

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 21 February 2018

(Extract from book 2)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

Procedure Committee — The President, Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Davis, Mr Jennings, Ms Pennicuik, Ms Pulford, Ms Tierney and Ms Wooldridge.

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Mr Bourman, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

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

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

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

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

Joint committees

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

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

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

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

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

President:

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	AC	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	RV
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred ⁷	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Truong, Ms Huong ¹²	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 2018

¹¹ Appointed 18 October 2017

¹² Appointed 21 February 2018

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

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Wednesday, 21 February 2018

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

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, JOBS, TRANSPORT AND
RESOURCES**

**Melbourne Exhibition Centre expansion
project**

**Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State), by leave,
presented project summary.**

Laid on table.

**ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE**

Victorian oversight agencies 2016–17

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) presented report.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (09:36) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In doing so, I would just like to make some remarks in relation to the report from the Accountability and Oversight Committee. This report examines the three agencies that the committee has oversight responsibility for: the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner, the Victorian Ombudsman and the Victorian Inspectorate (VI). The report recommends greater powers for the Victorian information commissioner to require compliance by government agencies on freedom of information requests and makes five recommendations as part of the committee's legislative reporting requirement of reviewing the annual reports for the year 2016–17.

The recommendations to the Victorian government are that the Victorian government reviews the current requirement that complaints submitted to the freedom of information commissioner must be made in writing; that the information commissioner provides data in its annual reports on the time frames of complaint resolution; that the Freedom of Information Act 1982 be amended to provide the information commissioner with the power to compel compliance by agencies in relation to review decisions; that the Victorian government reviews the appropriateness of the

Victorian Ombudsman's target measure of 95 per cent of complaints being resolved within 30 days; and that the Victorian government clarifies the monitoring and oversight of the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner in relation to the Accountability and Oversight Committee and the Victorian Inspectorate's similar responsibilities.

The Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner began operating in September 2017 with Sven Bluemmel appointed the inaugural information commissioner in the same month. At the Victorian Inspectorate Eamonn Moran was appointed to the role of Inspector from January 2018, replacing the inaugural Inspector, Robin Brett, at the end of his five-year term. I would like to take the opportunity to welcome Mr Bluemmel and Mr Moran to their respective roles and also to thank Mr Brett for his work in the role as the VI and for the assistance that he provided to the committee.

In terms of performance in 2016–17, the Ombudsman received 40 642 contacts to the office, 18 149 of which were redirected through the website or phone service to a more appropriate authority; completed 4614 formal inquiries, 25 of which were own motion; completed 29 formal investigations, two of which were own motion; delivered 39 presentations to students, community groups and state and local government organisations; tabled 10 reports in Parliament; and contributed to parliamentary and government reviews and inquiries.

For the then FOI commissioner, the office's achievements in 2016–17 were: finalised the highest number of review decisions, totalling 456, and resolved the highest number of complaints to date, and that was 529; responded to 8090 inquiries by phone and email; processed 90 per cent of FOI applications within the statutory time frame of 45 days; received notification from agencies that full access was granted to applicants in 65.6 per cent of cases; noted FOI appeals to VCAT increased from 72 in 2015–16 to 91 in 2016–17; increased education and training activities to 42 in 2016–17, up from 27 in 2015–16; exceeded the quantity target of 550 completed reviews and complaints — 985 reviews and complaints were completed; recorded an increase in the number of FOI review decisions carried over from the previous year, with a total of 338 review decisions remaining outstanding; reported that the highest proportion of applications denied in full was in the government sector at 13.69 per cent, with part access granted in 66.86 per cent of cases; and noted that the health sector continues to have the highest proportion of applications granted in full at 91.71 per cent.

The committee members are Mr Neil Angus, the member for Forest Hill in the Assembly, who is the chair; me; Mr Luke O'Sullivan; Mr Michael Gidley, the member for Mount Waverley in the Assembly; Mr James Purcell; and Mr Nick Staikos, the member for Bentleigh in the Assembly, until February 2018. Mr Staikos has now been replaced by Mr Wade Noonan, the member for Williamstown in the Assembly. Ms Marsha Thomson, the member for Footscray in the Assembly, is also a committee member.

The committee secretariat provided great support to our committee, particularly the executive officer, Sean Coley, the research officer, Caitlin Grover, and the administrative officer, Sarah Catherall. I would like to thank them very much for their assistance to the committee in its ongoing work.

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 — No. 10.

Family Violence Protection Act 2008 — No. 14.

Medical Treatment Planning and Decisions Act 2016 — No. 13.

Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 — No. 12.

Veterinary Protection Act 1997 — No. 11.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Lake Charlegrark

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (09:53) — I rise today to inform the house of a significant new investment the government is making for communities in the West Wimmera. The Andrews Labor government is investing \$200 000 towards upgrades at Lake Charlegrark to improve this popular West Wimmera shire destination for locals and visitors alike. For those of you who are not as familiar with this location in Victoria as the members for Western Victoria Region are, Lake Charlegrark lies about halfway between Kaniva and Edenhope and is one of the area's most popular tourist destinations.

People visit for camping, canoeing, waterskiing and fishing.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms PULFORD — The fishing opportunities do not include barramundi — to respond to the interjection — but there are certainly wonderful fishing opportunities. There is something for everyone: camping, canoeing, waterskiing — you name it. There are lots of reasons to visit.

The Lake Charlegrark Country Music Marathon is renowned across the region, and improved infrastructure will help the event continue to raise funds for local charities while building community spirit right across the Wimmera. The music marathon held its 27th event last weekend and attracts thousands of visitors to the area.

The upgrades to Lake Charlegrark will include construction of an all-abilities amenities block with showers, toilets and a laundry; the installation of three-phase power; repairs to the jetty; and the installation of new barbecues and seating. I am very pleased that this contribution we are announcing today in the Parliament will lead to an increase in visitors by more than 6000 people over 10 years, which will in turn create six new full-time jobs and increase gross regional product by \$850 000. The West Wimmera Shire Council will deliver the project with funding support from a range of community groups.

Right across the state, the Labor government's \$500 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund is supporting initiatives that make regional Victoria a better place to live, work and visit. We are proud to invest in these crucial upgrades at Lake Charlegrark so even more visitors and locals alike can enjoy Lake Charlegrark and the wonders that the Wimmera has to offer.

Skills and jobs centres

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (09:55) — I rise to update the house on the Andrews Labor government's skills and jobs centres and the recent extension of services they provide for the Victorian community. This afternoon I will have the pleasure of launching the Bendigo Kangan Institute's skills and jobs centre bus on the steps of Parliament. The bus is the first mobile skills and jobs centre in Victoria.

Skills and jobs centres are located across Victoria and provide a one-stop shop for people looking to start training, workers needing to reskill, unemployed

workers needing support and employers looking to upskill or retrain their workers. Skills and jobs centres also link local job seekers with local employers to ensure that job seekers are engaged in quality training that will lead to high-quality jobs. The staff at all of the skills and jobs centres across Victoria are doing an incredible job. They assisted over 40 000 people seeking training or employment across the state last year. Skills and jobs centres cater for people from all walks of life and from different backgrounds and circumstances, and this mobile centre will provide greater access to high-quality independent careers and training advice. The mobile centre will visit a wide range of locations, including expos, shopping centres, community events and schools.

The Andrews Labor government's investments in skills and jobs centres are yet another example of this government's commitment to providing high-quality training and job opportunities for all Victorians. Through Skills First we will continue to fund TAFEs, dual-sector universities, and community and high-quality private training providers to support the delivery of responsive and relevant training.

Neighbourhood houses

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (09:57) — I rise to update the house on this Labor government's support for neighbourhood houses in Victoria. The Andrews Labor government recognises the important role facilities like neighbourhood houses play in being places of inclusion for many people as well as assisting in social cohesion, the provision of education and the opportunity to volunteer in local communities.

Through the neighbourhood house coordination program the Andrews Labor government provides recurrent funding of over \$30.11 million per annum to support 375 neighbourhood houses, 16 neighbourhood house networks and the peak body, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria. This core investment enables a typical house to leverage more than five times the amount in funding and support from other sources such as local government, the commonwealth government, philanthropic organisations and local donations. Last year the Andrews Labor government increased its support to the sector by providing a further \$210 000 to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria to deliver more information and support to neighbourhood houses to enhance operational management and governance where required.

The biggest threat to the neighbourhood house sector at the moment is coming from the Turnbull government as they walk away from the national occasional care program, ripping more than \$4.7 million from Victorian occasional childcare providers. As a result 52 neighbourhood houses across Victoria that deliver occasional care stand to lose over \$800 000 per year at an average of \$15 417 per house thanks to these callous cuts. I have written to the federal minister, Simon Birmingham, about this matter and my pleas have gone without a response. I take this opportunity now to call on the Turnbull government to continue the occasional childcare program to give local families some peace of mind, or to immediately provide adequate, comparable alternative subsidies.

Whilst our government has provided more funding for the neighbourhood house sector each year it has been in office, the federal Liberals want to slash and burn, while the Victorian coalition simply stands by and watches. We know, whether it is Malcolm Turnbull or Matthew Guy, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, cuts are in the Liberals' DNA.

An honourable member interjected.

The PRESIDENT — I note the interjection. I actually did have some similar concern about the minister's statement in that writing a letter is hardly a new government initiative. A ministers statement is supposed to be about some new action taken by the government and is certainly not supposed to be about criticising others.

Sheep and goat electronic identification

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (10:00) — We are currently in the midst of a significant agricultural reform which is changing our entire sheep and goat supply chain — the introduction of electronic identification for our \$2.5 billion a year sheep and goat industries. Nearly 10.7 million sheep and goats have been electronically tagged in Victoria since 1 January 2017, when this reform commenced. Despite a few initial reservations, industry has well and truly backed this important reform. The government committed to this project with a \$17 million transition package. While 2017 was a very big year for the project, 2018 will see the systemic benefits of this project realised throughout the supply chain. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in getting us to this point and congratulate them for their active engagement and positive attitude.

From the start of this year our meat processors have been recording and uploading the data from electronic tags to the national livestock identification system (NLIS). The key benefit of electronic identification technology is fast and accurate traceability, should we need it in the event of a serious animal disease or food safety issue. Each year around 5 million sheep are sold at our saleyards. This presents us with at least 5 million good reasons why accurate traceability data is critical for our livestock industries. I would particularly like to recognise Ouyen saleyard in a recent development as the first saleyard to have fixed hardware installed for scanning earlier this month. They are providing great leadership. Last week equipment funded through the transition package was also installed at Sale and Leongatha. Next week equipment arrives at Nhill saleyard and will thereafter roll out progressively across the state's other sheep and goat selling centres. By 31 March all saleyards are required to scan and upload NLIS data. I am confident that industry is ready and well supported for this transition.

In addition, we are supporting farmers not only with equipment but with information. This week there is the first of a series of workshops being held for producers and livestock agents at Bairnsdale, Maffra and Koo Wee Rup. Next week the workshops will be at Swan Hill, Ouyen, Birchip and St Arnaud. In total 21 workshops will bring attendees up to speed as to how to record property-to-property and private sale data, another important piece of this reform.

Victorian Public Sector Commission

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (10:02) — This is a red-letter day because I am doing a ministers statement. Just to allay people's apprehension, the cameras are not in the chamber on the basis of the matter that I am going to raise before the house today.

Following an open and competitive selection process, the Governor in Council appointed Dr Paul Grimes to the role of commissioner of the Victorian Public Sector Commission at the end of 2017, and he took up his appointment in the last few weeks. The Victorian Public Sector Commission was established in 2014 to replace the State Services Authority. Its objectives are to strengthen the efficiency, effectiveness and capability of the public sector and to maintain and advocate for public sector professionalism and integrity. The Victorian Public Sector Commission helps to strengthen public sector efficiency, effectiveness and capability and to maintain public sector integrity.

A range of programs are also administered by the commission on behalf of the public sector bodies,

including the graduate recruitment and development scheme; the Victorian Leadership Academy, which supports development of high-performing, diverse and collaborative public sector leaders; and Barring Djinang, our new five-year Aboriginal employment strategy for the Victorian public sector. In fact on a number of occasions, including in the last week, I have participated in the graduation program for graduate students. The Aboriginal graduates coming through that program actually participated in the program in the Parliament within the last week.

The important thing is that Dr Grimes has significant experience as the head of public service organisations, having served as secretary of the commonwealth Department of Agriculture and the commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. He is a professional who is well-regarded to operate with integrity within that commonwealth jurisdiction. He has also worked in South Australia and the ACT. He is the highest calibre professional public servant, a career public servant, who in fact perhaps was adversely treated in the commonwealth jurisdiction. It is unfortunate that his name is drawn to attention regarding the commonwealth, but in Victoria he will play a prime role in the integrity and maintenance of public sector values and will provide the public service in Victoria with the capability, the professional standards and the development that we so desperately need in this jurisdiction and in all jurisdictions across the country.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Adani coalmine

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (10:05) — This week while touring Queensland, opposition leader Bill Shorten declared that there was a 'role for coal' in the future and that the Adani mine was 'just another project'. He is quoted as saying:

The environment groups have worked themselves up into a passion about [Adani]. I don't know why. Adani is just another project and it should be judged on its merits.

This was on the same day that new scientific research published in *Nature Communications* warned that even if the Paris climate change targets were met, the world's oceans would experience sea level rises of 3 metres by the year 2300, threatening cities from Florida to Shanghai and London and submerging islands in the Pacific.

Adani is not just another coalmine. It is the largest thermal coalmine proposed in Australia, one of the largest in the Southern Hemisphere and one of the

largest in the world. Twenty-eight banks have ruled out supporting it financially. Even a Labor figure is quoted as saying:

It is talismanic. It's the litmus test. Adani has become shorthand for 'Are you serious about climate change?'

Anyone who is serious about climate change cannot support the Adani mine.

Global leaders came together in 2015 and agreed on what collective action was needed to limit global warming to under 2 degrees by cutting greenhouse gas emissions. So while Antarctic ice sheets melt at record levels and while 100 million people are threatened because of sea level rises caused by global warming, Bill Shorten, Ged Kearney and the Liberal-National parties say that coal can be part of our future. The Adani mine is at the heart of one of the biggest environmental campaigns seen in Australia. It is time to dig our heads out of the coal pits and lead for future generations. Adani cannot go ahead and will not go ahead.

Melbourne City Football Club

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (10:06) — The Melbourne City women's W-League team only came into the W-League in 2015–16 but has won the championship in all of its three seasons, with the latest triumph being a 2-0 defeat of Sydney Football Club in the grand final last Sunday. Superstar Jess Fishlock was the difference between the two teams on Sunday, scoring a first-half screamer and then firing a rocket second-half free kick to set up Jodie Taylor for our second goal. It is the second straight season that City has finished fourth on the table and then clinched the main prize, following its whitewash of the club's debut in 2015–16 — the three-peat.

Can I congratulate our magnificent W-League players: Lydia Williams, Yukari Kinga, Lauren Barnes, Ashley Hatch, Lia Muldeary, Aivi Luik, captain Steph Catley, Larissa Crummer, Jess Fishlock, Rhali Dobson, Jodie Taylor, Rebekah Stott, Alanna Kennedy, Amy Jackson, Sofia Sakalis, Kyah Simon, Hayley Richmond, Tyla Jay Vlajnic, Emily Shields and Melissa Hudson. I also congratulate the staff — coach Patrick Kisnorbo, Paul Kilpatrick, Sam Frangos, Adam Centofanti, Lucy Kennedy, Dr Nic Van Wettering, Christian Riotto, Leroy Alamenara, Anthony Mercuri, team manager Louisa Bisby, CEO Scott Munn, the management team and the admin staff — for the wonderful job they do. As a Melbourne City Football Club ambassador, I am very proud of our wonderful women's team and I stand with all our supporters in congratulating them.

Haining Farm

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (10:08) — Over the weekend I spent three very busy days at the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo among a great display of agriculture-related equipment, services and information. The expo catered to everyone from large-scale farmers to hobby farmers and families looking for an interesting day out, and brought thousands of visitors to Seymour. Whilst I would like to talk more about the expo, I am going to use this opportunity to once again raise an issue that a very distraught mother from Don Valley wanted to bring to my attention while she was at the expo.

This government is forging ahead with a project that would revegetate an area of public land known as Haining Farm. It is a project developed through false consultation and goes against the wishes of locals. The people of Don Valley and the surrounding area are now scared of the fire risk that this vegetation project would impose. This particular mother and her four children have already had to rebuild their lives after losing a home to bushfires in Flowerdale on Black Saturday, and it appears the government is now putting them at risk again. She pleaded with me to pass on a letter she has written, so I have. I simply hope that the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change reads it.

Regional and rural health funding

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (10:09) — The Turnbull government is determined to pursue its cuts to Victorian health care through its underfunding of Victoria to the tune of \$2.1 billion. For example, Goulburn Valley Health stands to lose almost \$97 million, which is equivalent to 121 fewer doctors, 290 fewer nurses or 5847 fewer elective surgeries.

Whilst Turnbull may have forgotten Victorians and country Victorians in particular, I was pleased to make plenty of funding announcements from the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund last week. I visited health facilities in Numurkah, Cobram, Yarrawonga, Echuca, Cohuna, Birchip and Boort, with all receiving significant funding boosts from the Andrews Labor government for vital infrastructure projects. The Andrews Labor government is committed to regional and rural health.

Riverboats Music Festival

Mr GEPP — The Riverboats Music Festival in Echuca is going from strength to strength. I was lucky enough to launch it last week on a fantastic old paddle steamer, the *Pride of the Murray*. Into its seventh year,

the festival continues to be a sell-out event and has the town of Echuca pumping. Congratulations to the council tourism authorities and organisers for bringing together another excellent line-up and professional event in regional Victoria.

Rochester Development Committee

Mr GEPP — The Rochester Development Committee is a group of dedicated individuals who are looking to the future. Last week I announced \$151 000 in funding from the Andrews Labor government for the town of Rochester and the modification of the market reserve to turn it into a multipurpose community space. The town hopes to redirect some of the 1.6 million cars that pass through the town each year into their economically vital shopping precinct. The Rochester Development Committee are a credit to their town, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with them in the future.

The PRESIDENT — I just mention that in his contribution Mr Gepp mentioned the Prime Minister by his surname but did not attach 'Mr' or suchlike. Can I just remind members that we do not just use a surname in a speech; we actually apply their title — Mr, Ms or whatever — because to simply use the surname can be seen as a dismissive reference to the person, and that is not acceptable. So please, members, do be careful about that. Mr Gepp, I know you did not mean it.

Mr Gepp — If I can just put on record, I meant no disrespect to the Prime Minister.

The PRESIDENT — That is one of the reasons that I picked it up. I was not admonishing you, I was just reminding members.

