mr LEANE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — The government will be consistent on calls for paperwork. The Labor Party has been consistent, both in government and in opposition. The paperwork that Ms Crozier is calling for will be presented to the Parliament as long as it is not a commercial-in-confidence issue or a cabinet document that is for internal cabinet use only, for obvious reasons. This is a sensitive issue as far as any business case goes for any type of prison. With a juvenile justice centre, I think it is obvious that there will be some items and some schematics where I would not have thought we would want potential inmates to be able to investigate the best ways out of a place by using this document. I think that is probably a reason in itself.

This government stands by its transparency record. It has handed over more documents that have been called for than any other government in Victoria’s history. Its record is miles ahead of the previous government. In one instance where there was a similar call for the business case for the east–west link, the previous government produced to this chamber what they called a short-form business case, which consisted of 10 pages, including the covers. One page had a picture of a tram on it that took up half the page. Three-quarters of one page was a picture of people crossing a road at an intersection that was a long way away from the area where this project was proposed. A lot of very artistic coloured triangles took up most of that particular document.

This government stands by its record on handing over these types of documents. We will continue that process. We will continue to approach and treat these motions calling for paperwork seriously. When we were in opposition we respected the then government not handing over documents because it considered they were cabinet-in-confidence or commercial-in-confidence documents. Obviously we were suspicious of the previous government’s lack of eagerness to hand over to this chamber paperwork that was called for, but we were not surprised.

As for this particular call for paperwork, obviously this is a project that is of the utmost importance to Victoria. We have identified a cohort of young offenders who seem to be a new breed who do not have much fear of the consequences of their actions, which is unfortunate. I think we should make statements in this chamber about it being unfortunate that these young men are at

this point, but we do have to accept their behaviour. We have to make public safety paramount.

It is a shame that the previous government managed to sit on a report from the Ombudsman in 2010 — which was at the start of its term in government — that this was the sort of facility we needed to be looking at. It did nothing; it did not react to that report at all. It did not act on those recommendations at all.

**Ms Crozier** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — Ms Crozier says that is not right. Show us the plans for the new facility that you are calling for now that your government — —

**Ms Crozier** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — There was an Ombudsman's report in 2010. Ms Crozier says that under her government they did not have violence. There must have been some magic formula around when the coalition was in government if there was no violence anywhere. Wow! They must be the most special magical people in the world. What a pathetic joke the coalition is. They say, 'We didn't have violence when we were in government'. That is most moronic thing I have heard. They must be magical special people. For the *Hansard* record, I was being sarcastic then.

The government will approach this call for paperwork in the way the government always approaches such calls. If there is paperwork that can be delivered to this chamber on this motion, then the government will proceed to do so in a timely fashion.

**Ms SPRINGLE** (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I think my contribution might be a little more substantial than most of the others. Victorians deserve to know — —

**Mr Leane** — Don't judge me.

**Ms SPRINGLE** — I am not judging you. I promise I am not judging you.

Victorians deserve to know the basis for Ms Mikakos's decision to propose a brand-new youth justice facility at Werribee South. On youth justice the Andrews government has been short on detail, information and consultation and very long on rhetoric. The Andrews government and Minister Mikakos would have Victorians believe that everything was hunky-dory when Labor was last in government and that after the 2010 election and up until the 2014 election the Baillieu-Napthine coalition governments squibbed the whole youth justice portfolio. Labor would have us

believe that much of the crisis we have seen emerging in Victoria's youth justice system since September 2015 can be put down to a combination of Liberal failures and a new cohort of particularly vicious and violent young people for whom existing facilities, which have served Victoria well since the early 1990s, are no longer fit for purpose. The Minister for Families and Children would have us believe that young people currently detained in Victoria's youth justice centres are the worst of the worst and that they really need to be in a high-security prison staffed with prison guards with weapons and broad powers.

It is a nice, simple little story that the government wants to tell. It is a story which hopefully absolves the government of most of the responsibility for the way it has treated the teenagers in its custody and care and the way it has responded to their entirely predictable behaviour. It is a story that is perhaps appropriate for the times. It fits quite neatly into a broader environment of fake news and alternative facts because it is a story that is just not true.

What has actually happened is that governments of both flavours — Liberal and Labor, red and blue — have systematically and categorically failed the most vulnerable young people in the care and/or custody of the Victorian state for years, indeed for decades. What has actually happened is that successive governments' systematic neglect of the children in their care has meant that the child protection system tragically has become a conveyor belt for youth justice and also for adult corrections.

What has actually happened is that recent governments, especially those led by Premiers Baillieu and Napthine, have systematically gutted the capacity of the Department of Health and Human Services to respond effectively to the challenges in youth justice centres.

What has actually happened is that this government — the Andrews government — and this minister have presided over a period which has seen staffing shortages, huge increases in remand numbers and an increasingly accepted use of solitary confinement as a way of managing both staff shortages and problem behaviours among young people. It is absolutely undeniable that the use of solitary confinement or lockdowns have been directly implicated in the behaviour of young people in youth justice centres. What has actually happened is that this government, led by Premier Andrews and his minister directly responsible for the care and protection of extremely vulnerable and challenging young people in this state's care, have sought to shift the blame for government's systemic failures directly onto teenagers who have been

failed abysmally by the adults in their lives when they should have been assuming responsibility in relation to them.

So now we have a proposal to build a brand-new, highly secure youth detention centre in Werribee South, complete with a maximum security behaviour management unit, which is exactly what many adult prisons have and which is precisely what the Don Dale youth prison had in the Northern Territory. I am very firmly of the opinion that we need to know the basis upon which the Andrews government and Minister Mikakos made this decision, because I have very deep concerns about it. They are not the same concerns I suspect the opposition has. The opposition has not helped this whole sorry state of affairs one iota, with its Trumpified language and its spreading of unsubstantiated alternative facts, innuendo, rumours and general rubbish and its proposal to get even tougher than the Andrews government is getting.

Victorians must know the basis for the government's decision to build the new youth detention centre at Werribee. We need to know that the decision was based on evidence about what actually works to reduce rates of reoffending among young people. The government really needs to address any concerns that exist in the minds of experts and of organisations which work with young people who display challenging and violent behaviours, not to mention the concerns of the community.

I have spoken to a whole range of experts who are worried that the government is simply panicking itself into building a new youth prison that will be built on principles of maximum security prison infrastructure and only secondarily — or perhaps not at all — on principles of rehabilitation and therapeutic intervention to address the root causes of a young person's behaviour. The worst case scenario is that the government has been spooked by an extraordinary and almost unprecedented campaign by the *Herald Sun* newspaper and the Liberal Party into responding to incidents of violence in Victoria's youth justice centres purely on the logic of physical security and physical security alone.

We have seen where that logic leads. It leads to solitary confinement, human rights abuses, lockdowns, tear gas, unmuzzled dogs, strip searches and increasing violence. There is a royal commission hearing mountains and mountains of evidence right now in the Northern Territory about how the logic of security led to the abuses at the Don Dale centre, abuses which were, for the most part, authorised by officials, as was shown on *Four Corners* in July last year. This is my concern: that

if Minister Mikakos and the Andrews government have arrived at the Werribee South youth detention centre proposal by following the logic of security, then it will not end there. We are already seeing dogs, tear gas, lockdowns, solitary confinement and increasing violence, much of which has happened since teenagers were moved to the maximum security Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison in November last year. My concern is that the Werribee prison will be one more step, a very expensive and very permanent step, towards a solution that will further undermine the efforts of everyone involved in Victoria's youth justice system to reduce the likelihood that young people will commit violent offences.

The evidence is clear: Victoria has in recent years and decades detained a very small proportion of its young people in custody. This is in line with mountains of international and Australian evidence which shows that keeping young people locked up in prison-like environments does absolutely nothing to reduce the likelihood that they will commit criminal offences in the future; indeed it probably increases the likelihood. This is reflected in actual crime statistics. Only the ACT and WA have lower rates of criminal offending among young people than Victoria. Despite what the *Herald Sun* and the Liberal opposition would have Victorians believe, there is no youth crime wave in Victoria. Criminal offending rates by young people in Victoria have not increased, except as reflected in the existence of new procedural offences on the books — —

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem)** — Order! Mr Davis!

**Ms SPRINGLE** — Finished?

**Mr Davis** — No.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem)** — Order! Ms Springle, I am on my feet. Can you please resume your seat? I am not going to warn members again about their behaviour. I will not hesitate in calling the President to deal with this matter or ask people to leave. Ms Springle to continue, without any assistance.

**Ms SPRINGLE** — Criminal offending rates by young people in Victoria have not increased, except as reflected in the existence of new procedural offences on the books. This is the strangest thing about the whole youth justice panic over the last year or so. Young people are categorically not responsible for the recent

increase in the Victorian crime rate, but young people have been blamed. There have been front-page *Herald Sun* headlines screaming about the youth crime wave that Victoria is apparently experiencing, but there is just no evidence that there is any youth crime wave.

So what has the government said so far about why it has decided to propose a new youth detention centre? All we really have thus far is an assurance — and coming from this minister it is no assurance at all — that the decision was based on both an independent assessment by former police commissioner Neil Comrie and a 2010 opinion by the then Ombudsman, Mr George Brouwer.

Let us consider those titbits of information in turn: first, the 2010 Ombudsman's report into Parkville. The then Ombudsman, Mr Brouwer, conducted an own-motion investigation into the situation at Parkville after he received a tip-off that some staff members were assaulting young people, inciting violence among young people, supplying them with tobacco and marijuana and stealing things. The 2010 report was not and is not, in light of recent events, pretty reading. The Ombudsman did find significant problems with the physical infrastructure at Parkville. Among the many problems he identified was that one unit was too close to a boundary fence. He found that it was too easy for young people to climb onto roofs. He found that people could too easily wander onto the precinct. He found staircases in places that created unnecessary risks and blind spots, and he found electrical hazards, mould, unhygienic food preparation areas, unprofessional maintenance and broken glass in landfill. He even found a high prevalence of communicable infections including scabies and staph, and he found various points throughout the precinct that young people could use to attempt to take their own lives.

In the end he concluded in 2010 that the problems he identified were beyond simple maintenance repair. As he saw it, the only practical way to address the conditions at the precinct in the long-term was to develop a new facility at another site. Of course we have heard the minister echo that 2010 opinion quite often recently, but we have not quite as often heard her repeat the outcome of the Ombudsman's 2014 follow-up visit to Parkville. Let me just quote from the Ombudsman's recommendations report of February 2014:

The recommendations from my investigation have all been implemented and have had a significant impact upon the operation of the youth justice precinct and the youth justice system statewide.

It is impossible for the minister to claim, as she often has, that no steps were taken following the Ombudsman's 2010 report. My understanding is that Mr Ian Lanyon was appointed director of youth justice custodial services in March 2011 and then director of secure services in December 2012 largely to oversee the implementation of the recommendations which remained to be actioned. Going by the Ombudsman's comments in February 2014, by that point Mr Lanyon and the Department of Human Services, as it was known at that stage, had largely satisfied the Ombudsman's earlier concerns about physical infrastructure.

Beyond the physical infrastructure of Parkville there were some important reforms that were implemented during this post-2010 period. Perhaps the most significant of those reforms was that Parkville College commenced operations as a registered school, which in time would provide specialist, tailored, trauma-informed, evidence-based education for young people detained in not just the Melbourne youth justice precinct at Parkville but also the Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre, the secure welfare facilities at Maribyrnong and Ascot Vale, the Melbourne Children's Court and the Disability Forensic Assessment and Treatment Service at Fairfield.

Parkville College provides a fascinating case study. As with all things, I need to add a standard caveat because the government does not provide very much actual information about anything much at all in this area. My understanding is that the Parkville College spaces have been largely spared much of the damage that has been caused to both the Parkville and Malmsbury youth justice centres by young people since September 2015. My understanding is that when young people have run amok in Parkville and Malmsbury, they have left the Parkville College program areas largely undamaged. One interpretation of this is that young people respect Parkville College spaces much more than they do other parts of the centres, which is quite possibly a reflection of the extent to which they feel respected.

There has been a very moralistic tone to much of the public commentary around youth justice over the past year or so. It is the same moralistic tone that gets applied to adult prisoners. It is a tone that reflects the very widespread refrain that people who commit crimes do not deserve to be treated with respect and that they have somehow forfeited their rights and just need to be punished as harshly as possible. I can understand that response, and I think everyone who has been a victim of a criminal offence can understand that kind of moralistic response. The problem with that is that it leads to policy outcomes that are just not helpful — that

are actually the opposite of helpful. What we know beyond a shadow of a doubt about young people who commit violent criminal offences is that they are overwhelmingly likely to have been victims of sustained, extreme abuse and/or neglect themselves as children.

This is all laid out in the Youth Parole Board's annual reports, and while I have previously put these figures on the record quite recently in this chamber I think it is worth doing again, because it is on this foundation that our current situation derives much of its context. So I will quote again some figures from the most recent annual report, which gives a snapshot of young people serving sentences and on remand as of 7 October 2015. A staggering 64 per cent of those young people were subject to a current or previous child protection order; a whopping 63 per cent of those young people were victims of extreme abuse, trauma or neglect — and that is based on self-reporting, so the actual proportion is likely to be much higher; 62 per cent have been suspended or expelled from school; almost one in five has a history of self-harm; one-quarter of those young people represented with some form of impaired intellectual functioning; an absolutely astounding 66 per cent of those young people had a history of misuse of both drugs and alcohol; and 38 per cent of those young people had parents, brothers or sisters who had also been imprisoned.

This is a picture of extraordinary, overwhelming, tragic disadvantage and social exclusion. I am not suggesting for one moment that everyone who suffers this kind of disadvantage is prone to committing criminal offences, but what I am saying is what the evidence says, and that is that young people who grow up in environments in which they are abused, assaulted, neglected or all of the above by people they should be able to trust and rely on are, statistically speaking, much more likely to end up in the youth justice system, and the vast majority of young people who do enter the criminal justice system have had backgrounds of truly horrific abuse and neglect.

We also know — and I have put it on the record here as well — that the human brain does not stop developing until a person reaches the age of 25. As policymakers and authorities, we have choices. We can either respond to young people who commit violent offences, as Parkville College is set up to respond, by looking beyond a person's often very challenging behaviour and working to address whatever deficits each young person may be carrying as a legacy of their past experiences or we can respond with violence of our own, which is likely to entrench whatever feelings of anger, resentment and isolation they are experiencing

and which is likely to entrench any violent behaviour that presents as a symptom. My deep and growing concern is that instead of taking Parkville College's approach, which emphasises a therapeutic evidence-based response to challenging behaviour, and threading that right through the youth justice centres, what successive governments have done is to emphasise security and physical infrastructure.

Minister Mikakos has said many times that her decision to propose a new youth justice precinct at Werribee South was based on a review of existing physical infrastructure undertaken by former police commissioner Neil Comrie. That may be so, but unfortunately we have not seen that Comrie report. What we have seen is one report completed by Peter Muir, an external consultant who is a former director-general of the New South Wales Department of Juvenile Justice and a former assistant director-general of the New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services.

The report by Mr Muir that I am referring to was commissioned by Minister Mikakos following a major incident of violence in the Parkville youth justice centre in March last year. Mr Muir's report — at least his second for this minister after he completed an earlier report following violence in September 2015 — is still being kept secret by this minister, but sections of it were leaked to the *Age*. We know that in May last year Mr Muir wrote that:

... in this group —

of young people in youth justice centres —

there are high levels of mental health disorders, alcohol and other drug use and cognitive disorders. A further exacerbating factor has been the dramatic increase in the remand population within the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct. Within the last few years, the ratio of 80 to 20 sentenced to remand has flipped to 20 to 80, with the overwhelming majority of clients now being on remand. Remand clients are known for their increased complexity and challenging behaviours ... Their uncertain futures also tend to heighten behaviours.

Further, he concluded:

I believe that there was a rising degree of tension in the precinct over the issue of lockdowns as the result of staffing shortages that was a contributing factor to this incident.

'Lockdown' is usually a euphemism for solitary confinement. This is what actually happened. When the Liberals were in government they took a wrecking ball to the Victorian public service in line with an ideologically driven need to cut the size of government. They paid out a fortune in redundancies in all departments, including in what is now the Department

of Health and Human Services, and they lost so much more in the years or decades of senior experience of those who walked out the door forever. So much experience was lost in both operations and the bureaucracy that some remaining employees say that an entire ethos was lost from youth justice — an ethos that prioritised therapeutic intervention over punishment and security.

In the centres themselves, while Mr Lanyon was getting rid of staff who apparently belted kids, the government was actively undermining him by pursuing efficiency dividends, which meant that good staff members were following the bad ones out. It is entirely understandable to me that this whole process provoked a lot of resentment among the staff who stayed; mass redundancies are almost never a good solution to anything, especially not in an area as sensitive as youth justice.

My understanding is that Mr Lanyon saw his role as ushering in a much more evidence-based therapeutic approach to the staffing and management of the youth justice centres. I say with the greatest respect that it appears that whatever was tried, he or the department were not able to foster a working model successfully. I have heard a lot of different things about this, but what seems obvious is that whatever reform was attempted occurred within a silo system. Therapeutic intervention can only be effective if it is a whole-of-system approach, underpinning all operations — it is not just within one isolated segment. For example, in the case of the Parkville or Malmsbury precincts it was used in Parkville College but not in the accommodation units or other divisions. Without a holistic approach underpinning all operations, division and manipulation is bound to occur.

So whatever the case may be, what we do know is that a therapeutic evidence-based approach to the staffing and management of Victoria's youth justice centres has not prevailed. There are lots of labour hire staff who have replaced much more experienced staff members. Many of the floor staff are now basically required to act as little more than security or prison guards — at least that is how they appear to many of the young people. I have heard that there is much less emphasis on staff building rapport with young people, which is actually one of the best protective factors in a youth justice centre.

Instead there is high absenteeism among staff; there is much less experience; there is understandable resentment, given the way restructures have been managed; and there are major staffing shortages. Clearly the current minister has not been able to get on

top of these issues in any way during the two years she has had the job. In fact the problems have gotten so much worse. For the young people who are detained in the centres, staff shortages mean one thing: lockdowns and solitary confinement.

It is absolutely shocking and disgraceful that Victorian authorities have been locking children up for 15, 20, 22 and even 23 hours every day for days and even weeks on end. Here is what the United Nations special rapporteur on torture says about the use of solitary confinement on people over the age of 18:

Research further shows that solitary confinement appears to cause 'psychotic disturbances', a syndrome that has been described as 'prison psychoses'.

...

While the acute effects of solitary confinement generally recede after the period of solitary confinement ends, some of the negative health effects are long term. The minimal stimulation experienced during solitary confinement can lead to a decline in brain activity in individuals after seven days.

... lasting personality changes often leave individuals formerly held in solitary confinement socially impoverished and withdrawn, subtly angry and fearful when forced into social interaction. Intolerance of social interaction after a period of solitary confinement is a handicap that often prevents individuals from successfully readjusting to life within the broader prison population and severely impairs their capacity to reintegrate into society when released from imprisonment.

That is how solitary confinement affects adults.

Here is what the special rapporteur concluded in 2011 about the use of solitary confinement on people under the age of 18:

... the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the preamble of the Convention on the Rights of the Child state that, given their physical and mental immaturity, juveniles needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection ... the special rapporteur holds the view that the imposition of solitary confinement, of any duration, on juveniles is cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and violates article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 16 of the convention against torture.

The current Minister for Families and Children clearly does not see things this way. It appears she thinks solitary confinement is a solution to staff shortages and challenging behaviours. Then, when the young people at Parkville respond in what Mr Muir described in his May 2016 report as an entirely predictable way to lockdowns in conditions of solitary confinement, Minister Mikakos thought that moving teenagers into the maximum-security unit of an adult prison was a solution to the loss of beds which occurred in

November. Then, when the young people at Parkville continued to behave in an entirely predictable way after being kept in solitary confinement for 23 hours every day in Barwon Prison, Minister Mikakos thought that an appropriate response was to send in prison guards armed with weapons, dogs and tear gas.

I think we have got to be highly circumspect about the idea that ‘high security’ somehow means ‘safe’ for either young people or staff members. Let us not mistake the concept of stability for security. There is no doubt that young people, particularly with the histories many of them have, need a secure, stable and structured environment, not just to quell some of their destructive behaviours but also to begin to allow the positive relationships they need to begin to heal, something that was a hallmark of the Victorian youth justice system of the past. What is abundantly clear is that punitive measures will not provide the same results.

Let us just reflect for a moment on what has happened in recent times. Despite an increase in security measures at Parkville youth justice centre, including anti-climb protections, we have seen young people continually access roofs and ceilings and cause millions of dollars of damage at Parkville. Despite the fact that Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre is one of Australia’s newest high-security facilities, it experienced perhaps Australia’s most significant mass breakout in recent years on the day before Invasion Day this year.

Despite the fact that Mr Lanyon and the Department of Health and Human Services could find no facility, other than the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, that was secure enough to house the young people who needed to be transferred out of Parkville after the damage in November, we have seen the continuation of major incidents there, including one incident during which a 16-year-old boy suffered broken vertebrae in his back. As I have said, we have already seen the use of tear gas, dogs and weapons by prison staff against these young people, who I understand are still being locked in solitary confinement most of the time.

Minister Mikakos said repeatedly last year that she just did not know what was causing the worsening situation inside Victoria’s youth justice centres throughout last year. I cannot know whether that reflects advice she was getting from the Department of Health and Human Services. I do know that Mr Lanyon said exactly the same thing on a number of occasions while he was still director of secure services. But we do know that what was causing the violence or at least contributing significantly to it was the frequent and increasing use of lockdowns and solitary confinement in Victoria’s youth justice centres, the use of which in the view of the

United Nations amounts to a breach of the convention against torture and just does not work to induce better behaviour among young people and paradoxically creates an even more unsafe workplace for staff.

I do not know what kind of advice the minister has been receiving about this. I know she has essentially stopped listening to the Department of Health and Human Services and she is basically taking her cues from the people responsible for adult prisons, Corrections Victoria, under the Department of Justice and Regulation. We do know that the minister has apparently relied on the report of a former police commissioner in her decision to build a new high-security youth prison. We do know that the minister has rejected at least one, perhaps two, concrete proposals to improve the therapeutic responses for young people exhibiting challenging behaviour in youth justice centres. These are proposals that offer vastly different models to what currently exists in Victoria and have had profound successes elsewhere. They would offer the opportunity to rebuild a broken system based on the evidence of responses that have been proven to work.

We do know that lots and lots of services that work with young people exhibiting challenging and violent behaviours were essentially begging the minister not to make any major decisions before Professor Ogloff and Ms Penny Armytage reported. Despite this, the minister made the most massive decision imaginable, which has probably changed the face of youth justice in this state forever. She has announced that she is severing the all-important administrative link between youth justice and child protection by removing responsibility for youth justice from the Department of Health and Human Services and shifting it to Corrections Victoria.

This has been a really important administrative link in Victoria for decades. In fact, it is in the states and territories which do not have that administrative link — Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and of course the Northern Territory — that we have seen most of the really big and violent incidents in youth detention centres around the country in the last few years. In my naivety I believed the minister when she told this Parliament on repeated occasions last year that she was working on improving the department’s data linkages between youth justice and the child protection system. It turns out that what she is actually doing is severing them completely.

This administrative separation can in no way improve Victoria’s response to young people who commit criminal offences. We need to know a lot more than we do now about how so many people are failed by the

child protection system and wind up in the Children's Court and then youth justice centres for offending behaviour. I suspect we will know much less about these links in the future.

The minister has also moved adult prison guards into youth justice centres to ostensibly restore order, with weapons and spray and dogs and strongarm tactics, when it is just as likely that it is this kind of treatment that has contributed to young people's increasingly challenging behaviour over the past 12 to 18 months. And of course the minister has proposed a whole new youth prison at Werribee South, with apparently no consultation with the community, no consultation with services and no consultation with experts.

We do know that the minister is very deliberately using highly inflammatory language in relation to young people. She insists on describing them as the worst of the worst. She has even called them potential rapists on Twitter. She clearly does not care about the mountains of evidence that predicts how describing young people in this way will work in a self-fulfilling way. It will work to confirm young people's sense of themselves as violent, bad people who deserve to be locked up.

We do know that the minister has basically washed her hands of the young people in custody in Victoria. She calls the young people who she has moved to Barwon Prison young offenders, despite the fact that they are pretty much all on remand and have not been found guilty of any offences by the Children's Court yet. She implies that they deserve to be in custody because they are the worst of the worst. She is simply not interested in their welfare, from what I can gather. By extension she is simply not interested in working with them in ways the evidence says will reduce their violent behaviour and reduce the chances that they will reoffend in the future.

I am extremely concerned that what the minister hopes to do with her brand-new youth detention centre in Werribee South is continue down this corrections-driven path of punishment and security, with lockdowns and solitary confinement and prison guards and dogs and spray, but in a much more so-called secure facility that the young people cannot damage when they retaliate. That is why we need to see the full basis upon which the minister made this decision.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MELBOURNE METRO RAIL PROJECT

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise and move:

That, in relation to the Melbourne Metro rail project (the project), this house —

- (1) notes the joint inquiry and advisory committee (IAC) report regarding the Melbourne Metro rail project and the response of the Minister for Planning;
- (2) notes planning scheme amendment GC45 was gazetted on 5 January 2017;
- (3) pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 —
  - (a) revokes provisions of amendment GC45 so far as to exclude the Minister for Planning from being the responsible authority for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Stonnington planning scheme as they relate to the project; and
  - (b) as a result of (3)(a) revokes any consequential provisions to amendment GC45.

This is both a complex and also a deceptively simple motion. It seeks to use the particular powers that are in the Planning and Environment Act 1987. On 5 January the Minister for Planning gazetted planning scheme amendment GC45. This is a planning scheme amendment that had, prior to it, a process of a panel — the one referred to in the motion — and sought to put in place a set of planning provisions for the Melbourne Metro.

I hasten to add very clearly at the start that the opposition supports public transport projects and supports a metro project. Indeed we had one very similar to this, but different to the government's current proposal, when we were in government — a project that took the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines through South Yarra station, through Domain into Fishermans Bend and then across to Southern Cross station and ultimately to the airport as a further extension. But the government's project is a different one: it comes from North Melbourne and Parkville to the top end of Swanston Street, down Swanston Street, underneath Swanston Street in a tunnel, and runs to Domain, where it wheels around in the current proposals and then seeks to go underneath or next to South Yarra station, disconnecting the lines from Cranbourne and Pakenham — two of the key lines that go through South Yarra station.

It is important to note that the coalition supports this additional capacity in our transport system and understands the importance of that capacity, but that does not mean that that gives the government carte

blanche to introduce any project and to cut corners, which will lead to very bad outcomes. It is very clear that this government has trouble managing large major projects. We have seen the debacle with sky rail, and we have seen the issues that have developed with respect to the Melbourne Metro itself.

The coalition's key contention here is that the government is not building a South Yarra station as part of this project. Perhaps I ought to quote directly the words from the planning panel itself and the minister's response to it. On the matter of South Yarra station, I am quoting from page 18 of the minister's document, which also includes his quote of the IAC's comments:

The IAC addressed submissions made by Stonnington City Council as to whether the project should be changed to include a station at South Yarra. I accept the comments made by the IAC at pages 269 and 270 of the report ...

The committee did not accept a cost-benefit relative ratio was suitable for South Yarra, but the committee did consider that:

... the design and construction of the project should not preclude the ability to include such a station as part of the metropolitan network at some time in the future.

It goes on, and I am quoting directly here:

However, the design stage of the project should seek to ensure that if possible, the option of providing for such a station at some time in the future should not be precluded.

I think that was a welcome recommendation from the panel. The minister says he adopts that, and the government has since said that it has instructed the tenderers to try to design this project in that way. So they are welcome developments, but they are not sufficient developments. It is very clear that the future of South Yarra — and I will come back and say something about that in a moment — is a very significant one with respect to public transport, and we need to make sure that public transport is advantaged in that area and that we are not actually taking the step that the government proposes to take, which is to disconnect two lines. The government seeks to disconnect the Pakenham line and the Cranbourne line from South Yarra. The four lines that go through there now include Frankston and Sandringham, as well as Pakenham and Cranbourne. To disconnect those two from South Yarra is a significant hit on its future viability.

The coalition supports the project being built with a South Yarra station. At a minimum we want to see that there is a very clear way forward with respect to ensuring that the design is an outcome that suits the community in Stonnington, in South Yarra in particular, and that the design is such that a later retrofit

can occur. We do not want that precluded. Despite the government's statements on this — the minister's statements and the further statements by the government in recent days — that it will design it in this way, I for one do not trust this particular minister, meaning Minister Allan. I do not trust the metro authority. It shows all the signs of being an out-of-control authority that is not to be trusted. Its processes are poor; its figure work is wrong. We know the business case has significant problems in it.

We know that the Stonnington council has done significant work of its own, and I compliment the City of Stonnington on that work. The City of Stonnington's work shows that the government's business case is flawed. It shows that there is a case for South Yarra being added now. It shows that the projections for movements through South Yarra for later in the 2020s are already being exceeded on the survey work that they have undertaken — the actual survey work. These are not estimates; these are actual figures recorded by the council in the work that it was doing.

My point here, very clearly, is that this revocation motion is an important one. What it will do is say that the planning powers remain with the City of Stonnington with respect to this project. The City of Stonnington will be in a position to work with the government, to negotiate with the government and to work through the planning aspects in a coordinated way with the government, and I have no doubt that the City of Stonnington under the current council and current officers is in a position to do that work. I know it would be some additional effort for them but, having said that, they are very focused on getting a good outcome for their community long term. It is important to note that on Monday, 20 February, Stonnington council resolved to support any proposal that sees Stonnington as the responsible authority for its part of the metro rail project. That I think is an important indication that Stonnington has the capacity and maturity to do that work with the government.

I want to say something about the minister's decision to take all powers to himself. With this GC45 planning scheme amendment the minister signed, the planning panel advice came down, he released that just before Christmas and in very late December he signed a planning scheme amendment, GC45, under section 20(4) of the Planning and Environment Act. In signing that, he takes all power to himself for the planning of this whole project. I must say I have developing concern about the minister pulling all powers to himself. I am not here indicating that that is never appropriate; I do not make that argument specifically, but what I do say is that where there is a

major linchpin like South Yarra that is not in the government's project, this chamber ought not be afraid to use its powers, its approach, to actually generate an outcome that puts the council in this case and the community and the state of Victoria in a position to have a better outcome long term.