Elsternwick Park redevelopment

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (10:12) — On Saturday, 17 February, I attended a public gathering organised by the Elsternwick Park Coalition. I spoke at the event, as did Bayside mayor, Cr Laurie Evans. Also in attendance were councillors Tim Baxter, Katherine Copsey and Dick Gross from the City of Port Phillip. The Liberal candidate for Brighton was also in attendance and spoke. The public gathering was to demonstrate public support for what is known as option 1A for an expanded wetland and urban forest in Elsternwick Park north. A large crowd of local people turned out to show their support for option 1A, which also includes an upgrade to the existing oval 2. A survey by Bayside council found that there is majority support for this option; around 60 per cent of residents

support option 1A and only 40 per cent support all the rest of the options.

This is a unique opportunity to re-create an urban wetland and an oasis in metropolitan Melbourne. I would like to congratulate the members of the Elsternwick Park Coalition for their tireless efforts in advocating for an expanded wetland and urban forest in Elsternwick Park.

Macedon Ranges planning statement

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (10:13) — Today I want to draw the chamber's attention to the important work of the Macedon Ranges Residents Association and note that at their meeting on 13 February they passed a resolution. It was an important resolution because it drew on the long history of the Macedon Ranges with localised planning statements and the protections that were first put in place by the Hamer government in 1975 and later through work done by Matthew Guy.

The state government has brought forward a draft *Macedon Ranges Localised Planning Statement 2017*. This has been widely criticised throughout the Macedon Ranges as being inadequate and not providing sufficient protections for the precious lifestyle and heritage values and the vegetation through the Macedon Ranges. These are important areas of tourism that require protection. The Liberal Party and the National Party are very committed to those protections with that long history going back to 1975.

It is clear that the statement Daniel Andrews has brought forward is wildly inadequate and should be withdrawn and rewritten. We will certainly support landscape and distinctive area protections as proposed by the Planning and Environment Amendment (Distinctive Areas and Landscapes) Bill 2017, but the localised planning statement the government has brought forth is at variance with those objectives. It is weak, it is vacillating and it will see the destruction of the Macedon Ranges. I say Mary-Anne Thomas in the Assembly and Daniel Andrews need to step back and start again.

Mr Melhem — On a point of order, President, you made a comment earlier in relation to the Prime Minister on which I agree with you totally. I think other members should be reminded that the Premier should be referred to by his title. We should be consistent and there should not be any differentiation between the Prime Minister and the Premier. He is the Premier of Victoria. Have a bit of respect.

The PRESIDENT — I agree that Mr Andrews ought to be referred to by his title.

Mr DAVIS — This is a very important reflection on the future of the Macedon Ranges —

The PRESIDENT — Mr Davis had finished anyway; he had run out of time.

Avenel

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (10:16) — This morning I would like to use my members statement to talk about some initiatives in the small town of Avenel. It was a pleasure to be there last week to officially open the upgraded community hall, a \$400 000 project to rebuild the interior of the very historic hall. There was a great turnout by the community to celebrate the completion of that project.

One of my passions is child care. I know all too well the importance of the provision of quality childcare facilities for families, particularly those in country Victoria. So it was wonderful to visit the brilliant little kids at Avenel kindergarten and make an announcement there, in conjunction with Strathbogie Shire Council, about a half-a-million-dollar upgrade to that facility. Not only is it going to provide better facilities and greater capacity but it will also introduce for the first time in the town of Avenel long day care for families as an option.

I have got to give a shout-out to Minister Mikakos. Since December last year I have visited Chiltern, Heathcote and Avenel. These are small, growing towns that have been held back for too long because they have not had adequate provision of childcare. It is a fantastic legacy that we are creating for country communities in providing childcare because it means that families can move to these towns and they can work in these towns rather than having to move to some of the larger regional centres.

Regional and rural transport infrastructure

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (10:17) — I take this opportunity to express my disgust at this government's misuse and abuse of the funds from the sale of the port of Melbourne lease. The \$9.7 billion windfall heralded an era of renewed potential and mass opportunity for the state. Outside of Melbourne it was seen as a timely saviour given the Premier's promise to spend 10 per cent of those funds on new transport infrastructure projects in regional Victoria. Those projects are needed in a state undergoing population increases, growth, record farm productivity and

decentralisation. Investment in country areas is vital, and \$792 million should have gone to these projects.

So you can imagine the sense of anger and loss when it was revealed last week that the Premier has broken yet another promise. He has failed to invest that 10 per cent in regional Victoria, the very place which provides the bulk of goods that move through the port which produced such a high sale price. The very generators of the port's success are the ones this Premier has just betrayed. But then again, I guess he cannot kowtow to inner-Melbourne Greens and look after country providers at the same time.

This failure was revealed during questioning of the Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance, David Martine, by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. It was squeezed out of him. He told the committee that \$288 million from the port sale profits had gone to 'periodic maintenance.' Periodic maintenance is not new transport infrastructure projects in regional Victoria. Prior to the lease deal I strongly advocated, as did other regional members on this side, for 10 per cent of the proceeds to be used for new regional transport initiatives.

Janet McCalman

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (10:19) — I rise to congratulate Professor Janet McCalman from North Melbourne who was a recipient of Australia's highest honour on Australia Day, Companion of the Order of Australia in the general division. The Order of Australia is the principal and most prestigious means of recognising outstanding members of the community at a national level and is a fitting honour to pay tribute to the outstanding contribution that Professor McCalman has made as a passionate advocate for education and her eminent work, particularly in the field of social history, as a leading academic, researcher and author and as a contributor to multidisciplinary curriculum development.

Premier's Volunteer Champions Awards

Ms MIKAKOS — I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of the 60 volunteers who were recipients of the 2017 Premier's Volunteer Champion Awards. I had the pleasure of recognising these outstanding individuals at an awards ceremony on 11 February 2018 at Government House with the Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau; Premier Daniel Andrews; and the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers

and Volunteers, the member for Dandenong in the Assembly, Gabrielle Williams.

The Premier's Volunteer Champion Awards recognise and celebrate the extraordinary contributions of all of Victoria's 1.5 million-plus volunteers in areas such as health, sport, education, culture, community, environment, science, animal welfare and many other areas. I congratulate and commend all the recipients of these awards, which are a just and fitting recognition of their remarkable service and achievements to date. I particularly want to congratulate equality advocate Riley Briese, who was named the Premier's Volunteer of the Year for his work in supporting young transgender people in regional Victoria.

The Andrews Labor government is investing \$145 000 in 2018–19 to investigate ways to strengthen and diversify the volunteering sector to build on the remarkable contribution of our volunteers.

Employment

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) (10:21) — I rise to speak on recent jobs announcements in Victoria. The latest data shows that Victoria continues to be the jobs powerhouse of Australia. Since the election in 2014 Victorian employment has increased by 316 000 people. This represents a rise of 11 per cent — the largest in the country over that period. Unemployment numbers are also extremely encouraging. The Victorian unemployment rate currently sits at 5.6 per cent — a significant decrease from the 6.7 per cent recorded in the final year of the previous Liberal government. Jobs growth has also been strong in my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region. In the three years since the 2014 election 23 900 jobs have been added in the west, representing a rise of 6.6 per cent. In 2017 we saw an increase of 0.2 per cent in the participation rate, highlighting increased engagement of our working-age population in the jobs market. It is encouraging that unemployment fell during this period even as the labour force was increasing.

Melbourne's west has faced significant challenges in recent years. The loss of the car manufacturing industry has been devastating to the local area. The closure of the Altona Toyota plant alone is set to impact 6000 jobs in and around the Altona area. The Andrews Labor government has recognised this and has renewed its focus on job creation in the west. Massive investment in arterial roads, new projects like the West Gate tunnel and metro rail, as well as road upgrades across the west have provided a much-needed injection of economic activity. Furthermore, the emphasis on encouraging

public and private business to employ ex-auto workers is an excellent initiative that highlights this government's focus on not leaving these workers behind. I commend the Andrews Labor government on these latest jobs figures.

Bourke Park, Pakenham

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (10:23) — It was wonderful last week to be able to attend, on behalf of the Minister for Police, the unveiling of 11 new CCTV cameras at Bourke Park in Pakenham. This is something the local community has been working towards for some time. The government contributed \$165 000 towards these CCTV cameras which completely blanket the park. Local council contributed a substantial amount of money — over \$30 000 — as well.

Council, the state government and police have been working with community organisations, including a number of community groups and even transport and bus companies, for some time on this project. My understanding from talking to local police is that these cameras have already led to the apprehension of four suspects, which is a very, very good outcome for the local community.

Employment

Mr MULINO — In my members statement I wish to supplement what Mr Eideh has just mentioned in relation to the economy. As he mentioned, the Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force statistics released last week are very, very positive for this state and show the continuation of three years of strong growth in employment. Over 316 000 extra jobs have been created since this government came to office. The labour force statistics for this state stand out in regard to any other jurisdiction in Australia, particularly in regional areas. Our real gross state product growth is also extremely strong, and we have record building approvals — \$39.7 billion in 2017.

Local environment protection program

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (10:24) — It was a pleasure to attend the announcement of a new officer for the protection of the local environment — it is called OPLE — in the electorate of Western Metropolitan Region last week. The Environment Protection Authority Victoria has introduced 11 locally based OPLEs around Victoria with an associated \$4.8 million in funding. This is a pilot initiative which if proven a success will hopefully be rolled out over the whole state.

The recent appointment of Michelle Walker as the OPLE for the City of Wyndham is an important measure to ensure that we are looking after our sensitive ecosystems. Michelle will be tasked with responding to smaller scale waste risks, pollution complaints, illegal dumping and other similar activities. She will also be in charge of educating local business on appropriate environmental practices and compliance procedure.

The City of Wyndham contains some of the fastest growing suburbs in Melbourne. These growth corridors are experiencing rapid construction of homes and roads as well as private and public services. It is excellent to see those practical measures being put in place to coordinate local government efforts to track pollution. I am also delighted to see that the Brimbank and Hobsons Bay councils, two more municipalities within my electorate, will be taking part in the pilot program. While the federal government and the state opposition have proven they are not concerned about the environment, this Labor government has placed it at the very forefront of our agenda. I commend the Premier, Daniel Andrews, on his government's focus on strong environment-related initiatives.

Caulfield–Dandenong line elevated rail

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:26) — I was very happy last week to see the new elevated rail running through the Noble Park area and to see motorists able to drive unimpeded by boom gates through three intersections — three actually quite busy intersections — in Corrigan Road, Heatherton Road and Chandler Road and also to see that the people that were catching the train were really enjoying the experience of this fantastic new piece of infrastructure in Noble Park.

Standing there at ground level when trains were going past I have got to say you can hardly hear them on the new infrastructure as far as the new rail goes and also with an amount of rubber between the actual concrete and the rail and also in the piers. This is just a fantastic addition to Noble Park. It is fantastic to see the workers actually have removed the old rail and the old gantry and have started work on one of the parklands. Soon people in Noble Park will be able to actually walk directly from where they live to the shops — to the coffee shops. This is just a part of this fantastic level crossing removal program which will help this government, the Andrews government, go down as one of the greatest governments — probably the greatest government — this great state has ever seen.

Pyrenees community halls

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (10:27) — I would like to share with the house the truly wonderful day that I had on 10 February in the Pyrenees Shire Council with Cr David Clark, the mayor, and a number of other councillors throughout the course of the day; the CEO, Jim Nolan; and the Labor Party's candidate for the Assembly seat of Ripon, Sarah De Santis. We visited Raglan, Barkly and Redbank as part of an announcement of \$230 000 in funding for a project to upgrade three community halls.

It is really important to support projects like these. Our government very much likes building things, whether it is things like level crossing removals here in Melbourne, the amazing work that is going on on Murray Basin rail a bit closer to the Pyrenees Shire Council, hospitals, schools, you name it — the Western Highway upgrade, the extraordinary regional rail revitalisation project — but we really, really love community halls like the ones at Raglan, Barkly and Redbank.

I for one will probably never forget the Barkly community insisting that Sarah and I sing at their performance; it is a very musical community. They put us up the front of the room and they got us to sing. The mural at Raglan, the story of the history of the kitchen at Redbank — it was a truly magical day meeting with and spending some time in three very, very special communities for whom their hall is such an important place. This is where they have their funerals. This is where they have their 21st birthday parties. This is where they celebrate their sporting achievements. This is where they gather in hard times and in good times.

Federal health funding

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (10:29) — It is a sign of the disregard of the federal government — the coalition — for Victoria and for regional Victoria when we look at the cuts to health and hospital funding which it has imposed to the tune of over \$2 billion across the state. In Gippsland in particular the region stands to lose almost \$97 million — the equivalent of 324 doctors or 762 nurses. Our hospitals and healthcare services cannot afford to lose this funding, and whilst we are doing everything we possibly can through record investments in health funding and in infrastructure upgrades, it seems that those in Canberra are too busy taking cheap pot shots at each other to focus on the things that regional Victorians and Gippslanders in particular need and deserve as our population grows. It is an absolute disgrace, and we really need the commonwealth coalition to come to the

party, to stop obsessing over what is happening in Queensland and in New South Wales and to start delivering.

Yarragon skate park

Ms SHING — It was an absolute delight to confirm that Howard Park in Yarragon will be the site of the brand-new skate park. Welcoming this news along with skaters and scooter riders of all ages and abilities last week was a true delight. There is \$221 000 going towards this park, which will provide access to kids, who will no longer have to skate and practise on the streets.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65

Debate resumed from 7 February; motion of Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan):

That, in relation to amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, which facilitates the delivery of the West Gate tunnel project, this house —

- (1) notes planning scheme amendment GC65 was gazetted on 7 December 2017;
- (2) notes section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 requires the Minister for Planning to cause a notice of the approval of every amendment to be laid before each house of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is approved; and
- (3) contingent on any tabling of the amendment, and pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, revokes amendment GC65.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (10:31) — I rise to continue my contribution on yet another stunt by the Liberal Party and the Greens party which relates to another revocation motion to basically stop progress in this state, another motion to bring the state to a standstill. That is what they did when they were in government last time — they brought the state to a standstill. They did nothing for four years — nothing, not a single project that they could put their name to — so when the Andrews Labor government was elected to office it hit the road running. We had a record infrastructure investment in the state's history. Project after project, we are delivering what Victorians asked us to deliver. They voted for us to deliver these major infrastructure projects, and the West Gate is one of them.

On the notice paper today there are three revocation motions. The President yesterday made a point of sending a caution to members in relation to revocation motions, and I agree wholeheartedly with his

comments. This place should not be a planning authority. This place's role is to look at legislation, to look at bills and to look at putting laws into effect, not to become a planning authority.

Heed the comments of your fearless leader, who wants to be the Premier of Victoria. If he cannot control his own bench, how is he going to become a leader or the Premier of this state? In this place in 2010 when he was the Minister for Planning he was having a go at the Greens — your partners — and he said that we should not have this house become a planning authority and revoke every decision the planning minister hands down. That is your leader. He repeated similar comments in November last year. In November last year he said that we should not let planning issues become political footballs. What are you doing here? You are doing exactly that.

Let us look at the history of this place. Let us pay some attention to what the President said yesterday, that we should not be using this place to simply put forward one revocation motion after another to actually stop the government doing its job. These planning schemes and these projects go through a lot of work. A lot of effort goes into these projects to get the environmental impact statements and go through all of these things to basically get the project to a stage where construction can commence.

You pass a revocation motion and what happens? You go back to the starting point again. You have already done that with a number of projects, and that is going to cost taxpayers in the community a lot of money. This is because of your vandalism. That is what I call it; it is economic vandalism. Economic terrorism is what you are doing. You basically decided to go to bed with the Greens party because you have the numbers and you are going to stop everything this government is doing. Well, guess what? November is coming soon, and you will be judged on your actions. People will not forgive you.

Let me talk about those who actually support this project. Who is against it? Let me go through the list. Let us start off with my constituents in the western suburbs of Melbourne. They support it. They are fully behind it. They want the project to go ahead. Let us look at —

Mr Finn — You've sold them down the drain, totally sold them down the drain. It's a disgrace.

Mr MELHEM — Well, Mr Finn, you are the one who sold your constituents. You are the one. You are a disgrace. You call yourself a member for Western

Metropolitan Region, and what are you doing? You are about to speak on the motion to actually stop the very project that is going to make life easier for your constituents to travel to the city and to travel to the other side of town. You are going to stop them. Stand up for them. They elected you to represent them. That is what I am doing, so it is about time you do your job. The City of Hobsons Bay, the City of Maribyrnong and all the local governments in the west support the project.

Now let us talk about the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). They support the project, and in fact, along with other industry organisations, they took the liberty to put an ad in the paper to basically say, 'Enough playing politics. Let's do the right thing by the state'. That is their advertising. Let me tell you, employer organisations and industry organisations traditionally would be rusted to the Liberal Party, but they can see that the Liberal Party, along with the Greens party, have lost their way, are doing the wrong thing by the state and are sabotaging the state. They went as far as putting an ad in the newspaper and putting their case out to the people of Victoria to say that what you guys are doing is wrong. So you say VCCI is wrong.

Let us look at the next one. The Urban Development Institute of Australia are wrong as well. I have got a few quotes from them. Everyone is wrong but Mr Davis and the Liberal Party and the Greens party. This is a quote from the Urban Development Institute of Australia:

The Victorian Parliament should not seek to become a planning authority and section 38 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 should only be invoked by the Victorian Parliament in the most exceptional of circumstances. This could include where there has been, for example, a clear breach of probity, or of natural justice. It should not be invoked for political purpose —

which is exactly what is happening in this case —

or in cases where the merits of a planning scheme amendment have been assessed, reviewed by a panel or advisory committee, and approved by the Minister for Planning.

It is a simple case of political game playing by the Liberal Party and the Greens party, full stop. There is no other logic. There is no other reason why they have moved this motion, and I am sure there will be more motions to come.

I think the sad thing about it is that maybe it explains why Mr Davis has become the shadow Minister for Planning. I am not sure that was a wise decision by the Liberal Party to actually put him in that position. We are going to see more and more of these motions

because Mr Davis believes this: 'If it's not my idea, it's a bad idea. If it's someone else's idea, it's a bad idea'. That is exactly what has happened here, but unfortunately he is getting away with it. His leader cannot pull him into line to say, 'Hey, that goes against what I said' — in this house — 'in 2010'.

Mr Gepp — He's gone rogue.

Mr MELHEM — He must have gone rogue. He has always been rogue, and I think he likes it that way. We will continue on the subject of who else supported the project. G21, which is the business —

Mr Davis — Tell us about 2020. Wasn't that that fundraising group?

Mr MELHEM — It was a very good fundraising group, Mr Davis. You should have come to the fundraising events I held. Why didn't you? I sent you an invitation, didn't I? G21, which is the planning committee in Geelong, are supporting the project. The people of Geelong and the south coast would love the project to go ahead. They would love to have another crossing to the city. They would love the West Gate Freeway to go from four lanes to six lanes each way.

The people of Ballarat, which you represent, Mr Morris, would love to see another crossing so that they have other options. They could use the West Gate Bridge, the West Gate tunnel, Ballarat Road or, if they want to go to the other side, the M80 to the Tullamarine Freeway. It is about giving people choices. It is about giving people more opportunities to travel to work and travel back home with the least possible time spent on the road — safely. The same thing goes for the south-eastern suburbs. When there is a problem on the West Gate Bridge at the moment the system comes to a standstill. But with this project we will have another option for people to use.

Let us talk about Transurban. When those opposite were trying to get approval for the widening of the Tullamarine Freeway in the last year of their term in government they had no hesitation in extending the toll for one year. You actually agreed to it.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MELHEM — Hang on! You agreed to extend it; we are loath to do it. But let us go back to what I said earlier: Mr Davis, and possibly the whole of the Liberal Party, runs with the idea that, 'If it's not my idea, it's a bad idea'. You cannot operate a state like that.

Mr Finn — This wasn't your idea; it was Transurban's.

Mr MELHEM — No, it was not.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Mr Finn, it was always my idea. I always advocated for the western section of your failed east–west link to start first. I always argued that the western section should commence first. Guess what? I have got my wish and I am very happy. I am very pleased that we are doing the right thing and we are getting that section operating.

Mr Gepp — On a point of order, Acting President, under standing orders Mr Melhem is entitled to his views. We cannot hear him because of the ridiculous interjections from the do-nothing clowns opposite.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! There is no point of order, but I understand there is a lot of noise and a lot of interjections. Mr Finn, you are next to speak on the motion. Mr Melhem, through the Chair.

Mr MELHEM — I am losing my voice. I cannot keep shouting so someone can hear me. I have just named a number of organisations, including community organisations, that actually support the project. Let me now talk about how many people and how many organisations have spoken publicly against the project. I cannot find any, apart from Mr Davis of the Liberal Party supported by the Greens party. They are the only organisations — the Liberal Party and the Greens party — that have spoken against it.

Mr Davis — There's a whole heap in the audience.

Mr MELHEM — Well, name them. Where are they? Name them.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Mr Finn, I am looking forward to your contribution. Enough said. I hope you will do the right thing by standing up for your constituents and advocating on their behalf for a change. This project will go ahead with you or without you. We will go ahead with you or without you. Let me give you the mail: this project —

Mr Davis — What happened to democracy?

Mr MELHEM — Democracy — exactly, Mr Davis. You should have paid attention to what the President of this place, a very respected person, who has the respect of everyone in this place, said when he cautioned you and your fellow Greens about your bad

ways — about putting up one revocation motion after another. You should pay attention to what he said yesterday. He was spot-on. If you look at the history of this place, in the past 100 years how many revocation motions did we have in this place? But since you have become the opposition leader — not the leader, but you are probably working on that; I hope you will not become the leader — the opposition spokesperson on planning and environment, we are seeing revocation motion after revocation motion. It used to be exclusively something that the Greens party moved; they were the ones who used to move these motions in the past, and at least they were consistent in their approach. But now you are following their lead and you are going to try to stop the project.

I just said to you that I will give you the mail. You are not going to be able to stop the project, because we have many ways that we can deal with this and we will find a way through so that the project will be delivered. Come 2022 this project will be finished. We will move from eight lanes to 12 lanes, so six lanes each way, come 2022. We will have a second river crossing whether you like it or not. My constituents in the western suburbs will be rapt when it is commissioned. They will have an alternative to the West Gate Bridge. The freight industry and businesses in the western suburbs are crying out for a second crossing to the port, and I talked about that last week.

You talk about the east–west link: the western section was not there. Basically it was in the never-never. Wake up to yourself, Mr Finn, it was in the never-never. I could not find it on the time line; maybe it was in 2050. I will probably be long gone by then, so do not talk to me about the east–west link.

We have got massive growth in container facilities and warehousing facilities in the western parts of Melbourne. It is massive. There are a massive number of trucks that want to travel backwards and forwards to and from the port. We want to give them a second crossing. We want to give them an alternative to the West Gate. We want to get these trucks off Somerville Road, off Francis Street and off Hyde Street — all these residential streets in my electorate. It is time we say to the people who are living in the inner west of Melbourne, 'We've finally got a solution — a permanent, long-term solution — to the diesel fumes and to the trucks on the roads in the inner west of Melbourne'.

We are finally delivering a solution, and yet that solution is about to be stopped by the Greens party. Ms Colleen Hartland was always advocating that the trucks should be getting off the road. This is obviously

going to deliver that, but unfortunately they are going to vote against it. The same thing goes for the Liberal Party. It is not just the economics; it is the environmental benefit and health benefit for the people of the west, who Mr Finn and his colleagues do not really give a damn about. They do not give a damn about that. So I will finish off with that note. I hope that the Liberal Party and the Greens in particular reflect on their contributions and reflect on the decision they are about to make and on the precedent they are about to set.

In relation to the Greens party, you have been advocating for getting trucks off the road. We are going to deliver that. In relation to public transport, we are delivering Melbourne Metro with a massive investment. In relation to the Liberal Party, it is about time they stood up for industry, stood up for people to be able to go to work and stood up for productivity improvement, which this project will deliver at the end of the day because we will be saving heaps of travel time, and that will be better for everyone involved. Get with the program and support the project.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (10:49) — I rise to say that the Greens will be supporting this motion of revocation because this project is a bad idea. It locks in congestion and pollution and holds democracy in contempt. It fails on a number of planning grounds to be acceptable at the most basic of levels. This government made a promise to the people of Victoria in 2014 as it headed to the last state election. It said it would stop a deeply unpopular road project that was going to cut through the heart of this city, acquiring parkland and houses along the way. I remember what happened in our communities in the lead-up to that decision: they became informed, they became angry and they became activated. They stood at protests and picket lines, refusing to let this mega road cut through their neighbourhoods. The then Labor opposition made a promise to us that if elected the east–west link would be stopped. They kept their promise, and I along with the community were profoundly thankful and proud of their courage in the face of immense opposition.

But fast-forward three years and this feels a bit like *deja vu*. Actually, it feels like a nightmare — the kind of dream that feels familiar in so many ways but all the characters are played by different people than the ones you saw last time. Things feel very, very sinister. In 2014 the Labor Party, then in opposition, promised us that they would address the problems with trucks and congestion in the west with the \$500 million West Gate distributor project. It was going to be delivered as soon as possible, they said, and the modelling suggested that

it would provide relief to commuters and residents. But instead of a \$500 million project, Victorians were shocked to hear late last year that the government had done everything they said they stood opposed to: a secret deal with Transurban, one that was not subject to public input or disclosure, to build a \$6.7 billion tunnel and toll road that even the transport experts say will not resolve the very problems they are trying to solve but instead will deliver a \$15 billion profit to Transurban as drivers get tolled for another 10 years.

If this motion is successful, if this government cares about democracy, it must not proceed with the West Gate tunnel project. If this Parliament revokes planning approvals, it sends the loudest possible message that we do not approve of this government's agenda to do secret deals locking Victorians into decades of congestion and pollution and locking Victorians into making multimillion-dollar corporations like Transurban even richer than they already are while making taxpayers pay for a project which they do not want and which will not work.

This project is so poor on a number of levels. I am going to talk about how it delivers a poor outcome, how it is a poor process, how bad deals have been done and how it is an environmental disaster. Let us talk about the outcome. We know that it will not solve truck and congestion problems in the west; it will just move the problems around. It will funnel thousands more cars into the CBD, with some of the modelling saying that some sections of North Melbourne will suffer peak-hour conditions for 10 to 14 hours a day. It is locking in car use for decades to come and will fail to have a measurable impact on congestion within just 10 years. It also comes at a significant opportunity cost — the opportunity to invest in freight rail solutions and in public transport that can actually connect people with the jobs that they have and have to move to through sustainable transport. Instead of an integrated statewide transport plan, we have Transurban deciding what gets built across this city.

Let us talk about the poor process. This is a result of an unsolicited bid by Transurban. The public were not made aware of this. The Parliament was not made aware of this. We do not know what deals were made and how they are being honoured by this proposal. It locks in losses for Victorians for years to come, and it locks in contracts that were not taken to an election and will not be subject to public scrutiny. It was wrong when the former government did it with the east–west link, and it is wrong now. It is a bad deal for Victorians. It is potentially going to be funded by extending toll roads beyond the current deadline, tolling road users for years to come. Apparently there is a point at which

Transurban will make super profits, at which point the tolls stop, but there is hazy detail about if that has been reached already or when it will be reached. Otherwise the taxpayers are going to be slugged billions of dollars for this project that they were not informed about and that they do not want.

This project is an environmental disaster. It entrenches car dependency when we should be making a rapid move to transition away from fossil fuel-dependent travel to more sustainable forms of transport. We have the solutions and we have the expertise; we just do not have the political courage or will to be able to implement them. With locked-in carbon dioxide emissions, as we have just heard this morning, we are on the pathway to catastrophic climate change, and we have got governments digging their heels in not wanting to address the climate catastrophes that are to come. Transport is a huge emitter of carbon dioxide, and if you are actually going to take climate change seriously, you have to tackle transport seriously. We know in the local immediate realm that, in terms of the environmental impacts, the E-gate urban renewal area, with its off-ramps, is going to be significantly harmed. This project has to really think about how the design is going to mitigate those harms.

If those reasons were not enough to convince everyone that this project is a bad idea, let us turn to the planning problems, because at the heart of what we are discussing today is a planning revocation. There are a number of grounds on which a planning revocation can be considered, and I think this Parliament is well and truly justified in considering a planning scheme revocation of a project of this magnitude. What the Parliament is tasked with doing is applying scrutiny to represent the people of Victoria. This is why it has revocation powers to use in situations like this when undemocratic things are happening and being implemented by governments.

Section 4 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 says that Planning Victoria has to adhere to the following guidelines. It has to 'provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land'. It has got to 'secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians'. It has got to 'protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities'. And the last point is it has to 'balance the present and future interests of all Victorians'. I ask: how does this project balance the present and future interests of all Victorians? It is going to cost Victorians billions of dollars. We are going to have the same levels of congestion within 10 years. It does not actually solve

the problem. It does not satisfy the interests of present Victorians, let alone future Victorians.

The government and the planning report try to say this will have some impact on easing traffic in the immediate time, but we have an expert panel report from RMIT — quite an extraordinary report — with researchers coming from a number of institutions to raise their voices about how terrible this project is. It says:

While we acknowledge the congestion issues on the West Gate Bridge, international and local evidence overwhelmingly shows that building new or expanded roads are only ever short-term solutions. The purported travel time savings and reductions in congestion will not materialise because of induced demand, which attracts users to new road capacity and away from other modes —

of transport. The report says:

... we will very soon be stuck in traffic once more. Instead what is needed in an increasingly automobile-saturated city are significant and continuous improvements to public transport integration that draws travellers away from cars — both in Melbourne's west, and across the entire metropolitan area.

Then there is a whole tranche of work that was cited that needed to be done through the panel reporting process last year, and we have no idea whether it is underway or has been completed.

The timing and the pace of the process that we see before us begs a number of questions about why it is being rushed through and why the necessary time has not been given to address a number of very serious concerns that the inquiry and advisory committee reported in its panel findings in October 2017. It made a number of recommendations, including suggesting that design revisions were needed based on state government commitments during the hearing relating to Millers Road, additional noise mitigation, additional truck bans and toll point removals; that design revisions were needed related to the city end of the project, particularly the alignment and elevation of the Wurundjeri Way extension and Dynon Road link; and that it needed mitigation impacts for Millers Road and planning for future alternative truck routes to Millers Road. It asked for the application of significant mitigation measures through the environmental performance requirement (EPR) of effective project implementation, including environmental management of construction impacts, and it asked for a design review at the city end of the project that may involve significant investigation and analysis.

Given the overall project timing, the independent inquiry and advisory committee (IAC) said that this

element could be done as a separate project planning approval if necessary by splitting up the planning scheme amendments to avoid any change. The question is: has this advice been heeded? Where is the evidence that the panel recommendations have been adhered to in the least?

Then there are a number of issues that the IAC report outlined that really needed to be reviewed before this project went ahead. In terms of transport there is a lack of an overall transport management plan. The IAC said it shared its concern regarding the lack of a transport plan, although it was satisfied with the overall response to some of the transport aspects of it. They said that the project should have some success reducing heavy vehicles in key areas, but some areas, such as Millers Road in Brooklyn, are likely to experience a significant deterioration in traffic conditions resulting in negative environmental impacts over time without further action. So they are saying that, while we solved some issues on one hand, we caused greater issues on the other hand. And what rights do those residents have to be brought into this process, to be consulted and to have solutions found for them as well?

The question is: have these things been done? Has there been an assessment of impacts associated with the provision of city connections and port connections at specific intersections? Has there been an assessment of Millers Road both confirming predictions in the environment effects statement (EES) and providing the basis for detailed local area traffic planning? They were some of the recommendations, and we need to see evidence that they have been done.

There are also concerns around the built environment. The report found that the project is likely to impose significant constraints on the urban renewal area at E-gate, primarily through the Wurundjeri Way extension. The IAC asked for a review and refinement of the project design at the city end to ensure that urban renewal opportunities associated with the future development of the E-gate precinct are reviewed. Has this been done and completed?

There are a number of serious health, amenity and environmental quality impacts that are cited in the report as well. There are noise impact studies that are saying that some of the noise impacts in the open space that is going to be created are going to potentially make the open space unusable and that you will have noise mitigation in some areas that will not achieve noise reduction levels across the project. We have to ask: do the residents of Western Metropolitan Region deserve this? Some of them get some noise reduction and others get a substandard level of noise reduction. They will

have to live with that noise pollution for decades and decades to come.

There is some open space that is going to be created, but it is going to be unusable because of the pollution and the noise. There is going to be a loss of very significant vegetation; hundreds of trees are going to be lost. The report cites that you actually have to address some of those vegetation issues now or you will not see a good outcome in terms of the landscape. Where have the time, energy and investment gone into ensuring that mitigation efforts have been invested in? I would argue that they have not been entered into because the rush to get Transurban to sign the contracts has outweighed any of the benefits to the community.

Then there are social, business, land use, public safety and infrastructure concerns right through this project, to the point which the IAC came out with a series of recommendations that would need to be addressed before this project proceeded. In terms of those recommendations, the IAC said they need to revise the project design, as announced by the state government; they need to review and refine the project design at the city end particularly; they need to include the environmental performance requirements in any project agreement between the state and the project company; the Environment Protection Authority should consider the recommendations and environmental performance requirements in this report and report back on that; they need to undertake a corridor study along Millers Road between the West Gate Freeway and Geelong Road to determine traffic and transport management works required to cater for the projected traffic volumes in 2031; they need to undertake further investigations of the traffic impacts on North Melbourne, West Melbourne and Docklands and undertake mitigation works as part of the cost; they need to undertake additional traffic modelling and implementation works to facilitate safe and efficient access by freight vehicles; they need to incorporate in the project design capacity for the future provision of noise protection measures; they need to undertake additional air quality surface road modelling, including exhaust and non-exhaust emissions, for the roads; and they need to develop and fund a specific air quality mitigation response for roads likely to experience significant increase in traffic, including Millers Road and Williamstown Road.

The IAC were also asked to develop and fund a smoky vehicle enforcement program within the project area to identify smoky vehicles for enforcement and rectification action. They were to be asked to consult with local and other relevant authorities to explore the potential for further urban design and landscape improvements outside the project area where they may

achieve improved outcomes. They were asked to review the design of the ramps on either side of the proposed Maribyrnong bridge to minimise visual bulk and incorporate transparent panels on bridge parapets. They were asked to fund a master plan for a linear reserve along the Moonee Ponds Creek between Dynon Road and Footscray Road, including the proposed open space west of the creek. They were asked to develop and implement a community involvement and participation plan to mitigate social impacts, particularly on communities which will experience cumulative negative impacts. They were asked to voluntarily acquire residential properties on the west side of Hyde Street, south of Francis Street.

The IAC recommended that the state retain control of the city access charge amount to ensure that the traffic management aims of the charge can be met. They recommended that the state retain authority to waive general tolls, and investigate alternative mechanisms for truck ban monitoring beyond physical surveillance by VicRoads. They asked for VicRoads to advance the development and release of a revised traffic noise reduction policy, and finally, they were asked that planning should commence for the northern corridor to complement this project.

There are 21 recommendations that were released in October 2017. Have any of those been followed up? Where is the reporting, where is the review, the redesign, the refinement, that this expert committee asked for as a matter of importance with this project approval?

We acknowledge that the government is undertaking some good public transport projects across the state, and we welcome them; they are long, long overdue. But this West Gate tunnel project is not one of them and it is an example of the worst process and the worst outcome. As planning expert after planning expert are telling us, there are better projects that should be invested in to address Melbourne's growing population, to address our increasingly bad traffic problems, to increase public transport and to get trucks off the streets in the inner west. The government are clearly not listening to transport and urban planning experts and they are not listening to the community. They seem to be listening only to Transurban. The project seems to be driven not by what is best for the local community but what is in the best interests of Transurban.

We acknowledge that the people of Yarraville, and so many residents in the west, have been waiting decades for successive governments to fix the problems that they are facing with trucks and congestion. We are with them in wanting immediate solutions to the problems

that they are facing. Those solutions are long overdue as well. We have a \$500 million project which is well-advanced, and which could be implemented, and yet we have got this \$6 billion project instead, a project that the modelling says will not actually solve the problems. We want the trucks off the streets too, and we will work with residents to ensure that we achieve that.

We think that this project will just shift the problem to other places. The city of Melbourne is going to be inundated with traffic. Melbourne City Council have spoken very strongly in opposition to the project because they are going to have to deal with some of the most significant of the ramifications. So many people have come out to oppose this project. Just recently I received letters from the City of Yarra and Moreland City Council, which passed a resolution last week. These are city councils that surround this project and that will have to deal with the aftermath of this project — and at the same time they are being denied the public transport funding that is so urgent for their own communities.

We have heard about the City of Hobsons Bay. It is deeply concerning to hear reports of a capital improvements package that has been promised to Hobsons Bay and that the council is actually reversing its original position which was in opposition to this project. I think questions have to be asked about that arrangement that has just come to light in the media in the last 24 hours.

In conclusion, there are better solutions to get trucks off the road and fix congestion, including proceeding with the plan that this government took to the 2014 state election. Labor promised a West Gate distributor project that would cost \$500 million, not \$6 billion. We could create a dedicated truck route around the edge of Yarraville to the port. A train line can carry 40 000 people per hour, while a freeway can only manage 24 000 people per hour. We know that trains and public transport will offer solutions for decades to come. The world's greatest cities have the world's greatest public transport integrated plans — and Melbourne is lagging behind.

We could be putting freight onto rail. The Greens have campaigned heavily for the port rail shuttle to be built — and it needs to be built immediately. The plan for the West Gate distributor could have cost a fraction to build and yet we have got billions of dollars being funnelled into a company with a deal that is not transparent, that was not taken to the public and that the public do not approve of. We could transform our rail network to a high-frequency metro system. Projects like

high-speed signalling and the Metro tunnel 2 are put off because billions of dollars are going into projects like this.