Putting the council in that position would enable it to responsibly work with the government, and I would have no doubt that that is what it would do. Its constructive approach to data gathering, to putting forward alternatives and to doing the work at a local community level has been very strong and praiseworthy on every level. I think this constructive approach to advocacy on behalf of the community is entirely within the purview of municipalities like the City of Stonnington, and as I say, I compliment them and particularly Claude Ullin, the then mayor who led much of the work, and Warren Roberts, who is the CEO and was I think instrumental in ensuring that the background work, the City of Stonnington's proposals and the support that they got from a series of consultancies achieved a high standard of not only measurement of data but proposals to actually put in place a better outcome.

This is a motion that I think can have a very good outcome for the community. It is a motion that I think the community will want to see.

Stonnington, in putting forward its proposals released in April 2016, said:

Melbourne Metro interchange at South Yarra could benefit 65 000 commuters per day;

Stonnington pedestrian counts reveal serious discrepancies in state government projections for South Yarra;

transport experts identify cost-saving engineering solutions.

And it stated that:

Independent pedestrian counts, conducted in December and March, show that daily patronage at South Yarra has trebled since 2011 to 28 000 commuters. Council projects this to increase to 40 000 by 2031. By contrast, the state government's projections estimates daily patronage figures at South Yarra to reach only 23 000 by 2031 — 5000 less than the number of commuters using the station today ...

That is from April 2016. It is important to note that South Yarra is the busiest station outside the CBD across the network during the morning peak, coming second only to Flinders Street. Caulfield station comes in at 10th, according to 2013–14 Public Transport Victoria figures.

The cost that the state government has put on the South Yarra station is, in my view, overinflated. It is clear

from the council work that it can be done more cheaply, and I know from my period in government that in fact there are cheaper ways to do this work. A cost structure in the order of \$600 million to \$650 million is absolutely achievable in this regard. We need to be quite clear here: the state government is pumping up those costs because it does not want to build South Yarra. It has got some kind of fixation against South Yarra. While I understand, and many people understand, that when you are building a major project you do have to cut your cloth to get to a financial outcome, you have also got to be looking at these projects and asking, 'What is in the long-term interests of communities? How can we get a better outcome for the community in the long term?'. It is tremendously short sighted not to be building this project with a full South Yarra station connected and part of the outcome.

We will have more as an opposition to say on this as we go forward. I have got to say that the support from the community has been very strong. As I said, the City of Stonnington has been very thoughtful and constructive in its approach to this. What I also want to say is that I will seek the support of all of the chamber on this matter today — the government, the minor parties and the Greens in particular. This is an important area for our community. It is a very significant station — the busiest outside the immediate CBD area — and this is an outcome that the community certainly want. They want a South Yarra station there. This motion will give planning capacity to the City of Stonnington to work constructively with the Metro authority.

I want to put on record some of my concerns about the Metro authority and their approach. I have had quite a bit to do with them now as I have worked through this area of my electorate but also as shadow Minister for Planning. At an early point I wrote to a number of councils saying they need to be active in advocating for their communities on these major projects. Some have been so, and some have been to a lesser degree. The City of Stonnington has been very active in that regard.

But the behaviour of Metro in terms of its public consultations and the attitude of Metro to the engagement of local community groups has been nothing short of shocking. At a number of the meetings I have attended I have seen the behaviour of some of the officers from Metro, and I do not think this is a role model or a good case study for community consultation. At the Fawkner Park consultation I attended there were well over 200 people, and they were very angry that parts of this project have been sprung on people. Frankly, the community was very, very unhappy with the Metro authority and its particular approach to this.

I also want to say that the work by Margaret Fitzherbert on Domain station has been very significant in seeking to get a better outcome there. We support a deep tunnel option at Domain. I know that many of the groups in that area are also working very hard on that. There are reasons for that, not least the disruption and the devastation that will occur with the government's proposed open-cut approach and the massive movement of trucks. I know concern has been expressed by people like Michael Butcher, the president of the Melbourne South Yarra Residents Group, and like the Save St Kilda Road group, and that has been important. Those campaigns continue, and it is important to think about the parts of the City of Stonnington, the City of Melbourne and the City of Port Phillip that will be impacted by the project.

It is all very well for Metro and the government to now decide that they are going to use a tunnelling method through part of the section that is north of the Yarra, but they have rejected that option south of the Yarra. They are proceeding to cause massive devastation and negative outcomes for the community whilst the project is underway. There will be the loss of an incredibly important heritage asset in that boulevard.

I compliment Barry Jones and Tom Harley on the submission that they made. I also compliment the many local activists on the work that they have done to put material before Heritage Victoria. We await Heritage Victoria decisions on matters of the Metro rail project through that particular sweep of the Domain area.

I also put on record my appreciation of the work done by the National Trust of Australia in its submission on that matter. It is an important and powerful submission that makes a very strong case for protecting the trees and for a deep tunnel option. I am still hopeful that the government will step back and say, 'Look, we cannot, as a modern First World city, do the damage that is being proposed by the government and the metro authority to St Kilda Road, the environment, the Shrine of Remembrance and the Domain section'.

I am particularly concerned about some of the impacts in relation to the Park Street and Domain Road route of the old no. 8 tram. This government is intending to remove the no. 8 tram — that is their word in their own document — and push the tram straight down Toorak Road West, again impacting movements east-west parallel with where the Metro Tunnel will actually be. I know the South Yarra residents group has made the point that they are concerned about the strong possibility that they will lose the Park Street–Domain Road tram route forever. They are concerned that the tram route will be relocated permanently along Toorak

Road West. They point to the construction planning for the new tram line down Toorak Road West and the new tram stops as giving a strong indication that the state government has no intention of restoring our existing tram service down Park Street and Domain Road when the metro project is finished.

The number 8 tram is a longstanding tram. It commenced in 1927, and it was actually a cable tram before that. It plays a very important role in ensuring the movement of tourists but also a whole range of local people. It is a positive and respected route and ought not be removed in the way the government seeks to do. They seek to replace it with another tram, but one that does not do the same work and that forces people to change in a way that, to be honest, is not what people, particularly older people, are looking for. The super-stops that are proposed on Toorak Road West will have a significant and devastating impact on traffic movements and, very likely, safety too. There is a great concern with the enormous number of movements, and the government is going to have to come to grips, if it adopts this open-cut method — and I pray that it does not — with the huge number of trucks that are going to be moving through this area. This is not going to work well down Toorak Road West, which is going to be narrowed, have tram stops put in and have a tram line running down there as well.

This has not been well thought through by the government. The opposition is very concerned about the way this matter is being approached and will be working to get a better outcome there. We will be seeking to push for a deep tunnelling option. We will be seeking to make sure that the tram lines along Domain Road and Park Street are not torn up. There is a strong indication that the government is intending to tear up those tracks. That would be an act of outright vandalism. It would count out the simple prospect of restoring trams through that route, and if the government does that, I think there will be hell to pay, because this will be seen as an outrageous act of vandalism by Daniel Andrews. The coalition and the Liberal Party will be working very hard to prevent that from happening, and we will be looking at ways to restore that tram after the work is done if we are elected in 2018.

Everyone is clear that there will be a significant impact from the metro project throughout that area. There is no question of that. That impact will be severe — —

**Ms Crozier** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — That is right; there is enormous disruption already starting.

It is true that you cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs; everyone understands that. But the government needs to work with communities — with representatives of communities and with community groups — to minimise this disruption and get the best outcome that is possible. People want the projects, but they want the outcome minimised in terms of disruption and impact on their local community and local environment. This is not where the government is going. As with sky rail, they are just pushing forward like a bulldozer, and with enormous arrogance. You can feel the arrogance. It is palpable in the — —

**Ms Crozier** — And it's divisive.

**Mr DAVIS** — And it is divisive in local communities. It is divisive, but you can feel the palpable arrogance of the bureaucrats and indeed, I might say, of some of the government's ministers. That is not the way it should be. That is one of the reasons why I am very concerned that, whatever the government's soft words and whatever its promises, none of those promises with the Andrews government are worth the paper they are written on — none of them. Only by giving an authority like the City of Stonnington, in the case of South Yarra station, the capacity to work constructively with the government but also the whip hand as the responsible authority will we be in a position to guarantee, first, that a South Yarra station can be built in the future, and second, that there is strong advocacy for it to occur as soon as possible as part of the project. That would be the best way forward.

I make the point that it is not just the groups and the councils that have a very strong view on this. I have surveyed extensively in the community, and I can say that there is overwhelming support for the action that the coalition is taking today to revoke in part the planning scheme changes that Minister Wynne put in place on 5 January through the *Government Gazette* with respect to Stonnington, and I just want to read those words again so everyone understands what we are talking about:

- (3) pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 —
  - (a) revokes provisions of amendment GC45 so far as to exclude the Minister for Planning from being the responsible authority for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Stonnington planning scheme as they relate to the project ...

That is, the Melbourne Metro rail project. The minister has taken all power to himself, and we are saying, 'Yes, we understand why you want significant planning powers for this particular project and major projects of

this type, but in this you cannot be trusted. You have shown through bad faith and you have shown through a focus on poor consultation that what you will do is bulldoze forward, and there will be an outcome that will drive the community mad. The community will be the poorer through this approach'.

I am going to read some of the responses to the survey work that we have done. They say:

I can assure you that whatever legal action is necessary to prevent this wanton destruction of our neighbourhood will be undertaken to prevent your vandalism.

That is talking about the government's vandalism. Someone else said:

Why does the government not plan accordingly for future population growth ...

Just think of that node next to South Yarra station, the Forrest Hill precinct. Fifty-one storeys is the large building that is going on the corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street. That has got a planning permit with a very low ratio of car parking specifically because it is right next to the station, yet we are actually reducing the access to major public transport in that intense node of massive transport movement. Let me say it again: under the government's metro proposal we are getting less connection and less public transport in that context.

We need to preserve a full service into South Yarra station. South Yarra is a medium to high density residential area. The last thing it needs is less public transport and an increase in private cars.

That is what someone told me in the survey work we did.

Someone else said:

We have seen the renaissance of South Yarra as a vibrant and growing retail and commercial hub. The vibe of Toorak Road has improved and will continue to grow. The suburb now has a mix of many different demographics. With the apartment developments in the area it has brought in more people and these people need an upgraded multifaceted station that can serve us all.

I want to hit one thing clearly on the head. We have had some local people — including Mr Hibbins, the member for Prahran in the Assembly — talking about the upgrade of the station. Everyone supports an upgraded South Yarra station, but he has been very slow about the need to do a full connection to the metro. An upgrade is one thing — it is important, and the coalition has supported that and has been advocating for it — but that is not to be confused with a full connection to the metro. They are actually separate points. Mr Hibbins has been very tardy in being

prepared to put his colours on the mast with respect to South Yarra and the full connection to the metro. It is only in recent times that he has given a clear commitment to that, but even now I do not quite think he is there. We need every local MP, upper and lower house, to be supportive of South Yarra being connected to the metro now.

Somebody said to me in response to the survey:

This is a no-brainer. Labor can't get away with stuff-up after stuff-up. 2018 election can't come quickly enough to boot Labor and its anti-democratic ideology and get back to having a government who can run projects and put this state back from the ...

I will not use some of the words he uses. He then talks about the desal and the waste of money.

Another said:

Totally agree that South Yarra station should be included as part of the metro project!

And another:

This present state government has absolutely no vision ...

Another said:

This is just economic sabotage like east-west!

And another:

The old adage 'penny-wise pound-foolish' is in evidence with the proposal to cut out South Yarra station.

Another said:

The lines from Pakenham, Cranbourne, Sandringham and Frankston must be connected to the new ... underground line to prevent gridlock on our roads.

That is absolutely right. I mean it is nuts — really nuts — this idea that you would spend \$11 billion building a transport connection and you would actually disconnect one of your major stations. It is dumb, dumb, dumb.

Somebody said:

The fact that Labor have left South Yarra out of the plan is understandable ... However to not have the option to do this in the future defies logic.

I could go on all day with some of these responses, including:

South Yarra is a key node ... To not include it in the Melbourne Metro build defies any logic and thus smells of vindictive politics.

I think there is a bit of truth in that. In the responses to the survey other people talked about the no. 8 tram and its importance and the full connection of different services through the area. I could go on, but I think people get very much the flavour. Somebody else said:

I think it's a disgrace ...

And another said:

I live in Willam Street, South Yarra. Metro so-called liaison officers equivocate and obfuscate. This project is being put together by a series of ever-changing thought bubbles.

**Ms Crozier** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — I think that is a great description. I challenge anyone to go to the tram stop at South Yarra station at 8.00 or 8.30 on a workday and tell me a new station connection is not needed now, let alone in the future.

The responses go on:

Students in RMIT, Melb. Uni. and major schools and business penalised as well as residents. Can't get to the G or Flinders Street.

This is another point about the metro that is a quiet sleeper in this process: where does it go exactly? If you are on the Cranbourne or Pakenham lines, you will not be able to get to the sporting facilities directly as you can now. You will not be able to. The government has not thought through solutions for this.

I was talking about this the other day with someone who is a Tigers supporter.

**Ms Crozier** — Bernie Finn?

**Mr DAVIS** — No, not Bernie Finn. He comes from a different side of the city. The point here is that those Tiger supporters from out in the eastern suburbs will need to change trains. This will cause delay and trouble for large families who are seeking to move to the football and then home from the football on a Friday night. This resident of Oakleigh made it very clear to me that this was a big problem, and they regard this as a loss of a service, not an addition.

The government has not thought through all of these points. They have not thought through the outcomes that the community wants. They have not thought through the best solutions. We need through this motion to actually make sure that the City of Stonnington is empowered to work constructively with the government to push for a South Yarra station connection now, but at a minimum to guarantee that there is the capacity to do a full connection at a future

point. The fear is that the Andrews government, Minister Allan and the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority could not care less and will, in an act of bastardry, seek to build a set of lines disconnecting the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines and leaving no prospect of connection for the future.

I am not assuaged and I am not assured by glib or blithe promises from Minister Allan or from the metro authority. I think the only thing that will suffice here is an outcome that actually makes sure that we can guarantee that those connections will be — in the community's interest, in the City of Stonnington's interest and in Melbourne's interest — guaranteed into the future.

**Mr MULINO** (Eastern Victoria) — This motion is, I would argue, one of a series of attempts to delay this project. I would categorise much of what I see from those opposite as being sympathetic to public transport at a very high level and sympathetic to public transport in principle but opposed to every particular project. That is an easy position to take. Those opposite are very supportive of more investment in major projects, but when it comes to actually seeing a project through, that is where the support evaporates. That is also where those opposite find it all too comfortable to constantly find problems with any particular design or any particular process. Those opposite find it all too easy to snipe while at the same time trying to maintain that they are very supportive of doing more for public transport in general, in principle and at a theoretical level. That is the broad context I want to put on the table for what this motion reflects.

There have been any number of attempts by those opposite to thwart this project and other projects, but this project in particular. There have been any number of attempts by those opposite to put in place additional layers of red tape and additional layers of veto. Let us look at their track record. They had four years and what we ended up with after their four years of government was a haphazard, ad hoc, back-of-the-envelope plan for a metro tunnel but no action. They were just drawing lines on a map in their last budget. There was no action and no detailed planning. Their track record indicates that when in government they behave much as they do in opposition: they are supportive in principle, but there is no capacity for actually working through in a systematic, methodical way a project that can actually work on the ground. They left government with a plan up in the air, and in opposition that is what they want to support. They want to continue supporting nothing more than plans, principles, endless red tape, vetoes and process.

We want to deliver. If you talk to anyone in the infrastructure planning space, if you talk to anybody in the construction world, they talk about how this government, through a methodical and detailed consultation process, is delivering this project in a very, very timely way and yet at the same time has involved considerable consultation with the community and key stakeholder groups.

Everybody in this place agrees that our state is growing at such a pace that we need this project. This project has been talked about for a decade or more. There were a succession of budgets before this government came to power in which this project was mentioned, but it is only this government that actually started a process that led to concrete plans, it is only this government that put real money behind this project and it is only this government that is seeing this project actually delivered. We are looking forward to November 2018 when we will look back on our term and what we were able to deliver on this project. Those opposite continue to put up motions such as this, the only intention of which is to unnecessarily throw spanners in the works of a project that is absolutely needed for this city and this state. I say 'this state' because there are large parts of my electorate — places like Pakenham and Officer, but indeed further out into Gippsland — that will benefit greatly from increased services along that busy line.

The system as a whole is going to benefit from the Melbourne Metro Tunnel. Every single line in the system will benefit from increased reliability and increased capacity. It is going to be the state as a whole that benefits. It is not just people in metropolitan Melbourne; it is the state as a whole that will benefit from greater access to rail lines into and through the CBD. This project is significant. It involves 9-kilometre twin tunnels from South Yarra to Kensington and five new stations. It will see a seamless connection with city loop services, with the CBD South station connected to Flinders Street and the CBD North station connected to Melbourne Central. It has high-capacity signalling to allow more trains to run more often. It will create 5000 jobs and is part of a broader infrastructure package that will create 10 000 jobs, including on other major projects such as the level crossings removal. Importantly it will allow an additional 39 000 passengers to get into the city during the a.m. peak.

This is a critically important project. It has been talked about for so long, but it is now being delivered. It is not being delivered in a rush but in a way that is sensible and methodical and with appropriate consultation. I will get onto the specifics of amendment GC45 in a

moment, but I did want to set that context. This is a critically important project. We all agree on that. Those opposite agree in principle, but they are always opposed in practice to every single particular. That is why if they had their way, we would end up after four years with no progress, just like they did after their four years.

The member opposite, Mr Davis, goes on about South Yarra station constantly. It is all very easy to suggest this or that increase to a particular project. It is all very easy to suggest this or that change. He can throw concepts around like, 'Of course it makes sense to connect this to that. Of course it makes sense to make it easier for commuters at this station', but when you are talking about \$1 billion of additional costs, you cannot just throw around concepts on a whim. You actually have to look at whether or not spending that additional \$1 billion makes sense, because of course if you spend the additional \$1 billion on that particular addition, you cannot spend \$1 billion on another part of the transport network or another part of government spending.

The proposal that Mr Davis talked about today and has talked about incessantly has been rejected in the Metro Tunnel business case, it has been rejected by Infrastructure Victoria and it has been rejected in the independent environment effects statement (EES). Importantly Infrastructure Australia has endorsed the tunnel as a high-priority project based on the business case without the second South Yarra station.

I do not want to get into all the details of that in this particular contribution, but it is important to say that this is yet another example of Mr Davis trying to add red herrings, trying to slow the process down and trying to add more and more complications. They of course will say, 'We're very supportive of this project. We just want this project to be the best it can be', but what they want to do is keep adding complications and keep adding costs. All they really want to do is to grind this project to a halt so that it is in the same state that it was in after they left government — that is, still a plan; still a thought bubble. That is not the way this government operates. This government is going to actually achieve something in this space. This government is not going to endlessly dream up new fantastic ways that this project might look in theory. This government is about working out the most sensible way forward given all the constraints we are running under and given the expert advice in the Metro Tunnel business case, from Infrastructure Victoria and in the independent EES. Based upon all of that, we have a plan to go forward that is the best way forward given all the various constraints we are operating under.

This motion is notionally pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, which revokes provisions of amendment GC45, but as I said, what it is really about is yet another attempt to throw a spanner in the works. Let me get onto GC45 for a moment, because it is the subject of the motion. GC45 affects the Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Port Phillip and Stonnington planning schemes. It is an amendment that allows the use and development of land in the project area for the purpose of the Melbourne Metro rail project. The construction and operation of the project will be facilitated by an incorporated document, included in each planning scheme. Why is the amendment needed? It is needed because it provides the necessary approval framework to ensure that the project is delivered in a timely, consistent and coordinated manner, and this is very consistent with the way in which major projects are delivered.

In order to provide a bit of context on this point in particular, I want to quote a couple of paragraphs from a letter that was provided to the relevant member of the Greens, Ms Samantha Dunn, from the Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects in order to clarify these aspects. I will read some of it into the public record. The letter states:

A comprehensive environmental effects statement has been completed in relation to the government's Melbourne Metro Tunnel project. The independent joint inquiry and advisory committee (IAC) has produced its report on the outcomes of the EES process. In relation to South Yarra station, the IAC found that —

and I quote here —

'The committee does not recommend that a new station at South Yarra be considered or included as part of the project. However, the design stage of the project should seek to ensure that, if possible, the option of providing for such a station at some point in the future should not be precluded'.

The Minister for Planning, the Honourable Richard Wynne, has released an assessment of the IAC report and has accepted the recommendation not to include a new station at South Yarra as part of the project. However, its future provision should not be precluded.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority has accepted the advice of the Minister for Planning, and as a result the three bidders who have been short-listed as part of the procurement for the delivery of the tunnel and stations will be required to adhere to this recommendation in their bids. Their designs for the project must not preclude the provision of a station in the future.

The Melbourne Metro business case, Infrastructure Victoria and the EES now have all independently recommended to not include a second station at South Yarra as part of the project. Infrastructure Australia has also assessed the project without the new station included and placed it at the top of their priority list.

As you know, the Liberal opposition is seeking to attempt to give Stonnington council veto powers over the project. This will further delay a project the Liberals have already delayed for four years.

I acknowledge the Greens have always been a supporter of the Melbourne Metro Tunnel project and are on the record suggesting it should be built quickly.

That is critical context. As I said, it provides me with a great deal of comfort that the minister agrees with my assessment that those opposite are unduly attempting to delay this project while trying to shroud their activities in a whole series of motions that purport to be about due process. It is clearly not about that. It is clearly a disingenuous and, might I say, somewhat cynical attempt to throw constant red herrings into the process. Every other week in this place it seems that we are dealing with some planning motion which is an attempt to throw more confusion around this project. This is a project that all of us in this place agree with in principle. Some in this place, however, do not behave in a way that is consistent with that.

I will just finish by saying that this is a transformational project; it is a critical project. We all understand in this place that population growth is rapid across the state, and it is particularly rapid in the metro area. This project is critical for public transport but also for freight across our rail network, and it is absolutely imperative that we finish it in a timely way. This government is committed to doing so.

The government has progressed this project in several key ways. Firstly, it has progressed it in relation to design, it has progressed it in relation to planning consideration and it has progressed it in relation to putting real dollars behind it, which, I might say, has not been helped by the federal government continuing to underfund our state, which should be a matter of some concern in all parts of this chamber. Those opposite would do well to talk some of their federal counterparts into improving the infrastructure spending in this state.

In short, this motion is not one to be supported. This motion is highly disingenuous. It is not going to improve the process at all in relation to this important project. This motion is causing undue delay. This motion is confusion. This motion is a red herring. What we need in relation to the Melbourne Metro project is to continue on the sensible path that we are on, and for that reason I will not support this motion.

**Mr LEANE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — In the brief time I have to speak on this motion before question time I want to say that this is a moronic motion from a

group of MPs who do not support any capital works project, particularly public transport projects — —

**Mrs Peulich** — The only ones we do not support are Trades Hall projects.

**Mr LEANE** — No, you do not support any project. You do not support the removal of level crossings. The coalition does not support the Melbourne Metro, which is a project that will create five new stations in the CBD area. This will open the capacity of the central loop by 100 per cent.

When the level crossings are removed and the work is done this will give Melbourne commuters the opportunity to not even need a timetable. They will be able to turn up in the morning, like all other great cities that have great transport networks, such as London, and expect a train to come within a few minutes because of the advanced signalling that will be available.

I find it strange that the opposition wants to hold up the government on the Melbourne Metro project when its own Melbourne Metro project involved a second station at the casino. That was the jewel in their crown: a second station at the casino. I do not know where the importance of that came from, but I think we all should remember the casino station. You have got to ask: why would you come up with that plan when there is already a station close to the casino?

**Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Game reserve management

**Mr YOUNG** (Northern Victoria) — My question today is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, a report has recently been produced by the Game Management Authority (GMA) as a result of an audit on state game reserves. In it is some very damning evidence of poor management by the current land managers. It found that 90 per cent of 199 state game reserves had no infrastructure for users, 50 state game reserves cannot be accessed by users due to ambiguous or undefined access points and/or being landlocked, 58 per cent of state game reserves have no two-wheel drive access and 29 per cent of access roads have been assessed as being in poor condition and only 61 are in good condition, leaving very few in excellent condition. The report also found that car parking cannot occur at 40 per cent of reserves due to no access. More importantly, though, of the 199 state game reserves, 69 per cent of reserves were found not to have targeted management plans for the reserve, despite legislative

requirements to do so. Minister, what is being done to rectify the issues highlighted in this report?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Young for his question and his interest in the management of state game reserves across the state. To improve the situation the first thing to do is to understand the nature of the problem that we have at hand. To that end the comprehensive audit that was undertaken by the Game Management Authority with the assistance of Parks Victoria that Mr Young referred to has been very helpful indeed. As Mr Young indicated, there are 199 state game reserves, and this audit occurred between July 2015 and February 2016, so it is a reasonably contemporary assessment of the state of our state game reserves.

There were a number of concerns that were identified by the audit, as Mr Young points out, including a lack of management plans, a lack of signage and poorly defined boundaries and access in a number of areas. The last state budget provided \$5.3 million to support the implementation of the government's *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan*. The hunting action plan was launched in December last year and is a public document that members may wish to familiarise themselves with. In total \$1.2 million of this funding has been allocated to improve the situation on state game reserves, with a particular focus on signage in state game reserves and other public areas where hunting is permitted. This action will be implemented, as Mr Young, I think, well knows. A really important part of the *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan* is the allocation of tasks to implement it which sit behind it.

This action will be implemented by Parks Victoria with input from the Game Management Authority, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and hunting groups. Hunting groups have been encouraged to give input as to which initiatives they are interested in being a part of the project control group, and I know this is certainly an area of great interest to hunting groups. So the funding is secured and the policy framework is finalised. We have a good long list of areas for improvement, and we are getting on with addressing those.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr YOUNG** (Northern Victoria) — I thank the minister for her answer, and it will be great to see some of those things happen. But, Minister, it is clear that the current managers of state game reserves cannot or will not prioritise them and provide the funding and manpower to manage these important reserves. When

will the government give the GMA the authority and budget to properly look after our state game reserves?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Young for his further question. Improvements to state game reserve habitat is work that is underway. The *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan* provides the framework so that all agencies know who is responsible for what and what our objectives are. I am not sure our government can make a clearer statement than that *Sustainable Hunting Action Plan* and the investment of that \$5.3 million in the budget to demonstrate that we are very keen to see improvement here. I recognise — and I am familiar with the report that Mr Young referred to — that there is considerable room for improvement, and they are improvements that we look forward to working with hunting groups on and with different government departments and agencies to deliver.

**Princes Highway west**

**Mr PURCELL** (Western Victoria) — My question is also to Minister Pulford, representing the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Last week it was pleasing to see the CEO of VicRoads, John Merritt, in south-west Victoria facing the unhappy road users at public meetings in Portland and Warrnambool. It was even more pleasing to see his support for a two-plus-one, being a continuous passing lane on the Princes Highway from Colac to the South Australian border. My question is: will the minister at least support the VicRoads CEO and the local campaign to construct 50 passing lanes from Colac to the South Australian border?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Purcell for his question and for his ongoing interest in the quality of roads in south-west Victoria. I note that Ms Tierney also shares, as do I, a strong interest in this area.

**Ms Crozier** — So does Mr Ramsay.

**Ms PULFORD** — Yes, and Mr Ramsay. Mr Morris, would you like to join in too? There are five of us in our region. Ms Tierney made some significant funding announcements on behalf of the government in recent months that will hopefully make a very real difference. The question Mr Purcell has asked and directed to my colleague Minister Donnellan seeks a response as to his view of the passing lanes campaign, and I will certainly seek for Mr Purcell a written response from the minister to that effect.

### Duck season

**Mr BARBER** (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, last sitting week I gave you a list of various wetlands around the state where volunteer bird observers had located threatened species and a number of other populations of bird species that are not meant to be shot during duck hunting season. Can you please tell me and the house which of those sites have now been surveyed by the Game Management Authority?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Barber for his question and for his follow-up to his inquiry about the arrangements for the 2017 duck season that are in place. As members may be aware, there will be a full season commencing on Saturday, 18 March, and running until 12 June. The arrangements that have been announced include a restriction in that no taking of blue-winged shoveler will be permitted this year, but in every other respect the season will run in accordance with the default arrangements that are enshrined in legislation.

The work that needs to occur immediately prior to the opening of the season though does involve on-ground wetland surveys, and I think I indicated to Mr Barber last sitting week that this work was underway and that I would then be receiving advice on the results of that. On-ground surveys have now been completed, and they were undertaken by a combination of officials from the Game Management Authority and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and as Mr Barber has indicated, there was also a role for volunteers in this. That has now concluded. I am expecting advice from the Game Management Authority potentially as soon as later today, and I hope to make a decision before the end of the week, having had an opportunity to consider that advice.

I know that for those who have an interest in the arrangements for duck season, being able to receive as early as possible any advice in relation to closures or confirmation around what wetlands will be open is a matter of great interest. As members would know, last year's season was a very difficult one to manage. We have got more streamlined arrangements in place now, which of course is a good thing, but we want to be sure that we are providing timely advice to people about where they can and cannot participate in duck hunting, particularly around — well, always around, as there is a particular interest in it — opening weekend, because it is for hunters the main event of the season and that point in the calendar where there is the greatest level of activity. Activity is much reduced over the rest of the season.

There are lots of people who plan their year in advance and make arrangements with accommodation, friends and family, so that advice I hope to be able to announce by the end of the week.

### *Supplementary question*

**Mr BARBER** (Northern Metropolitan) — Thank you for that answer, Minister. If the information is about to be provided to you imminently, would you be able to release if not the advice then certainly the results of the on-ground surveys themselves to the house and to the Victorian public when you have received them?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Barber for his further question. I will receive the advice I think hopefully today. We will make a decision on that as quickly as possible, and we will provide the basis for our decision in the usual way, which I think is a summary of that information.