Before I finish, I would like to speak as well on what I mentioned at the start, the role of this Parliament in revocation motions. Here we have an example of a terrible planning process. I would argue that this Parliament would not be seeing the number of revocations it is seeing if the planning minister and the government used the process that is prescribed in the Planning and Environment Act to actually get planning permissions and approvals for the government's projects. There is a clearly defined process of consultation, of expert feedback, of taking it to local councils and communities. A project like this, which is foisted onto the public at rapid speed and with secret deals, undermines the integrity of the planning system. That is why we are seeing so many revocations in this Parliament. The integrity of the planning system is being called into question with the number of ministerial call-ins for projects across the state because developers and big, profitable companies seem to be prioritised over the community.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (11:09) — The late Kerry Packer once famously said, 'You only get one Alan Bond in a lifetime'. I think it is safe to say that Transurban is now celebrating its very own Alan Bond, because Transurban is fully entitled to say that you only get one Daniel Andrews in a lifetime. The whole process of this tunnel has been exceedingly dodgy. Cloaked in secrecy, it would not at all surprise me if this matter was one day closely examined by IBAC. Something stinks in the state of Victoria, and it is not just the Ravenhall tip. This stench involves Transurban and it involves the Andrews government.

We heard from Mr Melhem a little bit earlier about the views of the people of the western suburbs on this project. I would suggest to Mr Melhem that he should perhaps get out and speak to some of his constituents and hear what they have to say on the subject, because clearly he has not been doing so. I was very disappointed in fact just before Christmas to be at a rally in Brooklyn of local people opposed to this particular project. I was very disappointed to notice that there was not one member of the government there.

Ms Crozier — Just like Werribee.

Mr FINN — Exactly. As Ms Crozier points out, just like Werribee earlier in the year, there was not one member of the government there. I was very disappointed because I would have thought that Mr Melhem, Mr Eideh or perhaps Mr Noonan in the

Assembly, who will take the money and run at the next election, would have been there. Nobody from the government was there. That was to me exceedingly disappointing and indeed disrespectful to the people of the inner west of Melbourne.

I was challenged by Mr Mulino two weeks ago in this house to make this an election issue. I would be delighted to make this an election issue, because if we made this an election issue and if the next election in November was fought on this issue, let me tell you, we would win the seat of Williamstown. The Liberal Party would win the seat of Williamstown, the Liberal Party would win the seat of Footscray and the Liberal Party would win the seats of Werribee and Altona. We would have perhaps three or four members representing the Liberal Party in the west of Melbourne, along with Dr Carling-Jenkins of course. The ALP would be wiped out. I can only hope that this issue will be a major election issue in November.

I am standing here today doing what I do. I am standing up for my constituents. I am here telling this house that the people of the west do not want this project. They do not want your tunnel, Acting President Melhem. They do not want Daniel Andrews's tunnel. They are exceedingly unhappy. They know that it will be of no help at all in solving the traffic problems that they have. They know that already we have seen blowouts. We have seen a government that is just bouncing around from place to place being led by the nose by a large multinational corporation that is waiting for the rivers of gold to come its way if this project goes ahead. But the fact of the matter is that I have an obligation to support this motion today, because I know that the West Gate tunnel project is bad for Melbourne's west, is bad for the people of Melbourne's west and is bad for Victoria. We all have an obligation to support this motion moved by Mr Davis today.

I am sure the house would be aware that this project was touted as being a \$5.5 billion project. The government talked all last year about a \$5.5 billion project. That has already blown out to \$6.7 billion. Before they have even got a shovel in the ground it has blown out to \$6.7 billion. That should not be surprising, because this started out, before the last election, as a \$500 million project. The then opposition leader, Mr Andrews, said at the time that the project was shovel-ready. That is a quote — 'shovel-ready'. I tell you what, he was shovelling something, but it was not dirt. He was shovelling it all over anyone who was prepared to listen.

Mr O'Sullivan — Is that the only blowout, Mr Finn?

Mr FINN — No, there are many other blowouts that add up to some \$24 billion. For this particular project it is extraordinary that already we have seen a blowout of \$1.2 billion, which is almost the amount the Premier wasted by cancelling the east–west link. I wonder if some of that blowout is as a result of pay-offs — of slings if you will — to various groups and perhaps councils in the area who may have been threatening opposition. It has come to my attention in the last day or so that Hobsons Bay council has reversed its opposition to this project. From all reports the reversal of its opposition to the tunnel just happens to coincide — and I am sure it is a complete coincidence — with the promise of \$5 million from the Treasurer. Some might call that a bribe. I would not, but some might. As I say, this matter may well be looked at very closely by IBAC at some stage in the not-too-distant future.

Now we have a situation here where the opposition has made it abundantly clear where we stand. The opposition leader, Mr Guy, the next Premier of Victoria, has written to Scott Charlton, the chief executive officer. He has now written to them twice, and I will quote from the letter that he wrote to Mr Charlton — the second letter he wrote to Mr Charlton — on 29 December last year. I will not read all of it, but it says in part:

In fact, our concerns have deepened since further information concerning the project has been made public including the release today, the last business day of the year, of the *West Gate Tunnel Project Agreement*. The apparent desire to limit public scrutiny by the specific day of release and heavy redaction of parts of the agreement is most concerning.

Indeed, it is most concerning.

In addition to the concerns previously outlined, we note that the proposed WGT involves:

20 years of higher tolls for CityLink users —

I hope Mr Melhem is listening to this —

20 years of higher tolls for CityLink users: an above-CPI increase of CityLink tolls for 10 years, followed by an extension of Transurban's concession period for a further 10 years means that CityLink users in the south-east and north of Melbourne would be required to pay higher tolls for two decades in order to fund a road they may never drive on.

Here we have people living in, for example, Sunbury, Bulla, Gladstone Park and Tullamarine — they are going nowhere near the tunnel, but they will be expected to pay for it via tolls on CityLink.

Mr Guy's letter goes on to express:

A poor financial outcome for Victorians: analysis conducted by Credit Suisse notes that the proposed West Gate tunnel represents '\$2.7 billion value creation (for Transurban) from unsolicited proposal' —

which is just quite extraordinary; I mean, talk about money for jam —

and 'it is a highly attractive investment opportunity that TCL negotiated with the Victorian government without a competitive process' —

without a competitive process —

while Macquarie Wealth Management noted '... the surprise increase in CityLink tolls to 4.25 per cent per annum over 2019–2029. In a low inflationary environment, this is as much as a 20 per cent real toll increase!'. While Transurban will clearly benefit greatly from the proposed WGT project, this will be at the grave expense of Victorian taxpayers and motorists.

Isn't that the truth. As chairman of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee of this house I can advise that we have raised similar concerns with the department and with Transurban in the past on a number of occasions, and these questions, along with a number of other questions, have just been completely brushed over — completely brushed over. There has been no attempt to answer any of the serious questions about this project — no attempt at all. When I see that the tolls will be around for 10 years longer and they will be increased in real terms by 20 per cent, I am thinking of the families of the north-west of Melbourne. I am thinking of those families who are struggling already to pay their electricity bills — that is, if they have electricity at all. I am thinking of people who are struggling to send their kids to school, to pay off their house and to even put petrol in their car. I mean, it is a daily struggle for many families just to get by, and to have these extended tolls and increased tolls is an obscenity — it is an obscenity. What an appalling insult to the people of Victoria that this government is proposing in this project.

Of course there is also, as Mr Guy points out in his letter:

A new tax to access the Melbourne CBD: for the first time, motorists travelling from the western suburbs, Geelong and western Victoria will be subject to a new tax to access Melbourne between 7 a.m.–9 a.m. on weekdays. This is in addition to —

above, on top of —

tolls. We note that Premier Daniel Andrews promised Victorians before the last election that he would introduce no new taxes —

what a pity he didn't say, 'Read my lips' —

and, as such, the city access tax represents a broken promise.

Mr Guy should have pointed out, in fact, that it is yet another broken promise.

This program is a shocker. It is a shocker. It is an appalling project in terms of a piece of infrastructure. We are going to find a situation where what it will be doing is replicating for the west side of Melbourne what we already have in Hoddle Street for the eastern side of Melbourne. Now, why you would want to do that I have no idea. Why would you want to do that? We know what a pain Hoddle Street is. Why would you want to give us one on the west side of Melbourne as well? That is just insanity. I am really starting to think that the Premier and the roads minister — certainly the roads minister; he does not look at much at all, I think —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — I hope he does not get kicked anywhere, but particularly there.

An honourable member — Kicked out!

Mr FINN — Get kicked out of Parliament in November — that would not be a bad thing. But I am starting to think that the Premier has not actually read what this proposal is. It is just outrageous. It is just appalling. Is it any wonder that Transurban think that their ship has come in? They are laughing all the way to the bank. We are talking about rivers of gold for Transurban, with no tangible benefit for the people of Victoria and certainly no benefit to the people of the western suburbs. In fact the people of the western suburbs will be worse off after this project is open — if indeed it is ever open — than they are now. They will be worse off than they are now. Why the hell would anybody representing the western suburbs of Melbourne come into this place and support it? Mr Melhem might like to explain that at some stage to his constituents. I am not sure why they would do that.

I very strongly support the motion that has been put by Mr Davis. I am hoping that the government will not filibuster anymore and will actually be able to get on with this, because this is a particularly important motion. You know, people talk about certainty. I think this is something we can be certain about. If this motion is passed today, it will send a very clear message that the Parliament of Victoria does not want the West Gate tunnel.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (11:25) — I rise to speak somewhat briefly on the motion moved by Mr Davis that seeks to revoke the various planning permits relevant to the West Gate tunnel project. It is interesting that this is just one of two of these revocation motions that we will be debating today.

I think this is partly why Australians are disengaged from politics. In 2015 only 19 per cent of our population had even some trust in political parties, and that is a statistic that has been in steady decline. Our communities — and I am sure we all experience it when we are out in our communities at events — are becoming increasingly cynical and disillusioned when it comes to our elected representatives, when it comes to us. It would be remiss of us not to contemplate why. Why in the five years from 2011 did trust in federal and state parliaments decline from 55 per cent to 33 per cent? Two-thirds of the Australian population has no trust in state and federal parliaments and our systems. Why is this trust being increasingly replaced with cynicism and frustration?

Victorians are right to be frustrated when in this parliamentary term we have seen \$1.2 billion in public funds thrown away as the east–west link project was canned and those contracts torn up — a huge sum of money that could have been spent on Victorian infrastructure, be that roads or hospital beds. The opposition will blame the government and the government will point to the conduct of the former Treasurer in signing a side letter during an election campaign that was being played out on that very issue — it will be tit for tat. But irrespective of who is responsible, where the blame lies and who was or was not complicit, losing \$1.2 billion of Victorian taxpayers funds was a massive failure. And it is a failure we should never repeat. It is something that we should try and protect ourselves against systematically and not continue to squabble over.

In some ways I feel that these types of infrastructure projects of this scale should be above this type of politicking. I do not think I know the answer for how we do this, but resurrecting a project like the east–west link should not be contingent on who won the last election or who wins the next. Long-term infrastructure planning does not sit comfortably with our four-year election cycle. These are longitudinal population issues, and I think we as a Parliament must consider where we are going with future planning and how we are developing that future plan for our very fast growing state.

I note that the Australian Business Council CEO, Ms Jennifer Westacott, also makes this point, and I will quote her:

... the cost of delaying yet another major transport project in Victoria would be immense.

You cannot just turn on the tap and expect infrastructure investment to flow. It will be years before another project of this scale will be ready to be built ...

If and when that happens, the state will face higher costs and the project is likely to take much longer to build.

In thinking about how we could do this better — again I do not have the answer — we should be asking, ‘How do we empower an independent, evidence-based voice to drive our infrastructure agenda more effectively?’ so that we are not having this politicking and tit for tat in this place.

We have talked about transparency, and I know Dr Ratnam also mentioned transparency. I do think that there is a perception of a lack of transparency in this — it is more than a perception, I think it can be very real. The arrangements with Transurban that probably underpin this motion and are certainly the reason that we are debating this are just like the problem with the east–west link and will be again if we do not effect some sort of systematic change.

I know we all would have received letters from many councils, but I take the point of the City of Yarra, who wrote to us just the other day, and I will quote them:

In the council’s opinion, the process surrounding this proposal has not been transparent, no business case has been provided to support the project and its concomitant extension of tolls, and the project has not been submitted to a tendering process to ensure best value for the Victorian community in its delivery and ongoing operation.

I agree. We do need to improve our transparency, and that is probably how we will improve the trust. That may even be how we improve the prospects of getting bipartisan support for major projects. It may even go some way to restoring the confidence of our community and its faith that this Parliament will act with integrity. Infrastructure planning should be evidence based and above this short termism and politicking that we are seeing today.

Should we be entrenching this recent trend to block significant government projects by challenging planning approvals in this place? I think the President made some very important points on that yesterday when he spoke of this. I do not think this is how we should be operating in here — tit for tat, starting and stopping, and creating uncertainty. We know that this not only destroys business confidence but also destroys

trust more broadly. If we block this project here, we will be throwing away billions of dollars that have already been spent on it, down the same hatch as the money spent on the east–west link. If this motion is successful today — although, going by the speakers list, I doubt it will actually get to a vote today — it will raise the issue that this Parliament tables a document and then revokes a document without the minister actually tabling the document. I think that raises some questions. If this were to occur today, would the matter then proceed to the courts, and if so, who would pay for that? I feel that we can afford the government some sort of mandate to govern, the successes and failures of which will be tested at the ballot box.

Turning to the project itself — the West Gate tunnel — a project of this scale will have adverse effects and individuals will be disadvantaged. They should be given every opportunity to voice their concerns, and those concerns should be considered. I do not think we ever get to a perfect scenario in which everybody is absolutely happy with a project of this scale. There will be road closures; there will be noisy works. It is difficult for governments, and it is difficult for communities as well. I feel like I have been saying this a lot in this place during my term so far, but we should not let the perfect stand in the way of the good.

I think that this project has some very positive aspects. It will improve the movement of freight. It does provide direct connections to the port of Melbourne. It removes trucks from local streets. It will deliver some travel time savings for motorists from Geelong, Ballarat and Melbourne’s west. It provides an alternative to the West Gate Bridge. One accident on the West Gate Bridge can currently clog our city in every single direction, so having an alternative route, I feel, is absolutely crucial. In the north it means that we will see less vehicles on the Bolte Bridge, and also there will be an alternative route to the western suburbs, Geelong and the Surf Coast. In the east we will see increased capacity on the West Gate Freeway, and I believe we will see better traffic flows.

I appreciate that some would say that roads create more congestion and that all we need is public transport. We are building a lot of public transport at the moment, but I do believe we need this sort of infrastructure, and we have not actually built this sort of infrastructure for a very long time. Fourteen kilometres of new cycling paths and walking paths is very positive, and this includes the new 2.5 kilometres of the veloway for cyclists, which creates the missing link to the Federation Trail. We will finally have the completed Federation Trail.

As I mentioned, the Business Council of Australia want this project to go ahead, and they are not alone. The RACV supports this project, as do the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Logistics Council, the Geelong Regional Alliance, the Urban Development Institute of Australia, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and the Victorian Transport Association.

Finally, the environment effects statement process has been criticised significantly in this chamber, but it is a 10 000-page document and I think received over 500 submissions. I appreciate that this project is not perfect and that there will be people negatively impacted by it, but all in all I believe that governments should have some mandate and that that mandate can be tested at the election box on 24 November. I have been disappointed with the process. I believe we should consider how we can deal with large infrastructure projects like this so that they are more transparent and so we can find some way to restore the confidence of the community, but I am not supporting this motion.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (11:37) — It is a pleasure to rise and speak on today's motion, which has been proposed by Mr Davis. I must say Ms Patten's contribution was very sensible and it made a lot of sense. I too will not be supporting Mr Davis's revocation motion.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms SYMES — Actually I will passionately be opposing this motion, Mr Ramsay.

Mr Ramsay — You come from the north. You won't be paying tolls.

Ms SYMES — You wait and you will hear about how good this is for the north, Mr Ramsay.

The current status of the revocation motion is meaningless. I did speak on this at some length last sitting week in relation to the requirements under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to go through the right processes. In order to be revoked, planning schemes must first be tabled by the minister. Of course we know that that will happen this week.

I will speak generally on the revocation without getting into too much of the legal uncertainty that has been introduced by today's motion. The Labor government's ambitious infrastructure program is massive; it is huge. We are a government that can never be accused of doing nothing. We do not sit on our hands, and no-one disagrees that we are a government that gets things done.

This infrastructure project is the biggest in Victoria's history. I do not always get the time to examine the details of every individual project, but I have paid a little bit of attention to this one. We are building the West Gate tunnel because drivers in Melbourne's west, Geelong and Ballarat desperately need an alternative to the West Gate Bridge. For too long Victorians have desperately needed a second river crossing. The West Gate tunnel will slash congestion from Geelong to Pakenham. It will reduce travel times. It will take 28 000 vehicles, including 8000 trucks, off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 off the Bolte Bridge. It will finally ban thousands of trucks from local streets, with 24/7 truck bans coming into effect in 2022, and improve safety and reduce noise. On the face of it, it sounds pretty good.

Even so, I think I have already been questioned while on my feet on why a member for Northern Victoria Region would be so passionately opposed to Mr Davis's revocation. What does this have to do with northern Victoria — the communities that I represent and that I truly care about? This project will create 6000 jobs — and it had me at 'jobs'. Last fortnight the Minister for Roads and Road Safety joined the Premier in Footscray to mark the start of the West Gate tunnel works. Workers have started clearing a site on Whitehall Street in Footscray where they will dig down more than seven storeys, clearing the way for the project's two massive tunnel boring machines. When they are launched in 2019, these two machines will tunnel towards the West Gate Freeway, moving 9 metres per day and excavating enough rock and soil to fill the MCG. As these machines bore through the earth, they will install a concrete lining behind them, forming the walls, roof and base of the tunnel. Construction crews following behind will work to build the road surface and install electrics, ventilation and safety systems.

Although I am the daughter of a builder I am no expert on construction, but what is very clear in relation to a massive project like the West Gate tunnel is that a hell of a lot of concrete is needed to do this. So the day after he visited Footscray I was delighted to welcome Minister Donnellan to my home town of Benalla. It was not just the roses and street art that brought one of the busiest ministers in the government to B-town. He joined me, Benalla Rural City Council mayor Don Firth and CEO Tony McIlroy to formally announce that in order to facilitate the construction of the West Gate tunnel project, Victoria's largest precast concrete manufacturing facility will be built in Benalla, creating 400 jobs and providing a massive boost to the local economy.

That is the reason I vehemently oppose any interference with or stalling or frustration of the West Gate tunnel project — 400 jobs for people living in Benalla or around it in Wangaratta, Euroa, Shepparton, Yarrawonga and all the way up to Wodonga and every town in between. A \$60 million factory will be built outside Benalla to supply the concrete for this project. Mr Donnellan’s announcement explained to my country constituents that the Labor government is making sure that all Victorians will share in the opportunities created by our massive infrastructure program.