### Public transport

**Ms DUNN** (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture, representing the Minister for Public Transport. The Auditor-General's report into rail franchising was tabled in December 2016. The report exposed Public Transport Victoria's inability to explain why the operators were granted the exclusive right to negotiate. Rather than just rolling over the concessions, will the government open up a competitive tender process or explore the option of bringing public transport back into government hands to get the best outcomes for both passengers and the Victorian taxpayer?

**Mr Dalidakis** — On a point of order, President, I believe the question was addressed to the Minister for Agriculture. This appears to be a portfolio that is not within agriculture.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The member has directed it to the minister because of the representation of the Minister for Public Transport.

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I am feeling popular today, but this one is outside of my area of expertise and knowledge and indeed responsibility. The question Ms Dunn asked is to Minister Allan in her capacity as Minister for Public Transport, who of course I represent in this place. I will seek a response to that question from Minister Allan.

### Timber industry

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Minister, Victoria's forest industry is made up of hundreds of small businesses, from harvest and haulage contractors to small mills, specialised craftsmen and craftswomen and sales businesses. How can the small businesses of our timber industry have any certainty about their future when the Andrews government's failed task force process has left them in limbo for two and a half years?

**Mr Dalidakis** — On a point of order, President, I thank Ms Bath for her question. As the President and in fact the chamber would be well aware, since I was appointed as a minister in this place I have not at any stage chosen to answer questions that are outside my portfolio. There was a specific reference to the Forest Industry Taskforce, which is a task force that has absolutely no relevance to my portfolio. It is a task force that does not report to me, nor is it a task force that I in my position have been asked to contribute to, because it is made up of industry representatives, environmental non-government organisations representatives and union representatives that deal with those matters at the task force level. So I would specifically ask of you, President, whether in fact the question is germane to my portfolio responsibilities, given that it is very specific to Minister Pulford's responsibilities as the agriculture minister with responsibility for forestry.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Mr Dalidakis, I need to understand whether that was a point of order or the answer to the question.

**Mr Dalidakis** — It was a point of order.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Can I have a look at the question? Whilst I have a look at this question we might go to Mr O'Sullivan, and I will come back to this particular question.

### Energy prices

**Mr O'SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) — My question is also to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Minister, the impact of increasing gas and electricity prices on large regional employers such as Patties Foods, Kagome, D & R Henderson and Australian Paper have been widely reported. These rising electricity and gas prices also impact energy-intensive small regional businesses such as dairy farmers, laundries and engineering businesses. Have you commissioned through your

department any work to predict the impact of increasing electricity and gas prices on Victoria's regional small businesses, and if so, what has it shown?

**Mr Dalidakis** — On a point of order, President, I would refer to very similar questions of this nature that have been put to me before, specifically in relation to modelling of impacts on prices in relation to policies in other ministerial portfolios. On those occasions, both in verbal response and then in follow-up through written response, I also submitted that I do not have purview over those policy specifics, and where modelling is undertaken it is undertaken by the minister with the policy that is being implemented at the time.

**Ms Wooldridge** — On the point of order, President, the question was very specific to Mr Dalidakis and his department, saying 'Have you commissioned through your department', so the question is not 'Has anyone else done the work?'. The question is: has he done anything?

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I am going to use a little bit of discretion here from the chair and indicate that I actually think that Mr Dalidakis's point of order on this occasion was his answer. I would ask if he wants to elaborate on that at all, but essentially the point that he made in the point of order was that the modelling was done by other ministries and not in his own ministry. Whilst it was put as a point of order, I accept that that was sufficient for an answer.

### *Supplementary question*

**Mr O'SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) — I will try a supplementary along the same line, and we will see how we go with this one. Minister, small businesses — I will repeat that: small businesses — are reporting year-on-year gas price increases of between 50 per cent and 120 per cent and electricity price increases of up to 50 per cent. Is the Andrews Labor government doing anything to alleviate dramatic increases in gas and electricity prices on small businesses?

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the member for his question. The fact remains that energy policy is a very important one to this state government, and getting the mix right is also equally important as we move into a carbon-constrained world. Our Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in the other place has responsibility for both energy reform and energy policy and also what we can do in relation to the energy market, which is, by the way — the member may not be aware — part of a national grid. In fact Victoria is connected to South Australia, Tasmania, New South

Wales and Queensland through the one grid. We are at the behest of the national market in relation to prices. Our response as a government is driven by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I suggest that the member would be better positioned to direct those questions to the minister in the other place.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I have had the courtesy of being provided with the question that Ms Bath put to the minister, and I have read that. I am of the view that the minister could provide a response on that question. As a courtesy to the minister I would ask Ms Bath to read her question again.

### Timber industry

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Victoria's forestry industry is made up of hundreds of small businesses, from harvest and haulage contractors to small mills, specialised craftsmen and sales businesses. How can the small businesses of our timber industry have any certainty about their future when the Andrews Labor government's failed task force process has left them in limbo for two and a half years?

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the member for her question. As I understand the question, it is: how can they have certainty? I can tell you how they can have certainty. It is because as a government there is no party more committed to ensuring that we can sustain the balance between environmental conservation within our forest area and also the production forest estate and the values that come of it.

As members in this chamber would be aware, I very proudly represented the timber industry for three and a half years as its chief executive. I have been to mills and I have been to towns that those members opposite would probably struggle to find on a map, especially Mr O'Sullivan with his house in Fitzroy. He would also struggle to find Bendoc, Cann River, Orbost and Bairnsdale on a map. But that is okay, because I can tell you what we will do on this side of the house. On this side of the chamber we will work very hard to strike the right balance between ensuring that there are jobs within the timber industry going forward and that conservation values are restored.

Members opposite, including Mr O'Sullivan when he was chief of staff to the previous minister, Mr Walsh, who looked after forestry, did nothing to defend the industry. In fact the reason that Heyfield was mentioned in the question from Mr O'Sullivan's colleague was that the previous minister allowed to sit on the

government's desk for over two years a contract of supply that was not executed.

I know that this may be an inconvenient truth to those opposite. I know that Mr O'Sullivan and Ms Bath may not like the truth in this place; they may not be able to accept their role in the challenges that the industry is facing right now. But the fact remains that there are two pertinent issues in relation to supply at the mill at Heyfield. Number one is that it was Mr Ryan Smith, a former environment minister and the member for Warrandyte in the other place, who introduced prescriptions around the Leadbeater's possum that have restricted supply to our mill at Heyfield. It was Mr Smith who did that. It was an environment minister in a Liberal government who did that, not us. Secondly, it was a contract for supply that for over two years was not executed by either Mr Walsh or indeed Mr O'Brien as Treasurer with responsibility over VicForests.

We on this side will continue to work as best we can for the benefit of the industry. But in relation very specifically to the claims and the misleading statements of those opposite, in fact the Labor government has been left with a range of issues that it has had to fix and clean up because those opposite were too incompetent to be able to settle them themselves.

### *Supplementary question*

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) — Minister, when you were Victorian Association of Forest Industries CEO you commissioned a survey that found that 73 per cent of Victorians wanted the level of native forest harvested annually to be increased or to be maintained at current levels. Now, as small business minister, why have you not acted at any point to help the hundreds of small businesses of our forest industries to increase or at least maintain timber resource levels?

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I completely reject the assertion in the supplementary question because it implies that in fact I have done nothing in terms of lobbying, in terms of speaking to — —

### *Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DALIDAKIS** — It implies that the member somehow knows that I have done nothing in this area, which is not possible, so I can completely reject the assertion and tell the member that she is incorrect.

**StartCon**

**Mr ONDARCHIE** (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Minister, on 11 October 2016 when you were asked about your broken promise of LaunchVic supporting Freelancer with \$1 million to bring StartCon to Melbourne in 2016, you said:

... there is no embarrassment on behalf of myself or the government for walking away from an agreement when the company ... refused to agree to diversity targets and diversity metrics.

However, recently at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee outcome hearings, when asked whether a gender metric is applied as a condition of funding, department secretary Richard Bolt said:

There is no policy that requires that to be a requirement for funding receipt ... unless there is some edict of which I am not aware. I have certainly not asked for that or seen a requirement for that to be applied to grant applications.

Minister, who is right, you or the department secretary?

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I always love these pretend gotcha moments from Mr Ondarchie because really what they do is they end up slapping him in the face with stupidity. The fact of the matter is that LaunchVic was incorporated as a private company separate to the department. There is no reason that the department would understand what criteria LaunchVic goes by in terms of supporting grants because the grants are submitted to LaunchVic. LaunchVic determines what will be funded and what will not be funded. So I find it highly amusing that the member, who has been, apparently, in this place for some time, could fail to understand such a very simple process between a private company versus a public department — who does what and who has coverage of what. I suggest that the member try to work a little bit harder next time.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr ONDARCHIE** (Northern Metropolitan) — Minister, given that the department secretary confirmed there is no policy around diversity targets, perhaps not even in his department, or to put it your way, that he does not understand that there are gender metrics, what is the real reason that you flip-flopped on providing funding to Freelancer to host StartCon apparently to ever come to Melbourne?

**Mr Dalidakis** — President, on a point of order, can I just say that this question has been asked and

answered previously in this place, and a search of *Hansard* will see that that is accurate.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr Ondarchie** — On the point of order, President, as the minister tries to divert attention away from the real facts, this question relates to the fact that there is a conflict between what his department secretary says and what he says. This question goes to the real reason that he bounced away from StartCon.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The minister is correct when he says that the question should not be asked a second time in the same form. However, in this matter, given the substantive question that was raised and indeed the matter that was led in the supplementary question, I believe that what has been put to the house is new information in the context of some remarks that were made at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing, and on that basis indeed there is an opportunity for the member to revisit this particular issue with a question. On this occasion I am less concerned about whether or not the question was framed in precisely in the same words than I am about the fact that the question has picked up on evidence that was led at PAEC, and therefore it is new evidence and I think a revisit of the issue is allowable.

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I refer back to my earlier remarks in the substantive answer — that the assertion that the member has made is incorrect. There is no reason for the department to understand what a private company is doing separate to policy that is achieved.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DALIDAKIS** — I find this most disappointing and galling on this day, International Women’s Day, a day when we are attempting to seek to work on and fix the gender inequality that the tech and innovation start-up sector faces. We chose to walk away from the StartCon conference because it was not prepared to meet gender balance ratios in relation to speakers and panellists, and I am very proud of that.

**LaunchVic**

**Ms CROZIER** (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Minister, is LaunchVic CEO Kate Cornick being paid the same salary as her immediate predecessor, Pradeep Philip?

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — What I can say is that I do not actually set the salary. That may shock Ms Crozier and those opposite. The salary and the remuneration package are set by the board of the private company, in this case LaunchVic. I do not sit on the board — apparently much to the amazement of those opposite. The level of remuneration is best asked for through FOI, if those opposite choose to do so, as LaunchVic is an incorporated private company.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms CROZIER** (Southern Metropolitan) — Minister, the fact is she is earning less than Pradeep Philip did, while undertaking the same role. You claim to be a champion of gender equality, but is it not the reality that when faced with a direct opportunity to address gender pay gaps you have comprehensively failed?

**Mr DALIDAKIS** (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank the member for her question. Again it is important to note that the start-up sector has gender inequality of between 13 and 27 per cent. So when we looked at implementing LaunchVic as an entity, we were very proud in this place to begin it with more women than men on the board — the first time any such tech company in Australia had that. We are very proud that Dr Kate Cornick, a most professional, experienced and capable individual, was appointed by the board as the stand-out candidate in their process, as its chief executive. In fact Dr Philip was not appointed by the board in his role. Dr Philip chose to, fortunately, come across from his role as secretary of a department to help set it up, given his immense experience in the public sector, and so you cannot compare the two.

**Mr Ondarchie** interjected.

**Mr DALIDAKIS** — On a point of order, President, Mr Ondarchie made a claim that I am a fraud, and I ask that he withdraw.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I must say I did not hear any comment. Sometimes one of the problems about raising a point of order like that is that it will then be in *Hansard*, when it would not have been before. Mr Ondarchie, could I ask: did you make any such comment?

**Mr Ondarchie** — I did not call the minister a fraud.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! I do hear nearly, I think, every word that Mr Ondarchie utters because of where I am situated. I actually did not hear it on this occasion, and Mr Ondarchie assures me he did not say it. It is possible that someone else in the vicinity said something, but I did not hear that either. So on this occasion I am reluctant to press for any withdrawal because I am not sure that I can do so, but I do caution members again to be circumspect in terms of the remarks that they make and descriptions that they apply to members across the chamber.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr Ondarchie** — On a point of order, President, in order to satisfy the minister's claim, I did not call him a fraud. But in response to that he called me a grub, and he has form on that. I ask you to get him to withdraw.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Mr Leane, in his interjection, is quite right. I did not hear him say that, but in fact he confirmed he said it. Mr Dalidakis, I would ask you to withdraw that on the basis that you indicated you said it.

**Mr DALIDAKIS** — I withdraw.

**Family violence**

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is for the Leader of the Government. Minister, on 22 February the president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Keysar Trad, said in relation to violence against women:

Before you even consider using your hand, before you consider any act of violence, have you checked box number one, which is counselling, have you checked box number two. So what does counselling entail; well maybe next time you should bring her a bunch of flowers, maybe next time you should bring her a box of chocolates, maybe next time you should take her out for dinner.

And he then went on to say, 'Violence is a last resort'.

Minister, this comment is a disgrace and has been widely condemned, including by the federal minister, Michaelia Cash. On a day when we celebrate International Women's Day, why has your government been so silent about this abhorrent comment that not only condones violence against women but details the steps that justify violence?

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) — I cannot confirm in any shape or form the construction of the question by the member in relation to an acceptance by the government of that attitude, those values or in

fact the way in which they were articulated, because in fact they are not the values that the government shares. The government is very clear that a major reform of the incoming government was to deal with family violence and all the ways in which it permeates all aspects of culture and daily life in Victoria and to take steps to remove it.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! Today the amount of interjection across the chamber when ministers have been responding has been just totally unacceptable to me. A couple of members have been close to being called out in respect of those interjections. I think, fortunately, in most cases they have checked themselves subsequently. But the level of interjections is not appropriate. This is an important issue that has been raised, and Ms Wooldridge had the courtesy of the silence of the entire house in recognition of the importance of what she was raising. Mr Jennings deserves exactly the same courtesy in his response.

**Mr JENNINGS** — Thank you, President, because I was indicating to the chamber that this government will leave no stone unturned in relation to the work that was commissioned by the government in relation to establishing a Royal Commission into Family Violence, which made 227 recommendations, which the government is assiduously working through, allocating resources. In fact in the immediate response \$572 million was allocated of additional programmatic support to actually remove family violence as being a feature of community life in Victoria and to deal with the circumstances of victims and survivors of family violence to see that they have the wraparound services to support them now and into the future, to drive better prevention and community understanding about the way in which family violence permeates our lives and to reform the justice system to make Victoria a more just, inclusive and respectful society.

This government has not only undertaken this but actually put its money where its mouth is: \$572 million has been allocated to this task, which casts into the shade the amount of money that has been contributed by the commonwealth government in this regard. It is probably five or six times the amount of money that has been allocated by the federal government on this issue.

**Ms Wooldridge** — On a point of order, President, I was giving the Leader of the Government the courtesy to have preamble and context, but he has started attacking another level of government in addition to that. I ask you to bring him back to the question, which was very specific as to why the government has been

silent about these comments in the context that he has provided and its arguments in relation to family violence.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! The minister still has some time to go. He referred at the outset to the matters and indicated that perhaps he was not across all of the matters that have been raised or the form in which they were raised, but I am sure that he will come back to that.

**Mr JENNINGS** — Just to clarify the way I started, President, in fact I was refuting the suggestion that the government has not made comments on this issue and that none of my colleagues have made comments on this issue. I had not made public comments on this issue, but I am making them now. I am actually making it very clear, and I made it very clear on behalf of the government, that the issues that have been identified are totally inappropriate and incompatible with the value system of the government, and the government rejects that. I made that very clear from the outset.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr JENNINGS** — You may not remember that, President, because of the interjections or the attitude of the opposition. Perhaps that is a problem that I actually have to revisit in this remaining minute of my answer. What I was actually saying is I will not follow the lead on any policy matter from the federal minister in question. I do not find the leadership of the federal minister in this issue anything that the government would feel that we have to follow in Victoria, because we are capable of implementing an agenda, taking action and investing in programs to try to remove family violence. We are not interested in dividing our community; we are not interested in not going the full nine yards in relation to following up our rhetorical position with our actions. That is the difference between us and the federal government on this matter. This is actually something that I will not take lectures from anybody on in relation to the leadership of the federal government on this matter, and what I am saying is that this government is committed to removing family violence and that any way it is expressed is rejected.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — I suppose it is pleasing — and I think that is what happened — that nearly two weeks after the comments were made finally someone from the government is condemning those comments. I think that is what we got from the Leader of the Government in relation to

those responses. The minister also said that they follow their words with actions. Minister, given that violence against women is contrary to not only our beliefs but our laws, will the government withhold any future funding to the Australian Islamic councils until Mr Trad does the proper thing and resigns for his shocking comments? Will you follow your words with action?

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) — It seems to be a theme for the opposition this week to assume that I will apply retribution against anybody that they do not like today. That was the theme yesterday and that is the theme today. I have to be very mindful of my obligations as a minister to acquit my responsibilities and not to pre-empt the decisions of government in relation to funding or other forms of support or engagement with community organisations. If I have identified that in fact the comments in question are totally unacceptable and that the attitude is unacceptable, there is a long leap from that recognition to actually saying that retribution should be meted out on any organisation that may be doing good work but that has been let down by leadership in their organisation. That is something the government has to consider.

### Written responses

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! In regard to today's questions I seek a written response, which Ms Pulford actually offered, to Mr Purcell's substantive question. That is two days. I seek a written response to Mr Barber's supplementary question to Ms Pulford, and that is one day. The minister did provide some indication to the house about this report. I guess what I am inviting is whether or not the findings should be released publicly, which is what Mr Barber sought by his supplementary question. The minister indicated that the report she is to receive will inform decision-making. That is only one day. I seek a written response to Ms Dunn's substantive question to Ms Pulford, and that is two days because it involves a minister in another place. I seek a response to Ms Crozier's substantive question to Mr Dalidakis, and that is one day.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

### Answers

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) — I have the written response to question 9729.

## CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

### Eastern Metropolitan Region

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety in the other place, and it relates to the stretch of Main Road, Eltham, between Beard Street and Leane Drive. My question is: will traffic lights be installed at the Leane Drive intersection? This was a policy of the Liberals going into the last election, and it reflects, basically, concern of local residents that many students cross this busy stretch of road and that pedestrians in particular need to be better protected. I understand there have been several accidents, including one in the last few weeks which required police and ambulance presence at the Leane Drive intersection. This just highlights the danger. My question is: when will these traffic lights that are needed and wanted by the community to ensure and enhance resident safety be installed?

### Southern Metropolitan Region

**Ms PENNICUIK** (Southern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. With the recent announcement that the Gatwick Hotel is to be sold, the minister said that the government will work with St Kilda Community Housing and a network of agencies to relocate the current residents. The minister also called on the owners not to take on any new residents. The Gatwick has been able to accommodate up to 80 people, but this has been reducing over time. I am concerned that vulnerable people who until now would have found accommodation at the Gatwick will have nowhere to go. What will the minister do to ensure that not only those 80 beds that already exist at the Gatwick but an increased number of modern, fit-for-purpose crisis accommodation with funding for support services is provided as soon as possible in the Port Phillip area?

### Northern Metropolitan Region

**Mr ONDARCHIE** (Northern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. It concerns Epping North Primary School and Epping Views Primary School and the promise of a new secondary college, Edgars Creek Secondary College, that was due to have a staged opening in 2018. The community have been advised by the department that the school will not open in 2018 despite promises being made during the planning meetings that there would be a staged opening.

Epping Secondary College has been totally maxed out with its numbers and cannot take on the 180-or-so kids from Epping Views Primary School. There is no plan from the government for what they are going to do with these grade 6 kids given there is no staged opening of Edgars Creek Secondary College in 2018. I ask that the minister meet with me and the community of Epping North and Epping Views primary schools to outline the plan for what they are going to do with these kids who graduate grade 6 in the local area in 2017.

### Western Metropolitan Region

**Mr EIDEH** (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question today is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Lily D'Ambrosio. My electorate office has been approached by a group of constituents concerned about the planting and placement of gum trees in state schools and in public parks within my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region. The group claims that as these trees grow they often shed large branches, which is considered an overt danger to anyone below the trees. My question is: can the minister provide advice as to whether gum trees are actually planted in state schools and public parks and whether they do present any danger to those in the vicinity of them? Also, have there been any environmental impact studies conducted to determine which trees should be planted at which locations?

### South Eastern Metropolitan Region

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport and the Premier. I refer to a recent announcement made in relation to a so-called hybrid version of elevated rail, or sky rail, designed for the remaining three level crossings along the Frankston line, including in Carrum, which has given rise to a high level of angst and community concern, especially given the different solutions proposed for the Mordialloc electorate. In particular, local constituents are very keen to meet with the Premier because of their disappointment with the consultation process, which has obviously been a hoax. They wish to discuss with him their concerns about the proposal, especially in relation to the overshadowing of homes and properties and the devastation of local residential amenity and coastal amenity, and its impact on house prices. I invite the minister and the Premier to meet with local anti-sky rail groups and concerned residents. I am happy to facilitate that. I ask that he provide me with a date and time, and I will accommodate that.

### Western Victoria Region

**Mr MORRIS** (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is directed to the Treasurer. Last week the Minister for Regional Development, Ms Pulford, was quoted as saying the state government will release a jobs plan for Ballarat in coming weeks. I might remind the minister that she and Daniel Andrews have now being in government since November 2014, and what have we seen since then? We have seen a Ballarat jobs forum held in April 2015 that proved to be nothing more than a talkfest and failed miserably in addressing employment opportunities in Ballarat. We had Daniel Andrews say in November last year that an announcement about jobs in Ballarat would be made in the not-too-distant future. That was three months ago, and still we have heard nothing.

We all know what needs to be done, and that is to relocate VicRoads to Ballarat. The plan has been done by the former Liberal government, and the Treasurer has a cost-benefit analysis for the relocation on his desk. He just needs to get on with it. In the nearly three years since Premier Napthine made the announcement that the Liberal Party would, if re-elected, relocate VicRoads to Ballarat we remain committed to the above. My question is: will the Treasurer stop dithering and commit to the relocation of VicRoads to Ballarat?

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! That is not a question. Can you rephrase?

**Mr MORRIS** — Will the government relocate VicRoads to Ballarat?

### Northern Victoria Region

**Mr YOUNG** (Northern Victoria) — My question today is for the Minister for Agriculture. Game licence holders have been receiving a newly formatted game hunting guide in recent weeks, which I have to say is a brilliant piece of work by the Game Management Authority and provides a lot of useful information. However, I believe it is the intention to produce and distribute these on a less frequent basis, and therefore it does not contain this year's ill-conceived changes to the game list, leading to confusion about what is in or out for the 2017 duck season. Signs have been spotted on some lakes and reserves in northern Victoria about blue-winged shovelers, but only in popular destinations. How does the minister intend to clearly communicate the regulations for this season in remote parts of my electorate after constituents received information suggesting there are no changes, or is the government setting up duck hunters to fail?

### Western Victoria Region

**Mr RAMSAY** (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Regional Development, the Honourable Jaala Pulford, and it is in relation to the convention centre that has been long mooted for Geelong. In fact when we were in government the coalition allocated \$3 million for a feasibility study for a convention centre, which included a 5-star hotel. My understanding is that Regional Development Victoria have been doing a lot of work in relation to creating a business plan for the convention centre that is now sitting on the minister's desk and has been for two months. My question is: when is the minister going to release the work that Regional Development Victoria have done in relation to the business plan for the convention centre so we can see as a community of Greater Geelong what is being proposed?

### Northern Victoria Region

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Water. I have recently been contacted by a constituent who is concerned about the quality of Heathcote's town water supply. The constituent advises me that she believes the water supply is currently being fed from the Sandhurst Reservoir in Bendigo and that this source is very heavily chlorinated with sodium hypochlorite in order to get rid of excessive chemicals and colour. The constituent alleges the use of chlorine is because it is very cheap, but there are much safer options available. The constituent also alleges Coliban Water is not keeping residents informed and states that it is 'damn near impossible to speak to someone in authority'. The community has previously made Labor member Jaclyn Symes, in the Legislative Assembly, aware of the issue, but so far no action has been seen by the local community. Will the minister direct her department to look into the claims made by this constituent regarding Heathcote's water supply and make sure that water supply is being treated appropriately, and will she provide me with a detailed response to satisfy community concerns?

### Western Metropolitan Region

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Of course, as she would be aware, there is significant concern in the local community in Werribee South as to the proposal by the government to build a youth jail in Werribee South. The community outrage is unabated, I have to say, and in fact it is growing almost by the day. My concern is that this consultation that the

government speaks of is in fact not happening at all, and it seems to me that the government has clearly made up its mind on what it intends to do. I ask the minister to make it very clear that the government is serious about this consultation or to just get on with it as things stand.

**Sitting suspended 12.58 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.**

### MELBOURNE METRO RAIL PROJECT

**Debate resumed.**

**Mr LEANE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — I will briefly conclude by saying that the government members of this chamber will not support this motion. We are actually pretty miffed that while the Melbourne Metro rail project travels through a number of council precincts this motion is only calling on a veto for Stonnington — one council, when there are a number of other councils that I would have thought might want to be added to Mr Davis's wish list. I think when he sums up he might be able to explain — —

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — Very good. He is going to explain in full why he is only working on one council having a veto while the project travels through a number of councils. We will be very interested when he sums it up. Mr Davis gave a commitment through an interjection just then that he will explain why he is only — —

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — I think that it was recorded by Hansard that Mr Davis said he will explain why he is only pushing for one particular council that the project travels through. The bottom line is that the coalition does not support any public transport projects, and this one in particular. The coalition do not support the level crossing removal program. They do not support the Melbourne Metro project. They do not support the removal of the 50 level crossings that this particular government is proceeding with. They can say whatever they want, but their actions betray what they are trying to say.

They seem to have invented a new name for something that the Romans built in, I think, 142 BC. It went up and over a river, and it was called a bridge. They have created a new name for this. It is called a sky rail or a sky road. Over 2000 years ago in Rome the Romans actually went up and over something. I do not know what the Romans named it — a bridge? — or what the history of that name is, but the Romans went up and

over something, and in the end we call it a bridge. I am not too sure what they called it. As far as the opposition is concerned, especially Mr Davis, that word no longer exists. If you go over a rail with a road, it is a sky road. If you go over a road with a rail, it is a sky rail. Whatever it is, it is a sky road or a sky bridge, and then if you build an apartment near it, it is a sky apartment.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr LEANE** — I am sorry. It is a sky tower. I do not want to verbal Mr Davis, because he does a good job of it himself, so far be it from me to do that. Anyway, you can tell by their actions that the opposition do not support public transport projects. They had their own plan for Melbourne Metro, which involved a second — —

**Mr Davis** — On a point of order, Acting President, this is a documents motion. It is obviously in a context, but it is about the Metro Tunnel, and now the member is debating sky rail. It is actually a debate about the tunnel and about the planning scheme around the tunnel and about a documents motion linked with that, not about a sky rail.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! Thank you, Mr Davis, for that point of order. I note that there have been wideranging contributions from many members, and I am quite sure that Mr Leane will go back to the substance of the motion. I do not uphold the point of order, but I would remind Mr Leane to talk specifically to the motion at hand.

**Mr LEANE** — I appreciate that, and I will get back to the particular motion. I also appreciate the interjections from some in the chamber that Mr Davis wants to talk about the sky tunnel. I think that will be his new — —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — For Metro — the sky tunnel, yes. Maybe we should not be helping him; maybe we should not be encouraging him. But that is clearly our expectation in the future. Things that were built 2000 years ago — —

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — Sky road, going over a river.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr LEANE** — The sky! Everything is sky. Have you got any pets, Mr Davis? Have you got any pets at

home? Do you have a sky dog and a sky cat? A sky guinea pig? Sky everything!

Getting back to the opposition not supporting any public transport project, I have to say that we have had some interesting exchanges and debate around different projects. I know this pertains to the level crossing program, but a few months ago at a consultation at the Sandringham level crossing removal site Mrs Peulich was there with, I think, an ex-MP called Graeme Stoney — was that his name?

**Mrs Peulich** — It was a con.

**Mr LEANE** — Was it a con? Let us go to that. In Sandringham, where it has recently been announced that the rail will go under the road and there will be a trough, at those level crossings where that was discussed there was an ex-Liberal MP there. When I went up to Mrs Peulich and quite politely said, 'How are you, Mrs Peulich?' — I might have actually called her Inga, but you can do that outside this chamber — the old MP started barking at me. He was swearing quite a bit, but I can handle that, as we know. He was very passionate about it all. He said to me, 'What's going on here is all bulldust' — he might not have said 'dust' — and he pointed to me and said, 'because if you know anything about rail, if you know anything about the roads, you'll know that it is impossible for this rail to go under the road, and you're just here conning everyone'. And I said, 'Well, what you just said was bulldust. So why don't you say "Bulldust" back to me and I'll say "Bulldust" back to you and we'll do that all day. We'll have a bulldust-off'.

Mr Stoney was wrong. He should come and apologise to me. I am calling on Mrs Peulich to get Mr Stoney to apologise to me. He was quite angry and aggressive and said, 'If I know anything about rail, there's no way this rail could go under the road'. Well, the rail is going under the road. I want an apology from Mr Stoney, because not only was he angry and swearing a bit but he was wrong. I am not asking for an apology for the swearing. I am not asking for an apology for the angry stuff, because I can handle that. But he should apologise for being wrong and for trying to wind up the community for what he was hoping and for what Mrs Peulich was hoping — —

**Mr Davis** — On a point of order, Acting President, going back to the earlier point of order, this is a documents motion about the GC45 planning amendment and the revocation of a part of that. It has nothing to do with consultations in the southern suburbs on an entirely different project and an entirely different mode of construction.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! Thank you, Mr Davis. As I did note earlier, this has been a wideranging discussion, but I do agree that the debate is somewhat moving away from the substance of the motion. I will not uphold the point of order, but Mr Leane, I would strongly encourage you to come back to the substance of the motion.