The massive factory will be built and operated by local businesses and will supply the concrete for the tunnel project. It will then go on to supply future major projects across the state. Benalla’s access to road and rail infrastructure means the facility is directly connected to the West Gate tunnel project and will be well-placed to supply future projects around Victoria and also interstate. A new 700-metre rail siding will be built along the existing rail line in Benalla to provide a direct link between the precast facility and Melbourne. Construction of this facility will commence next month and is due to be completed in October of this year.

I am very much looking forward to hearing the contributions on this motion from the members for Northern Victoria Region, particularly Mr O’Sullivan. This is the biggest jobs announcement in decades to affect the communities of Benalla and Wangaratta and the Nationals-held seats that are the huge beneficiaries.

I cannot emphasise enough what this project means to Benalla. But I do not need to, because my community have done a pretty good job themselves. The mayor said:

This is a massive investment and one Benalla has been waiting for for a long time — you could say it is a game changer for Benalla.

And he said:

The number of jobs coming to Benalla is so significant, it’s the biggest investment Benalla has seen at least since Thales.

Facebook comments have included those from Tanya:

Congratulations, Benalla. We are back on the map.

From Colin:

What a great thing for Benalla.

And from Graham:

At last some good news for Benalla. Bring it on! #benalla #jobs #northeastvic #westgate.

The Supporting Benalla Business Facebook page has changed their cover photo to a diagram of the tunnel project with the headline ‘West Gate tunnel creates 400 jobs for Benalla’. They have shared the WIN News coverage of the announcement, saying:

Such a buzz in town — locals can’t wipe their smiles!

Robert commented:

This is unbelievable for Benalla, 400 workers for this site, 150 approx. for the new aged-care centre and 200 for the proposed tomato farm, at last Benalla is becoming a commercial hub.

Gwen said:

Well done Jac Symes, you are doing lots for Benalla.

Dianne said:

Congratulations Benalla, great to see some new employment ... Welcome to Benalla all you new people.

Christine said:

Good news for the region.

Further Facebook comments have included Wayne telling a friend:

Maybe you guys should move up here. Will be jobs going soon.

Steffi told her friend Anthony:

See, come home.

Ally wrote:

This is bloody amazing news! Congratulations to you Jaclyn, your government colleagues and the Benalla Rural City Council.

The front page of the *Benalla Ensign* welcomed the jobs boost for the area, with a story headed ‘Concrete investment thrills’.

I can honestly say that I have not found any negativity in town about this development, so I find it really interesting that The Nationals in particular are set to abandon the view of their constituents and side with the Liberals to knock off the project and in turn knock off 400 jobs in north-east Victoria. If The Nationals do not stand up for country jobs, what do they stand up for? They stand in the shadows of their Liberal leaders. Is it any wonder they are becoming less and less relevant in modern-day politics? I promised my community that I would stand up today in support of jobs, and I am proudly doing that. Like most of the locals, I am really, really angry that the coalition are attempting to revoke the planning approvals for the West Gate tunnel project.

Of course our minds turn to the hundreds of workers already on the job and their families. Many of them are apprentices or retrained auto industry workers. But this is the biggest thing for Benalla in decades, and the thought that it could be taken away is generating a lot of talk in town.

Bizarrely the Assembly member for Euroa is trying to convince Benalla residents that the concrete factory will be built even if the West Gate tunnel project is stopped. This could not be further from the truth, and I cannot work out if it is misguided, misinformed or malicious. The tunnel project has been awarded to a construction consortium, and commercial discussions are currently underway with local suppliers to develop and operate the facility.

The member for Euroa is trying to convince Benalla that John Holland will build the facility anyway, and she has sought a meeting with them to discuss this. The embarrassing fact is that her intelligence on this project is false. I assume she made it up. I do not want to go in too hard on the member for Euroa — that is not really my style, and I think it is likely to happen at the ballot box anyway. I personally think the Liberal Party have hung The Nationals out to dry on this revocation motion, and they have little option but to desperately try to save face in the community. I guess desperate times call for desperate measures, but as politicians we should really refrain from just making up facts.

There is no saving The Nationals on this one. My communities know they have sold them out, and they are unlikely to be forgiven for being active participants in a plan to cut 400 jobs from north-east Victoria. I cannot be clearer: if there is no tunnel, there is no Benalla concrete facility and there are no 400 jobs.

Mr O'Sullivan — On a point of order, Acting President, this seems to be a set speech that the member is reading from which is overtly criticising a political party and has got nothing to do with the actual bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Thank you, Mr O'Sullivan. That is not a point of order.

Ms SYMES — It is true that once built, the facility will be capable of up to 1500 tonnes of concrete product per day at peak capacity and will be well-placed to supply future jobs interstate and in our state. It is awesome that this project will go ahead, but it will only be built if the tunnel is built, and it is being built now. I will not say it will never be built — I am not as loose with the facts as some other members of Parliament — but it certainly will not be any time soon.

If the tunnel project is stopped, the concrete facility will not be operational from October this year.

Larry on the Benalla Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down page summed it up pretty well. This story will either be a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down story. It will be a thumbs-up story if it creates jobs and growth and a boom for real estate and businesses in the area and employment for young people, or it could be a thumbs-down project if it does not go ahead.

I am very pleased to say that I have already been contacted by people who want to work at the concrete factory, asking, 'What are the employment opportunities?', and I am happy to report that there is an industry briefing to be held at the Benalla Performing Arts Centre tomorrow night. You can imagine, following the announcement of the actual concrete factory being built in Benalla, the numbers of interested people, companies, organisations and parties to register for this has soared. I am sure actually that the opposition's attempt to knock off the project will be a hot topic of conversation for people participating.

There are no legitimate grounds for the Legislative Council to revoke this planning scheme amendment, and any attempt to do so would be an act of economic vandalism. Personally for me it puts at risk 400 jobs in my home town — that is, 400 country people wanting to live and work close to home.

Perhaps it is unsurprising. There is a quote from the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in 2011, the member for Brighton, when she revealed:

... there is a fundamental point of philosophical difference between the opposition and the government, and that is that the opposition seems to think the government's role is to provide jobs.

I can confirm to the house that Labor members consider that it certainly is our job to create jobs. It underpins almost everything we do. We know that the Liberals and The Nationals do not believe it is the government's role. They have got no record in it. They have never done it. But we on this side, we the Labor government, get it. The latest labour force statistics show that since the election of the Andrews Labor government Victorian employment has increased by 316 800 persons and 52 700 regional jobs have been created under Labor. Almost 40 000 of these are full-time. This is publicly available information. In contrast, only 8500 regional jobs were created in the entire coalition term, December 2010 to November 2014, and full-time employment shamefully went backwards by 14 100 jobs. We do not spend time patting ourselves on the back over this.

We know there is more to do — more jobs to create — and I am proud of our government's commitment to creating jobs. Many of our projects have minimum numbers of apprentices. We are reskilling retrenched workers. We have got long-term unemployed programs for getting people back into work. We have got programs targeted at Aboriginal employment and jobs for people with disabilities, and frankly if it was not for this government's hard work and commitment to job creation, many Victorians would not be employed or have any prospect of future employment at this time.

I have got lots and lots I want to say on this, and unfortunately the clock is going to beat me, but I did want to just point out that one of the issues for the Greens and the Liberals, who keep saying that it did not go to tender and that this is secret, is wrong. This project went through the market-led proposal guidelines of Treasury and competitive tender processes, which this consortium, which is CPB Contractors and John Holland, won. Some people will have you think that it is all John Holland. This is a consortium. This is a group that got together to build the tunnel.

This is the most open and transparent process a project of this size has ever gone through — it is actually unprecedented — unlike the east-west link, which never released a business case. We do know why, though, because it would have lost 55 cents for every dollar invested. The West Gate tunnel, on the other hand, returns \$1.30 for every dollar invested.

I have got lots to say, but I think most importantly I promised the Benalla community that I would come here today and stand up for them, for their jobs and for north-east Victoria, and I vehemently oppose this motion.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (11:52) — The context we find ourselves in in Victoria is that we are growing at an incredibly rapid pace — more than 140 000 people per year. And it is not just Melbourne; it is our regional cities as well. Indeed we look at Geelong in particular as a regional city which is growing at a rate that stands out amongst Australia's non-capital cities. The kind of growth that we are experiencing is extremely high relative to any other Australian jurisdiction, and indeed Australia itself has high population growth relative to comparable OECD countries. Of course what this means is that we have a significant challenge. Our society has a significant challenge to build the infrastructure that we need — the economic infrastructure, the transport infrastructure and the social infrastructure — in order to keep up with that population growth.

I have said in this place on a number of occasions that this population growth, I believe, is a good sign. It is in part a reflection of people voting with their feet — people moving from interstate and a disproportionately high number of international migrants choosing to move here. It is people voting with their feet, moving here because our quality of life is high, but in order to maintain that high quality of life and improve it, we need to invest. As Ms Symes was just pointing out, over the last three years we have put in place a record infrastructure pipeline, more than \$10 billion per year, and that covers the full gamut of infrastructure — private and public transport, education, health. What those opposite stand for is, in government, doing nothing and, in opposition, wrecking for its own sake.

I know I have said on a number of occasions — and people on this side have all said — that it is entirely appropriate for this chamber to act as a place of review, but it should not take upon itself the role of acting as a place of kneejerk rejection. I will argue later on in my contribution that that is what this motion represents.

I am going to talk about three things in my contribution today. Firstly, I am going to talk about the benefits of this much-needed project for the west of Melbourne, for Geelong but indeed for the whole state. As Ms Symes pointed out, the benefits of this project are going to be felt throughout Victoria, so the first thing I am going to talk about is the range of benefits of this project. The second thing I am going to talk about is the process that has been undergone to date, just to rebut some of the assertions that have been made about a lack of consultation and a lack of due process. There has indeed been a very rigorous process to get to the point where we are now. Thirdly, I am going to talk about the way in which this revocation motion is an inappropriate use of the review powers of this chamber. I am going to talk about the way in which the kinds of debate that we should be having are being misused and skewed so as to test processes that have been used well over recent decades and push them to the point where they are, in my opinion, nothing more than a political stunt.

In terms of the benefits of this project, this project most directly is about linking some of our fastest growing municipalities to the CBD. This project is about not just linking people to the CBD but about connecting Melbourne and Geelong better, Geelong itself being an incredibly rapidly growing regional city. It is fair to say that Geelong, depending on the precise time period that one takes, is the fastest growing or certainly amongst the very fastest growing regional cities in Australia. This project will be absolutely critical in reducing travel times and reducing congestion.

Indeed it is not just what we see right now. We see the West Gate Bridge under immense stress right now. The last time I spoke on a revocation motion of a slightly different form — it was Mr Davis's pre-stunt motion — the West Gate Bridge had been under incredible stress for a few days in a row. This is an issue right now, but the way to think about this — and Ms Patten talked about the need to plan — is that governments of all stripes, no matter who is in power, need to plan over the longer term, and that is what the community expects. If we fast forward the kinds of population growth that we are experiencing now and that demographers expect over the next 30 years, we know that we cannot sit on our hands. It is not just the issues we are facing right now, which are extreme enough. If we fast forward the population growth that we can reasonably expect, those problems will become totally unmanageable.

The benefits of this project are in terms of congestion and travel times. For the west there will be reduced travel times, less congestion, more choice and a second river crossing, which is absolutely critical. For the north there will be 22 000 less vehicles on the Bolte Bridge. In the east, in my electorate, the M1 conveys people all the way from Pakenham to Geelong, and indeed even in my electorate people are now feeling the strains of the M1 being congested. The project reflects the interdependency of transport and the transport challenge around the state, so the benefits are immense.

Ms Symes pointed out that this project will create 6000 jobs. Victoria's job performance stands out amongst all the other states, with over 300 000 jobs created since we came to office. The regional jobs performance stands out even more than the overall jobs performance. As Ms Symes said, we can point to construction jobs directly on the project itself, but think about all the jobs that are going to be directly created in places like Benalla — the 400 jobs she talked about, the 400 families with a reliable income. Of those 6000 jobs and of the 400 that Ms Symes talked about, many of them will be apprentices and many of them will be people who are coming from a vulnerable background. These are absolutely critical benefits of projects like this.

When one talks about this government's massive infrastructure pipeline, one can look at tens of thousands of jobs directly attributable to the actions of this government. Those jobs are an additional massive benefit. Then of course it is also about taking all of the trucks off the road, making the port function better and improving the productivity of our major international gateways. The benefits of this project are absolutely immense. There are direct benefits. There are

long-lasting benefits. This project is absolutely urgently needed right now.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT (12:00) — Before I call the first question, can I just indicate that we have in the gallery today some guests of the Parliament: Mr Scott Bates, the deputy secretary of the state of Connecticut; Mr John Schuyler, chairman of the Connecticut District Export Council; and Anne Evans, director of the US Department of Commerce in Connecticut. We welcome you to the Parliament.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Victorian certificate of education

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (12:01) — My question is for the minister representing the Minister for Education. I have recently been informed that the book *Foreign Soil* is being used as a Victorian certificate of education text in high schools in my area. Many parents are concerned about the content of this book, describing it as an offensive, provocative collection of stories with strong sexual references. When they have approached school principals with their concerns they have been told that there will be no compromise on the book, that it is a compulsory text and that if they wish for their child to proceed to year 12 the book must be studied. This is actually not the case, as the text is one of six options provided by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority in the short stories category. Minister, why are school principals displaying such inflexibility and refusing to accommodate the sensitivities and preferences of parents and their children, and what action will the minister take in this area?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:01) — I thank Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins for her question. It is about a book that is part of the curriculum in schools, but I think the question really is about the actions of school principals. I will refer this matter to the Minister for Education, and I am sure he will respond and comply with the guidelines in terms of the question.

Supplementary question

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (12:02) — I want to thank Minister Tierney for her response. I appreciate how specific this question is. Minister, when you pass this on to the Minister for

Education I want you to state that it is simply not fair for a student to be academically penalised in situations like this, so I am asking the minister: what quick methods of appeal are open to these students to resolve this issue, keeping in mind that students have been threatened with not being able to proceed to year 12 should they resist studying the book *Foreign Soil*?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:03) — I thank the member for her supplementary question. The supplementary question raises a very serious allegation, and I am sure that the Minister for Education will respond very quickly.

Duck hunting season

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (12:03) — My question today is for the Minister for Agriculture and is in response to information published by the Game Management Authority (GMA) regarding a recent regulation change to the retrieval of game birds. The new regulation implies that reasonable effort must be made to retrieve a downed game bird, a practice that any responsible and ethical hunter supports, but the regulation has simply not been written this way. The information provided by the GMA suggests that it would no longer be legal to shoot a pair of ducks and it would no longer be legal for a mate to collect your bird from the next hide. That would destroy traditional practices of duck hunting such as decoying in a hide, as it would no longer be practical. This has obviously been written by a person with no knowledge of duck hunting in this state whatsoever. Minister, can you clearly explain to the house what new regulation 51A means and how it will be applied?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:04) — I thank Mr Young for his question. I understand there has been some debate in the hunting community about the new regulations that we have put in place for this year's duck season following some conduct by a number of hunters last year that was really unacceptable. I will say, as I have done on many occasions before, that it is certainly the government's view that the overwhelming majority of our duck hunters abide by the rules and participate in accordance with the regulations.

Mr Young — Then why are you changing the rules?

Ms PULFORD — You had suggestions for me after last year about changing the rules. You, hunting groups and anyone in the state, frankly, with an opinion on duck hunting had some views about some changes that we should make.

If we can just get back to Mr Young's question, there has been, as Mr Young points out, a fact sheet that was recently placed on the GMA website. But let me just make absolutely clear that the expectation that a reasonable effort be made to immediately recover a downed bird is not new. This has existed in the code of practice for hunting that exists under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and has existed since 2005. It also is taught as part of the shotgunning education program, which is delivered by Sporting Shooters and Field & Game. If I could just quote from *Be a Better Game Bird Hunter: Shotgunning Education Program Handbook*, at page 37, section 5, 'After the shot', this is what some of our leading hunting organisations in our state train new hunters to know, and I quote:

Never shoot at multiple birds. If you down a bird, recovering it must be the sole focus of your attention. Don't shoot at another bird until you have made every effort to successfully bring the downed bird to hand.

The language that is in regulation 51A of the new regulations is:

A person who hunts, takes or destroys a game bird must make all reasonable efforts to recover the downed game bird immediately after the bird is struck —

as has existed in the code since 2005 and as exists in the shotgunning education training materials.

I understand that there is some concern from some people around the way that this has been expressed on the GMA website. If there are people who think it can perhaps be more clearly expressed, then we are happy to consider that. But the regulations have been changed, and as I indicated, in this respect they codify what has been understood to be best practice for quite some time.

Supplementary question

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (12:07) — Thank you, Minister, for your answer. Minister, I asked last week whether the government would change the times that protesters are allowed onto the water at opening, and the answer was no. Since the government is comfortable with the conflict it has created, I seek some clarification of what a hunter is to do when their bird is stolen by protesters. At what point in retrieving their bird should a hunter stop the pursuit of a protester for fear of prosecution under this new regulation?

The PRESIDENT — I am a little concerned about how relevant that supplementary question is to the first question, Mr Young.

Mr YOUNG — The first question asked for a simple explanation of the regulation and how it would be applied. This is a specific example that was not explained in the first answer.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:08) — I thank Mr Young for his supplementary question and the scenario that he has outlined. I do not accept that we have, in making these changes for the 2018 season, exacerbated a conflict that has existed in the community for an incredibly long time. There are deeply held and wildly divergent views about duck hunting in Victoria. As you know and as Ms Pennicuik who was interjecting not more than a moment or two ago knows, there are divergent views, and I do not believe that the changes to the regulations will make the passion that both sides of this debate feel any greater or any less, if I could just respond to that.

But compliance officers in regulation of game, in regulation of fisheries and in regulation of the controls that exist for our wildlife in so many different areas of government administration deal with difficult situations all the time in the course of their work. They are trained and of course expected by the agencies for whom they work to be able to assess whether or not somebody is acting responsibly. I have confidence that the significant numbers of people who will be coming together around opening weekend from across a range of different agencies will have the skills to undertake their jobs.

Strathbogie Ranges logging

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:10) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. I note that in documentation I secured under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 the Victorian government's independent Scientific Advisory Committee advised the government in a letter dated 4 November 2016 that the greater glider is, and I quote, 'in a demonstrable state of decline which is likely to result in extinction'. The Scientific Advisory Committee requested the government support an interim suspension of timber harvesting in the Strathbogie Ranges. In 2017 VicForests logged the Parlours Creek coupe and now plans to log the Barjarg Flat coupe, both in the Strathbogies. Could the minister please advise why the Andrews government is going against the advice of its independent Scientific Advisory Committee and permitting the state-owned logging enterprise, VicForests, to log the Strathbogies?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:10) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question. It is specifically around the Barjarg Flat coupe in the

Strathbogie Ranges. There has been some recent protest activity in this area. I believe it was last week. This has been managed, and there has been consultation with the broader community in the area about harvesting as part of the usual community engagement and consultation that occurs in managing the work of VicForests. What I can indicate to Ms Dunn is that one of the consequences of this consultation and the advice that is available to government is that in respect of this area that Ms Dunn is asking about there is to be a move from clear-fell harvesting to selective harvesting. I know there is nothing in the world that I can say that will satisfy Ms Dunn's views about the native timber industry.

Ms Dunn interjected.

Ms PULFORD — Yes, I have no doubt that Ms Dunn loves the gliders and the possums and all manner of other creatures that dot the landscape of Victoria — I have no doubt about that at all — and I recognise Ms Dunn's determined efforts to do whatever harm she can to the native timber industry. But what I would indicate in this case is that we have made some changes to the way in which logging is occurring. I doubt very much that they will satisfy Ms Dunn, because Ms Dunn will not be satisfied as long as logging is occurring, but we certainly take very seriously our responsibility to manage and protect those species whose very existence interacts with our logging activity, and the code of practice that applies to practices of VicForests is always undertaken in a way that is incredibly conscious of that responsibility.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:13) — Thank you, Minister. For the benefit of the house, the greater glider is in fact the clumsy possum. But my supplementary question is: could the minister confirm —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms DUNN — And in a state of decline facing extinction too. Could the minister confirm what percentage of the logs extracted from the Strathbogie coupes will be processed and sold for firewood?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:14) — I thank Ms Dunn for her further question. I know it suits Ms Dunn's argument to reflect that some uses of timber harvested in our forests are of lesser or greater value. Ms Dunn, I think, is being a little cute, because Ms Dunn knows about the way the industry operates enough to understand the interaction between the different uses of different types of timber. So nice

try, Ms Dunn, but I can certainly assure her that VicForests, in managing their responsibilities, in managing their contracts, are always conscious of the best possible use of this resource.

Duck hunting season

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (12:15) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture, and it is a follow-up question to my question last week with regard to compliance and enforcement of the duck shooting regulations. I agree that the new regulations will make little or no difference to the shooting of protected species. Last year at the Koorangie marshes I witnessed a barrage of early shooting at threatened species while Game Management Authority (GMA) officers and police stood on the shore. GMA compliance officers are constrained by OH&S regulations which mean they cannot go into the water and they cannot approach a shooter on the shore without being accompanied by two police officers. My question, Minister, is: how are GMA compliance officers expected to police duck shooters who are shooting before the official start time or shooting illegal species when they are not able to go into the water because of OH&S regulations?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:16) — So today in question time we have had it asserted that the new regulations are completely over the top and completely ineffective. Maybe Mr Young and Ms Pennicuik could work out which it is.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms PULFORD — Yes, I know. I suppose I was just making the point that no matter what approach anybody takes to the regulation of duck hunting and particularly the arrangements for opening weekend, there will be people in the community who are very unhappy about it. That is I suppose because the very nature of it is something that is quite contested in the community. But I do thank Ms Pennicuik for her question around compliance and enforcement capability of the GMA. I guess that also goes in part to the preparations for the opening weekend, which is now only about four weeks away.

So there are restrictions on which types of officers can enter the water — Ms Pennicuik is correct about that — but that has got to be seen in the context of a multi-agency enforcement effort. I can certainly assure both Mr Young and Ms Pennicuik that it will be significantly greater than it was last year and that we are currently putting in place the arrangements for different agencies to be available to ensure compliance

with the rules and also to ensure that the community and people who are in our wetlands for opening weekend are kept safe.

I think, as I indicated in the answer to Ms Pennicuik's question in the house last week, there are limits to the extent I can detail all compliance planning and activities, but I would certainly reassure Ms Pennicuik that there will be officers who are able to enter the water. There will be officers from a range of agencies. We are certainly very conscious of the need to have a strong presence given the circumstances of last year and the opportunity I think for everyone involved to demonstrate a better outcome. That is one of the reasons that we have sought to change some of the rules. Ms Pennicuik has been critical of that and Mr Young has been critical of that, but I think that they strike the right balance. There has been extensive consultation with stakeholders throughout the development of those, and they are based on recommendations from the Game Management Authority about what is the best way to proceed for 2018.

Supplementary question

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (12:19) — Thank you, Minister. I would be very interested if you could elaborate on the multi-agencies that you mentioned and while doing that indicate how many game management compliance officers will be available on the wetlands for the full three-month duck shooting season. I, myself, witness every opening weekend, which of course is the busiest weekend. As I mentioned, compliance officers do not enter the water. Shooters start shooting way before the time allocated for the start, protected birds and other birds that are not even ducks are shot before our eyes and no compliance officers ever go into the water to approach a shooter for breaching those two very obvious regulations. Could you elaborate on how regulations are going to be enforced by these multi-agency and GMA compliance officers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:20) — I thank Ms Pennicuik for her further question. I suppose there is a short answer and a slightly longer answer. I might just indicate that some of the agencies who will be involved include the GMA, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources enforcement staff, and Victoria Police. I will provide further detail insofar as I can around total numbers for Ms Pennicuik on notice. I have a fair idea, but the reason I cannot provide you with a complete picture of that is it is still being

assembled. Staff are being recruited from a range of agencies, and that is happening right now. I might take that part of your question on notice so that I can provide you with the most contemporary information on our preparations.

Parkville youth justice centre

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:21) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, the Melbourne North police station received an unprecedented 108 alleged criminal reports from the Parkville youth justice centre during September and October 2017 — the equivalent of one every 13 hours. Minister, what were the reasons for the more than tenfold increase in criminal reports during these months?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:22) — I thank the member for her question. She has made some assertions around facts in relation to particular incidents for a specific period. I will seek some advice from my department in relation to the time period that the member does assert.

What I can say to the member is that I am aware of some Crime Statistics Agency data that relates to the December 2013 to November 2014 period where it was recorded that there were 12 offences at the Parkville youth justice centre, yet for the 2013–14 financial year there were 39 WorkCover claims. I find it very interesting that during that period the number of WorkCover claims was more than three times the number of offences, which suggests — and this would be very concerning if this was in fact the case — that during the time of the previous government there were matters that were not reported to Victoria Police, that there were matters that were not —

Ms Crozier — On a point of order, President, my question was specifically around the alleged criminal reports. It was around the criminal reports during the months of October and September of last year. It has got nothing to do with WorkSafe reports of 2013. I ask you to ask the minister to come back to the specifics of my question or, if she does not know, to just get the figures for me.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister is allowed to provide some context for her answer. But, Minister, you are mindful of the fact that there is a specific time frame involved in the question that I would hope you are looking to answer.

Ms MIKAKOS — In fact I did refer to that right at the outset, but I do think it is important to give some

historical context to these matters because what we have seen from those opposite is that they have been completely oblivious during their whole time here, and also through the parliamentary inquiry, to looking at anything that occurred before November 2014. And so when I do see this significant discrepancy between offences recorded at Parkville during the time of the previous government and the number of WorkCover claims I do have to question the level of reporting that in fact may have been occurring during the time that Ms Wooldridge was the responsible minister.

What I can say to the member is that our government has taken significant action to ensure the safety of staff, and the safety of young offenders in these facilities as well, by recruiting more staff in these facilities, by investing unprecedented funding in relation to new infrastructure, by bringing into this house legislation to increase penalties for those offenders who commit offences whilst in custody — a bill that Ms Crozier tried to scuttle, together with those sitting opposite, and —

The PRESIDENT — Order! Minister, I do regard most of this answer as debating. That is not allowed under our standing orders. I note that the question does call for the reasons for a significant increase in reports and in a particular time frame, which was September and October 2017. Could you please direct your answer to that matter?

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, President. I actually referred to that matter right at the outset of my response. What I can say to the member is that we do take the view, to keep both our staff and young offenders safe whilst they are in custody, that these matters are reported to police. These matters are reported to police, and of course if there are criminal offences that are committed in these facilities, it is important that police investigate these matters and charges are laid. That is in fact what is occurring. I commend Victoria Police for taking action in relation to these matters, but I also commend our youth justice staff for doing everything possible to ensure that we have greater safety and greater stability in our youth justice facilities. We have put in place a range of measures to ensure exactly that. I would have thought that the member opposite should not have come in here and sought to scuttle our legislation. It goes directly to the point in relation to criminal matters that occur in youth justice facilities, and she tried to scuttle this legislation.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It is again debating.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:27) — Minister, if you want to talk about crime stats at Parkville, up to November 2014 there were 12 incidents and in the nine months to September 2017 there were 189. But I will go to my supplementary. Minister, given the significant increase in police response at Parkville, Victoria Police have advised that they are under strain when it comes to completing prosecution briefs before statutory limitations take effect, which would mean charges against young offenders who have committed serious assaults lapsing. Of the 108 reports to Victoria Police in these two months, how many of those young offenders investigated received a penalty of extended time served in youth justice?

Ms Mikakos — Just on a point of order, President, the question that the member has asked is actually in relation to police resource issues and relates to charges then put in place by Victoria Police. This is actually a question that should be addressed to the Minister for Police. In relation to the specific question that the member has asked, it is in relation to a matter that does fall within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Police, but it is of course a matter for Victoria Police to determine when they lay charges.

Ms Wooldridge — On the point of order, President, there is no disagreement that it is up to Victoria Police about laying the charges, but that was not the question. The question was about how many of the young offenders received extended time in youth justice, for which Ms Mikakos is directly responsible and would have the information about each individual offender.

The PRESIDENT — I concur with Ms Wooldridge's interpretation of the question and the relevance to the minister's responsibility, so I would ask the minister to respond.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:29) — Thank you, President, for your guidance. What I can say is that we as a government have put in place more police and we have given more resources to Victoria Police than your government ever did — record numbers of Victoria Police, more than 3000 Victoria Police members, funded by our government in a record investment. In fact the member did refer in her supplementary question to the precise data that I did refer to in my substantive answer. She talked about 12 offences for the December 2013 to November 2014 period — she said 12 in Parkville — when there were 39 WorkSafe claims during the 2013–14 financial year. If she is not concerned about what might have gone on when Ms Wooldridge was the

minister, then I think the Victorian community should be concerned. But in relation to the specific matters, I will seek further advice and provide a written response to the member.

Lara prison expansion

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:30) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, regarding the purchase of additional land at Lara for the expansion of Barwon Prison you said, and I quote:

The department will follow standard land procurement processes to ensure that the appropriate value is paid for the land.

Minister, what are those standard land procurement processes that will apply to Barwon?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:31) — I thank the member for his question. Labor is planning to manage the growth in the prison system now and into the future. As I have said publicly, we are doing this because this is what good governments do: they plan for growth. Last month we did announce the first stage of the Lara prison expansion. We will see hundreds of new prison beds open in the medium term. This strategic planning will avoid the panic and the disorder that occurred in 2013 when the former government changed parole laws and abolished suspended sentencing without recognising the impact that those laws would have on the prison system.

In terms of acquiring land, it is the same process that we go through in acquiring land whether it be for schools or hospitals, and the process is clear. We are engaging with specific landowners about land purchase, we are engaging with the local community regarding the potential expansion and we will be finalising the land purchase in line with other processes. The design and procure facility will be consulting with the community. This process takes some time, and so that is why we are starting now and that is why we made the announcement that we did in January. If we were not to have made that announcement in January, I am sure those opposite would say that somehow we were acting in secrecy. We are not.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:33) — Minister, is it consistent with standard departmental land procurement processes for a minister of the Crown to publicly disclose the intent to purchase prior to beginning the land acquisition process?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:33) — I thank the member for his question. As I have responded to his substantive question, the processes that are undertaken on this occasion are the same processes that are adopted for other facilities, such as schools and hospitals.

Early childhood education

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — (12:33) — My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. The Australian government's 'Future outlook' site lists child carers and childcare centre managers as one of the areas of the largest jobs growth over the next five years. It also states that, and I quote, 'Education is important if you want to work in this industry'. Minister, did you consult the Australian government's Job Outlook before deciding to cut funding for childcare training by 90 per cent?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:34) — I thank the member for her question and I relish providing a response to her. We know that the early childhood sector is a growing sector. This is why we continue to make investments needed, so all children can get the best start in life. Let me be clear: our Skills First reforms direct government funding to training that leads to jobs. Skills First gives clear and transparent information to the training system through the jobs and training needs reports about skills that are needed in industry across Victoria. This government is continuing to ensure thousands of further students can and will undertake training in early childhood qualifications. Certificate II and the diploma in early childhood education and care are funded to be delivered next year and targeted onwards in traineeship delivery.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, I have left over a minute but the minister is slavishly reading from a preprepared document. I do ask either that she table it or that she answer the question in accordance with the rules, which are not reading directly from a document but actually informing the house in terms of the question that is answered.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister is entitled to refer to notes. She is also entitled to have a context for her answer. As I have indicated to Ms Mikakos, I am not keen to hear debate as part of an answer, which is not allowed under our standing orders, and I am always keen to hear an answer that is responsive to a particular question. The minister will bear that in mind as she continues with this answer.

Ms TIERNEY — In respect to childcare workers in this state, we have got a very strong pipeline of childcare workers. In 2015 and 2016 this government subsidised over 34 000 places in early childhood education, Ms Wooldridge. Then in 2017 there were a further 10 000 positions funded by this government, and there will continue to be a significant number. We do not have any concerns in terms of the number of childcare workers that we have in the system. We have got one of the strongest pipelines of any jurisdiction in this country.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:37) — It does not sound like Job Outlook was consulted in the process, but it would be good to have some confirmation either way in relation to that. Pines Learning and the Park Orchards Community House and Learning Centre have been delivering government-subsidised training to Manningham residents since 2009. Both organisations have been restricted to offering just 10 places this year, a decision they were informed of on 17 December, just days before the course was to begin. These two organisations say the minister's decision to cut 90 per cent of funding for child care, and I quote:

... will have a severe impact on our ability to continue to operate successfully as RTOs —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am having a little trouble hearing the opposition leader's question, so from the top, please.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — Thank you, President. Pines Learning and —

Ms Shing interjected.

The PRESIDENT (12:38) — Ms Shing, have a rest. Fifteen minutes. Ms Wooldridge to continue, without assistance.

Ms Shing withdrew from chamber.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — Pines Learning and the Park Orchards Community House and Learning Centre have been delivering government-subsidised training to Manningham residents since 2009. Both organisations have been restricted to offering just 10 places this year, a decision they were informed of on 17 December, just days before the course was to begin.

These two organisations say the minister's decision to cut 90 per cent of funding for child care, and I quote:

... will have a severe impact on our ability to continue to operate successfully as RTOs and will impact the ability of local people to undertake this qualification.

Minister, in a written response yesterday you stated the department could increase allocations to vocational education and training providers, so can you please explain to these organisations and others that have been affected by your cuts how they can apply for an increase to their allocations in 2018 and reverse your savage cuts to their early childhood training?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:39) — As I said in my answer to the substantive, this government makes no apology in terms of its subsidised funding for training places in those areas where there is training that leads to jobs. I have already advised the house in my substantive answer that in terms of the pipeline that we have — that is, 34 000 positions we subsidised in 2015–16 and a further 10 000 in 2017 — and through the process that the department employed in terms of the Skills First Victorian training guarantee process that the department undertook, they determined with the information that was provided to them that the allocation was to be what was decided.

Prisoner transport

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:40) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, I refer you to the 2015 five-year prisoner transport contract signed by the Andrews government with provider G4S for \$95.7 million. Since the G4S prisoner contract was signed the Andrews government has begun holding hundreds of remand prisoners at country medium-security prisons, including Hopkins at Ararat, Karreenga at Lara and Fulham at Sale. This change sees thousands of extra prisoner movements every year to Melbourne from these prisons for court appearances and medical and other service provision. What has been the impact from the tens of thousands of extra kilometres driven on the prisoner transport contract with G4S?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:41) — This is in relation to, I assume, an allegation of some safety concerns that the member may have in terms of vehicle transportation. The contract that Corrections Victoria has with G4S contains vigorous safety requirements. I can advise the house that Corrections Victoria also undertakes regular reviews to ensure that G4S is complying with its vehicle safety obligations under the contract.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:42) — Since the contract came into force in October 2015 how many contract breaches have been identified and what penalties have been imposed as a result?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:42) — I thank the member for his question. I do not have that level of detail before me this afternoon. I will seek advice in terms of being able to provide any further information to you, but I would imagine that it would be governed by commercial confidentiality.

GOTAFE

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:43) — My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. The Andrews government has announced a further inquiry into GOTAFE to be conducted by John Watson to get to the bottom of problems identified at GOTAFE in governance and compliance. Will you provide a comprehensive list of the specific course qualifications that have been affected by the compliance and governance issues?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:43) — I do thank the member for his question in respect of GOTAFE. This government welcomes scrutiny to improve confidence in all elements of our training system. In fact it was this government that elevated the issue of training quality generally within the Victorian community. We have worked carefully and we have worked methodically through our quality blitz to stamp out providers that were not doing the right thing and to clean up the sector, because it was left in a dreadful mess by those opposite.

As the house would be aware, last year's investigations into government-funded training delivery at GOTAFE indicated a couple of things: firstly, a failure to notify the department and the regulator about third-party training; and also instances where funding for training was not validly claimed. The department has written to GOTAFE to reclaim \$1.7 million in funding related to contractual non-compliance and to seek a commitment that improvements will be implemented.

The member referred to who the investigator will be, and yes, that is correct. The inquiry will be led by a very respected public administrator, John Watson, and the investigation will be carried out over a six-week period. Mr Watson, as most people would be aware, has very strong experience in public sector governance and has previously served as chair of the panel of administrators at the Brimbank City Council. The chair

of GOTAFE will work very closely with Mr Watson during the course of the inquiry, and I know that the board of GOTAFE is fully committed to supporting Mr Watson throughout the inquiry. There is an expectation that following the inquiry GOTAFE will put in place measures which will restore community confidence in the institute and safeguard against similar matters occurring again.

Supplementary question

Mr O’SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:46) — Minister, according to your latest advice, how many students have been impacted by these investigations at GOTAFE, and can you provide a comprehensive list of the specific course qualifications that are being impacted by these compliance and governance issues?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:46) — Of course this is a matter that is subject to an inquiry, so I am not going to provide the details that are being sought at this point in time. The overarching work of the inquiry will be in respect to the systems and whether there are systematic failings in certain parts of the administration of GOTAFE.

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (12:47) — Today I require a written response to Dr Carling-Jenkins’s question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary questions, which involve a minister in another place, so within two days. Ms Pennicuik’s substantive question to Ms Pulford, one day — I think an answer to the substantive will actually clarify what was proposed in the supplementary. At any rate it went to the same matters and was an elaboration of that matter. Ms Crozier’s question to Ms Mikakos, the substantive and supplementary questions, one day. Mr O’Donohue’s first question to Ms Tierney, the substantive question, one day. Ms Wooldridge’s question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary questions, one day. Mr O’Donohue’s second question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary questions, one day. Mr O’Sullivan’s question to Ms Tierney, just the supplementary, one day.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Questions on notice

The PRESIDENT (12:48) — I have had a request from Mr Rich-Phillips for the reinstatement of questions on notice. I have looked at those questions and had them checked by the clerks as well — in fact

they have done most of the work on this — and there are 68 questions at issue. My order is that they all be reinstated. These questions are: 11 474, 11 477–82, 11 484–5, 11 488, 11 490–2, 11 494, 11 496, 11 499–504, 11 507–8, 11 511, 11 513–15, 11 517, 11 519, 11 522–7, 11 529–30, 11 533, 11 535–7, 11 539, 11 541, 11 544–9, 11 551–2, 11 555, 11 558–9, 11 561, 11 563, 11 566–71, 11 573–4, 11 579–81, 11 583.