**Mr LEANE** — And I actually withdraw the call for Mr Stoney to apologise to me. I would just like to maintain my opinion of him.

Mr Davis obviously called a point of order because he was praying that in Sandringham there would be rail over the road. His heart is broken. The two of them, Mrs Peulich and Mr Davis, have had their hearts broken that there is going to be a trough there now. They are broken-hearted. I challenged them months ago that if those particular rail crossings and those particular grade separations ended up being rail-under-road troughs, then they would support the project and they would be out there holding banners saying, ‘We support this project. We are right behind this project’, but it is not going to happen. They got what they were calling for, and it proves my point that the opposition do not support our public transport project. They do not support the level crossing removal projects. They do not support the Melbourne Metro project. Why would Mr Davis in this stunt today be trying to delay one of the most important public transport projects Melbourne will have?

**Mrs Peulich** — The one you are going to rip up all the heritages trees for?

**Mr LEANE** — So there are trees. This is what we go through every time we do a public transport project. The opposition say, ‘Oh, there’s the trees’. Then they say, ‘Oh, no, it’s going to attract bad people’. Then they get down to, ‘Oh, there’ll be disruption’. Then they get down to, ‘Neighbours that live four blocks away might have some dust on their house’. They give every excuse in the world not to build a public transport project, because the coalition do not support public transport projects. They do not support any projects. They had four years and they just sat on their hands. It is amazing that their hands are not all flat. They just sat on their hands for four years. It does not surprise me and it does not surprise us. There will be stunt after stunt to try and delay these projects, but unfortunately for the opposition this government is committed to the projects. We are going to get them done, and the public transport system will be much, much better for it. The commuters will be much, much better for it. The roads will be less congested and much safer for pedestrians and motorists.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — I know it breaks your heart, Mrs Peulich, that this government is actually doing something. I am sure you will get over it. You are resilient. I am sure you are resilient enough to get over it and move on. I encourage the chamber to move on with this project and vote against another stuntarama from Mr Davis.

**Debated adjourned on motion of Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## ELECTION PREFERENCES

**Ms SPRINGLE** (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house takes note of the rising vilification of and discrimination against Victorian Muslims and calls on all political parties to take a stand against this and to preference One Nation last on the ballot at the 2018 Victorian state election.

We are at a crossroads in relation to multiculturalism and the rise of right-wing ideologies and groups. It is vitally important that we recognise this, that we assess and understand the full implications of our options and that we make a conscious decision about where we are headed. In putting forward this motion we are calling on all political parties to make the right choice based not on narrow, political self-interest but on the need to protect multiculturalism as one of Victoria’s greatest strengths.

This motion is driven by a number of urgent concerns. We note that public discourse in Australia is characterised by increasingly Islamophobic overtones and that this is partly driven by global discourse, including the actions of President Trump and his administration. We have grave concerns about the decision behind the Western Australian Liberal Party’s preference deal with One Nation, and these concerns are shared by many in Australia, right across the political spectrum.

We are gravely concerned about negative attitudes and criminal behaviour within Victorian communities, driven either in part or to a significant extent by Islamophobic attitudes. We are alarmed at the actual and potential impact of an increasingly Islamophobic discourse and actions on culturally and linguistically diverse communities within Victoria and around the country. Finally, we note that the current discourse exhibited by conservative political parties and media has the potential to result in grave and unintended

consequences in terms of social and political exclusion and, potentially, radicalisation. I will address each of these areas in turn.

There is no doubt that events far beyond our shores are having a significant and damaging effect on politics and public opinion right across Australia. One of the most significant drivers of Islamophobia right now comes from the US administration itself. I cannot understate how disturbing this is. Millions of people around the world have recognised the threat this poses on many fronts, and I am pleased to note that in Australia thousands recently marched in Sydney and Melbourne not against Trump's election per se but more broadly against the values espoused by his campaign and the early months of his presidency.

Ordinary people are saying no to anti-Islamic attitudes and behaviours, to homophobia, to racism, to misogyny and to propaganda aimed at furthering the damaging ideologies associated with these. Others, however, seem to be choosing a different path. Pauline Hanson and One Nation, at one time a fringe party with limited pockets of support, are exploiting this narrative to the fullest extent. And of course they are not on their own. The Western Australian Liberals have taken the decision to preference One Nation in upcoming elections above all other parties. The narrative employed both within WA and nationally within the Liberal Party should be of huge concern to anyone who values Australian multiculturalism and social cohesion. To be very clear, I am referring here to the vast majority of Australians. Premier Colin Barnett is quoted as saying on record:

Pauline Hanson is more moderate than she was back in the 90s. (It's) just a mathematical equation, the Liberals best chance of winning. (We) can't sit back and let it all happen.

He and others have couched the deal purely in terms of pragmatism and say it is in no way indicative that they support the objectives and policies of One Nation. This may have been a pragmatic deal, but the second part of this argument is dangerously misguided. Make no mistake: this preference deal will have the effect of legitimising One Nation. It will have the effect of legitimising everything that One Nation stands for, including its dangerous brand of Islamophobia and xenophobia, and it sets a very dangerous precedent.

Political pundits have questioned whether the deal will have any beneficial effect for the Liberals in WA and that it may actually be aimed at testing the waters for upcoming elections here in Victoria, in Queensland and at the federal level. Either that or they have just made a very stupid decision, which should not be ruled out.

Based on this trend, we fear that the coalition here in Victoria could follow suit and abandon their traditional support for multiculturalism. This may be evidenced by what the Victorian Leader of the Opposition has put on the public record in recent months. Mr Guy has taken aim at migrant youth, claiming that crime is out of control in Victoria, advocating the deportation of migrant youth involved in crime. He seems determined that his position will not be influenced by facts. Victorian crime statistics show the vast majority of youth crime is being committed by children born in Australia and that the majority of youth gang activity involves Caucasian youths.

In relation to Islamophobia specifically, the coalition has not done enough as a party to denounce Islamophobia and the significant damage it is doing to our communities. It has to date taken the opposite path, evidenced by the coalition's failed attempt only weeks ago to introduce the so-called burqa ban under the guise of disrespectful behaviour in court.

Again, we do not need to look far to identify a number of serious and recent developments to illustrate the crossroads that we are at and the impact of the choices we make as political parties, but more importantly as Victorians, as Australians and as people. This week the head of the anti-Islamic group the United Patriots Front (UPF) had a number of charges against him heard by the Melbourne Magistrates Court. Backgrounded against resistance to a new mosque in Bendigo, members of the UPF staged a mock beheading using a dummy outside the City of Greater Bendigo council offices, filming the incident and posting it on social media. The dummy was set up to shed fake blood, and those involved reportedly spoke Arabic phrases on camera. This is the kind of behaviour that has resulted from a tacit legitimisation of One Nation and its ideologies. It is toxic, and it should be a call to action to us all, right across the political spectrum.

In my own electorate of South Eastern Metropolitan Region we are seeing how pockets of Islamophobia can run rampant, heightening tensions within communities and threatening to spill over into other communities. Last year the City of Casey refused to acknowledge that it has a problem in this respect, with Mayor Aziz bizarrely claiming that his own cultural heritage made it impossible that racism or Islamophobia could even exist let alone be running rife within the Casey City Council, despite very public disparagement towards Muslims being a trademark of his tenure on council. His fellow Casey councillor Rosalie Crestani doubles as the deputy leader of Rise Up Australia, the whole political agenda of which appears to centre around anti-Muslim sentiment.

These anecdotes are well and truly backed up by evidence. No doubt we all recall the Newspoll and Essential polls that purported to show such high levels of anti-Islamic sentiment that their validity was called into question. It is fair to say that this kind of survey does not represent best practice in social research and that these extremely high levels of anti-Islamic sentiment have not been consistently found across all research efforts in this area. However, make no mistake that even the most rigorous research being undertaken in this area demonstrates high and concerning levels of Islamophobia. At best these levels will remain consistent; at worst they will rise.

Deakin University is undertaking substantial work in this area, and its findings should be of concern to us all. Research consistently points to a political environment that allows anti-Islamic discourse, which increasingly creates an unwelcome environment for Muslims. Deakin's research has shown that the level of negative attitudes towards Muslims is three times higher than that of negative attitudes towards any other religious group. Research has shown substantial support for discriminatory acts, such as higher levels of security searches for Muslims and lower levels of trust in practising Muslims.

The most distressing part of this situation is the very real impact it is having on communities across Victoria. With growing regularity I hear story after story of discrimination, exclusion and sometimes even violence against law-abiding citizens of Muslim communities, including Muslim women being refused service in shops, children being excluded in the playground based on judgements of their parents' appearance and religious observance, drivers being forced off the road and verbally abused with Islamophobic slurs, women having their hijab ripped off them by force in the street, teenagers being assaulted on public transport, again due to wearing a head cover, and Muslims receiving death threats due to their support for the building of a mosque in their local area. These abuses are often perpetrated against women and children and are usually because of the visible presence of a head covering that they or their parents are wearing. Furthermore, many report a growing feeling of hate and animosity towards them, their families and friends in a way they have not experienced before in Victoria.

These are the very real repercussions of an ugly public discourse that has resulted in a growing number of services and projects to address these problems specifically. National organisation Islamicare has recently launched a helpline to specifically service Muslim families. In the short time they have been in operation they have already seen a sizable proportion of

their community make contact to discuss their anxiety and fear caused by the rise in Islamophobia and what seems to be a lack of public support from non-Muslim political and community leaders speaking out in solidarity with Victorian Muslims. This is a clear example of how what we as political leaders say in this place, in the media, to our stakeholders and out in the community has repercussions. Nothing we say is in a vacuum. Our communities are listening and heeding the example we set.

The legitimisation of One Nation and high levels of Islamophobic attitudes within our communities are of immediate and pressing concern. We need to be aware of and act on these immediately. We also need to take a step back to consider long-term impacts. The first relates to social exclusion and disenfranchisement. There is very little doubt that the legitimisation of One Nation and its policies will result in culturally and linguistically diverse communities both here and across Australia being excluded and in some cases actively persecuted. This is already happening. The process of disenfranchisement and social exclusion runs a long-term risk of driving divisions within our society and of driving radicalism. A huge amount of research has focused on drivers of radicalism, and this has consistently found social and political exclusion to be a significant factor. Research among ethnic communities has shown that promoting healthy social connections, being part of a community and being politically interested seem to be important targets for prevention. Culturally diverse debate has real risks attached, and we ignore them at our peril.

As I said earlier, we are at a crossroads. We should be concerned about increasing Islamophobia, we should be aware of the role of political discourse in driving this and we must be cognisant of the possible outcomes of our actions. At the same time we need to focus on ways in which we can protect multiculturalism in Victoria — something most of us will agree represents one of our greatest strengths. Political leadership can make a difference. Comparative research looking at political leadership on this issue in Canada is particularly interesting. President Trudeau's policies on multiculturalism have not significantly reduced Islamophobia in Canada, but they have had a hugely important effect in this space. They have empowered Muslim communities to play an important and constructive role in the wider community, and they have made these communities feel significantly safer. Research has also shown that the more Australians know about Islam, the less likely they are to show prejudice against practising Muslims. Education is the key, and political leadership in ensuring and promoting this kind of education makes a difference. These are

just two examples of what strong political leadership can do, and this is the kind of leadership we need to exercise in Victoria.

Given these risks and the fallout we are already seeing in our own communities, we as Victorians need to be having this conversation now. The Greens will not be silent on this issue, and we will not allow a last-minute scrambling for preferences and poorly thought out deals to drive this conversation. Pauline Hanson cannot gain a significant foothold in Victoria without the support of the major parties. Political self-interest cannot be allowed to drive deals and decisions that have politically disastrous outcomes for Victorian communities.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! I call upon Mrs Peulich, and in doing so I just remind the gallery that clapping is not allowed.

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) — In speaking to the motion moved by Ms Springle I would like to circulate an amendment, which I will now move:

That all the words after 'Victorian Muslims' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place 'Jewish and Christian communities and calls on all political parties to take a stand against left-wing and right-wing extremism'.

Therefore the amended motion would read as follows:

That this house takes note of the rising vilification of and discrimination against Victorian Muslims, Jewish and Christian communities and calls on all political parties to take a stand against left-wing and right-wing extremism.

I believe that this is a more appropriate motion to put to the house. It concerns me greatly and disappoints me to no end that Ms Springle has actually brought this particular motion, as presented to the house, at a time when there is a lot of focus on politicians, multicultural affairs policies and all of the many issues and dynamics that occupy a lot of media space at this time in such a one-sided way. That is not to say that the issue she brings is not an important one; it is a very important one. But, as she has said, there is a heightened attention to these matters and certainly the capacity of growing tension in our community, which she says can stir up racial and religious hatred, and indeed I see this motion in part as doing precisely that.

She also condemns those who use multicultural affairs and the politics of culture to fight political wars or to serve some sort of political interest. Can I say that there is no greater example of political self-interest than the motion that has been moved by Ms Springle on behalf of the Greens. Indeed the Greens cannot see the hypocrisy of their calling for any political party to place

One Nation last. They cannot see the hypocrisy of all their whacky policies, including their attempts to extinguish religious freedom from the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, which they do not believe is important to multicultural communities. The Greens do not believe it is important to our Muslim community; they do not believe it is important to our Jewish community; and they do not believe it is important to our Christian community. Without religious freedom, you do not have multiculturalism. They cannot see the hypocrisy of that.

They cannot see the hypocrisy of the Greens-supported boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaigns against Jewish-owned businesses. They cannot see the hypocrisy of blowing a green dog whistle on race, which appears to be more commonly occurring now amongst the Greens, most recently by the Australian leader of the Greens, Senator Di Natale, at a function. These sentiments are not appreciated.

This motion is about political self-interest. Not only that, it assumes one thing about One Nation. Who can forecast in two years what crackpots will in actual fact appear on the ballot paper? Every political party and every political candidate should be free to make an assessment as to what they consider to be the best manner in which they can serve their constituencies and the whole of our state and our nation. That means casting a vote and forming an assessment on the positive and negative, including the negative effect of any policies of political parties or individuals, or any other particular issues.

As the shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I get to a lot of functions, events, festivals and delegations, and the issues that most people speak to me about are not touched on by this motion. What they are concerned about is the ability to have their children educated, to get a job, buy a home, be able to pay their bills and make good their aspirations for a better life in the state. That is what they are concerned about. They are not interested in politicians playing cheap politics with multicultural affairs. The last thing that we should be doing is making Muslims feel that they are the targets of hatred and vilification. Indeed we know that one of the risks with the radicalisation of young people is that they feel they do not belong and that they are somehow disenfranchised, that they do not have the same opportunities.

Yet the Greens are more than happy to light a fire under this sort of tension. They are more than happy to exploit it, and all in the guise of somehow having a higher, stronger commitment to multicultural affairs than any other political party. Really it is all about self-interest; it

is a deplorable example of self-interest. There are always going to be stories of people who are discriminated against on the grounds of a whole range of things, such as colour if you are coming from an African community. I recently spoke to a fellow who admitted to me that he had to go back to Africa to get himself a wife because he could not find one here, and he assessed that that was on the basis of his colour. The thing is our system does not condone racism and it does not enshrine racism. It ought to protect those things that our communities believe are important, including religious freedom.

The Greens, supported by the Labor Party and supported by Ms Patten, were more than happy to trample on religious freedom. I have lived under communism where religion is not allowed — —

**Ms Patten** — There we go.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Yes, absolutely. For me it is about communism. Let me say, some of the policies of the Greens are to the left of even those communists. I had to be baptised — not that I am a highly religious person — in secret because it was not something that was condoned. For me having the freedom to practise your religion, whether you are a Jew or a Muslim, is essential to the workings of our democracy. There is no democracy if you do not have religious freedom. I am very proud that we have laws that should protect that. In addition, I believe that any form of extremism, whether it is left or right — and regrettably we have seen ample displays of that on our streets — can find support in areas where it should not be supported. The fact that this motion ignores the different types of extremism shows that the Greens are playing politics with multicultural affairs.

Yes, religious and racial vilification is abhorrent and should be swiftly dealt with by the law, shunned by Victorians and called out when it occurs. It is unacceptable behaviour. The reality is that this motion tries to present the Greens as something which they are not. The Greens are not a moral compass when it comes to multiculturalism. The motion attempts to shape the political paradigms applied to the well-embraced and supported concept of multiculturalism. That does not include saying certain things, as unfortunately the member for Clarinda in the Legislative Assembly has said on some occasions. I must say that I was sympathetic with the government's view that it was inappropriate. The member for Clarinda addressed an Islamic group and said, 'In Australia Muslims have a target on their backs'. That was highly irresponsible. We know that our Muslim communities are petrified of their own children being radicalised, just as much as

any other parent is petrified of their children being seduced by any other illegitimate cause or harmful or destructive activity. They do not need this sort of unhelpful intervention from politicians and political parties. What they want is support on the things that matter.

Australia is renowned for providing a fair go. We cherish our religious freedom, despite what the Greens say. We are a pluralistic society. We do believe in freedom of association — well, most of us believe in freedom of association.

I will also comment on the claim that there is rising vilification and discrimination of Muslims in Victoria. Certainly there are anecdotes, and no story should ever be ignored. When I was at primary school I was beaten up every Friday because I could not speak English. I know what it means and I know how cruel that migration experience can be. But we are fortunate. Any form of unlawful discrimination is abhorrent and religious or racial vilification should be rejected by all Victorians.

The Scanlon Foundation recently released its report *Mapping Social Cohesion: The Scanlon Foundation Surveys 2016*. Key findings indicate that there has been no significant shift in negative opinion towards Muslims. This has actually been funded by the government. The figure is still too high because it remains at 22 to 25 per cent according to the survey; however, over the last six surveys this has not significantly shifted. This is referred to on page 3 of the report, for those who care to research it. According to the Scanlon Foundation the findings also challenge the view that negative attitudes towards Muslim Australians, immigration and multiculturalism are increasing. I would certainly urge people to have a look at that. I did organise a presentation to members of Parliament on that; unfortunately it was not all that well attended, but the report is online.

There is a whole range of other very useful data about that. Unfortunately time does not permit me going into this as I know that there are many other members who wish to make a contribution to this debate. Ms Fitzherbert will be talking about the BDS campaign and the impact that has had on the Jewish community that she represents. I know Dr Carling-Jenkins will be talking about the targeting of other religions and her involvement. I imagine the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party may have something to say and also Ms Patten. We are a pluralistic society, and in order to be cohesive, positive and forward looking we should never ignore problems, but we should also not fuel the fires of dissent and tension. Coming from

Bosnia-Herzegovina, I know how easy fires and tension can be lit and how devastating and destructive they can be.

**Ms Springle** — Oh, come on.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Do not say, ‘No, no, no’. This is exactly what you are doing. You are lighting fires that will never be stopped, making Muslims feel that they are a bigger target in Australia than they are — —

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! I caution members that interjections are out of order. Mrs Peulich should make her contribution through the Chair. I am sure members will have an opportunity to make a contribution when their time comes.

**Mrs PEULICH** — I know that there are a lot of politicians who are more than happy to jump on the bandwagon and stir up racial tension. Ignoring problems which actually impact on communities as well as the broader community means that we should never ignore tensions and problems, because by not fixing up those problems that is how they breed. On turning a blind eye to violence involving our multicultural youth, no parent wants that ignored. They want help, and they need help. Unfortunately there has not been sufficient help given. Whether it is other problems or whether it is domestic violence, those communities need help.

We cannot expect to take in 100 000 migrants per year, wave a magic wand and suddenly have cultural harmony. It is just crazy. Domestic violence will continue to be a challenge given our migration program. There is always going to be work to be done. There are always going to be kids and families, with every new wave of migration, who will feel that they do not belong. We do not need politicians making them feel that they belong less.

There is the issue of the radicalisation of young people, which has emerged as a serious issue for governments to deal with and which is also reflected in a number of surveys in terms of the issue of disengaged youth, especially young males. Combined with radical influences, a sense of disillusionment and a state government blinded by its own ideology, unfortunately the problem remains. Disengaged youth and the radicalisation of youth, whether left wing or right wing, Islamic or otherwise, are not something the government and its agencies can ignore.

These radical elements have to be dealt with through legislation, through the judiciary, including, for example, respectful behaviour in courts. That is not an

attempt to ban the burqa, and it is no different to what happens now. If a judge deems that the removal of veiling or other paraphernalia is required, that is what happens now and that is what we have reaffirmed through our recent policy announcement.

Discrimination against Muslims, Jews, Christians or any faith must be condemned, and we as Victorians should fight against any perceived or actual injustice which is being perpetrated by those who may be regarded as extremist, whether their agenda is to recruit or participate or to spark violence or social upheaval, or whether it is simply political opportunism.

All forms of extremism, whether left or right, must be denounced, and in doing some research I found some interesting observations coming out of research that has been undertaken. The United States Department of Energy says the following about left-wing extremism in a publication entitled ‘Left-Wing Extremism: The Current Threat’. It was prepared by Dr Karl Seger, PhD, of the Center for Human Reliability Studies. Dr Seger stated:

Leftist extremists were responsible for three-fourths of the officially designated acts of terrorism ... in the 1980s.

Dr Seger attributes this to their ability to organise. He says:

Because leftist extremists are better educated than members of right-wing groups, they have the ability to organise more effectively, and once committed to a militant revolution, they are more of a threat.

It frightens me to no end when I read some of the stuff that is on the web. The Greens are under pressure. There is a new left-wing faction of the Greens. It is called the Socialist Renewal.

**Mr Bourman** interjected.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Socialist Left Renewal? Or is it just Left Renewal? Nonetheless they actually believe in revolution. This frightens the jeebies out of me because I believe people should have the right to protest if they need to do so, while not infringing on the rights of others and doing it in a way that is legal and not violent. The wearing of masks at protests, I think, simply indicates that people have come with the intent of committing some sort of violence and want to evade the law. That is totally unacceptable.

Dr Seger also comments on the challenge of dealing with extremists, both left wing and right wing, without trampling on the right of individuals to religious freedom. He states:

... there is always a possibility that a few extremists may be attracted to these causes, left and right, who decide to use

terrorist tactics to achieve their goals. The challenge to law enforcement and security is not to interfere with the rights of individuals to express their beliefs while also providing a means for the early identification of extremists who are planning criminal actions.

I know a fair bit of work has been done in that field by the previous and current governments, and this needs to continue.

What we have seen from some elements of the Labor Party and the Greens is a concerted and targeted effort to destroy religious freedoms under the Equal Opportunity Act. I believe this is directed at Christian faiths; however, its impact is felt across all religions. In my discussions with various Islamic groups, including with imams, I have heard that they are appalled by some of the policies that have been championed by the Greens and indeed by the Labor Party.

Dr Seger makes an excellent point in highlighting the need to protect and enhance the rights of individuals to express their beliefs. This is what makes multiculturalism work, something that Labor and the Greens obviously would like to destroy. By targeting religious freedom, the Greens and the ALP add to the sense of disillusionment. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion can never be used as a vehicle for the left to excuse the use of power to stymie a key principle of multiculturalism.

In recent years we have seen instances of violence on the streets, whether in Sydney, Melbourne or elsewhere in Australia and indeed around the world. These types of clashes are unacceptable and must be met with appropriate responses from both police and others. Politicians who seek to gain political mileage from such clashes are doing a disservice to the community and to themselves. On the other hand, we must also make sure that we do not ignore the problems that they focus on. Only by addressing those problems and dealing with them in a reasonable and sensible way can we actually take away their fuel and support. It is up to political parties and voters to make up their minds as to who best represents their interests, and I certainly see a lot of harm coming out of the policies of the left and the right but in particular from the politicians who come here driven by political opportunism under the guise of somehow having the moral compass of our society.

One hard-left group supports the active use of violence. A member of the group known as Antifa is reported as saying:

... peaceful confrontation is not going to work with these people. We have tried that in the past. We will not tolerate any fascism in our country.

These are the people who are actually organising many of the protests that we have seen against right-wing protests, and they are frightening. They certainly frighten the jeebies out of me. Of course no form of extremism, no matter what the grounds, should be condoned. We have seen acts of discrimination against Jews in recent times. Some of the Greens have reportedly been involved in this as they are known to be left-wing radicals, as well as some trade unions closely tied to the ALP. A good example of this are the anti-Israel activists targeting businesses linked to Israel under the banner of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, which was linked to the Maritime Union of Australia, Geelong Trades Hall Council and *Green Left Weekly*.

In 2011 the Victorian Trades Hall Council embarrassed the Labor Party by passing a motion backing global boycott, divestment and sanctions protests. According to news reports, Greens senator Lee Rhiannon was linked to the global BDS campaign. As part of the campaign, Victoria Police had to use anti-riot tactics to make arrests outside businesses which had been linked to Israel. Even former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd got involved in the issue, stating:

I don't think in 21st century Australia there is a place for the attempted boycott of a Jewish business ...

I thought we had learned that from history.

It was interesting also that the Greens dissented in the Senate committee inquiry into the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and indeed failed to endorse some very important recommendations. They had two recommendations but failed to endorse those of the committee. They certainly did not refer to any of the committee's recommendations in their dissenting report, and addressing racism in Australian society is part of the committee's very first recommendation. The Greens are prepared to throw out the baby with the bathwater when it comes to education programs addressing racism. I find that incredibly bizarre.

Labor policy has, I believe, also lost focus in most recent times. I do not believe it is the minister himself who is responsible, as it is obviously the Premier's agenda, for broadening the focus, which has been on multiculturalism — culturally and linguistically diverse communities have got their own issues — to a more diverse definition, which includes sexual diversity. These are issues that do not sit comfortably with our multicultural communities. I believe there is dissent in the Labor Party about its placement in multicultural affairs.

I would urge that a traditionally bipartisan approach, which now seems to be fraying a little bit, be embraced and continued. I believe Minister Robin Scott wishes that to continue. I would certainly encourage him in that regard, because I think bipartisanship, or multipartisanship, is critical to our success as a multicultural society.

There are many things that I wish to say. I wish this debate could continue for hours on end, but unfortunately I am trying to leave a bit of time for other people to have their say.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mrs PEULICH** — Thank you. All I would say is that I urge members to support my amendment to the motion. The sentiments in the amended motion would reflect what multicultural Victoria and multicultural Australia are about, and that is not discriminating against any person, irrespective of their religion, and indeed calling it out when it happens; making sure our laws do not deny them the freedoms that they are entitled to; and also not using multicultural or any specific communities as political footballs, especially to lock in preferences which may give you political advantage come an election campaign. Also, to presuppose that all political parties will now commit to placing Pauline Hanson last makes a huge assumption that there is not going to be anyone who is far more destructive than anything that exists now. As it stands this is a foolish, irresponsible motion, and I certainly hope the house votes in support of my amendment to it.

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) — I also rise to speak on the motion:

That this house takes note of the rising vilification of and discrimination against Victorian Muslims and calls on all political parties to take a stand against this and to preference One Nation last on the ballot at the 2018 Victorian state election.

In doing so I just want to focus on what the motion is trying to do and spend a bit more time talking about what I understand to be the principle behind the motion. While it is talking about Muslims, I think it could go beyond that. I think Mrs Peulich has also talked about that, but I am not going to address the issue in relation to her amendment; I will just focus on the motion and what One Nation basically stands for. It is the principle of what this country and this state have been built on. They have been built on immigration — people who have come to this country from all over the world.

Our citizens have come to Australia from over 200 countries, with various religions, and some with no religion. Diversity is what makes this country great.

Diversity is what makes this state great. Looking back at the Andrews state Labor government's announcement not long ago, just a few weeks ago, in relation to building on our diversity, that is why we are richer as a state — because of our diversity.

Unfortunately political parties like One Nation choose to play on that. Its narrative is basically to attack a group of Australians and Victorians who happen to be Muslims. Twenty years ago when One Nation was formed by the same person, Pauline Hanson, it was centred around Asians — that Australia was going to be swamped by Asians. I give credit to former Prime Minister Howard, who back then stood up as a true liberal and a true Australian, along with other political parties, and spoke against Pauline Hanson and what One Nation stood for. It was basically saying we would be swamped by Asians.

Now moving forward, unfortunately we do not have the same relationship or the same approach or leadership coming from the Liberal Party, whether it be at the federal or state level, in terms of standing up for what is right, and we can refer back to what federal Minister Dutton spoke about a few months ago — that is, banning all Lebanese Muslims from entering Australia and basically tarnishing the whole community because of the actions of a few.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MELHEM** — Let us go and look at what is popular. Let us look at what drives people's fear. There is fear in the community about terrorism. There is fear in the community about Islamic State and the terrorising it is doing in the Middle East and throughout the Western world. But unfortunately it is a small group of people who use religion — in this particular case, Islam — to basically terrorise innocent people around the world.

I was born in a country with half of the population Christians and half Muslims. The ratio is now changing, but it was made up of Christians and Muslims. My experience is that most people, whether they be Christians or Muslims, are peaceful people who want to get on with life. Now, you cannot just assume the whole Muslim community is the way that One Nation is portraying them. I think Mrs Peulich agrees with me that not all Muslims are terrorists, but what I am worried about is that if we are going to tolerate the approaches of political parties like One Nation and things like what Donald Trump is doing in the US — painting everyone with the same brush — that is not helpful. That is not leadership. There is the issue of

freedom of speech, where people can express an opinion. I get that. But there is — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! Just before we continue, I ask members of the house to allow Mr Melhem to make his contribution. As we well know, to interrupt a member while they are speaking is unruly and not allowed in the house. I ask Mr Melhem to continue, without the assistance of fellow members.

**Mr MELHEM** — Thank you, Acting President. Things like that require leadership from our political leaders to basically stand up for what is right and what is decent. What I am saying is that it is up to us. People look up to us. Sometimes you are going to make a decision that is not necessarily the most popular, but one that is the right decision.

If we survey Victorians, we will find that the overwhelming majority do not have issues with Muslims, with Jews, with Christians or with people who do not believe in anything. Most Victorians and most Australians believe this country is built on diversity. Everybody accepts that. Therefore we should be able to say publicly and proudly to political parties with a particular platform, an anti-Islam platform in this particular case, ‘Enough is enough. We are not going to subscribe to your platform, your agenda and what you stand for. So we are not actually going to go on the same unity ticket as you. We are not going to go and preference you’. I think that is what the argument is about.

Similarly, if another political party had a platform of anti-Semitism, for example, they should be treated in the same way and be told, ‘We do not want to deal with you, because we do not stand for racism in this state’. We should send the message loud and clear: we welcome Jewish people in this state, we welcome Muslims, we welcome Christians, we welcome Buddhists, we welcome people who actually do not believe in anything and we welcome people who believe in something. We do not care what you believe in — that is your business — we welcome you as long as you abide by the rule of law in this country and you are a decent citizen. That is basically what we believe in.

During question time today questions were asked in relation to an issue of the kind One Nation tries to be selective about and sometimes tries to use quotes from Muslim leaders or give examples of the actions of a few Muslim people or extreme terrorists. The particular

case I am going to refer to was the subject of a question that was asked about Keysar Trad.

Today is International Women’s Day, and when Keysar Trad was asked a question by Andrew Bolt in relation to violence against women the comment he made, there is no question, was appalling. No person should stand for comments like that by a leader. In this case, he is the president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. He came out and apologised, and said ‘I was taken out of context. I’m sorry. Blah, blah, blah’. To me, that is appalling. I cannot believe someone in his position would make that comment. Essentially he was making a comment that it is okay to hit your wife and it is okay to beat your sister and to beat your daughter. I do not think anyone can argue that particular case. And this guy should be condemned, even though he made a mistake according to him and he was misunderstood. I am not sure that can be excused.

But the point I am making is this: the first people who came out and attacked him were the rest of the Muslim community. I am just going to quote one of the imams, Inam ul-Haq Kauser, who is an imam from Australia’s Ahmadiyya Muslim community. He told SBS that hitting or beating is not permitted in their religion. So do I take the view of a layperson — and in this particular case that is right; he is a layperson — when what he said is really just scum and should not be tolerated, and he should bow his head in shame? I will take the view of a learned person, and in this case it is the imam, who actually studied the Koran. Probably Keysar never read the Koran.

**Mrs Peulich** — A Melbourne-based imam?

**Mr MELHEM** — I would need to check that, Mrs Peulich, but I am sure he would be in Melbourne, because Melbourne is known for its diversity and we have got some really great scholars and imams from the Islamic community who actually live in Victoria, and they always preach tolerance and people living together, and I have had the pleasure of meeting some of them. The imam is reported as saying:

Islam gives full respect and honour in being a mother, being a wife, being a daughter and sister.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad never hit all his life. He said the best Muslim is ‘he who is best with his family’.

There is a Sydney imam, Ahmed Abdo, who was unequivocal in his condemnation of Mr Trad on social media. He said in a tweet:

I will stand up, speak out and act to prevent men’s violence against women. This is my oath as an Australian Muslim imam.

He went on to say:

If you beat your wife, you are not a man.

That is so true. Because you have got the physical size, because you can physically perform that act of horror, that act of terror against a woman, you should not be doing it. If you do, you are not a man. If a man wants to go and fight or something else you do it with someone at your size and your level; you do not look at someone who has not got the same physical build as you. He is so right: a man who does that is not a man.

The reason I am referring to these issues is that unfortunately it has become a trend where we start judging a whole community based on the actions of a few, and that is a tragedy. I do not think we should be doing that. I think we should judge the whole population from what the whole population is doing, not what a few people are doing. And that is the problem and the difficulty I have with Pauline Hanson and One Nation. Some of their policies in relation to manufacturing and some other policies — buying in Australia, for example — I agree with, but there are many other issues I do not agree with.

**Mr Davis** — You and Shorten ticked off on the Chinese gantry imports on EastLink.

**Mr MELHEM** — I am getting lectured by Mr Davis about Australian-made products — that is new! I am happy to debate you at any time, Mr Davis. You pick the time, the venue and the date and I will be there to debate you on these matters. That is not what we are talking about today, but I am happy to debate you on these matters any day.

The centrepiece of Ms Hanson's policy — and this is what worries me — is division and fear. It is trying to make us believe that Islam is a threat to this country and a threat to us all and that we need to arrest it at any cost. If we look at what Donald Trump is doing in the US, I think if One Nation has half a chance of, for example, having the balance of power in any state in the lower house or in the federal Parliament and dictating its own policies, then God help us.

I think it is very important for us as a society to have a sense of principle which is enshrined in our constitution. If you look at our policy platforms, whether it is the Labor Party or Liberal Party, I do not think we differ on these sorts of matters. The policies of the Liberal Party were very well articulated by Prime Minister John Howard in the 1990s, and the policy of the Labor Party is very well known. I think we agree on what made this country great, and I think we will stick to that.

We might have differences on other policies and other issues, and that is fine — that is part of the political system — but I think we should make a pledge that there are core values that we are not going to compromise on. I think that is one of them. Whether it is the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Greens or One Nation, we should say we are not going to have in our platform any policy where we are going to pick on a particular group or religion because it so happens that they are Muslims or Jews et cetera.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr MELHEM** — I take up the interjection by Mrs Peulich. One Nation is not actually picking on the Christians or the Jews, thank God. I am a Christian, so she is not picking on me yet, but she might one day. You never know. She might wake up in five years time and find it is popular and say, 'I can get more votes if I go and attack Christians'. I do not know. She might do it, but she has not gone that far yet.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr MELHEM** — No, you are not listening. That is the problem. Put your listening ears on. Maybe your ears are painted on. I am saying that no political party should be advocating anything that could undermine diversity anywhere. That is what I am saying, and I will defend that to the end. I think that is something which we as political parties say: diversity is what we have, we embrace diversity and we respect people's right to practise their religion without any fear and without any persecutions, whether they are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Sikh et cetera.

We should disassociate ourselves from any other political party that subscribes to the idea that, for example, we go and pick on people because they are Muslim. That is what we are talking about here in the case of One Nation. They are making it quite clear that Muslims are bad.

Let me talk about what Pauline Hanson and her party are actually ignoring. Yes, we have got an issue with extreme people, and it also happens that they are Muslim, but let us look at the acts of terror they are committing around the world and who they are killing most of. If we look at Iraq and Syria, who are they killing? Muslims. If we look at people who have been killed as a result of a terrorist act by ISIS, al-Qaeda and all these various so-called Muslim terrorist groups — and I think they are doing so much injustice in the name of Islam — 99 per cent of the people who have been killed by them so far have been Muslim. I do not think

that is being acknowledged. They are killing Muslims before they are killing Christians and other people.

I am pleased that as a country, along with our Western allies, the Iraqi government and the various other groups, we are fighting as one unit to make sure that fundamentalists are being dealt with and that organisations like ISIS are being defeated and wiped from the face of the earth. Hopefully the day will come when we can celebrate that, and then we can go back and take away the argument from people like Pauline Hanson in relation to her stand on Islam.

I was not long ago watching *Q&A*, and she was sitting next to Senator Dastyari. That is the other thing; I think ignorance is part of the problem. That person who never actually bothered — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MELHEM** — Obviously the other side do not think that is an important issue. They are actually happy for Pauline Hanson to stand for what she stands for, so stop being hypocrites. We are talking about a serious issue. I am not attacking you. Pay some respect. I do not agree with Pauline Hanson; obviously you do.

She did not even bother to actually inquire whether Sam Dastyari was Muslim or not. She did not think about what a Muslim was — ‘I’m sorry; I didn’t know you were a Muslim’. She did not even go and study what halal means. She thought it was some other way of doing things. She did not bother about it. She did not say, ‘I’d better go and do some study and find out what these people stand for’. She thought, ‘I’ve decided that people are fearful about their safety because of what is happening in the Middle East with ISIS and the Islamic thing; therefore, if I go and pick on Muslims, I might get some votes and be popular’. That is what Pauline Hanson did without bothering about doing any research or having any basis for her argument. That is what she did to get some votes. She played on fear.

Instead of the Liberal Party saying, ‘We’re not going to have a bar of you’ — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MELHEM** — Let us go back. Maybe I will start again. I have still got 40 minutes. I will not speak for the full 40 minutes, because I know there are other people who would like to say a few words. That is what the Deputy Leader of the Government reminded me — that there are other people who would like to speak. That is a fair point, because there is a lot to talk about on this.

I will finish off by saying this: I think it is time for us to lead on this issue. It is time to stop playing politics. It is time to stop looking at the most popular thing to do and to stop playing on fear. It is time for the Liberal Party, the National Party and the conservative forces in this country to take a note from John Howard’s book. In the 1990s he stood up and said, ‘I’m not going to stand by and support One Nation and a person like Pauline Hanson, who is a very divisive person. It is only about dividing this country. It is about attacking Muslims in this country. I will not stand for that’. She should be condemned instead of flirting with the Liberal Party about doing a preference deal so she can get into government and do popular things. Shame on you if you do that. I ask the Liberal Party leadership in Victoria to reconsider their position and make sure they put Pauline Hanson last. With these comments I will be voting against the amendment and supporting the Greens motion.

**Ms PATTEN** (Northern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the motion moved by Ms Springle on behalf of the Greens. Equality is a founding plank of my policy platform, and I stand in a strong position and have a strong record on anti-discrimination issues. At this very moment I have two motions on the notice paper calling on the government to strengthen Victoria’s anti-discrimination laws, and I will continue to fight that good fight.

I am appalled by Pauline Hanson and One Nation. I think they trade on disunity, division and fear, and they have no place in this multicultural country that we live in. We have 270 different ancestries here. There is a rich cultural diversity, and it is one of our great strengths. However, the reality is that too many individuals and communities in Australia experience prejudice, discrimination and racism on a regular basis. I appreciate what Mrs Peulich said, and I understand the discrimination that she felt when she first came to this country. I appreciate what Ms Springle said, and she raised some very good issues and she also raised some solutions. Unfortunately, with due respect, this motion is not one. This motion will not address the vilification of the Muslim community or, as Mrs Peulich raises, the Jewish community or any other community, any other group of people, that faces vilification and discrimination in Australia. This is not the answer.

I question whether we should be even talking about other political parties. Frankly why are we giving this particular party any oxygen? We have been discussing how we do not want our staff to be involved in politics, so why are we talking politics here? Why are we not talking about solutions to the vilification of all races

and the discrimination against all people? This is what we should be doing in this house today, and this motion does not do that. We are here to make laws and to assist people; we are not here to grandstand politically, although that seems to be what we have been doing a lot of lately.

Like the Greens, I am a crossbencher, and I get a few precious moments to lead debate in this house. Agree with me or not, I get those times, and I use them precious. To me it was very important to set up a medically supervised injecting centre in Richmond. No matter whether you agree or disagree with me, I get one or two times to lead debate in this house, and I use those opportunities precious. Whether you agree or disagree with what I choose to use them for, they are very important to me. I spend a lot of time on them, and I hope they will result in what I see as an improvement for my electorate and for the people of Victoria. I do not think that this motion does that. Actually the Greens have a number of motions on the notice paper that we could have debated today that I think would have been of far more value. In fact, in listening to Ms Springle's speech — —

**Ms Springle** interjected.

**Ms PATTEN** — Ms Springle, I am here to actually congratulate you on your speech. I think you highlighted a lot of issues and you highlighted a lot of solutions, and I would have liked it if that is what we spent today doing, taking note of how we can decrease the vilification and discrimination that people in our communities are meeting every day.

When I have a precious moment to lead debate here, I take it very seriously. I have looked at drug law reform. I have looked at safe access zones. I have looked at ridesharing legislation, online petitions, end-of-life choices inquiries. These are things that I thought were very important. I do not think that bashing One Nation and calling on us all to put them last on our how-to-vote cards is actually a good use of our time.

**Ms Springle** — You're missing the point.

**Ms PATTEN** — I am not missing the point, Ms Springle. I understand that we could have done something very constructive here, and I felt that part of your contribution was very constructive. In fact I think the first half of your motion is very constructive; it is just the second half that I do not support. I do not support the second half that Mrs Peulich has added to, but I support the first half of the motion.

Let us note that One Nation is actually not a registered party in Victoria, so yes, we are actually talking in the

hypothetical at the moment. Do you know who is registered, though? Rise Up Australia is a registered party, and it was the party that blamed the Black Saturday fires and the deaths in those fires on the change in abortion laws; yet we are not calling to put them last. Australia First is an extremist right party that is completely anti-Islamic and may run in the election next year. I do not know whether we will find other parties running, like the Australian Liberty Alliance, which is another extremist party. There is Love Australia or Leave; these are all extremist, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim parties that are fuelling that fire.

In my electorate we had the Coburg riots. I would have loved this motion to address how we could have stopped the Coburg riots and how we could have looked at identifying and building on good practice initiatives to prevent and reduce racism. At the Islamic Museum in my electorate you can have a weekend coffee with Sherene. There you get to meet a whole bunch of Muslim women, and they can talk about their experiences and the experience of getting their hijabs pulled off on public transport or being spat at when they are driving in their cars. Those are the issues that I want to address, and I want to find solutions for them. I want to empower those communities, as we heard Prime Minister Trudeau is doing in Canada. He does not have all the answers, we do not have all the answers, but this is what we should have been spending this 90 minutes dealing with.

I am not going to go on, because I want to allow other members time to speak on this, but I feel very strongly that this motion should have been about how we address racism and how we address prejudice. How do we create a society where there is freedom of religion as well as freedom from religion? How can we create a secular society? How can we address anti-female comments coming from the Islamic community? How can we address the absolutely outrageous comments that sometimes come from the Catholic Church and the Catholic community or from the Jewish community? How do we address those prejudices? How do we not accept that, no matter what your religion is? How do we empower those communities to take action and those individuals to take action to prevent and reduce racism in this society?

This is what we should have been debating today, not who we as political parties may or may not put on our how-to-vote cards. We do not know what parties will be running in 2018. I do not believe that this is the right place for us to be discussing such political matters. Racism is a serious issue in our country, and this motion is not a way to tackle it. In many ways I think it diminishes it by somehow putting the issue as simply as

One Nation being the be-all and end-all of this issue when it is far more than that. There are far more racist and discriminatory practices and policies coming out of numerous parties, and I will be far more judicial in how I decide where my votes are going to go and how my party decides on its how-to-vote card. I cannot support this motion.

**Dr CARLING-JENKINS** (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the take-note motion brought to the house by Ms Springle on behalf the Greens regarding a perception of rising vilification of and discrimination against Victorian Muslims, and which calls on all political parties to preference One Nation last in next year's election. I will try not to speak for too long — I am conscious of time — but I will address briefly both parts of the motion, and I will address the amendment brought to the house by Mrs Peulich.

The first part of the Greens motion calls for the house to take note of rising vilification of and discrimination against Victorian Muslims. For me, this part of the motion raises questions of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Firstly, let me state categorically that the DLP supports the fundamental right to religious liberty. This right is well expressed in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which reads:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Muslims here in Victoria enjoy this right along with all other Victorians. They have the right to believe, to worship together and to preach and teach. Any Victorian who chooses to do so can become a Muslim, and any Muslim in Victoria who chooses to do so can cease to be a Muslim — or should be able to cease to be a Muslim and embrace any other religion or system of belief. This is the beauty of freedom of religion and is something which I often remind new citizens of at citizenship ceremonies — that we are a freedom-loving country.

I find it necessary to note, however, that in many countries with constitutions based on Islam, the right of freedom of religion is gravely restricted. Religious believers other than Muslims are often denied the right to worship together, to preach or even to distribute the Bible, in many instances with dire consequences.

Dire consequences are also felt by Muslims in these countries who attempt to convert to another religion. Freedom of religion here can only be preserved in a

society that allows robust discussion of conflicting belief systems. In my view Victoria's Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 unduly restricts such robust freedom of speech. Victorians should have the right to openly discuss aspects of any religious belief in any context.

In the case of Islam there are legitimate matters for public debate, including the degree to which modern-day terrorist movements which self-identify as Islamic are rooted in the Islamic belief system and tradition. Similarly the treatment of women in Islam should be able to be openly discussed, as should claims that aspects of sharia law should be acknowledged by the Australian judicial system in cases involving Muslims. For the record, the DLP is firmly opposed to that proposition. There should be one legal system for all Victorians. Sharia law in whole or in part should be rejected by Victoria.

But I do want to make a really brief comment on the calls to ban the burqa. I do not support these calls. While I understand the context that police and judges may need to see a woman's face in some circumstances, I believe that to ban it wholly will lead to further oppression of women, and I reject this.

Back to the issue! Let us be honest. Where there is robust freedom of speech on matters as deeply held as religious belief, some of us will be offended from time to time by things others say about our own beliefs. We should not be too quick to cry vilification or to resort to suppressing freedom of speech, especially when the suppression of freedom of speech is being directed at one group over another. So I cannot support this part of the motion, because it appears to be based on an approach which seeks to limit vigorous debate on matters that I consider to be of profound public importance.

I wish to turn now to the amendment put forward by the coalition. I thank Mrs Peulich for bringing up her amendment for consideration. Essentially what Mrs Peulich has done is broaden the conversation around this motion. I wish to make a few observations.

Mrs Peulich has included the Jewish community. The Jewish community here continues to be one of the most discriminated against and threatened groups in Victoria, and I stand in solidarity with my Jewish friends today. I will note that every time I go to an event run by or for the Jewish community, the one thing that strikes me most is the heavy security. When I go to the synagogues to celebrate Hanukkah, the one thing that I note, particularly at the entrance, is the heavy security, and when I drive past a school, the heavy security again

strikes me because of the very real threats that this community is exposed to here in our state.

Of course Mrs Peulich has also added the Christian communities, who are increasingly — within this chamber and without — vilified. I thank Mrs Peulich for drawing attention to these.

I would agree that we should take a stand against extremism of any kind; I think that is one of our roles as leaders in the community and one of our roles as politicians. Extremism is about fanaticism. Often we think about it as being blind and involving violence, and we should condemn this. I will note that freedom within our political system does mean that everyone has a right to find 500 members and register a party, and each party is free to distribute their preferences as they see fit. But Mrs Peulich's motion is not about preferences; it is just asking us to take a stand against extremism on both ends of the ledger. In 2018 I hope that we will be able to trust the voters — and I will trust the voters in Victoria — to make their hopefully informed decision regarding who to vote for and in what order.

Now I will return to the second part of Ms Springle's motion, which calls on all political parties to preference One Nation last on the ballot at the 2018 state election. As of yesterday when I checked the Victorian Electoral Commission website, there were 17 political parties currently registered in Victoria. I am happy to inform the house that the DLP is one of them — successfully re-registered on 27 February this year. But I do note that One Nation is not yet listed as a registered political party in our state. On this ground alone, this motion seems to be premature at best and purely a pre-emptive political statement at worst.

When it comes to preferences, I have a very clear view and my party has a very clear view. The Democratic Labour Party allocates its preferences based on a careful assessment of the degree of overlap between its core principles, as set in articles 11 to 13 of our constitution, and the principles espoused by each other party and/or its individual candidates. One of these core principles is to affirm the sacredness of human life from conception until natural death as a fundamental basis for all human rights. So I do encourage any party who wishes to receive preferences from the DLP, including One Nation candidates and all other potential candidates, to consider their values and their stand on these issues that count, because it is the answers to those questions which will dictate the way in which I direct preferences at the next election, not a parliamentary motion and not a pragmatic approach,

which the Liberals are claiming to have taken in Western Australia.

What I do know is that some political parties aiming to run in the next election — the Voluntary Euthanasia Party Victoria, the Australian Sex Party Victoria and the Australian Greens Victoria — openly espouse principles that treat some human beings as disposable or like their lives are not worth living. Accordingly the last three positions on the Democratic Labour Party's ticket are already taken, and there will be no room for One Nation if it does succeed in registering in Victoria in those last three spots.

In case it has not been clear to date, I will not be supporting the motion put up by the Greens today.

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) — I want to make a couple of points about this motion, and I make the point that Ms Springle has brought this motion to take note of the rising vilification of and discrimination against Victorian Muslims, and she calls on all political parties to take a stand against this and to preference One Nation last on the ballot in the state election in 2018. I want to say at the outset that I am a multiculturalist, unashamedly. I want to be quite clear that I see our society as a broad and diverse one, but there are bounds and we need to have fairness in our society.

I was very disturbed to see Ms Springle bring this particular motion, which I take to be a divisive motion in fact. I support Mrs Peulich's amendment. I note that the Greens themselves have not got good form on many of these areas, and their attacks on Israel are of very great concern to me not just here in Victoria but particularly in New South Wales. I note that the Greens official position on Israel is a very confusing one. Senator Rhiannon in New South Wales has taken a very hard left-wing position. The Canberra Declaration on Gaza has been signed, I think, by almost all of the state and federal Greens across the country. That is a declaration that I think the community has great concern about.

I note that the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council on 27 June made the point that the Greens have called for an immediate end to all of acts of violence against civilian populations, including Palestinian suicide bombings as one example. However, in practice the Greens have never issued a condemnation of an act of Palestinian violence or terrorism on its own. In contrast the Greens foreign policy spokesman, Senator Scott Ludlam, has made six statements on the Israel-Palestine conflict since 2015, all of them including

condemnations of Israel. This is a party that does not practise what it preaches.

All Greens members of Parliament have signed the so-called anti-Israel Canberra Declaration on Gaza. Since the last election the Greens have passed further resolutions, and it is clear that there is similarly a half-hearted criticism of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) program against Israel. It is apparent that Senator Rhiannon has been let loose on this and has been allowed to do what she wants on the BDS activities. It is also true that the Melbourne Ports candidate, Steph Hodgins-May, touched off another controversy in Victoria when she abruptly withdrew from a candidates forum on 22 June over her objections to the co-sponsorship of the event by Zionism Victoria. I actually do not think this is a casual position arrived at by many Greens. I think for some Greens this is an article of faith, and I think at a deeper level it is racist, and I am going to call it that. I think it is wrong. I have a different view to them. They are entitled to speak their view, but we are entitled to put a contrary view.

I want to also say that Labor does not come to this with clean hands either. Labor has also got a number of its members of Parliament who have signed the Canberra declaration. One, I think, is Sharon Knight in the Assembly. Khalil Eideh is another, and Maree Edwards in the Assembly is another. I think that this declaration is something that the community should be very concerned about. It is an unbalanced declaration, it is an unbalanced position and it is contrary to the principles that are so deep in our society about ensuring that we have a position of bipartisanship on many of these issues about multiculturalism. But Labor and the Greens have gone out on a frolic to support the Palestinian position in a way that is quite unbalanced and unfair and, I think, targets Israel unreasonably.

The Greens are in a terrible position on this. I know there are many who have different views inside the party, but some have said that the creation of the Left Renewal group — a ‘left-wing far left’ in the words of a recent news article — an anti-capitalist faction within the New South Wales Greens, is right off the leash and needs a huge amount of winding back by those who are in power in the Greens. It is no good just looking the other way; you actually need to stop some of these people saying the things they are saying, supporting BDS and doing a range of other things that I think are anti-Israel and focused against the Jewish community in Australia. That goes for anyone who supports BDS. We have even seen the Trades Hall Council on a number of occasions appear to have been very active on this point.

Let us also be clear here that the need for the Greens to take a proper set of steps is clear. They cannot go forward in the way they have been, trying to walk both sides of the fence and taking different positions all around. This motion is a poorly drafted motion. The sentiment against vilification is strongly supported. The sentiment against discrimination is supported. Mrs Peulich’s amendment inserts the words ‘left’ and ‘right’ — extremists on the left and the right — and that is reasonable.

**Mr BOURMAN** (Eastern Victoria) — I rise to speak today on this motion. From my own personal view at the moment, I am against all violence, vilification and discrimination. I do not care who it is or what religion they are. But why is this motion not about everyone? I know that has been put out there. What about Jews, Christians and others? Why is it not about violence and discrimination in general? Everyone is feeling the pinch these days. We also have to talk about the Greens and their hypocrisy about vilification. What about vilification of legitimate law-abiding shooters? Where are their statements on the death threats that hunters receive? It seems to be very selective about what is and what is not vilification. It is just what we come to expect of them.

Also, who is anybody to try and tell this house and political parties anything to do with their preferences? It is called democracy. You do not have to like the other parties, but we have the far left, why can we not have the far right? In the end it is just going to be a case of: if they get enough votes and get enough deals, they will be in here. There are going to be plenty of other parties that I think are far more of a worry — both far left and far right — and we should not just be singling out an unregistered party, as it is at the moment. We know the Greens do strange things. It is not like they have changed the headline of an *Age* article and claimed it as their own, but this must be one of the strangest things I have seen.

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

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

## MELBOURNE METRO RAIL PROJECT

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

That, in relation to the Melbourne Metro rail project (the project), this house —

- (1) notes the joint inquiry and advisory committee (IAC) report regarding the Melbourne Metro rail project and the response of the Minister for Planning;
- (2) notes planning scheme amendment GC45 was gazetted on 5 January 2017;
- (3) pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 —
  - (a) revokes provisions of amendment GC45 so far as to exclude the Minister for Planning from being the responsible authority for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Stonnington planning scheme as they relate to the project; and
  - (b) as a result of (3)(a) revokes any consequential provisions to amendment GC45.

**Ms DUNN** (Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak to Mr Davis's motion, which is essentially a revocation motion in relation to amendment GC45 and which seeks to exclude the Minister for Planning from being the responsible authority in relation to the Melbourne Metro rail project and to enable the Stonnington City Council to become the responsible authority in relation to that section of the project.

This is an ideal opportunity to turn our minds to South Yarra station and what has been happening in relation to that particular part of our transport network. The observation the Greens make is that the government has ignored repeated requests from residents, shop owners and businesses in South Yarra; the City of Stonnington; and the local member for Prahran in the other place, Mr Hibbins, to properly and transparently consider including a South Yarra station interchange in the Melbourne Metro project. These proponents have been blocked at every turn from getting proper consideration of this addition to the project scope. For the consideration of this motion it is worth delving into the benefits that inclusion of a South Yarra station would provide. I will first go to the broader network benefits.

The major design flaw of Melbourne's train network is that it is a hub-and-spoke system. Unless a destination is on the same line, a passenger must go to the city and then out again on a separate line. The whole point of metro-style transit systems is that they provide interchange opportunities outside of the central core. The London Underground, the Paris Metro, Berlin's U-Bahn, the Tokyo Metro and the Beijing Subway are

all mass transit networks which have major interchanges outside the centre of the city. There are two major benefits of this — trips from outside the centre to another destination outside the centre can be more direct.

Compare this to Melbourne. If you want to travel from Preston to Coburg or from Belgrave to Pakenham, you must go the entire way into the CBD, even though that is a massive diversion and adds half an hour or even more to your trip. Forget about taking the bus instead. They either do not run between these places or are so infrequent and slow that there is no point trying. Furthermore, disentangling the core greatly improves system resilience. If the city loop goes down, the entire metropolitan train system grinds to a halt. With a metro-style network, network redundancy allows for alternative routes to be taken and people can continue making their way to their place of work or education.

South Yarra station is already a major hub for Melbourne's public transport system, with four metropolitan rail lines and trams interchanging at the station. Along with a high population density in the catchment of South Yarra station, this makes it the busiest metropolitan station outside of the city loop and the busiest of all in terms of morning peak boarding. It is the ideal location for a major hub in a new metro-style mass transit system for Melbourne. An interchange connection at South Yarra would enhance the South Yarra activity centre and provide high-speed access to the Domain, Melbourne CBD and medical and university Parkville precincts. If it were ever to be prioritised by state government, a South Yarra metro station would provide access to the Melbourne Airport rail link, although on the past form of both Labor and the opposition I will not hold my breath.

Not having an upgraded South Yarra station on the Melbourne Metro project is like having a cross-rail project in London bypass Liverpool Street station. It misses a prime opportunity for connectivity of the network for no good reason. No other city's public transport network planners would make such a short-sighted decision. Furthermore, South Yarra station would benefit people living from Sunbury to Pakenham through improved connectivity to South Yarra as an employment hub.

I want to turn now to the existing South Yarra station and its state at the moment — it is not fit for purpose. South Yarra station has experienced rapid increases in patronage numbers in recent years, driven by both employment and residential growth in the surrounding precincts. There will be an extra 12 000 residents in South Yarra by 2046, with 10 000 more jobs in the

area. There will be 5000 apartments built in South Yarra by 2031. The Forest Hill precinct looms over the platforms of the existing South Yarra station. It will bring with it 2500 new dwellings and 22 000 square metres of office space by 2031.

South Yarra station does not have full disabled access to and from the platforms and has substandard facilities for its designated premium standard classification. As any commuter would tell you, it is severely constrained in terms of space. There is only one access point to South Yarra station, and that is on Toorak Road, where pedestrian footpaths are already jammed with people in the morning and afternoon peaks.

The City of Stonnington's credible concept plan for expanding the station to incorporate a metro interchange has a public plaza and access walks on the southern side of Toorak Road. This would turn the derelict siding reserve into a valuable and well-used public space, providing multiple entry points to the rail system instead of the one entry point. It would also expand opportunities for interchange with other public transport modes and give space for bike parking, disabled vehicle access and taxi ranks. There is inadequate space for any of these in the current station layout.

Inclusion of a new South Yarra station in the Melbourne Metro project could allow for existing platforms on the Sandringham and Dandenong lines to be extended to accommodate new, high-capacity metro trains. It could include safety doors as per the designs that will be used in the new Metro Tunnel stations. It could provide plentiful space for access and egress, which is only fitting, considering this is the busiest station outside of the city loop.

The Greens have ongoing and real concerns about the project in terms of the bidder. Will the bidder leave tracks curved instead of including the necessary straight sections for a future platform? Will the bidder not move the alignment closer to the rail siding park, such that any future station would require even more property acquisition and therefore be more disruptive and expensive? It is a matter that my colleague in the other place the member for Prahran has been prosecuting. He has been tireless in his attempt to get information around this project and its intentions as recently as last month. The member for Prahran has asked what action the government will be taking to implement the Melbourne Metro environment effects statement recommendation adopted by the Minister for Planning. I congratulate my colleague on his tireless efforts around that. I recall Mr Davis talking about the member for Prahran in the other place as tardy. I will get to that

in a moment — Mr Hibbins's tireless activities in relation to this.