My concern, apart from anything else, is that I do not believe that the answers were at all responsive to the questions, but I do also note that it was a patent answer — that the same answer was given to all of those questions. I do not believe that was satisfactory in the circumstance.

Mrs Peulich — On a point of order, President, I did receive the answer to a couple of the questions yesterday and just now managed to peruse the responses. Though you have not seen it, I do seek the reinstatement of one of the questions, and that is the supplementary question in relation to the appointment of Mr Chang Yang to the Multicultural Business Ministerial Council, which was not answered. The minister simply restated his answer to the substantive question rather than answering the supplementary question.

Mr Dalidakis — No, I did not. Read it properly and stop being objectionable.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Thank you. Order! I will have a look at this question and come back to it a little later. I have got it, thank you.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (12:52) — My question for the Minister for Public Transport relates to the sections of the sky rail corridor that are in my electorate. What I am seeking from the minister is a simple piece of information, and that is: are all of the sky rail sections fully disability compliant or is it the case that part of the sky rail walkway in the design, which is still yet to be released, is in fact narrower than is ideal and recommended for disability compliance in full for access by wheelchairs?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:52) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. In response to question on notice 12 459 regarding the north-east link, the minister advised that the toll road would facilitate the movement of, and I quote, ‘new generation freight vehicles which can’t currently use the Eastern Freeway’.

Can the minister confirm that the north-east link will open up the M80 ring-road east of the Hume, the Greensborough bypass, the entirety of the Eastern Freeway, the entirety of EastLink and local access roads and interchanges to these toll roads and freeways to high-productivity freight vehicles, including A-double trucks?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (12:53) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Luke Donnellan — what a fine minister. I allude to the recent actions taken by the Liberals and the Greens to attempt to halt construction of the West Gate tunnel project. I proudly spoke against that motion in this place this morning and made it clear that the people of the west cannot wait for this project to commence. There are currently 700 jobs on site and 6000 expected to be created throughout the life of the project. This project is providing good, reliable jobs to the people in my electorate, many of whom are recently retrenched ex-auto workers. The west is the fastest growing area in Victoria. We need a second river crossing in order to service the imminent population boom and associated traffic. Without this project we risk a future of increased congestion and reduced amenity in the western suburbs. My question for the minister is: what will it mean for my constituents of Western Metropolitan Region if this project does not go ahead?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:54) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask why the North East Link Authority plans to undertake very limited consultation with the community over the design aspects of the new road. The authority advertised three workshops for next Tuesday to discuss urban design, walking and cycling, and the environment. What the newspaper ads did not say is that these workshops are limited to 40 participants each. You can only attend one as they are all being held at the same time. That is only 120 residents in total who can attend to talk about a

project that affects hundreds of thousands of people in the north-east.

Unsurprisingly next week’s workshops were booked out within days, and now another round on 6 March is planned; however, face-to-face participation is again limited, although you can join online after the event. When I undertook a brief survey of Eltham residents I received an unprecedented response from 2200 people. When they are discussing such important aspects of such an important program it is really a problem to curtail face-to-face participation. The minister needs to review this participation demand and provide more face-to-face opportunities for residents to have their say. I am asking: will he ensure that that happens to make sure he is not just paying lip-service to community concerns?

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (12:56) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development. On 30 January Murray Goulburn’s Rochester dairy factory employees left their workstations for the last time. In August last year the minister announced \$50 000 for the Campaspe Shire Council to undertake community economic development planning to support retrenched dairy workers following discussions with impacted workers of Murray Goulburn’s downsizing. The government also extended the Rural Skills Connect program by 12 months in the Murray dairy region to support the community working groups in Rochester. The supporting workers in transition workshop was also extended, as was the Back to Work program to assist prospective employers to retrain Murray Goulburn staff.

These measures were a direct response to requests from the Campaspe shire and were developed in close partnership with the local community. They set out a clear direction for growth and development, boosting local job prospects and the economy, and they will identify priority actions to help manage the economic impacts of the closure. My question to the minister is: how will these programs help my constituents in Rochester and help them get back to meaningful work?

Northern Metropolitan Region

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (12:57) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it concerns approaches I have had from many of my constituents in Northern Metropolitan Region, particularly in suburbs like Wollert, Epping, South Morang and Craigieburn, who

are interested in what ever happened to the northern roads package that was announced by the government. Similar to the western roads package, it all went on hold for a while.

They are interested to know what the government are going to do about things like the E6 corridor, Epping Road, High Street and Spring Street in Reservoir, Craigieburn Road and Mickleham Road. This northern roads package was much lauded by the government, and then it was put on hold for a while. It has been on hold for a long, long time. We are now well over three years into this government, and as we approach the end of its life as a government my constituents are wanting to know what ever happened to this northern roads project. The question I have is for the minister to advise me on the status of the northern roads package so I can advise my constituents.

Northern Metropolitan Region

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) (12:58) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister D’Ambrosio. Last week the minister visited Nightingale Housing in the northern metropolitan area to announce a grant of \$100 000. This grant will enable the sustainability measures for their first project to be implemented and improved in their newly announced village, which will soon be a Nightingale precinct. I was not surprised to see that more than 3500 people have indicated an interest in this model as potential purchasers. My question to the minister is: how can other not-for-profits in the Northern Metropolitan Region access these grants?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:59) — I have raised a matter in relation to a constituent by the name of Simon Johnson several times. It is in relation to United Energy attempting to squeeze out of him \$100 000 for the replacement of United Energy assets — being a pole outside his property — in return for United Energy ensuring a no-go zone permit so he could actually proceed with the building of his house for which he has got a permit.

I raised it with the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and got nowhere. I raised it with Mr Pallas because it is an example of United Energy attempting to defray the cost of asset replacement by charging the customer — something which the Australian Energy Regulator deems to be unlawful. Mr Pallas has come back to me saying that there is no power that they have to resolve this. Indeed the

Australian Energy Regulator disagrees and we have evidence of that. I call on Mr Pallas to revisit the issue and provide some way forward for this constituent and many others.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (13:00) — It is good to be back. My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask him about the work in relation to the introduction of flexible wire safety barriers throughout Gippsland and along major roads not just as far as Central Gippsland through to the Latrobe Valley but down into South Gippsland. The question that I have for the minister is: to what extent has the introduction of flexible wire barriers assisted in the reduction in the number of head-on collisions, the number of crashes, the number of serious injuries and the number of fatalities since they have been progressively rolled out throughout the Latrobe Valley and South Gippsland?

The PRESIDENT — I will let it stand today, but again it really is calling for speculation. How can a minister say how many lives have been saved? How would we know that?

Ms Shing — On a point of order if I may, President, evidence was given at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee about other parts of the state and a reduction in collisions, particularly in the Hume area, of 58 per cent since the introduction of flexible wire rope barriers. VicRoads does in fact have this information and data, and I would be grateful if that information were provided for South Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley.

Mr Dalidakis — On the point of order, President, in early January I actually spent time as the acting Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and information was provided to me by VicRoads about incidents that they had recorded where there were no fatalities, and that information will be available from VicRoads to provide.

The PRESIDENT — My problem is that, yes, I accept that, but that is retrospective information. To actually then try and apply that into the future is speculation. That is my problem, because it is asking for a minister to anticipate how many lives might be saved or how many collisions might be avoided because of this work. Some forecasters might make such predictions, but in terms of a question to a minister, it is speculation and I think that is outside a genuine capacity for a minister to answer.

Ms Shing — On a point of clarification, President, in my question I was asking about the reduction in the number of head-on collisions and serious collisions in areas where wire rope barriers had been installed, and that is in fact available data based on what VicRoads collates.

The PRESIDENT — Yes, that is okay, but again you are asking for data that is applying in other areas which are not within your constituency, therefore it is not a constituency question in that regard. Tell me you are not asking for a future prediction in your constituency question.

Ms Shing — I am not asking for a prediction; I am asking for the areas of South Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley where wire rope barriers have been installed to be assessed by reference to the number of serious head-on collisions, fatalities and serious injuries in those areas as compared with the period when they did not have wire rope safety barriers. That information is available to VicRoads, as Minister Dalidakis has indicated.

The PRESIDENT — I will let it stand today, but I tell you what —

An honourable member — It's a long bow.

The PRESIDENT — It is a long bow.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (13:04) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Over the past couple of months an appalling and intolerable stench has enveloped suburbs surrounding the Ravenhall tip. Residents of Caroline Springs, Deer Park and surrounds have complained of what they have described as a rotten egg gas smell that has made adults and children alike physically ill. Despite complaints to the Environment Protection Authority Victoria, no action has been taken to protect locals from the stench. Will the minister do whatever is necessary to ensure the owners of the tip satisfy the requirements of its permit and stop the stink?

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (13:06) — In respect of Mrs Peulich's request for reinstatement of her supplementary question from yesterday, I have looked at the question and the answer. I have also had a brief discussion with the minister as to my interpretation of

the question, and I do seek to reinstate that question at this time and therefore require a written response to that.

I have also had further representation from Mr Morris in respect of a question that he had asked on Eureka Stadium in Ballarat. He has sought to explain to me some of the issues that are related to this that perhaps I was not across. It would seem that there were two agreements issued by the government. One of them is a lease that was already in place to the North Ballarat Football Club, and that continues to be in place. Other matters involving the Ballarat City Council might have an impact on that but that is not the nub of the question. The nub of the question is that whilst that lease was in place there was also a licence granted to Ballarat City Council which Mr Morris contends is unlawful and needs to be revoked. That may well be because of the existing lease in place to the football club and because it is impossible to have two instruments related to ownership or use of that land. In that context I believe that the substantive question of 7 February ought to be reinstated and that matter clarified. That also requires a written response from the minister.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, President, in relation to your rulings about the reinstatement of questions, particularly Mrs Peulich's question, given that was turned around in one day, would that be a one-day response as well?

The PRESIDENT — Yes, it would.

Sitting suspended 1.09 p.m. until 2.12 p.m.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65

Debate resumed.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — If I am led correctly, I believe you were going to continue, Mr Mulino.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (14:12) — Thank you, Acting President. You are correct, as always. That is almost a redundant observation. At the beginning of my contribution I talked about the significant benefits arising from this project. There are benefits in terms of reducing congestion, reducing travel times, taking trucks off the road and improving connections to our international gateway and benefits in terms of jobs — jobs in Melbourne, jobs in regional Victoria — and Ms Symes talked about that. I also want to talk about the process because there have been some erroneous comments around this process not having been robust or best practice. It has been robust. It has been best practice. Let us look just at one aspect of it — the

rigorous environment effects statement (EES) process. This included extensive community consultation, including public meetings and presentations. It included 504 submissions being received. During the exhibition period there were public meetings and information nights explaining the EES documents, so there was a very extensive process on critically important issues.

Indeed in an earlier contribution on a different motion on this project I spoke at some length on all the various types of reports that had been made public on aspects relating to environment, on aspects relating to livability and on aspects relating to the amenity of the community. It has been an absolutely extensive process. The EES hearings were chaired by a panel of independent experts who heard from all submitters who chose to attend, and that included councils, residents, agencies, community groups and individuals. The hearings were held in Footscray between August and September of 2017, and the committee provided its report to the minister on 23 October 2017.

Importantly, the Minister for Planning made a number of recommendations arising from that report to improve the project. Those improvements related to a number of aspects. They included noise reduction, voluntary acquisition of some properties along Hyde Street, noise walls and the redesign of one of the off-ramps. There were a large number of amendments suggested by the Minister for Planning, and I think it is important to note that the Minister for Roads and Road Safety accepted all of those suggestions. It was not just a consultation process where they were going through the motions. There was extensive consultation, and that led to material recommendations from the Minister for Planning that were then accepted by the minister for roads.

Again in a previous contribution on a different motion relating to this same project I spoke at some length around the different ways in which the project has been amended for the better in light of that process. I will not repeat all that Ms Symes said, but there has also been an extensive process around the fact that this is a market-led proposal, and an extensive amount of information of a financial nature has been put on the public record — large amounts of the contract. There was in fact considerable analysis done on what you might call a public sector comparator. The market-led proposal process is a very robust one in this state, and I imagine that those opposite support market-led proposals being part of the infrastructure process. They had a process for evaluating market-led proposals when they were in power. We have changed that to strengthen it, but I would be surprised if those opposite are against market-led proposals per se. When you look

at the way in which this proposal has been assessed, as a market-led proposal it is very robust and very compliant with Victoria's processes.

The final thing I want to observe is whether this is a sensible way to deal with this project. I have stressed, and I think many on this side and throughout the chamber have stressed, that this house is a very appropriate place to discuss and review projects of significance, but at the moment revocation motions are being used in an unprecedented way in terms of both their frequency and, dare I say, their cynicism.

Let us look at some people who have criticised that. The Property Council of Australia has warned that what Mr Davis is doing will threaten investment and development in this state. The property council is hardly a Trotskyite institution. The national chief executive of the property council, Ken Morrison, said:

... as an exercise in good governance, this is a shocker.

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) is calling for all parties to support the West Gate tunnel project proceeding without amendment or delay. So I would love, when Mr Finn or Mr Davis next go to VCCI, to see them explain the economic vandalism that they are a party to. I would love to hear them explain that. The chief executive, Mark Stone, said that delaying the project would be disastrous for the state's economy. Actually, on second thoughts, given the track record of those opposite it is probably consistent with their modus operandi, but it is certainly not something that is supported by business interests or by those representing people in employment. It is certainly not supported by the thousands who want work out of this project. It is certainly not supported by the individuals and families who are going to get the jobs in Benalla that Ms Symes talked about.

Let us line up all the stakeholders opposed to the cynical use of revocations. I could go on and on. I have got so many quotes here, it beggars belief. Let us see how many stakeholders those who support the revocation can line up. I have not heard anybody supporting this revocation publicly, and those opposite are absolutely silent when it comes to explaining who in the community is calling for the uncertainty that this strategy brings.

Let us go to Matthew Guy. When he spoke to an earlier Greens motion to revoke a planning scheme amendment in Williamstown, he said:

We have clearly stated that we do not want to turn the upper house of Victoria into a responsible authority on every planning matter ...

So that is their leader, and then — a bit of history — more recently, in 2017, he said:

What Melbourne needs to do is take the politics out of our infrastructure delivery. I mean, there's no more arguing. We need to start getting on with some of these plans to free up traffic congestion.

He is all talk and no action. The only action we see is very cynical action, and that is why we need to reject this motion.

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

Debate adjourned until later this day.

MELBOURNE PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (14:20) — I move:

That, in relation to amendment C314 to the Melbourne planning scheme, this house —

- (1) notes amendment C314 was tabled on Tuesday, 6 February 2018; and
- (2) pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 revokes amendment C314.

This motion seeks to revoke the planning approvals for the demolition of the Yarra building at Federation Square and the construction of an Apple megastore.

Firstly, let us imagine this future scenario. In five years time Daniel and his dad head out for a day in the city. It is Australian Open time in Melbourne. They go to see a tennis match at Hisense Arena. They have to travel past Etihad Stadium to get there, and Daniel asks his dad, 'Are we going to Visy Stadium again, Dad?'. 'No', he says, 'but we'll be going to the iSquare after Hisense, and maybe we can take a look at the Pura Milk River while we're there'. Is that the future of Melbourne, a commercialised space on every corner, with stringent rules and imposing costs on the use of our public space? That seems to be where we are heading.

Melburnians were shocked last December when the government announced it was doing a deal with Apple to take over a part of Federation Square. Fed Square got off to a rocky start when it was first proclaimed. Its design created controversy, but since then it has become a loved and valued civic square. Millions of Victorians have shared sporting triumphs and defeats, celebrated the diversity and creativity of our state, rocked out to music and enjoyed the cultural institutions that fill its buildings. It has brought people together to

mourn and to celebrate. It is a place to protest and a place to party. My favourite memory of Fed Square is going to the John Butler Trio concert to save James Price Point from environmental destruction. Thousands of people were there, song rang out through the air and Melbourne came together and helped save the site under threat far away. That is the power of space and places for people to come together.

It is almost unfathomable that the Labor government would give a piece of this valued public space to one of the biggest corporations in the world. Make no mistake, the presence of an Apple megastore will change the nature of Fed Square. We are told that the Apple deal is necessary to fund the square, but this is just an admission of failure by the Labor government. Fed Square is one of the premier civic squares in all the world. Are we really to believe that in a city like Melbourne, with all our creativity, energy and vibrancy, the only option is to sell Fed Square off? I have much more faith in the people of Melbourne. We can do better than this.

Labor has once again shown its contempt for the people of Melbourne by doing a deal in secret with a multinational corporation while ignoring the people. Melbourne City Council was one of the key stakeholders that was kept in the dark. Melbourne city councillors were as shocked as everyone else when the deal was revealed last year. After receiving over 800 submissions opposing the Labor government's plan, the council has gone so far as to pass a motion supporting the revocation of this planning scheme and calling on the government to go back to the drawing board and develop a new process, inclusive of public consultation for the approval of the location and design of an Apple global flagship store within the central city.

That is the nub of the issue. Let our city have the discussion about the future of Fed Square. Do not land dodgy deals on the public just before Christmas. As Dimity Reed noted in an article in the *Age* last year:

It seems to have flown over the heads of the people involved in this proposal that it is a clear and distressing illustration of the fracture that is affecting the Western world: the split between the decision-makers and the concerns of the people. It is widely seen that this fracture is intrinsic to why the young are questioning the value of democracy as a governing principle. Secret meetings and secret agreements are a dangerous path to decision-making.

Yet it is the preferred option for Labor, whether it is secret deals with Apple or secret deals with Transurban as I have talked about this morning. We appreciate that revocation motions are a blunt instrument, but this is all we have when the Labor government acts so irresponsibly.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Order! I am finding it hard to hear Dr Ratnam. Could members keep the level of the interchange to a lower level.

Dr RATNAM — As the campaign that has sprung up in response to the government's deal proclaims, it is our city, our square, and the Greens will fight to ensure people have the opportunity to be involved in decisions like this.

The way the government has made this decision is one of the biggest reasons we are here debating that this amendment be revoked. There is a planning system for a reason, so that plans can be submitted, the public given an opportunity to have a say and experts to be consulted. But this decision has undermined all of that. It was dumped on Melbourne a few days before Christmas, after the Parliament had risen. It did not involve even working with Melbourne City councillors. Rather it involved the minister using a power that should be used only rarely and as a last resort — that is, the power to call in a planning application and override the system. The minister has used this power as a first resort in this case and undermined the integrity of our planning system. No wonder the public are outraged.