I want to quote from the *Melbourne Metro Rail Project: Inquiry and Advisory Committee Report*, issued in November 2016, in relation to the discussion and findings around this. It was very clear in the report that the design and construction of the project should not preclude the ability to include such a station — talking of South Yarra station — as part of the metropolitan network at some time in the future. The committee's report says that:

The design stage of the project should seek to ensure that if possible the option of providing for such a station at some time in the future should not be precluded.

This highlighted to us the importance of making sure there is still an opportunity in the future to put works in place so that our Metro system is able to provide the people of Victoria and taxpayers with the best possible outcome at South Yarra station. It was heartening to see that the committee considered that that should not be precluded — that the door should not be shut on that — and that it was important to future-proof in relation to that.

I will go to what this motion does. As I said at the beginning of my speech, the community of South Yarra has tried repeatedly to have proper consideration of the inclusion of South Yarra station. Businesses in South Yarra, residents, the City of Stonnington and the local member for Prahran in the Assembly, Mr Hibbins, have all been blocked and ignored by the Andrews government and its predilection for ignoring the views of locals — the people who know best. This motion will not succeed in forcing the inclusion of a South Yarra station though. The suggestion that the City of Stonnington should be the responsible authority and that the state government will be comfortable with such an arrangement is absurd; the government will just give itself the authority to bypass the City of Stonnington as the responsible authority for the project. It has mechanisms available to do so, and Mr Davis knows it. It is a yet another sham for the local community.

The Greens member for Prahran, Mr Hibbins, and I have secured from the Minister for Public Transport, Minister Allan, a commitment in writing that South Yarra station will not be precluded from the tender process for the design and construction of the Melbourne Metro Tunnel project, and I thank Mr Mulino for making reference to that letter on behalf of the government and wish to quote from that:

The Melbourne Metro Rail Authority (MMRA) has accepted the advice of the Minister for Planning, and as a result, the three bidders who have been short-listed as part of the

procurement for the delivery of the tunnel and stations will be required to adhere to this recommendation in their bids. Their designs for the project must not preclude the provision of station in the future.

I thank the minister for her assurances around that and for entering into conversations with the Greens. It is heartening to know that when we talk to ministers we can actually resolve issues. We can get somewhere and get some comfort from the government in terms of its intentions in relation to this matter.

In terms of some of the comments from Mr Davis, I wanted to go first to his first comment which talked about this being a complex and deceptively simple motion. I think that Mr Davis might have had that a little mixed up. I think what he meant to say was that this is simply a deceptive motion. It is deceptive to think that should this motion be successful, the community of South Yarra would be guaranteed to have a South Yarra interchange station. It is a nonsense to think that that would be the outcome of this particular motion, and it is really cruel to play that sort of trick on a community that in many cases does not have a full understanding of the planning scheme, the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the substantial powers available to the Minister for Planning.

There are substantial powers within the Planning and Environment Act, and quite frankly, if this motion succeeded, the government would exercise the full use of those mechanisms available to it through the Planning and Environment Act. We certainly would not be seeing Stonnington as the responsible authority. I do wonder about the legitimacy and genuineness in relation to this motion.

I am concerned about some remarks made about by my colleague in the other place, the member for Prahran. It was suggested that the member was tardy in that he did not disclose early on his commitment to this particular station. I would just like to let the house know that that could not be further from the truth. Mr Hibbins has been a tireless advocate for this project. He is rusted on to this particular project on behalf of the people of South Yarra. It was one of his commitments during the 2014 election campaign, so you cannot be more dedicated than that. He has pursued this issue vigorously. He has secured documents through the Freedom of Information Act 1982 on the detail of the provisions of the Melbourne Metro interchange. He was well onto this before those on the other side even started thinking about it.

I note with interest that it only came to the attention of the local federal member, Kelly O'Dwyer, during the federal election campaign. She seemed to be more

focused on \$6000 toasters than on the South Yarra interchange station.

To suggest that should this motion be successful that Stonnington would work with the government and negotiate with the government is nonsense. Mr Davis knows that Stonnington in fact would not be in that position at all, because the government would in fact enact the powers available to it. Stonnington would not have a say, and neither would any other local government authority for that matter. To suggest that there is overwhelming support from the community for the motion, I have to really wonder if the community understands — —

**Mr Davis** — That is actually not what I said.

**Ms DUNN** — I am happy to check *Hansard* tomorrow to see if I have quoted that right.

**Mr Davis** — There was overwhelming support for South Yarra being connected.

**Ms DUNN** — I do not contend or argue that there is not overwhelming support for this particular project, as the member for Prahran in the Legislative Assembly can attest to, but in terms of this particular motion being the correct outcome for that community in getting what they want, it is not the right way to go about it. In fact it is completely the wrong way to go about achieving that outcome. This is the best outcome we can secure for the people that live and work in South Yarra, and have no doubt, members of this house, that we will hold the minister to her word. This motion is reckless, ineffective and a nonsense and, due to the commitment of the minister, superfluous. The Greens will not be supporting this motion.

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) — I also rise to speak on this motion moved by Mr Davis. As Ms Dunn said, it is very irresponsible of Mr Davis to move a motion like this, but I am not really surprised. I want to quote from Mr Davis, because in *Hansard* not long ago he said his main intention was to actually stop the metro rail project, full stop. He made no secret about that.

**Mr Davis** interjected.

**Mr MELHEM** — Here is what you said, Mr Davis, in an adjournment debate, seeking delay on this project:

What I seek from the minister is that he stop the preliminary works...

So basically he wants to stop the project. Am I surprised? No, I am not, because when this lot were in

government from 2010 to 2014, for four years they stopped everything.

I get it: you guys do not like to do anything. Basically metro rail would be halfway completed, maybe three-quarters of the way completed, if the Brumby transport plan had continued as was planned before the 2010 election. Instead they stopped anything to do with Melbourne Metro. Even though Infrastructure Australia had endorsed it — the money was there; ‘Let’s get the job going’ — they stopped it. Then halfway through they said, ‘God, we should do something, so we’re going to revamp the Melbourne Metro project’. They rebranded it and they did some paperwork. It was not much. They even changed the direction of Melbourne Metro. They said, ‘We’ll send it through Fishermans Bend because we’re going to build a new suburb there’.

But they forgot one thing: what was the purpose of Melbourne Metro? The purpose was then, as it is today, to provide access to people in the west, north and south so they are able to get through the city from west to east, east to west and north to south. It will give us more flexibility because the city loop cannot cope with the current traffic. We do not have enough trains running that can service our people. It does not matter whether they live in the greater Melbourne area or even regional Victoria; there is not enough capacity in the loop. That was the purpose of Melbourne Metro, and that is still the purpose today.

But no. Mr Davis decided, ‘I want a station in South Yarra. If I don’t have that \$1 billion and another station in South Yarra, the project shouldn’t go ahead’. He has just come up with another innovative idea: that now we are going to have a new precedent where local government, Stonnington City Council — and I am not commenting about their work — is in charge of a major project. It is an \$11 billion project. Mr Davis is saying that we are actually going to have a city council — South Yarra station is not in Stonnington, by the way — determine whether the state of Victoria can proceed with a major project like the metro rail. I thought that was what state governments do; I thought that was our role. I thought state governments made decisions about major projects, not councils.

Obviously we are changing the way our constitution is made up, where local governments look at local issues, state governments look at state issues and the federal government looks at federal issues. No, we are changing things now because it suits Mr Davis’s agenda. Now we are going to pass all this responsibility on a project to a council. That will affect every single council in Victoria, because it affects all Victorian residents, whether they live in Mildura, Sunshine,

Frankston or Doncaster, where they do not have a rail network. But hopefully one day they will, because metro rail will have the infrastructure in place, and should a future government go ahead with a rail project to Doncaster, the infrastructure will be there to facilitate that — but no, because Mr Davis did not get his way.

I am not sure that the people of South Yarra are necessarily screaming for another station. My understanding is that the area is serviced very well by the current station, by their train network and by buses. In fact if Mr Davis gets his way, they would have to travel extra time to actually get into the city or even when passing through the city. I just do not get it. They went and enlisted their federal counterpart to basically support them, even though we all know their latest stunt about the heritage listing and environmental stuff they are talking about is not going to actually stop the project.

The government has got on with it. We went to the election with a clear plan to remove 50 level crossings and to build the metro rail. We actually told the Victorian people what the plan was. We even said to Victorians where the line would be running through Parkville et cetera. We actually had a plan. We put it out before the election. A lot of work was carried out during that period to look at the environmental impact statement and the business case. All the consultation has been done, and we are getting on with it, even though I did not hear the state Liberal opposition actually come out in support of this project or ask their federal comrades to chip in money for the project.

**Mr Davis** — We did.

**Mr MELHEM** — You did? Well, obviously you did not ask loudly enough; I do not recall that you did. You will have your chance in summing up, and we will see whether or not you are going to call on your federal comrades to put in a few billion dollars to support the project.

But I am not going to wait because you do not like the project. You do not like public transport, full stop. You like to stop things, a bit like the Frankston line. If you got your way, the nine level crossing removals would probably never go ahead, because you basically do not like anything to do with public transport at all — ‘We don’t like it, and we don’t have a solution’. It is just ‘No’. You were in government for four years. You had a plan. Infrastructure Australia said, ‘There’s a project ready to go. Off you go’. Three billion dollars was set aside by the former federal Labor government to assist in developing that project. You pissed that into the

wind. You stopped the project, and the money went elsewhere.

Then you are talking about how everyone is wrong. Mr Davis is the only one who is right in relation to the design. He has suddenly become a trained public transport designer. He knows everything about public transport and everybody else was wrong, ignoring the fact that the plan to include the existing South Yarra station as part of the metro rail will cost a billion dollars and destroy 100 homes and half of the Jam Factory. The Liberals and the Greens supported the project proposal.

I am pleased with Ms Dunn's comments that she is happy with the explanation and commitment given by the minister and is now supporting our project. But your proposition, Mr Davis, rejected the Metro Tunnel business case by Infrastructure Victoria and the independent environment effects statement by Infrastructure Australia, which have endorsed the tunnel as a high-priority project based on the business case without the second Yarra station. Do you want to go and attack Infrastructure Australia as well, like you have Infrastructure Victoria? Everyone is saying we have got the right model. Mr Davis's model is no model.

Again I cannot believe I am hearing from a shadow Minister for Planning, who hopes one day to be the Minister for Planning — if he has the honour and pleasure of serving as such — that he wants to outsource his responsibility if he ever becomes the Minister for Planning to a city council. That is what he is actually doing — outsourcing that responsibility to the Stonnington council. It will be interesting to see what you will do if you make it there, Mr Davis, and if you are making a decision one day about a major \$11 billion project and a particular council comes up and says, 'Hey, we want right of veto'. Are you going to bend over and say, 'Yes, okay, I can give you right of veto'? I bet you would not do that. If you do, then God help us, you should not be the minister.

That is essentially what this motion is about. It is about grubby politics. It is about the embarrassment that the former government abolished a ready-to-go metro rail project. The money was there. They abolished that; they did not go ahead with it. Then they suddenly decided to do something, so they proposed an alternative model which was not workable. It was not endorsed by any notable body like Infrastructure Australia in relation to redirecting the line. Now they are trying to spoil this project.

There is no question about that. On the record Mr Davis said, 'I want that project to stop. Let's have a talkfest for the next year, two years, three years' — God knows when. That is basically what this motion is about. He is trying to frustrate the government in delivering on an election commitment and delivering a project that is badly needed for this state. I get it if he has a constructive contribution to make on the development or delivery of that project; I think it is very important that he be able to make a contribution in relation to that. But he has none. He is basically saying, 'If I don't get that station' — and everybody is saying there is no need for it at this point in time, and there is provision for it if needed down the track in five, 10 or 20 years time; that commitment was given by the minister to basically be able to make the necessary changes to actually accommodate that — 'it's my way or the highway'. That is Mr Davis's view of the world. But I have got bad news for Mr Davis. This project is going ahead with him or without him.

We have gone to the election promising Victorians that we will deliver a first-class public transport system so that we are able to move people from point A to point B. We will have trains running more often and on time when people need them. If we are going to wait for you, Mr Davis, and your coalition parties, none of that will be achieved. People will still be stuck in traffic, trains will still be running late and we will have traffic jams all over the place on our public transport system. Get with the program, support the project as proposed, get on with it and ask your federal colleagues to chip in some money to assist the state of Victoria to deliver a project that is much needed so that Victorians can enjoy travelling to work on time from north, south, east and west on a first-class public transport system.

With those comments, I will obviously be voting against the motion. I hope Mr Davis and his colleagues come to their senses, stop playing politics and support the project Victoria needs.

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) — I indicate that in this context the motion is a very important one. It actually provides the City of Stonnington and its community with the capacity to ensure a good outcome at South Yarra. I have to say that it is disappointing that there is a belief that a single piece of paper will make a difference. It is like Neville Chamberlain waving a piece of paper saying 'Peace in our time'. I do not trust Jacinta Allan. I do not trust Daniel Andrews. I do not believe that the commitments they give are worth the paper they are written on, and I have got to say —

**Ms Dunn** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — I will come to the act in a second. The act makes it clear at section 38 that the chambers are allowed to disallow and revoke, in whole or in part, sections of planning scheme amendments. That is a very clear democratic signal that if this chamber chooses to exercise its power in that way, that is the will of the community. That is the will of our democracy. For the government to oppose that position would be just extraordinary. It would be an absolute outrage.

I have got to say I am disappointed in the Greens; I am disappointed in Ms Dunn and I am disappointed in Mr Hibbins in the Assembly. They have not fought hard for this. They have not done what is necessary. Mr Hibbins is a very late convert to this matter, and I have got to say that the Greens' decision today is a direct repudiation of that South Yarra position. The decision today is emblematic of the Greens' weakness on these things. They will not stand up to the government, they will not stand up to Jacinta Allan and they will not have the fight on behalf of their communities.

We will. We are up for it, and we are actually saying very clearly that we want a South Yarra station now and what is more we want to make sure that into the future South Yarra station is a part of Melbourne Metro. It is an outrage if the government proceeds without properly allowing that to occur. The only way is to have some leverage against the government, against Jacinta Allan and against Daniel Andrews, who are rolling over communities everywhere in this state. Whether it be at Werribee, whether it be down on the Frankston line or whether it be on sky rail, they are not listening to the community; they are not looking at long-term planning for the best outcomes. They are arrogantly rolling over communities and not looking for the long-term interest that is required here. I think the government's actions against the community are outrageous.

But this motion is a very simple one. It says we accept that there will need to be ministerial intervention through section 20(4) across most of the project, but because of the government's policy position against South Yarra — and let us be clear that it has been dragged, kicking and screaming, by the hair to the position that it would at least consider a retrofit at South Yarra — there is no guarantee that this government in its current mode, or even a government in just two or three years time as these things proceed, would take the decision that it should for the future of South Yarra.

Earlier in my contribution I laid out the importance of the enormous population growth in the area. It would

be an absolute travesty to proceed with the Metro without connecting the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines. Let us be clear: it is an \$11 billion project and we get fewer connections, not more; it is actually disconnecting two lines, in a bizarre step. The government needs to rethink this.

This motion has the capacity to give leverage to the City of Stonnington. I have already pointed out the very high quality work that the Stonnington council has done on this, and it has indicated that it is prepared to do this work. It has a formal resolution on its books indicating it believes this motion is of value and saying it actually would be prepared to do the work, so the council could work with government. They could do that collaboratively, constructively and positively, and in that sense we could see a much better outcome. This is how local communities should work on these occasions. This is the sort of step that should be taken.

For the Greens, in a monumental act of short-sightedness, to throw in their hat with the government and to work with the government to defeat this motion is a very sad reflection on their position.

**Ms Dunn** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — The reality, Ms Dunn, is that you are choosing to vote against a motion that would give the local community and the City of Stonnington leverage against the government.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DAVIS** — Yes, it would. If the government tried to circumvent the motion and circumvent the planning powers that were left with the City of Stonnington, that would be a matter for the government; but it would also be a huge political point to actually make against them, and the community would have a little bit more leverage. My view is the government would not do that. The government in fact would work with the City of Stonnington, which is very well intentioned in this and has shown its goodwill by the high-quality work it has done, including the proper survey and planning work, which has made a very significant contribution to this debate. I have complimented the City of Stonnington on that, but what is required here is that the community needs to have its say. The community needs to be able to put in what it wants and stop the government from making this short-term, short-sighted decision.

I do not trust Jacinta Allan, the Minister for Public Transport. I do not trust the piece of paper she has provided the Greens, and honestly, it is naive to believe it means a thing.

**House divided on motion:***Ayes, 17*

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

*Noes, 23*

Barber, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Bourman, Mr	Patten, Ms
Dalidakis, Mr	Pennicuik, Ms
Dunn, Ms	Pulford, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Elasmar, Mr	Shing, Ms
Hartland, Ms	Somyurek, Mr ( <i>Teller</i> )
Herbert, Mr	Springle, Ms
Jennings, Mr	Symes, Ms
Leane, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Melhem, Mr ( <i>Teller</i> )	Young, Mr
Mikakos, Ms	

**Motion negatived.****MEMBER FOR MELTON**

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to be able to rise and move this motion on behalf of the opposition. I move:

That this house calls on the Special Minister of State, as the minister responsible for the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation (Allowances) Regulations 2013, to take whatever action is necessary to allow recovery of any second residence allowance that was claimed by the member for Melton based on his Ocean Grove home base.

The rushed decision to build a juvenile justice centre in Werribee has set off a domino effect of bad headlines and crises for the Andrews Labor government. It is one own goal after another. It was yet another example of the Andrews government making a decision and then going through the motions of a consultation process. So here is a hint to the government: people are onto you on this. They tried it in Oakleigh, announcing sky rail on the front page of the *Herald Sun* and then telling locals and making out that they wanted to consult. That consultation basically amounted to, 'We are going to build a sky rail; what colour would you like it to be?'. They tried it also with the Melbourne Metro project, announcing the project and then not budging, despite very clear feedback that has been given from communities about wanting a connection with South Yarra station and about not using cut and cover at Domain station.

But back to the juvenile justice centre in Werribee, where we are seeing a similar pattern. Locals worked out pretty carefully that the reason Tim Pallas did not seem worried about how close the new centre would be to houses in Werribee was because it would be nowhere near his house, because his house was nowhere in his electorate — it was in Williamstown. Locals are understandably outraged by this. They have a local member who is not local and does not even try to be. It is convenient for Tim Pallas to be the member for Werribee — it gives him the safe seat that he needs for his career. Sadly it does not give people in Werribee an effective voice for their concerns about building a new prison in their community. And we can understand that fear, given what happened in Malmsbury only a short time ago.

**Ms Lovell** interjected.

**Ms FITZHERBERT** — Yes, I am just going to continue talking at this point about Malmsbury.

**Mrs Peulich** — You are setting the scene.

**Ms FITZHERBERT** — I am indeed setting the scene, because this is a story, and as I said at the start, the rushed decision to build a juvenile justice centre in Werribee has set off a domino effect of bad headlines and crises for this government. I was just speaking about what had happened in Malmsbury and why people were very concerned about the violence and so on that happened there when a number of people broke out, and as a result of Tim Pallas being outed for living miles away from his electorate in the western suburbs, the spotlight was shone on the large number of ALP MPs who do the same.

There is a big difference between the Liberal Party and Labor on this front. Local branch members expect Liberal members to live in their seats or very close to them, and our party organisational leaders also expect it, and as a result, for as long as I can remember, the Liberal Party preselection form includes a declaration that members will live in their seat unless they are given permission by the administrative committee to do otherwise. In other words, my party makes it clear that MPs should live in the communities they represent, because that is at the heart of being a good local member. But the ALP has a different approach, and that is why a wide number of their MPs live outside their seats — or, as the Assembly member for Eltham said today, many people need to work in their seats, not live. So that is okay then.

In the midst of all of this, it emerged that two Assembly members not only lived miles away from their

electorates but also claimed the second residence allowance for the privilege of doing so. In other words, they charged the taxpayer for living well beyond the electorates they were also being paid to represent. One, the member for Tarneit, quickly announced that he would pay back the money, which was about \$37 000, but the other, the member for Melton, has refused to pay back the money he claimed, which is believed to be around \$113 000. Together this amounts to one of the biggest rorts, if not the biggest rort, of entitlements in Victoria.

Both men have resigned from their positions as Speaker and Deputy Speaker, but that is not enough. The right thing, the decent thing, is to repay the money that has been claimed. We know that, and the community knows that. There is understandably outrage in the community that someone can claim an allowance in such a way and then just refuse to hand it back when they are caught out. People know this for what it is: it is a rort. As one person noted in the last week or so, it is like having money paid in error into your bank account, knowing that it is not meant to be yours and then saying, 'Oh, well, that is mine to keep. I am not paying it back'.

I understand that the member for Melton says that his claim was within the rules and he is not paying it back. We disagree. It is self-evident that the second residence allowance was intended for country members who represent electorates well away from the Parliament. It is not for members who hold western suburbs seats but decide that they would rather live on the Bellarine Peninsula, beautiful as it is. And I understand that the member for Evelyn in the other place commented recently on the debate that was undertaken in the Parliament on the last occasion that the allowances were changed.

What it comes down to is really an issue of character. The issue is not just 'Can I?'; it is also 'Should I?'. Should I do this, even though it appears on the surface that it may have been allowable within the rules, although that issue is currently being considered, and we need to wait for a formal response on the issue. But this is the other appalling aspect of this rorting: it was done by two members who held positions of trust within the Parliament. It was done by two members who were not just simply members; they were also responsible for upholding the standards of the Parliament.

At the moment, the member for Melton is at an impasse with the Andrews government. He says he is going to retire at the next election, and he is not paying back the money. This motion sends a very clear message to the

Andrews government that this attitude is simply not good enough. The member for Melton needs to be made to repay that money, and if he continues to resist, Mr Jennings, as the responsible minister and as a member of the Labor Party as well, needs to ensure that he does in fact pay it back. I note that the member for Melton has resigned from the Parliamentary Labor Party, and I am curious about whether he will also resign from the Labor Party, and there is precedent on exactly this issue. If he does not resign, I would be interested in whether Mr Jennings would like to tell us whether the Labor Party will actually kick him out of the party as well as out of the parliamentary party.

This government has been quite eager to litigate, I note, on a number of fronts. It has taken legal action against a number of parties. The most obvious and relevant example is its litigation against the Ombudsman, which it has now taken to the High Court in an attempt to stop her investigation of whistleblower allegations that electorate office staff entitlements were rorted during the 2014 election. There is a definite theme here, and that is of rorting — using all options to maximise personal benefit, which is the opposite of what a member of Parliament is supposed to be doing. They are supposed to be representing others and giving voice to their concerns.

I look forward to hearing Mr Jennings speak on this motion, and I hope he addresses the issue of whether he has sought legal advice on the possibility of action against the member to retrieve the money. With the full benefit of government what other advice has he had on retrieving money? Will this possibly be part of the suite of changes to entitlements that we have been told we will have?

I want to pause briefly to talk about this issue of members who do not live in their electorates and seem to think it is not important for them to do so. Reference was made earlier by the member for Eltham to working in your electorate and there being no need to actually live there. But what does 'working' mean? Does it mean you work from 9 to 5? Do you work on weekends? How does that fit in with normal community involvement?

On the weekend many MPs go to sporting events with their kids, as I do. They shop locally, and they go to movies or eat out locally. I know all of us who live in our electorates regularly run into constituents who raise issues with us. The supermarket is often a place where this kind of transaction happens, and that is part and parcel of the job — unless, of course, you actually do not want to be running into constituents, in which case you might choose to live 40 kilometres away from your

electorate or somewhere that you simply like more. The bottom line is that if someone is living a long way from their electorate, they are simply not going to be putting in as much as a member who does, because representing a community means actually being part of that community.

As I said at the start, there was a rushed decision to build a juvenile justice centre in Werribee, and this has set off quite a domino effect of bad headlines and crises for the Andrews government. What has happened this week is nothing short of a crisis, with the resignation of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, a dispute over a very large amount of money that never should have been claimed and an impasse over whether it is going to be paid back or not. The member for Tarneit, I note, immediately said that he would pay back the money, so the behaviour of the member for Melton is in quite stark contrast with the approach that was pretty much immediately adopted by the member for Tarneit.

The community has made its views on this very clear. It thinks it is appalling that a member of Parliament can claim an amount of money that would not pass the pub test, to use that hackneyed phrase. It is not on to say, 'I represent a group of people here in Melton, but actually I would rather live in Ocean Grove or maybe Ballarat, and while I am at it I am going to claim a benefit for doing so'. It was a substantial benefit that was larger than the wages that many of the people that the member for Melton represents would take home.

Community expectations on this are very clear. They think the money should be returned. That is the heart of this. It is reasonable that we talk about it in this chamber. There has not been much freedom to talk about it in the other place. Obviously the government has a vested interest in protecting its members and minimising the damage as much as it can.

I will close on this point. Most of the damage that has been done is well outside this place. It has done damage to all of us who are members of Parliament. These sorts of entitlements and this rorting have been seen by the community, and the community now thinks that many of us, if not all of us, behave in this way when we do not.

The community has sent a clear message, and the opposition sends a clear message: this money should be repaid. As the minister responsible and as a member of the government party, Mr Jennings has a very clear role to play in seeing that this money is returned, examining all options on how it is to be returned, sharing his wisdom with us — as I know he likes to do on occasion — and giving us an explanation of what

advice he has taken in relation to the return of the money and what actions he intends to take as a consequence.

**Mr BARBER** (Northern Metropolitan) — I would like to now address the motion moved by Ms Fitzherbert calling on the Special Minister of State, as the minister responsible for the parliamentary salaries and superannuation regulations, to take whatever action is necessary to allow recovery of any second residence allowance that was claimed by the member for Melton based on his Ocean Grove home base. I am presuming what the mover intended to say was, 'Take whatever lawful action is necessary', so the question may arise as to what the legal powers of the Special Minister of State are.

I feel that this motion may be just slightly premature. We have had some information from the President that at the current time he and the audit committee of Parliament are leading an investigation into this very matter. The President in fact was kind enough to provide a copy of the letter to party leaders, and therefore I am sure he would not be at all concerned about me referring to it now.

He wrote to us on 2 March to advise us that he had convened a meeting of Parliament's audit committee to initiate an examination of the very matter that Ms Fitzherbert is wanting to seek some action on. I think the terms of reference of that audit are quite important and will be of interest to members who have not seen this letter. It will certainly be of interest to anybody who has been following this issue and perhaps it will be useful for *Hansard* itself. The regularly retained internal auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), are to conduct an audit along the following lines:

Review the eligibility, processes and controls for receipt of the second residence allowance by the members for Melton and Tarneit.

The audit is specifically in relation to those two members. This is not just a general audit of processes, controls or rules; this is specifically to review the eligibility for receipt of the second residence allowance by the members for Melton and Tarneit.

When we get a copy of this audit report, we will get a specific ruling from PwC as to whether it believes those two members were eligible and, for that matter, a ruling on related questions, processes and controls, which one would imagine means who signs off on it, what evidence was required to be provided and so forth.

Secondly, the audit plans to go a bit wider to:

Review compliance against current eligibility requirements of all recipients of the second residence allowance during the current Parliament.

Therefore it is not just those two members but in fact all members who have claimed the allowance. I am not aware at the moment which members might have claimed this second residence allowance. I have not claimed it, so I am not worried. But apparently according to the rules I could actually announce that my primary residence is Lorne and my secondary residence is Fitzroy. I could have an apartment there that the Department of Parliamentary Services would kindly pay off for me over my term in Parliament. If I am too drunk to walk home from Parliament, I could probably crash the night at the Hotel Windsor and bill that to the taxpayer as well. It is pretty clear that these rules need to be tightened up. That tightening of the rules themselves may come later, and it may be something that we address.

The third objective is to:

Map out and evaluate the procedures and approval processes within PoV to approve second residence allowances ...

That is, what evidence has to be provided before the allowance is approved and the money goes into the member's bank account.

There is an objective to:

Identify possible areas for improvement in the processes ... governance and disclosure ...

We will wait and see on that. And the last objective is to:

Undertake a comparative analysis with other 'Westminster system' jurisdictions to inform better practice recommendations to the audit committee.

We are also informed by the President's letter that in fact phase 1, factual findings presented in respect of the validity of the payment for those members — the member for Melton, the member for Tarneit and those other members — is going to happen first. In fact I believe that the President has informed the house, and it actually says it in the letter, that the phase 1 audit is likely to come by 14 March 2017.

The letter does not actually say that the results of this audit will be made public; however, I do not think the President would mind me saying that I have discussed this matter with him. The audit is being conducted by the audit committee, not the President himself, so it will be for the audit committee to make a decision about the release of the information, but I am apprised that the

President is strongly of the view that when the phase 1 factual findings are presented, they should be made public, and I think all members would agree that that is appropriate.

We need to get to the bottom of exactly whether those two members or any other members were eligible to make those claims — did they provide the correct documentation for their claims and was the sign-off process appropriate? That is a separate question to whether we think the members should pay the money back. One member has already decided to pay the money back. The other member has seemingly decided that he will not pay the money back, and he has put a cherry on top by throwing a number of expletives at anybody who thinks that he should pay the money back. Who knows what he will think about this matter when things have cooled down. We may also discover that there are other members who have claimed it, and we will get a look at what their documentation is like. That, I think, is quite important.

From the point of view of the Greens I understand that this is a very controversial issue. I understand that it is running hot in terms of the community's view on it. I understand that Parliament over a couple of weeks has spent a lot of time on this question. I understand that the community's rage over this question is part of a broader sense in the community that politicians are not doing a very good job anymore. They do not think politicians are paying attention to the day-to-day problems of ordinary Victorian citizens: commuting, affording a house, getting your kids into a good school, getting a job. They see politicians ignoring those problems at the same time as seemingly enriching themselves — going after it to make sure they are well set up and comfortable while the people in the community themselves, regardless of their socio-economic status and measure of security, are all just finding it a bit harder each year, year after year, day after day, to get through their everyday life.

I have heard that message loud and clear. Unfortunately it seems there are members who have not heard it at all and see this as some kind of sinecure — who can look at a guide of member entitlements and see 20 different ways to rort it. And by 'rort' I do not mean it is a question of illegality; I simply mean they are used in a way not intended. The commonsense meaning, interpretation and purpose of that entitlement is to allow you to do your job for the people, but in fact members just look at it and think, 'I know how I can get an extra bit of money in my pocket using that'. That attitude unfortunately has popped up in this Parliament on a number of occasions, it has popped up in the federal

Parliament and it is popping up in parliaments all around the world.

Unfortunately these sorts of expenses and entitlements scandals are becoming routine. I understand all that. I understand all the emotion, and I understand where it comes from. However, I would just feel a lot more comfortable if we were able to pick this same motion up next week, when we have a copy of the audit committee's report, which promises firstly, according to the letter the President has circulated amongst party leaders, to give us specific facts as to the eligibility, processes and controls for the receipt of the second residence allowance by the members for Melton and Tarneit, and secondly, to review for compliance current eligibility requirements of all recipients of the second residence allowance.

But we must go much further than that. It is not a matter of simply getting to the bottom of this particular matter that has come to light. There have been a number of white-hot debates in just the first two years of this Parliament. There has been a minister who apparently directed his driver, who was provided to him for the purpose of him to be able to do his work as a minister, to conveniently move around his domestic animals and assist him with other domestic arrangements. In the paper last week I read that two ministers used their drivers to go to a Bruce Springsteen concert at Hanging Rock. I do not even know where to start with that one, but presumably there will be some internal discussion about the actual purpose for which ministerial drivers and cars are provided. My understanding is that they are for the purpose of matters relating to the minister's work, not their recreation and not their domestic arrangements or any other matter.

This is not something that has uniquely popped up in the Victorian Parliament. We had the former Speaker of the federal Parliament using Cabcharges to tour wineries and one thing or another, which all, again, had to be trawled through. It is not a joy-riding experience here; this is to get you to events that you must attend, to get you home at the end of the day and to pick you up in the morning — that is the purpose of it.

Of course I do not intend to expend any more time on the question we have debated many times in this chamber — the question of allegations about the Labor Party and the use of electorate officers in an election campaigning context. We have already got that particular matter under investigation by the Ombudsman, so we do not need to say much more about that.

What I would like to say is that we need to do much more than simply administratively check over the arrangements in relation to two members and one particular entitlement. We need to reform this system root and branch. I am sorry, but while the government may want to diligently go away and review these things and make changes where they can do so by regulation, we are talking about a much greater scope of changes than just tweaking regulations and the Members Guide. I am talking about a root-and-branch review of the package of entitlements that are provided, the rules under which they are granted and the processes through which they are ticked off.

My view is that that should be done through a parliamentary standards commissioner. This is something that the Greens have campaigned on for many years, coming out of the experience of the UK Parliament and their entitlements scandal. I note that in the instance of the Privileges Committee inquiry into Mr Geoff Shaw in the Legislative Assembly, there was a recommendation that a parliamentary standards commissioner be created and a further recommendation that the Procedure Committee of this house join together with its counterpart in the other house and actually come up with a model to deliver that. In the last Parliament they apparently ran out of time before completing that task. I think we need to reinstate that proposal. I seek the cooperation of members of this house to support a motion which I might give notice of tomorrow morning to allow the upper house Procedure Committee to come up with an arrangement to work jointly with its lower house counterpart and actually make a move forward on this particular proposal.

From here on in it is not going to be enough to simply say, 'We've rewritten the rules, and now the rules are good'. The rules were rewritten under the last Parliament in the context of both salaries and other sorts of allowances. Those allowances were nipped out with the then Labor opposition. You can go back to *Hansard* and read that particular debate. The Greens questioned those arrangements quite closely when they came before the house, and we also actually voted against one of the particular entitlements that we believe was wrongly framed, ill-considered and too open-ended, so I think this is unfinished business.

I think that a backdoor arrangement was made between Labor and Liberal members in the last Parliament to make changes. Those changes are now being scrutinised all over again in light of these recent scandals. It is not enough for the government to simply decide all by itself around the cabinet table what changes it will make. It is not enough for them to just simply go and agree that with the Liberal-National

opposition. They should put it out for the public to have a look at first and foremost, and then they should seek the support of all parties in this Parliament so that we build ourselves a foundation on which we can start to move forward.

We need to move forward and rebuild trust in institutions. Trust is the missing element in society at the moment. That is the reason that Pauline Hanson is out there in the way that she is. It is because she can sow mistrust, hatred and fear in an environment where there is no counterbalance and where there is no alternative leadership putting itself forward, saying, 'These are the standards we are going to set for ourselves. This is the way we will impose them on ourselves at arm's length'. Then we will get over a lot of this nonsense, get back to the job, stop talking about scandals, waste and corruption, misuse — the whole circus that has dragged on this week — and get back to talking about the things that the voters are actually concerned about.

Schools, hospitals, transport, livability, global warming, the environment, multiculturalism, harmony, peace — these are matters that are part of making day-to-day life in Victoria great or increasingly difficult. At the moment the voters are not hearing us.

**Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.**

## STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

### Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2016–17

**Mr MORRIS** (Western Victoria) — My statement on a report this afternoon is in relation to the budget papers. More specifically I wanted to refer to the situation that we have found in Ballarat with the Eureka Stadium precinct. What we are seeing in Ballarat is exceptionally concerning, because a very proud football club, the North Ballarat Football Club, is being placed in a very difficult position. It appears there is going to be an attempt to take a portion of the club's land and its building to ensure access for AFL games. The great concern about this is that the Labor government made a commitment to this project without ensuring that there was appropriate access to the land at Eureka Stadium to ensure that the AFL games that Labor promised in November 2014 would occur. I do note that it was a broken promise of Daniel Andrews, because he made a commitment that two Western Bulldogs games would be played in Ballarat during the election campaign.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Mr Morris, just as a matter of interest, which paper are you actually speaking on?

**Mr MORRIS** — The budget papers.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Thank you very much. We thought that may have been the case.

**Mr MORRIS** — Which indeed, Acting President, did fund the Eureka Stadium precinct. For the Eureka Stadium, as I was saying, there was a commitment by Daniel Andrews in November 2014 that two AFL games would be played this year at Eureka Stadium. This has since become a broken promise because the Western Bulldogs are now scheduled to play just one AFL game at Eureka Stadium. Indeed the certainty around this game has been thrown into doubt as a result of the inaction by this Labor government to ensure that appropriate access was secured with the North Ballarat Football Club.

What we have seen here are tactics from the government that are unfortunately not rare. These are tactics where the government attempts to just steamroll their way through and achieve the outcome that they intended to all along without any appropriate consultation or negotiation with our community. This is something that I am certainly well aware that the broader Victorian community are becoming sick and tired of. Many people that I speak to refer to Daniel Andrews as the Premier of Melbourne, not the Premier of Victoria. Recent statistics about growth in our state as reported in the *Age* newspaper today are certainly indicative of this. The Premier is focusing wholly and solely on metropolitan Melbourne to the detriment of the rest of Victoria. His commitment to so-called country bridges, which just happen to be in his own seat of Mulgrave, is certainly indicative of this fact. The great concern that the Ballarat community holds at the moment about the Eureka Stadium precinct is that the North Ballarat Football Club, which have been attempting to work with the government to ensure access to the ground, are going to be steamrolled.

Another project that has been funded through the budget is the railway precinct in Ballarat. Again, this is a significant concern for many people in Ballarat. There have been concerns about the appropriate use of that space. I note that the former government did go and do a master plan. It was an excellent master plan and one that dictated what would be an appropriate use for that site with community consultation. What we are seeing from this government now bears almost no resemblance whatsoever to the initial master plan that was done with

consultation and input from the community. What we are seeing now is the government attempting to roll out a half-baked scheme, something that would see a dramatic reduction in the number of community car parks.

We are seeing a skyrocketing number of commuters using the Ballarat train line, and it would only be a Labor government that would seek to try and reduce the number of car parking spaces from over 400 to 270 — a reduction of over 130 — for a railway precinct that is absolutely booming. Along with that we have seen the placement of buses on the historically significant Lydiard Street North to the detriment of all commuters. The master plan the previous Liberal government developed had appropriately placed the bus interchange within the railway precinct, and that is where the bus interchange should be. The Labor government needs to make sure that when it is developing such a plan it does so in a logical way. The only way to logically develop a railway precinct is to ensure that the bus interchange is within the precinct itself.

### **Auditor-General: *Managing Community Correction Orders***

**Mr ELASMAR** (Northern Metropolitan) — I wish to speak to the Victorian Auditor-General's report entitled *Managing Community Correction Orders*, tabled in February 2017. In 2014–15 the cost to manage someone on a community correction order was about \$27.55 per day or just over \$10 000 per year. Compared to a custodial prison sentence, the costs are \$360.91 per day or more than \$131 700 per year. Obviously the economics are simple. There are significant savings in applying the system of community correction orders; however, community correction orders used as an alternative to prison are also found to be more effective in deterring an offender from becoming a recidivist.

In an earlier civilised society the object of imprisonment was punishment for criminal offences and protection for the general population. Transportation to the colonies — lock them up and throw away the key — is now history. In today's modern world we seek an alternative to imprisonment. In these enlightened times rehabilitation is considered to be more beneficial to the offending individual and, in the long run, to the community. We believe in the power of reform and rehabilitation, and we want to see former offenders becoming a functioning part of our community. At the same time we must also protect our community from people who would harm us physically, emotionally and financially.

The recommendations contained in the report have been well received by Corrections Victoria and Victoria Police and are in the process of implementation. Most of the Auditor-General's recommendations are indeed sound common sense. The establishment of appropriate mechanisms to effectively monitor offenders, in a similar way to those procedures operating for prisoners on parole, should be implemented as a matter of urgency, especially for those offenders who present a heightened risk to the community. Everyone is sick to death of offenders committing offences while they are already subject to a community correction order.

Corrections Victoria and our police must and will collaborate and work together, and not only to share information. They must cooperatively develop a vigorous contingency plan, which should result in an effective reforms program. Non-compliance of corrections orders must be dealt with quickly and efficiently by the appropriate authorities.

The Andrews Labor government is committed to ensuring that the safety of our citizens is paramount. In the latest state budget the government invested \$233.4 million in the community correction system over the next four years. This includes funds to deliver most of the reforms proposed in the review, which are expected to be fully implemented by January 2019. I am grateful to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office for its professional guidance and timely report.

### **Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning: fire season preparedness**

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) — I would like to say a few words about the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning interim report on its inquiry into fire season preparedness. I am a member of the committee which has moved around the state, conducting hearings in Wodonga, Euroa and, at my request, Morwell and Bairnsdale, as well as many hearings in Melbourne.

This beautiful state of ours is one of the most fire prone parts of the world. Only last week I was speaking to a gentleman who is a helicopter pilot stationed in Traralgon at the moment. He basically covers off all Gippsland. He does six months in this area and six months in Canada. The difference between looking after the fire season in Victoria is that we have so many settlements in and around our tall timber forests and we have communities who live within those forests, so it is very important that we continue to protect and find ways of mitigating and minimising the risk of the loss of lives and property through fire.

Recently I reflected on the 34th anniversary of Ash Wednesday when 75 people were killed, 2500 homes were razed, livestock destroyed and hundreds of thousands of hectares of land was scorched. In February this year we also remembered the eighth anniversary of the Black Saturday bushfires in which 173 tragically lost their lives and 78 communities across Victoria were directly affected. In my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region we had the communities of Churchill, Bunyip, Darlimurla and Harkaway. People lost their lives, and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) risked their lives to save life and property. At the time we had thousands of CFA volunteers come on board, and with their trucks they staved off the fires to protect life and property. We also saw the State Emergency Service, Victoria Police and community organisations rally behind their communities post the fires.

The inquiry has spoken to a wide range of people and some very key witnesses, and I would like to comment on a few of them. Recently it spoke to former CFA CEO Mr Wootten, and he provided some alarming facts in his submission. In 2015 Mr Wootten dealt with the fallout of an arbitration process between the CFA and the United Firefighters Union (UFU). The UFU was seeking an ambit claim of \$2 million from the CFA to cover an arbitration issue between the UFU and the CFA. In the end it was a little under half a million dollars, with \$484 000 being paid to the UFU.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Ms Bath, can I just interrupt you there and inquire as to whether you are quoting from a public section of the report or a yet-to-be-disclosed section.

**Ms BATH** — I am quoting from my notes that I took on that section.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! That is okay. Thank you.

**Ms BATH** — I took notes during that time period. The concern I have around this is that this seems to be quite an unrealistic situation. Here we had volunteer firefighters last year providing funds from their own pockets to support Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) to support an action — a court case — against the United Firefighters Union, which was seeking to overrun the CFA, or the volunteers, through a proposed enterprise bargaining agreement. We had CFA volunteers providing funds for the VFBV to fight the UFU. We heard in terms of evidence that the UFU put through an ambit claim of \$2 million, which has gone through for a little under half a million dollars, against the CFA. That represents buckets of money that could have been better spent on volunteers.

## **Infrastructure Victoria: report 2015–16**

**Mr EIDEH** (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the Infrastructure Victoria report 2015–16. I would like to thank Jim Miller, the chair of Infrastructure Victoria, and the CEO, Michel Masson, for their preparation of the report. I would also like to thank all of those who participated in the preparation of this report.

Infrastructure Victoria as a statutory authority was established in October 2015 to address the long-term infrastructure challenges of our state and to provide independent and expert advice about Victoria's current and future infrastructure needs. The Infrastructure Victoria Act 2015 defined Infrastructure Victoria's role in three distinct areas. It was required to deliver a 30-year infrastructure strategy for Victoria, provide advice to the minister and also publish research to help find ways to get more out of our infrastructure.

Infrastructure Victoria has a direct impact upon the lives and living conditions of all Victorians. When creating its 30-year plan it consulted over 100 key stakeholders, which consisted of regional communities, public and private sectors, Victorian government departments and many more. A high level of participation from a diverse number of Victorians was an important part of the abovementioned consultation process. Over 37 000 people visited the website, and over 2400 followers registered on its combined social media accounts. The government is now preparing a response to the 30-year strategy, which will be tabled in the Parliament within 12 months of Infrastructure Victoria releasing its strategy.

Progress was made in undertaking research and providing advice on infrastructure matters, identifying priority areas for its research program, which was rolled out in the last financial year. Infrastructure Victoria commenced work and research on its approach to investigate the options for a second container port at the port of Hastings or Bay West locations. This was requested by the Special Minister of State with regard to the timing and location of a second container port to be provided by May 2017.

Infrastructure Victoria, by virtue of its public-private approach, provides expert advice and guides decision-making on Victoria's infrastructure needs and priorities. Its key roles, pursuant to the Infrastructure Victoria Act 2015, are to, as I already mentioned, prepare a 30-year infrastructure strategy, to provide advice to the Victorian government on infrastructure matters as they are in relation to the second container port and to publish research on infrastructure matters,

which, for interested parties, can be found on its website.

Infrastructure Victoria considers infrastructure needs in many different areas, including central and metropolitan Melbourne, interface councils, regional cities and rural and regional Victoria. The report outlines its broad view of infrastructure over nine key sectors, which consist of energy; water; transport of all sorts; education and training; health and human services; justice; information and communications technology; science, agriculture and environment; and cultural, civic, sporting, recreational and tourism sectors. Essentially it is comprehensive and broad-based coverage of almost every area of importance in Victoria.

Infrastructure Victoria's vision, as stated in its report, is, and I quote:

By 2046, we see a Victoria where everyone can access good jobs, education and services regardless of where they live, where communities are held together by strong bonds, where industries and businesses thrive, and where the environment is valued and protected.

Its research paper titled *All Things Considered* focused on establishing solutions for long-term infrastructure needs and had 264 formal submissions lodged and 461 online surveys completed. Twelve meetings with local government networks, four private sector round tables, six one-on-one interviews with five organisations, seven meetings with multicultural youth, and discussions with undergraduate and postgraduate students from various universities were held.

Infrastructure Victoria has demonstrated an impressive commitment to and engagement with the Victorian community. The Andrews Labor government is streamlining many state government departments and has created, where necessary, new statutory authorities to oversee critical elements of government activity. Infrastructure Victoria is part of this whole-of-government approach to infrastructure development, planning and regulation. I again thank those involved in this process and commend the report to the house.

### **Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2016–17**

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) — My contribution on reports today relates to the state budget and in particular the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning outputs. We have seen a number of announcements by government on housing affordability and related matters in recent days. We know they are

playing catch-up on precinct structure plans. After two and a bit years of snoozing by Richard Wynne, the very ponderous Minister for Planning, what we have seen is a frightened catch-up and a recognition that with Melbourne's population growing as fast as it is — 123 000 statewide in Victoria, and the overwhelming lion's share of that growth in Melbourne — there has now been a panic in government realising that they need to open up more opportunities for new properties to come forward.

At the same time the government has made some strange announcements around the removal of the off-the-plan exemption, which is going to have a significant impact on the construction sector in Melbourne in particular, and in the city and middle suburbs. There will be a very significant impact with the removal of that off-the-plan exemption that has existed for many years in Victoria and has enabled many projects to stack up in the early phases. It has been an important step in getting projects off the ground. That is now going to be stripped away by Daniel Andrews, his Treasurer and his Minister for Planning. That will have a huge effect.

Now, in relation to the decision to provide some stamp duty relief for first home buyers, there are real questions about whether this will be successful in the way the government claims it will. The objective is a very good objective. The objective of assisting people —

**Mr Dalidakis** — It is more than what you did for housing affordability.

**Mr DAVIS** — Well, in fact under our period of government with the former Minister for Planning, Mr Guy, the cost of lots of land on the edge of the city fell from \$230 000 down to under \$200 000. That was a very significant impact on home affordability. It is now back up to over \$240 000 under this government, and that is a significant hit on housing affordability.

We could talk about the taxes that are taken by this government. We have seen state taxes up by 20.7 per cent in two years, land tax up by 28 per cent this year, massive new taxes introduced despite the government's promises before the election — a tax promise that there would be no new taxes, levies or charges, including on property, and no increases beyond indexation. That is what the Premier said and that is what the Treasurer said, and they said it repeatedly. Well, I am here to tell you that they were not truthful with the Victorian people. There have been massive increases in taxes and charges and the proceeds are being squandered, and property is the first to be hit by this government for

taxes and charges. Every tax and every new charge that is put on property is in fact a disincentive for people buying, especially for first-time buyers and especially for those who are most impacted by housing affordability.

Now we see panicked reactions by government and panicked reactions by Daniel Andrews to open up more land. They should have been doing this steadily and incrementally over the last two years instead of this last-minute scurry to try and catch up. Well, it is not so easy to catch up. The big precinct structure plans take a lot of work, a lot of time and a lot of effort to get the planning right, and this government I predict will not get many of them right. The impact of the sales exemption removal — that being stripped away — will hurt the property industry here and will hurt the availability of properties coming forward. There will be less properties coming forward because of this decision. Those who bought off the plan were able to provide a financial base for the developer and for the builder to go forward, build that property and settle at the end with a clear exemption in terms of stamp duty.

The off-the-plan exemption will only be available for those who are buying a home for the first time. So what I am saying here very clearly is that this is a panicked set of announcements, and now we have got a vacancy tax put on it as well. I mean, how is this going to work? How is this vacancy tax going to work? How much will be collected? How are they going to snoop around to make sure these properties are empty? They say it is going to be by self-assessment or by a statutory declaration, but I predict Bunnings will do well when people go there to get electricity and water meters and such arrangements and switch them on and off so that they can appear to be there. I have got to say this is a panicked set of announcements by a bad planning minister and a bad government.

### **Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2016–17**

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) — I speak in relation to the budget papers on the Gatwick Hotel, which I am pleased to say appears to be finally closing. I want to note that Martin Foley, in the Legislative Assembly, has said very, very little about the Gatwick. He said a few weeks ago that it should close, but beyond that we have heard very little. I spoke with St Kilda Community Housing earlier this week, and they tell me about the work that they are doing to relocate the remaining residents in the Gatwick. They will all have a home to go to if they want it and will accept it. Some need to go and have rehab or other

medical assistance first before they do that. But this is a good thing.

In the last couple of weeks I have been contacted by a large number of residents who live close to the Gatwick, many of whom are longstanding residents, and they have expressed their feelings about what has been going on there for many years. Many express a view that it has gotten much worse in recent years, and I want to quote from a number of the emails and so on that I have received. The first thing is that most people express an understanding that in St Kilda in particular there are a number of rooming houses, there are people who are homeless and there are at times going to be issues that arise from different groups of people trying to live together in the same community. I think there is a huge amount of tolerance on that front, but what has been happening at the Gatwick is undoubtedly extreme. One person said:

We understand the need for social services like the Gatwick. We understand the complexity of the issues at hand, but residents are at a loss what to do. We can't keep avoiding local streets forever and dealing with theft on a weekly basis. We understand the Gatwick is not solely responsible for all the poor behaviour and drugs in the area; however, their tenants have had an enormous impact which is obvious for all to see.

Another person, who has lived in their street in St Kilda for 32 years, said:

I am too nervous to cross Fitzroy Street and turn the corner from Jackson Street into Fitzroy Street, which are opposite the Gatwick. I ride my bike often across the road as I feel I can get away on my bike.

I was assaulted two years ago near the corner of Fitzroy Street and Grey Street on the footpath by a permanent Gatwick resident of that time. I was terrified and still am traumatised.

As I said, many of these people are longstanding local residents. One said:

I have lived there for 11 years, and the last two years in particular have been hell due to the Gatwick Hotel. So I write to you to express my own and that of other residents concern, grief and experiences with people of the Gatwick Hotel, which has severely impacted on the peaceable comfort and safety of myself and our group (mainly women) in and out of our apartment block. Essentially I/we live in fear.

Another person said:

Over more than 10 years living in (my) street I've come across many heroin users that use our property as a place to shoot up, veg out after shooting up, sleep, masturbate, steal bicycles, money, property from our cars, plants from our gardens et cetera. I've seen people right outside my window; others have had home intruders. I'm male and fairly fit and young, but we have many female residents that have told me they are genuinely scared and upset by such intruders ...

The discussion that I have had with locals indicates a lot of really extreme behaviour. One person wrote:

After years of witnessing drug injections in front of our house, picking up needles and drug paraphernalia, soiled underwear, human faeces, it gets no less shocking. Personally, witnessing what these people do to themselves and each other is the most heartbreaking. The Gatwick is a haven for them, supporting the drug dealers and takers.

Another person wrote and told me:

I have previously been assaulted by a resident of this hotel, bailed up on a daily basis by its residents and generally living in fear whenever I shop ... The police and ambulance statistics ... are galling beyond belief but come as no surprise ... it's nothing short of a takeover of Fitzroy Street at the costly expense to business and community in general. Consequently I believe the Gatwick is now the most profitable enterprise on Fitzroy Street — an amusing statistic if it wasn't so tragic. There are daily skirmishes on the streets, and locals are forced to scatter to safety. Today I was threatened by a man because I was unable to give him a cigarette, and he told me if I did not comply then he intended to rob someone and I would have this on my conscience.

There is also a very strong theme that people believe that the Gatwick is not providing any sort of service to a very vulnerable group of people. One person said:

Apart from a roof over their heads, the Gatwick Hotel provides no help for the people that need it — i.e. mental health issues, aged, drug and alcohol addictions, criminal history et cetera. You cannot house so many people with individual problems with no support in one location and expect good things to come of it in the form of rehabilitation. This establishment is not helping the residents — in fact it is doing the opposite.

One argument that is made is that it is better than nothing to stay at the Gatwick. One person who helps run a local sporting club said that they have a problem there because many residents at the Gatwick will not stay there because of the violence and aggression and that at times they have let people in so that they can use the facilities, which they thought was the kindest thing to do rather than let people sleep outside in the cold. But they point out that while they have done that, they had concerns about it and did not think that is a sustainable way of dealing with the problem.

This is just a selection of some of the comments that I have received, and they are a testament really to the relief that is being expressed that the Gatwick will be closing. It would be good to have confirmation of when, and I look forward to being advised of that as soon as possible.

### **Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning: fire season preparedness**

**Mr RAMSAY** (Western Victoria) — My statement on reports and papers today is in relation to the interim report of the inquiry into fire season preparedness by the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning. I have been pleased to be a participating member of that committee. As I am often reminded by committee members, I do not have a right to vote, but I have a right to do everything else. I think I have been the only participating member that has actually attended most of the meetings and hearings the committee has had over the term of this inquiry.

This inquiry is important, as are the other inquiries the committee is currently conducting. This inquiry is particularly important, given that the state has faced a significant fuel load during the fire season this year. It is important that we look at where we might be able to improve the preparedness of Victoria to respond to what could be a catastrophic fire season.

The committee heard from a number of witnesses, and I thought the chamber might be interested to know those that we had to subpoena to get them to appear before the committee.

**Mr Dalidakis** — I am fascinated by everything you have to say, Mr Ramsay.

**Mr RAMSAY** — I know you are, Mr Dalidakis. Mr David Hamilton, who is president of the United Firefighters Union (UFU), had to be encouraged by subpoena to attend the hearings, as did Mr Peter Marshall, who is the national and Victorian secretary of the UFU. Ms Lucinda Nolan, former chief executive officer of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) had to be also encouraged to attend, as did Mr Joe Buffone, former chief officer, and Mr Jim Higgins, who is the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board chief executive officer. They all had interesting stories to tell in relation to the CFA, the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and the role of the UFU in the current enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) negotiations, which I will speak to very shortly and which is part of the report, Acting President. Just in case you are concerned that I am straying away from the report itself, I can assure you that is very much part of the report.

The interim report resolved to give the chamber an update on the work the committee is currently doing, but it will be tabling on 5 April a more detailed report. One of the considerations the committee included in the interim report concerns the potential impact of the CFA enterprise bargaining agreement on volunteer

firefighters. We know morale is very low in the CFA — our volunteer bushfire brigades — due to the acrimonious position that the UFU secretary has put us in by pitting the union-funded and controlled MFB and CFA career firefighters against our volunteer firefighting base. The committee worked through the potential impact of that not only on morale but also on the impact that has on the fire preparedness and response by our volunteers, particularly because of this ongoing negotiation between the CFA and the UFU in relation to the EBA.

On changes to the approach to preventive burning practices and their potential impact, I was particularly wanting to note that some of the Indigenous communities are doing very well in firestick burning, which can be conducted through the colder months, and it provides a greater yield in fuel reduction work. I think it is encouraging to see a lot of this work getting greater recognition. I certainly look forward to attending a number of onsite inspections to see how this technique from our Indigenous community is working.

On the current impact of current preventive burning practices on communities, local ecology and the size and intensity of bushfires, the possible alternatives to current preventive burning practices, as I mentioned, the coordination and management systems in place to mitigate the effect of bushfires, and whether the resources being made available to fire and other emergency services and communities is adequate to protect the Victorian community from the potential catastrophic impact of major bushfires, we have heard that there is a need for more resources in certain areas, certainly in our aircraft, where we are seeing the positioning of — —

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Mr Ramsay, your time has expired.

### **Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2016–17**

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) — I rise to speak on the budget papers 2016–17. In particular I want to talk about the provision of funding for health in Greater Shepparton. I would like to start out with a message that I got from a constituent last night. It says:

Just thought I'd like to share with you an incident that occurred with my neighbour tonight that illustrates just how well our after-hours health care initiatives are —

in shouty capitals —

not working. He had a little accident in his shed, and he burnt his hand quite badly with a gas flame. After over an hour of cold water treatment himself, he called on me for some

advice. I assessed his hand and decided he should go to the hospital for some professional treatment as it was around about a third of his hand burnt, blistering and so painful he could not remove it from the water. So I drove him to emergency at 11.30 p.m.

Well, the waiting room was full, and my friend was first asked why his hand was in a bucket and then told to have a seat and he would be seen in due course. Well, upon looking at the number of people waiting and the fact that two ambulances had just pulled in, he decided he couldn't sit there all night, so he asked me to take him back home and he would sit with his hand in a bucket all night.

I then suggested that we call the National Home Doctor Service to come and assess him. We did this, only to be told the services for this area had exceeded their maximum number of call-outs and nobody could attend. They referred us to Nurse on Call, whom we called and advised us to go to emergency.

We tried to utilise all options to avoid clogging the system, but it was already so clogged that it made no difference and still couldn't get treatment unless he was prepared to wait all night in the ED.

This is what we put up with in Shepparton. We do not have an adequate health service, and that highlights the need for more investment in the emergency department in Shepparton. Our emergency department is operating at capacity and the doctors and nurses and the administrators are doing a brilliant job. There has been a lot of investment in the emergency department locally through donations to improve the waiting area and to improve some of the efficiencies within the emergency department, but that is not enough.

The government has committed to stage 1 of the redevelopment of our hospital, and we welcome that. But that will not be finished until 2020, and they did not do anything to provide for a service that is overworked and operating at capacity at the current time. They had to be dragged kicking and screaming, and they have finally put in \$2 million for some emergency department improvements, but this will not be enough. We need to see more invested in our hospital in the interim to make sure that services can be provided to people before stage 1 of the hospital is completed in 2020. Of course the government still needs to commit to stage 2 of the redevelopment of our hospital, which includes allied health, outpatients, mental health, a helipad and more.

The helipad at Goulburn Valley Health has not operated for many years now and it is a major trauma hospital. It is a major regional hospital, and there should be helipad access at the hospital so that we can move patients who need to be moved very quickly straight out of the hospital and straight into the major emergency hospitals in Melbourne.

Oncology is another area that will need some attention. We do have a rather new oncology centre that was made possible through a very generous donation from the Copulos family and through some other government money from when we were in government, but we are in desperate need of radiotherapy services in Shepparton. To access radiotherapy, people from Shepparton need to go to Wodonga, to Bendigo or down to Melbourne. Several years ago my father was having radiotherapy and we had to bring him to Melbourne, and I know how horrendously painful the trip was for him. He had cancer in his bones, and those trips down here I think actually shortened his life span.

I want to see this service provided in Greater Shepparton so that other families do not go through the trauma that our family went through and so that people are able to access good health services in their home town with their family around them, where they will recover much more quickly than they would if they had to travel for services. It is time for this government to get on with the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health and commit to stage 2 and a radiotherapy service for the residents of Greater Shepparton.

### **Ombudsman: youth justice facilities**

**Ms CROZIER** (Southern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to be able to rise this evening and speak to the Victorian Ombudsman's *Report on Youth Justice Facilities at the Grevillea Unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville: February 2017*. I have spoken on this particular report in the past, and I wanted to make a few more comments in relation to some of the issues that are raised in this report but which also have been quite evident in the community in relation to the government's decision about a youth justice facility at Werribee.

Page 9 of the report goes into some detail about the number of youth justice facilities, how much is spent each year on youth justice detention services and how many beds are in the system at the moment. Of course we know that this government has been plagued by very serious incidents and a litany of disasters in the youth justice system, with dozens of riots that have caused so much damage and destruction, and that really they had no choice but to gazette the Grevillea unit at Barwon Prison and move offenders out of the Parkville youth justice centre in November, when those offenders trashed 60 beds and caused absolute chaos and mayhem in that facility. Then of course in Malmsbury they went on to do the same again, and the mass escape in January really highlighted how inadequate the government's response has been in managing this whole situation.

What the government has done in a panic in relation to this situation is it has gone out and just foisted onto the community a facility in Werribee South. This has been of great consternation to the local community, who had absolutely no idea this was going to occur. There was no consultation; there was just an announcement by this very arrogant Andrews government, and of course mayhem has broken loose, with the community still asking many questions about how this decision came about, what the reasoning was for it and what was in the business case.

They are still asking, 'What is in the business case? Why have you not released the reason your decision was made to build a youth justice facility in Werribee, which is the Treasurer's electorate?' He is actually the local member but lives in Williamstown, so he does not live in the Werribee community. The local community are very concerned about this, but it does not really matter to the Treasurer, because he is miles away. He will not be anywhere near it because he is down in Williamstown on the beach, just like a few others that have been — —

**Mr Ramsay** — Like Ocean Grove.

**Ms CROZIER** — Like Ocean Grove, Mr Ramsay. Like the former Deputy Speaker, who has been in Ocean Grove, Mordialloc and goodness knows where else.

**Mr Dalidakis** — I used to have a place in Ocean Grove.

**Ms CROZIER** — So do I. My family lives there, so I know it extremely well. But I want to get back to what I was talking about, which is a very concerning issue for the local community of Werribee, who are still asking many questions. Even Mr Pallas on Monday could not say convincingly that this decision was going to be upheld or going to be continued with. He was all over the place on ABC radio, which reported that the Treasurer could not answer, yes or no, if the government would change the location of the proposed youth detention centre from its 'preferred' location. This has come out on the Facebook page Speak Out! Wyndham's Voice, which has outlined concerns about this. This is a community group that has been, quite frankly, running a campaign against the government on this decision that was foisted upon them.

There are so many questions, and of course we saw the Treasurer run down there with Minister Mikakos a few weeks later to speak to selected members of the community, selected members of the council and other selected stakeholders to try to calm down the situation.

However, there are still so many questions to be answered. There are questions the community want answered. They were raised in this meeting actually — questions were raised regarding the jobs being promised as a result of the development and regarding the small buffer zone between the facility and existing and future homes in Werribee South and Point Cook, with Point Cook West and Wattle Grove developments being planned for sites 250 metres away from the facility.

All of these matters have not been taken into consideration by the government. The government has been completely arrogant in their decision. They are trying to run backwards on it now — —

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

### **Auditor-General: *Managing Community Correction Orders***

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am pleased to rise and make a brief contribution on the Auditor-General's report of February 2017, *Managing Community Correction Orders*. I must say that it has been quite interesting to note that in the report, which was released on 8 February, the Auditor-General found that the community was at greater risk under the Andrews government. The reality is that the Auditor-General reported at that time that the number of high-risk offenders out in the community on community correction orders (CCOs) had dramatically increased from — —

**Mr Dalidakis** — Is Damien Mantach on a correction order?

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — No, he would not be, and you know that. The number dramatically increased from 128 in 2014 to a staggering 3180 in 2016.

**Ms Shing** interjected.

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — Ms Shing, I know you are staggered by those numbers, and I appreciate the interjection.

**Ms Shing** — I am staggered by the gravitas of your contribution, Mr Dalla-Riva.

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — I appreciate the interjection and note your concerns in that interjection about the fact that the Auditor-General's report also found — I noted this on page 23 as I reviewed the report — and I quote:

Current practices for managing offenders are not effective due to the overwhelming number of offenders and the lack of trained staff.

We all know it is important that we have trained staff. It would be very difficult here if we did not have our trained staff assisting us in this important chamber in this important place. I always say that over the period that I have been here I have always respected the people that we have here known as red coats, and in fact I have been known to wear one on occasion, and I have been seen to wear one.

**Mr Dalidakis** interjected.

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — I will thank them by name on my final day. But they are all equally important — so thank you for raising that, Mr Dalidakis — as are the drivers. I note I have a drivers tie on today in acknowledgement of the drivers. You did not notice it, Mr Dalidakis. You are clearly not focused on what we are doing.

The other interesting thing that I might just point out is that the community correction orders are the second lowest in terms of completion. That is a very significant thing. Victoria's rate of offenders completing their CCOs is the second lowest of all Australian jurisdictions. It is amazing to think that this serious report shows that has been the outcome of this government. The report stands, as it should, as an indictment of those opposite, and unfortunately it does not seem to be getting better. I am looking forward to the time when the shadow Minister for Corrections, Mr Ed O'Donohue, becomes the corrections minister, because he will fix it. He will deal with it and resolve the problems.

**Mr Dalidakis** — Just like he did in the last term of the coalition government.

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — Just like he did in the last term of our government — correct. Thank you for that interjection and that acknowledgement.

### **Ombudsman: youth justice facilities**

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — I will now speak on the Ombudsman's *Report on Youth Justice Facilities at the Grevillea Unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville: February 2017*. Some may say I am raising this because it gives me a second speaking note, but that is not the reason. It is the importance of the subject of this particular report. Again, this report was released in February 2017.

**Ms Shing** interjected.

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — The interesting point, Ms Shing, as your interjection again has picked up — —

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Mr Dalla-Riva, through the Chair, please.

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — Sorry, Acting President, but the interjections from Ms Shing are just overwhelming.

**Mr Dalidakis** — What about mine?

**Mr DALLA-RIVA** — Not so much, Minister. The reality is that the riots at the Parkville youth justice centre in November 2016 and the government's subsequent establishment of the youth justice system have failed. There has constantly been fail upon fail by those opposite. It is disappointing because youth are important. They are important, and we need to ensure that we deal with their problems, get them off the streets and get them back into meaningful careers and jobs, and maybe there will even be a politician at some point down the track.

### **Auditor-General: *Managing Community Correction Orders***

**Ms PENNICUIK** (Southern Metropolitan) — I also would like to speak on the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report *Managing Community Correction Orders*, released last month. This is a very timely report on a vital part of the corrections system. I do have a different take on the report from that of the previous speaker, Mr Dalla-Riva. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office report sets out by saying:

A community correction order (CCO) is a sentence imposed by a court —

as an alternative to imprisonment —

that allows offenders to complete their sentences in a community setting. Offenders on CCOs may have to comply with specific conditions imposed by the courts, such as ... drug or alcohol treatment, and significant restrictions such as curfews and judicial monitoring.

People on CCOs have the opportunity to maintain and improve their social and economic support networks in a community setting while they make amends for their offences and undergo any court-ordered rehabilitation. Offenders who receive CCOs also tend to have much lower rates of reoffending. This is in part expected, as many of those on CCOs are from a relatively low-risk cohort.

Data from Corrections Victoria (CV), which is part of the Department of Justice and Regulation and is responsible for directing, managing and operating the

correctional system, reports that in 2014–15 almost 25 per cent of offenders who have been on CCOs returned to corrective services, which compares favourably to prisoners, 53.7 per cent of whom returned to prison or community corrections. Also the cost to manage someone on a CCO was \$27.55 per day, or just over \$10 000 per year, which is much lower than the \$360.91 per day, or more than \$131 700 per year, that it costs to manage a person in prison.

The previous speaker, Mr Dalla-Riva, talked about the increase in the number of CCOs. This report says that since 2012 there have been a number of changes to legislation and sentencing practices, which I have mentioned before, that have led to this increase in CCOs, such as the abolition of suspended sentences. That was done by the previous government, and it has led to a rise in the use of CCOs by the courts as an alternative, so you would expect a rise in the number of CCOs. I call on the current government to reintroduce suspended sentences because they have an important role to play in the justice, youth and corrections system.

The maximum period of imprisonment was extended from three months to two years when combined with a CCO, but that has recently been reduced to one year. Also CCOs have become a sentencing option for more serious crimes, although, again, recent changes have limited their use for very serious crimes. All these changes collectively have triggered an increase in the number of offenders on CCOs, almost doubling from 5871 in 2013 to 11 730 in 2016. These things are all expected.

There is not enough time in the 5 minutes that I have to speak about the large number of findings that the Auditor-General has made, but they address things like more high-risk offenders, recruitment and training, information management systems, contingency planning, risk assessment of offenders, support programs and services, managing breaches of CCOs, better practice in managing offenders, the monitoring and reporting framework, and evaluation activities. Suffice it to say there is an increasing number of people on CCOs, but there are not enough corrections staff to supervise those on CCOs properly. The workload is very large and the number of offenders that staff have to supervise is still too high, even though the report points to more resources having been put in by the government and more staff having been recruited. But in terms of the staff, CV has been addressing historical understaffing in this area, exacerbated by the recent growth in case loads, and has recorded a high staff turnover for more than a decade, not just under this government but under previous governments.

There is not a lot of time to cover this report. It is a very good report, and I do commend it to the Parliament. Suffice it to say that it does report on a review that has been conducted by CV into CCOs and that certainly CV is working to address these issues but still has quite a lot of challenges to meet in that regard.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Thank you, Ms Pennicuik. Your time has expired.

## E-PETITIONS

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I move:

That the proposed standing order recommended by the Procedure Committee in its *E-Petitions* report, November 2016, be adopted to come into effect upon an e-petition system going live on the Legislative Council website.

This is a journey we have been on for a little while, and it was a motion on a general business day initiated by Ms Patten that I think caused us all to try to be a little more modern. Our lives in every possible respect are increasingly enabled by new technologies and innovation, and of course the advent of the internet has been transformative and will continue to be transformative for our world in so many different ways. I am sort of grateful that I am old enough to remember not having had it. I look at younger people, not that much younger, who look on in a state of bemusement about how that could possibly be the case — how could you possibly be so old that you can remember before the internet?

We walk around with the internet on our phones in our pockets. It is an ever present part of life, and it is transforming the economy at a really rapid rate in all sorts of different ways. So too in the application of our democracy is there a whole lot of change that comes about as a result of new technology. It is not uncommon in debates in this place for there to be reference to digital news and to reports of events on social media. There have been well-documented occasions around the world where people being able to connect through online communications has been completely transformative in some communities. So whether it is the way in which our constituents interact with us or the way in which we interact with one another and organisations that we deal with in our daily lives, technology is very much a part of our day-to-day existence now.

Ms Patten caused us all to reflect on the Parliament's petition system. The White House, I think for many years, has had an e-petition system. In fact they have a rule where a certain number of petitioners actually

triggers a formal response, which has been no doubt challenging for organisations like NASA on occasion when the Jedi enthusiasts have bombed the online petition site. It is really important that people can communicate with members of Parliament in lots of different ways. There is no substitute for knocking on a door or standing at a street stall and making yourself available to people, but increasingly people express their political aspirations or their policy aspirations through online channels, whether it is social media campaigns or petitions.

Organisations like GetUp! have played a really big part, and their focus is much more on the politics and the issues of the day being considered by the Australian government. An organisation like that has the ability to harness and capture the voices of hundreds of thousands of people in a very short period of time — in fact millions of people. The thing with issues is that the level of interest is variable, but I think any measure we can take to make democracy more accessible for people can only be a good thing.

The Procedure Committee has taken this idea away and had a look at it. We have had a number of meetings and a number of discussions about how this would apply, and I think it is fair to say that where we have come to today and what we are proposing in the changes to the standing orders is a pretty modest change really. It is an introduction, and we have talked about replicating an online petition system that is very similar to the one that we all know well, and then to perhaps look at this issue again in 12 months to see whether there needs to be further evolution. I am sure the people in the Legislative Assembly will watch with great interest to see the Legislative Council take this advance, and perhaps it will cause some of them to reflect on how they might also avail themselves of this new mechanism.

I think it has been a really interesting discussion for us and an interesting project. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the many people in the Parliament's IT team who have been involved in this project. This has been breaking new ground. Most of us do not think about how the systems that support our work actually work, but we are all indebted to our IT team each and every day. They have done some terrific work on this project, and we thank them for it.

**Ms Shing** — Now say it in binary code.

**Ms PULFORD** — I cannot do that, but there would be a lot of zeros and ones, Ms Shing. I do know that someone like Tim Swanson from the IT team, who has chosen to observe this debate in the house, and perhaps

other people at IT from their desks would be able to perhaps translate this into binary code for us. I am not going to embarrass myself by trying. I am advised by the clerks that we will be in a position to go live with this next week, and so we look forward to greater opportunities for people to participate in the issues that we all care about, that we all think about, that we debate in this place and that we determine on behalf of all the Victorian community.

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to speak to the motion today regarding the adoption of the standing orders recommended by the Procedure Committee once the e-petition system goes live on the Legislative Council website. I have to say essentially all the points that I wanted to make have been made by Ms Pulford, and I am very tempted to say ‘Ditto’, but there are a couple of small points I would like to put on the record.

The first concerns the work that was done to try to replicate the existing paper-based system in a way that was electronic. I think we made very good steps through I have got to say a very constructive discussion process among the Procedure Committee about how that would be achieved, and there was some great work done by the Clerk and his team in relation to proposals and then negotiation about how that could be enhanced and extended, which is where we have ended up today. Also I think it is a very good idea that the practice note sits alongside to advise how that can work effectively and to be information for the community.

So we have essentially a system that replicates what we do currently on paper. It would certainly be something if the Legislative Assembly was considering such an approach as well — they may wish to pick up and replicate the system that has been recommended by the Council. Obviously we will be trialling how this works, but ultimately it would be a very good thing for the entire Parliament to adopt, and I am very pleased the Council has taken the initiative on the motion of Ms Patten to progress something which really in this day and age should happen automatically. Unusually, while some parliaments have progressed, others have only come to this recently, as have we. Even the commonwealth Parliament, among others, have done this within the last 12 to 18 months, so it is an issue that I am pleased we are able to progress.

We all receive petition alerts through things like change.org all the time, so I think what we are seeing is the community well progressed on these issues and the Parliament, I am pleased to say, catching up with that. What is now happening is the community will have a very effective mechanism through the Parliament’s

website to come in and generate an e-petition and utilise that in a way that not just sends a message about what is important but enables it to be tabled in this Parliament and be considered by this Parliament in the same way we do with the paper-based process. I think it is a very good addition to the suite of services and opportunities to engage with the democratic process and for us to get input from our constituents from across Victoria, especially younger people who wish to engage in this way and who, as Ms Pulford said, cannot imagine a time before doing things online. That provision is now made.

I too want to thank Tim Swanson and the IT team for the work that has been done. I think when members see the e-petitions site they will see that it is user friendly and accessible and that, importantly, the public will be able to engage with it in a very straightforward and easy way — it is great work by the team in IT. With those few words I do want to thank Andrew Young, Anne Sargent and the team for their work supporting the Procedure Committee and in particular this e-petitions approach.

**Ms PATTEN** (Northern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to rise to speak to this motion and I am very pleased that e-petitions will become a reality in the Victorian Legislative Council — and hopefully in the Victorian Legislative Assembly in the not-too-distant future. I have to note that the motion that I put on the notice paper last year was almost a replica of a 2009 Legislative Assembly motion after a Legislative Assembly committee had strongly recommended e-petitions, so it is certainly something that this Parliament has been grappling with, possibly somewhat unnecessarily, for many years, but in 2017 it is wonderful.

As Ms Pulford and Ms Wooldridge said, so many of our constituents expect to communicate with us electronically. They expect to be able to communicate with us via email, via social media and generally online. I was set in motion on this when I suggested to a young constituent that they start a petition. I started to explain the petition process, and they were just looking at me blankly. I said, ‘Yes, it’s done on a piece of paper’, and I almost felt like they did not know what a piece of paper was. The whole notion of a paper petition was just so foreign to them; they really had only known online petitions, so I think it is great to be responding to that.

I have no doubt that the papers office will be very pleased with the introduction of e-petitions and the work that that will save them. I have had the privilege

of looking at the base of it and at the good Mr Swanson's work. I think it is very accessible — —

**Ms Shing** — Is there a bad Mr Swanson?

**Ms PATTEN** — I do not think there is a bad Mr Swanson; I think there is only a good Mr Swanson. He is very good at this, and not only is it very accessible, it is also shareable, which no doubt our constituents will enjoy. I think it is time to then think about where we go next with our petitions and how we respond to petitions, because at the moment the petitions system is very one way: people send a petition in, we receive it, end of story. Possibly it is not to go down the American path — I think they are building the death star over there, are they, due to a petition?

**Ms Shing** — And a very big wall.

**Ms PATTEN** — And a very big wall — I am not sure that was a petition, I think that was just a president.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! Ms Shing, we are attempting to get along, and it would be very helpful if you would restrain yourself. Ms Patten, it would also be very helpful if you directed your comments through the Chair.

**Ms Lovell** interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn)** — Order! And Ms Lovell, it would also be very helpful if you kept your own counsel. Thank you very much.

**Ms PATTEN** — Thank you, Acting President; duly taken note of. I am pleased to see e-petitions become a reality, I look forward to seeing the community interact with this and I look forward to seeing the further evolutions of e-petitions in this house.

**Ms PENNICUIK** (Southern Metropolitan) — I would like to speak briefly on the motion that the proposed standing order recommended by the Procedure Committee in its *E-Petitions* report that was tabled last November be adopted to come into effect upon an e-petition system going live on the Legislative Council website. I think it is a great leap forward for this chamber, having been here for a while. I acknowledge Ms Patten for bringing the motion to the house that the Procedure Committee look at this issue. As she said, it had been looked at by the Standing Orders Committee of the Assembly quite a long time ago — eight years ago — so it has been a long time in arriving.

I was listening to Ms Patten talk about young people looking bemused when she was talking about paper

petitions, but I think there probably will still be some paper petitions because they are very good things to have on stalls et cetera, so perhaps the day of paper petitions is not completely over. We will probably never again see anything like the Women's Petition — the giant, massive Women's Petition — immortalised in a scroll and a replica across the road from Parliament House.

In the debate on this motion many of us spoke about the existing arrangements in other parliaments, such as in the United States where if there are a certain number of petitioners, it triggers a response from the White House, which is very interesting. There are various arrangements in Parliaments and more and more Parliaments are taking up e-petitions. I do not know that it is necessarily the end of the story when a petition is tabled, as Ms Patten said, because on many occasions when petitions have been tabled in the Parliament there have been motions moved to take note of them. I have done that a lot myself, and I think on every single occasion I took the opportunity to say, 'Wouldn't it be good if we had e-petitions?'. It is great that we are getting there.

I would like to thank Andrew Young, Anne Sargent, Vivienne Bannan and other members of the Clerk's team for the work they have put into this. I would also like to thank Tim Swanson and the IT team, who have done an awful lot of work to bring this into being. I am sure they have enjoyed it because it is part of their remit to innovate IT in the Parliament. I am sure that would have been a great project to be working on. Early on they went to the trouble of showing the Procedure Committee a prototype of how it would work and of getting some feedback from us including, as Ms Wooldridge was saying, trying to replicate the current paper system electronically. In the last couple of weeks they came to meetings organised by the Clerk's office and the IT staff to run us through what it is going to look like.

I think everyone will be really excited when it is up and going. It is great that the Legislative Council is leading the Legislative Assembly in this regard, but I really do hope the Assembly catch up with us pretty soon. It is a great step forward.

**Motion agreed to.**

## ADJOURNMENT

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

### Shepparton freight airport

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Ports. It concerns the development of a new freight airport that would be based in Greater Shepparton and would service northern Victoria. My request of the minister is that the government establish an inland freight airport in Greater Shepparton. In September 2015 I spoke in this place on the idea of establishing an inland airfreight port in Greater Shepparton. At the time I had just been in discussion with our local council and the Committee for Greater Shepparton, and we had identified that such a port could be of significant benefit to the region. I followed up the meeting by calling on the government to provide the support and funding necessary to conduct a feasibility study into this.

A recent media report in the *Herald Sun* of 24 February stated that the state government is in early discussions in relation to establishing a new freight airport in northern Victoria. The report also stated that there are several provincial airports being scoped for rapid expansion to create Victoria's third large airport. Greater Shepparton would be the ideal choice. Not only is the City of Greater Shepparton currently considering a new greenfield site for the Shepparton airport but it is the location of Victoria's premier food bowl for fresh produce. At least 25 per cent of Victoria's export produce comes from the Goulburn Valley, and an inland airfreight port could service a range of businesses located within an approximate 300-kilometre radius of Shepparton.

An airfreight port in Greater Shepparton would allow the export of product directly from the growing region into Asia and would be of particular benefit to our fresh produce exporters. With Asia's consumer class expected to grow from just over 500 million today to around 3.5 billion by 2030, the demand for fresh produce will increase and the Goulburn Valley food bowl is well placed to be a major supplier into these growing markets. A new airfreight port would not be in direct competition with the existing shipping container port, so it should not breach any conditions around the sale of the port of Melbourne. Rather, an inland airfreight port would complement the current container shipping port to establish Victoria as a major supplier of fresh produce into the Asian market.

Now is the time for innovative and progressive commitment from the government to realise the potential and numerous benefits in decentralising produce and other exports from the metropolitan region. This is a very solid idea, and the government owes Greater Shepparton and regional Victoria its strong consideration and any appropriate support. My request of the minister is that the government establishes an inland freight airport in Greater Shepparton.

### Federation Training

**Ms SHING** (Eastern Victoria) — The matter I wish to raise this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Training and Skills, Ms Tierney. It relates to Federation Training and TAFE in Gippsland. This is an enterprise which has operated across some 10 or 11 campuses throughout Gippsland and which offers a variety of courses and training upon which many Gippslanders have built successful working lives, careers and qualifications, whether as standalone training or as part of a pathway to a desired course, diploma or other qualification.

I ask that the minister come to Gippsland to tour the campuses and meet with Federation Training to discuss the challenges it has faced in recent times around funding, around course offerings and around the way to best engage with students and industry to develop courses and qualifications that match the need for growth in the area and that are partnered very strongly with the sectors and the industries, such as food and fibre, advanced manufacturing, aged care, health care and innovative technology.

We see in the Latrobe Valley in particular that there has been a significant investment not only as part of the Treasurer's advance at the beginning of 2015 to provide a support network and team for students to access support to complete and undertake studies but also around the assets that include the Bubble and shopfronts through Warragul, Morwell and Sale. In addition to this, however, there has been a review of the TAFE system, and we have seen that there is further work to do. In making sure that we tailor the solutions and options to meet community needs, to meet student needs and to meet industry needs, I would ask that the minister come to Gippsland, attend meetings with Federation Training and also tour the various facilities to see what it is they need to make the most of their potential, and again to make sure that we are investing in TAFE as we have in every other component of the education system here in Victoria.

We have seen a lot of gains. We have seen a lot of repair. We have seen an awful lot of engagement to fix the problems that beset education and training when \$1.2 billion was ripped away from the system. Now it is about how we invest for the longer term, not just in primary and secondary schools but through TAFEs and through partnering with tech schools and a high-tech innovation precinct so that we make the very most of opportunities for people who live in Gippsland, people who want to make their lives there and people who want to ensure there are opportunities for their children.

### Deep Creek boat ramp

**Mr O'SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the action I seek is that the minister allow some park rangers from Parks Victoria to accompany me and the Leader of The Nationals in the other place, Peter Walsh, to the Lower Moira boat ramp up near Echuca to attempt to work through a solution to the current impasse in relation to a localised boat ramp on Deep Creek at that location.

I visited this location with Peter Walsh last week. It is between Echuca and Barmah. If you drive about half an hour out of Echuca down a few gravel roads, you come across a little enclave at the confluence of Deep Creek and the Murray River. There are probably about 15 or 20 shacks there, some for permanent residents and some for others who have some weekenders. The situation is that there is a little boat ramp there that has had some concrete laid down so boats can be put in. It has probably been in that location for quite a while. It is not the flashiest boat ramp around, but it is serviceable for a little tinnie boat if you want to get it into the river to be able to go fishing.

The situation is that the foreshore along Deep Creek is Crown land, but then a bit further back it turns into private land. Previously there was a gate there, and locals could go through that gate down to the foreshore to launch their boats and go fishing. The situation now is that the gate tends to get locked, and therefore the locals are denied the ability to access the boat ramp and put their boats in.

Essentially we are looking to see if we can work towards a sensible outcome to this little issue that seems to be going nowhere. We tried to get the park rangers to come and have a look at this with us last week, but they were not permitted to meet with us at that time for a whole range of reasons. I understand there were some processes that they needed to go through to be allowed to do that, and we could not get

that organised in time. So I am hoping that the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change might be able to allow those park rangers to come and meet with me, Peter Walsh and some of the concerned local residents to work through what really should be a fairly simple matter that enables those local residents to be able to put their boats in the water and go fishing.

### Gender equality

**Mr ELASMAR** (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Sport, the Honourable John Eren. I was pleased to hear this morning the Minister for Sport along with the Minister for Women announce grants to promote gender equality in sporting clubs. I hope that clubs in my region will benefit from this funding announcement. The action I seek from the minister is that he join me to promote this initiative among sporting clubs in Northern Metropolitan Region.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! What an outstanding contribution that was. Mr Finn, see if you can match it.

### Sunbury Road duplication

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I will try, President, but I am not sure that I will succeed. My adjournment this evening is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I have expressed my very deep concern for some years now about the state of congestion on the Melbourne–Sunbury road, and it is getting worse almost on a daily basis. My further great concern is that the government is not actually interested in doing anything about it, because whilst we have had a few blokes with theodolites having a look around the road, there have been no announcements from the government and there have been no noises coming from the government that this is something that they would be interested in. In fact it may well be the case that the minister may well not believe me when I say that we need this road duplicated and we need it duplicated now. As part of this duplication we also need the Bulla bypass built — —

**Ms Shing** — Try saying that after a couple of drinks.

**Mr FINN** — Saying that after a couple of drinks — yes, that is a challenge. We need the Bulla bypass built as part of the duplication of the Melbourne–Sunbury road. At the moment during peak hour in the morning it is often bumper to bumper from Melbourne Airport right back to the other side of the hill and quite often almost to Sunbury. In the evening a similar situation

happens, except it is going the other way. It is a major problem.

In case the minister does not believe me, I am tonight inviting him out to join me to see just how bad the traffic is on Sunbury Road. If the minister were to join me at the afternoon peak hour, I would be very happy to take him to the Black Horse in Bulla and buy him a refreshing ale, but if it happens in the morning, he will have to work that out himself.

This is something that needs to be urgently addressed. I am asking the minister to join me at his earliest convenience to see for himself just how bad the congestion is on the Melbourne–Sunbury road.

### **Ballarat rail line incident**

**Mr MORRIS** (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and it relates to an incident that occurred on the Ballarat train service on 1 March this year. What happened was that a train service bound for the city stopped mid-track near Deer Park, and the passengers on board were stuck without air conditioning after it went out. There were quite a few distressed passengers at that point in time. At that point I believe a couple of passengers saw fit to break open the doors on the train to allow those passengers on the train who were becoming quite distressed to get out of the very hot train and onto the platform. This was a circumstance that was certainly not a pleasant experience for many of those passengers. I think those passengers were very pleased that the passengers who broke open the door took the action they took.

The action I seek is an assurance from the minister that no adverse action will be taken against those passengers who saw fit to break open the door to allow the other passengers out onto the platform. I think it was a perfectly appropriate action to take. I think these passengers deserve the assurance of the minister that no action will be taken against them for their actions in relieving the other passengers from the train.

### **Housing affordability**

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) — My matter for the adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Planning, and it relates to a number of announcements that the government has made in recent days regarding its various housing strategy components. Housing affordability is a very important objective. I strongly support making houses more affordable and ensuring that families are able to buy houses at a reasonable price. With this government's approach, taxes have

been jacked up month after month. There has been a 20.7 per cent increase in state tax in two years, massive new taxes on land and huge impacts thereby on housing affordability. The government has also made announcements about vacancy taxes on residential property, and the administration of that is going to be a very interesting nightmare for it to implement. There is also a stamp duty exemption on off-the-plan sales which has been stripped out. This will make it harder to sell units and harder to get pre-sales and start construction.

**Ms Shing** — Easier for regional homebuyers.

**Mr DAVIS** — Well, it will not do anything for regional homebuyers. It will actually affect mainly metropolitan Melbourne, where the stamp duty exemption has longstanding support from the industry to enable larger projects to get up. The government is now stripping that out and will heavily restrict who can access any stamp duty exemption in that way. But there is modelling, I am informed, being done by SGS Economics and Planning and Cadence Economics. There are two lots of modelling being done by the government on a number of aspects around its housing packages.

What I am seeking from the minister today is that he release that modelling for public examination. The underpinnings of the government's steps on housing in this way need to be publicly debated. A number of the impacts, including the removal of stamp duty on houses up to \$650 000 and a sliding scale of removal beyond that, have been pointed to by people like Saul Eslake as being ineffective, and others have pointed to the fact that the price of houses in those regions may well surge upwards. So the point here is that the government's modelling needs to be in the public domain, and the action I am seeking from the Minister for Planning today is for him to release the modelling done by SGS and Cadence for public examination.

### **Responses**

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) — I have seven adjournment matters raised by members this evening, and I will seek responses from the relevant ministers. Ms Lovell raised a matter for the attention of Minister Donnellan, Ms Shing raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Training and Skills, Mr O'Sullivan raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Mr Elasmara raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Sport, Mr Finn raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Mr Morris raised a matter for the attention of the

Minister for Public Transport and Mr Davis raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Planning.

I have two written responses to adjournment debate matters. One is from Ms Symes on 7 February and one from Ms Dunn on 22 February.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr)** —  
Order! The house stands adjourned.

**House adjourned 6.33 p.m.**