Added to this mess is the proposed design. As I mentioned before, the design of Federation Square was originally controversial but now we love it. Its uniqueness does exactly what it was designed to do — that is, bring the community together and provide versatile public spaces for public events and space for some of the most valued cultural institutions like the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, SBS and the Koorie Heritage Trust. Now we will see the generic Apple design of straight lines and glass just plonked down in the heart of our unique civic space. Surely our collective imaginations are not so constrained. Surely Apple can have its store somewhere else in Melbourne — in a commercial district where it would fit in seamlessly — and we can put our collective heads together to ensure Federation Square retains its uniqueness.

We have heard one of the original architects of Federation Square backing the Apple megastore and arguing that Federation Square was always meant to have some commercial aspect. But there is a big difference between commercial activities such as restaurants and bars and even other small-scale commercial ventures that fit in with the cultural and community aspects of Federation Square and a

megastore from one of the world's biggest corporations. The megastore will not just mess with the aesthetics of Federation Square but will change its very nature. We know what Apple wants. It wants the square to be filled with people lining up to get into its store, so where will the rest of us go?

People want government to do its job — to look after the interests of people that live here. We willingly pay our taxes for the government to provide the best schools and hospitals, a secure energy supply, reliable public transport to ensure all of us can access the basics of life like housing and to protect our public spaces so as a community we have places to come together for fun, protest, culture and sport. This Labor government is failing in key areas. It is outsourcing its problems to multinational corporations, whether it is Apple or Transurban, and selling off public housing land. Premier, stop selling our state. How much has to be sold off before there is nothing left? The Premier says Federation Square needs to make money. Where does this mindset stop? What other public spaces are up for sale? Will we see Coles at the NGV or Bunnings in the botanic gardens? Or will the Premier go the full Ron Swanson: 'Drop in a token, look at a duck'?

I can guarantee you now the Greens will always stand up for public good. Privatisation has failed the people of Victoria, and it has to stop. The cosy relationship between Labor and multinational corporations must give way to the government acting in the interests of Victorians. As historian Graeme Davison put it:

Isn't it time we grew up and recognised that not everything that is important to our collective life has a price? That commercial values do not trump civic ideals?

The Greens are joining with many of the citizens of Melbourne — thousands of them — and greater Victoria in opposing the imposition of an Apple megastore in the most significant of our city's spaces. As a city and as a state, we can do better.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:29) — Let me say at the outset that that was one of the most hypocritical contributions I have heard in my just over three years in this place. Whilst I understand that Dr Ratnam has been here for a much shorter time than that, it is some contribution that can head straight to that list.

Dr Ratnam says that the Greens support good public policy. Well, they have opposed social housing in this place. They have supported revocation motions that block the ability of people to get social housing. They have supported a revocation motion in relation to the West Gate tunnel project, which will provide more

green space, more riding pathways for bikers, the second major river crossing — I say ‘major’ because of course there are other crossings over the Maribyrnong and other places but this is the second major one — and an ability to take trucks off a major arterial route. That also happens to be a pretty important thing — 15 000 trucks out of the streets of Footscray — and the Greens have opposed that too. But that is okay. They want to pretend that they can be all things to all people, all things sugar and spice and all things nice. I am here to call them out on that.

I am not only here to call them out on that but also to point out their hypocrisy. They come into this place pontificating and attacking Donald Bates, one of the original architects of Federation Square. It is not good enough that one of the original architects supports this project, the Greens want to try to attack and smear him and suggest that somehow the calibre of the architecture means nothing, his views mean nothing and the desires when they proposed the design mean nothing. Why? Because it suits their purpose to distort, to smear and to characterise in a way that clearly aims to mislead public discourse in this debate.

There is no better way that I can fix this up than read from Donald Bates’s op-ed in *architectureau.com*. It is his contribution, and I am going to read this for the betterment of this debate and for understanding of course.

Ms Fitzherbert — There’s no need to read it. Can’t you just table it?

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, I am going to read it — just as your colleagues have taken the opportunity to read copious amounts of articles into *Hansard* in previous debates and discussions. I have another 57.5 minutes afforded me in this debate and I am going to use that opportunity, Acting Deputy President — Acting President Morris. You have not got that promotion just yet but no doubt you are an ambitious Young Turk and you have a bright future ahead of you.

But let me come back to the op-ed by Donald Bates, the director of Lab Architecture Studio and one of the original architects of Federation Square. The lead-in to his comments says:

The Victorian government’s decision to allow a building in Melbourne’s publicly owned Federation Square to be demolished and replaced with a flagship store for Apple has caused widespread controversy. Here, Donald Bates, whose practice Lab Architecture Studio originally designed Federation Square, explains his reasons for supporting this decision.

Here it goes:

I knew that my decision (it’s mine alone) to support the changes to Federation Square and allow an Apple concept store to replace the Yarra building would be controversial. That I would be pilloried and abused.

He was right there, wasn’t he, Acting President? He was spot-on. The Greens have done exactly that. They have pilloried and abused him. He says:

I always understood that many people (especially architects) would take offence and seek to hold a line on any changes. I am grateful that Fed Square means so much to so many. My reasons to support Fed Square management and this change are conditioned by six aspects of the project:

The civic, the cultural and the commercial

A majority of negative reactions to the proposed change are premised around the feeling that the public nature and the cultural mix of Fed Square is being diminished or lost. This is incorrect. It is even more incorrect in light of the original concept for Fed Square. From the very beginning, we always stated that for a 21st century public space to work, it needs to be an amalgam of civic embrace, cultural destinations and commercial activation. Not just food and beverage offerings, but commercial activities that engage with ideas and impinge on our daily lives.

Let me just repeat that for Dr Ratnam’s benefit:

From the very beginning, we always stated that for a 21st century public space to work, it needs to be an amalgam of civic embrace, cultural destinations and commercial activation. Not just food and beverage offerings, but commercial activities that engage with ideas and impinge on our daily lives.

He went on to say:

The current Yarra building was known as the south commercial building.

Well, isn’t that inconvenient for you, Dr Ratnam, that the building’s original title was the south commercial building. He continued:

This building was not part of the design brief for Federation Square.

These are not my words, Dr Ratnam. These are Donald Bates’s words, the man that you pilloried and accosted in your earlier speech. He said:

We as architects added it, so that we would have a more contained edge to the southern side of the plaza. We wanted three activated edges to the plaza, where each would have cafes, restaurants or shops fronting the plaza.

The design of public space in the 20th century is replete with failures, where a monoculture of arts facilities creates an enclave of worthy aspirations, but poor civic design. Melbourne’s arts precinct (Southbank), the south bank of Brisbane, the south bank of London and Lincoln Centre in NYC are all exemplars of what happens when the vibrant

messiness of city life is seen as too compromised to be part of a cultural and artistic experience, leading to sterile and vacuous public domains. If Fed Square has been successful as a public and civic space, it has done so as a consequence of a design ethos that embraced the multifaceted intertwining of the civic, the cultural and the commercial. To now suggest that we need to eliminate commercial aspects at Fed Square is to suggest that the original architectural ideas were improper. I don't accept that.

It goes on for the Yarra building. He said:

The Yarra building provided a massing to suit our urban design aspirations and extended the fractal facade language, but was a building that didn't have a tenant. In 1997–98, we thought that something like a Borders bookstore would be a great tenant. Though it could sometimes be seen as overseas interlopers decimating the local bookstore market, we could imagine Borders as a multistoreyed bookshop, complete with cafe and lecture spaces. But this didn't happen.

The Yarra building has remained problematic in its utilisation. There have been numerous iterations of tenants and occupation, none overly successful. Even the current tenancy of the Koorie Heritage Trust is compromised by the layout of the building. It remains a somewhat orphaned building. My assessment is that under all past and currently proposed scenarios, the replacement of this one part of the original design is acceptable.

It goes on in relation to Apple. Donald Bates wrote:

Some have agreed with the principle of commercial entities operating at Fed Square — but just not Apple. Too big, too powerful, too American.

It sounds like Donald Bates was somewhat of a soothsayer in seeing what the Greens would say today about this proposal as they seek to revoke the planning permit provided by this government. However, he said:

Apple's proposal to locate one of its limited global flagship or concept stores at Fed Square is not just another store. Yes, they will sell products — phones, laptops, tablets and all other electronics. Nonetheless, Apple Fed Square is also committed to providing an engaged program of events, debates, discussions and forums. Apple, for all its commercial success and force in the market, remains an undeniable innovator and transformative agent to our social world. The new Apple Michigan Avenue (Chicago) and Apple Piazza Liberty (Milan) give some indication of how this new retail concept could complement the cultural and civic charter of Fed Square. I can't guarantee its success or relevance at this point, but I am willing to allow for new activities, new forms of engagement at Fed Square.

Bear in mind that paragraph and I will return to it in just a moment. He went on in relation to the siting of the proposed building. He said:

Foster and Partners' site planning and the external works by Oculus, allow for new connections to Princes Walk and the Yarra riverside. The proposed building has a reduced footprint relative to the existing building and will expand the public space of the plaza. It will allow for a new relationship to emerge between the plaza and the river — one that we

were never able to achieve within the budget limitations of the original competition. The proposed design respects the dynamic nature of the plaza and the many activities and events that define the Fed Square calendar. This is a plus to the proposed design.

Donald Bates continued to write in his op-ed for architectureau.com in relation to Federation Square that:

Federation Square as an operating entity is charged with supporting a large cultural and civic charter —

and I will also return to this concept of the charter at the end of this op-ed —

made possible by funds generated through tenancy rentals, car parking and charges for commercial events. Operating without substantial ongoing government support, Fed Square struggles to maintain its heavily utilised buildings and public spaces, while honouring its public charter. A major corporate tenant such as Apple will go a long way to rebalancing the operational impost on Fed Square.

Donald Bates continued by talking about the Foster + Partners design:

We have always felt that when changes have occurred at Fed Square, if we do not carry the role of designer, then the last thing we want is a faux-version of Lab Architecture. The Maddison Architects-designed canopy at the east end of the plaza is a case in point — a totally different aesthetic, but one that advances certain architectural ideas in an intelligent manner.

Foster and Partners' design for Apple Fed Square fits within their own aesthetic and within the style of recent Apple projects. It is a major departure from the architectural language of Lab Architecture Studio and the rest of Fed Square. I understand that many will see it as too great a departure, too discordant. I appreciate these critiques. Nonetheless, it is my understanding that the design will evolve and it will reach an acceptable balance between a defined corporate image and the non-standard geometry of Fed Square.

I am well experienced in being harangued, abused in the media, denounced for my architectural positions and seen as devoid of good design sense (see media commentary of Fed Square between 1997 and 2002). And I am self-critical enough to accept that I may have made the wrong decision in this instance.

But I don't think so.

And therein lie the words, the thoughts and ultimately the deeds — given that he was one of the original designers of Fed Square — of Donald Bates, one of the original architects of Lab Architecture Studio. Why do I open with that along with a riposte of the Greens commentary? The reason that I do so —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I do not need to read Donald Bates's article to filibuster, Mr Ondarchie. You spoke for more than 4 hours on topics before you brought time limits into opposition business, and I would have been very happy to spend more time, not less, talking about what this has to offer civic life, commercial life and opportunities in Federation Square itself. However, I do have a limited time, so let me move forward to the points straightaway.

The Apple flagship store is not some kind of megastore, as Dr Ratnam would try and, sadly, attack them for. It is not a department store. It is not a major industrial wasteland. It is a major concept store that they have run out in only four other locations — in North America and one location in Italy, in Milan. This is unique. It will be the only store of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. Indeed it will be the only store of its kind in Australia. From a tourism perspective you will see that the flagship store has so much to offer Australia and in particular Melbourne, because nowhere else in the Southern Hemisphere will you be able to visit such a store unless you come to Destination Melbourne.

Mr Ondarchie — Nowhere else in Melbourne, either?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I have an interjection from Mr Ondarchie that I will take up. I will be careful not to disclose matters of confidence where I was involved in subcommittees of cabinet, Mr Ondarchie, but what I can say, which is what has been publicly discussed, is that there were indeed other sites looked at. Beyond that contribution which we made public previously, I cannot go into those sites. I can provide confidence that site selection did take place as a major and significant piece prior to locking in on the site of Federation Square.

I just want to come back to a number of points that Donald Bates made both in his article and also in terms of his very important contribution. The original building that is going to be pulled down to make way was an addendum to the original design — the concept that won the Federation Square competition. In the original design no such building existed. Subsequent to having won the competition, the Donald Bates-led Lab Architecture Studio was able to then add on this building, but in his own words this building has never worked. It has failed in its commercial outlook. It has failed in its connectivity within the square itself. It has failed connecting between the Yarra River and Federation Square. From Donald Bates's perspective, sadly, this is probably the one aspect of the design, subsequent to having won it, that he has been unhappy with.

Mr Ondarchie — Are you happy with it?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I will come to my views in a moment, Mr Ondarchie, I promise you. I will not leave this place without clearly articulating my views. In terms of the building itself, yes, the Koorie Heritage Trust has been a tenant of this building. As part of the demolition of this building the Koorie Heritage Trust has been provided with a far better premises in the main section of Federation Square with a much higher level of visitation and much higher numbers of passers-by.

Mr Ondarchie — How do you know all that?

Mr DALIDAKIS — Oh, we have got that information.

Mr Ondarchie — But how do you know it will have more passers-by?

Mr DALIDAKIS — Because it currently has a high level, Mr Ondarchie. In terms of the numbers of where pedestrians walk in Federation Square, they have the statistics to show that. We can clearly demonstrate that the Koorie Heritage Trust will be able to have a much wider audience than what they currently have. And beyond that we have not even started to talk about how the new building will help connect Federation Square into the Yarra River precinct. At the moment the building effectively stops people from moving through Federation Square into the precinct. The new building releases approximately 500 square metres of public space and, through landscaping and design, makes it far more accessible for people to flow right through the square into the Yarra River precinct, enabling and opening up access to the river, which was not possible under the current design. Let us focus on a couple of things.

Mr Ramsay — Bates got it wrong, did he?

Mr DALIDAKIS — Well, Donald Bates is happy to acknowledge that he got the original design of this building wrong, Mr Ramsay.

Mr Ondarchie — What do you think?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I support this proposal. I will come back to my very clear views. I know you are eager, Mr Ondarchie.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — We have still got 41 minutes, Mr Ondarchie, but I promise those opposite that I will make my views on this very clear. I have been pilloried as well on social media as being, I believe, an acolyte

bowing down to the altar of Apple. That is what someone called me on social media. And guess what? It is true. I started my day with apple juice — my God, seriously! This is just an amazing elucidation that somehow apple juice and me mean that I bow down before the altar of Apple. We have apple orchards right throughout this country, and we should be supporting small business men and women forcing their way forward, being apple orchard growers. I am sure Acting President Morris would support apple orchardists in his region, and right around Australia we should be encouraging people to support apples.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, the opposition is more than happy for Mr Dalidakis to take some licence with this, but he is almost an unlicensed driver at the moment. Can you bring him back to the motion that is before us? He is now talking about orchards, apple juice and something else.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — I would encourage the minister to come back to some of the specifics of the motion.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Thank you, Acting President. Of course the joke that I was making in relation to drinking apple juice was because people on social media have suggested that I am somehow an acolyte of Apple. I was suggesting that if starting my day with a glass of good clean Australian apple juice makes me an acolyte of Apple, then I plead guilty to supporting local homegrown Australian industry.

Let me get back to the Apple store. We have a proposal that releases 500 square metres of public space back into public space — an inconvenient truth again for Dr Ratnam. This allows us to be able to return areas to the public for people to be able to use the square in a way that accords them an experience and relationship with the square that is meaningful to them, whether it be sitting on the steps or walking through to the Yarra River precinct and enjoying the majestic weather that we have in this place. Everyone knows that Melbourne's weather on a daily basis is amazing and that it goes from amazing to even more amazing. Having returned from overseas and 1 degree weather, I much prefer Melbourne's weather.

What we also have is an opportunity for us to be able to grow and mature, in this debate, in terms of the architecture. A point that Mr Bates makes in his op-ed is that architecture evolves, it grows, it is a living thing, it is a living concept and you should not try to replicate — in his words — the existing architecture with new building. That is his view. Let me tell you that

we should be very proud to have a Foster + Partners designed building in Melbourne. Foster + Partners is one of the leading — one of the pre-eminent — architectural firms globally. To have a Foster + Partners-designed building here is something that we should applaud, not denigrate. It is something that we should embrace, not eschew. It is something that we should get up and sing from the rooftops about. We should have it here, not scare it away.

Unfortunately the Greens know nothing else. They come in here and they pretend that they have the virtues of Zion and that they protect the interests of the public, but they have voted against social public housing, they have voted against the West Gate tunnel proceeding and they are voting against Federation Square. They continue to be the naysayers with the virtues of no: 'We don't want commercialisation, we don't want cooperation, we don't want — God forbid — social housing. We just want to say no'. In fact I think there was a movie made once about the Greens; it was a Bond film called *Dr No* — or was it *Dr Evil*? I will go with *Dr No* and *Dr Evil*. There were two; there was a sequel.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — For the benefit of Hansard, Mr Ondarchie has said that somehow the Greens and Labor are in some kind of coalition. Well, let me just point out to everybody that it was the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Greens party that got together and kicked out our leader for six months; it was the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Greens party that got together and removed the planning rights for social housing; and it is the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Greens party that have got together to try and stop Melbourne's second major crossing, the West Gate tunnel precinct, taking 15 000 trucks off local community roads in Footscray. That is not good enough for Dr Ratnam. She does not live in Footscray. She does not care about the people in Footscray having to dodge 15 000 trucks on a daily basis. She comes into this place and pretends that she cares and then votes and pushes and pulls to get public policy that is less than ideal — and then she has the gall to stand up and say that they are the protectors of good public policy. Well, if they are the protectors of good public policy, I tell you what, our community is sorely and poorly represented by them.

We have in Donald Bates a man that has dedicated his career to architecture, a man that was an architect with one of the leading architectural design firms for the original Federation Square. He has, in his own words, managed to rebut every claim that Dr Ratnam has

made, and somehow Dr Ratnam knows better than Donald Bates. Somehow Dr Ratnam and the Greens know better than Donald Bates. I am not sure how that is possible.

Mr Ondarchie asked earlier what my view was. Let me move to that right now. As a member of the subcommittee of cabinet, again, I will be very careful about what I say. What I can tell you, Mr Ondarchie, is that for my own deliberations Donald Bates's representation carried a large sway with me — the fact that his view was that in the original winning design of Federation Square this building was not a part of its design and that subsequently the design of this building on Federation Square was one —

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I can come back to that as well if you want me to, Mr Davis.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am happy to come back to that as well, Mr Davis. Let me finish this part and I will deal with your concern. Mr Bates spoke at some length in a conversation with me. His view was that the original building was not part of the original design. The building, which became part of the design, he believes has failed and not worked. He believed in the original concept of Federation Square of having a major commercial entity in the square, in the precinct.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Mr Ondarchie, I am getting to that. I will get there quicker than I will if I am interrupted. When you consider that he wanted a commercial space, when you consider that he is not happy with the way this building has worked and when you consider that this building was not even part of the original design, you can see why he believes it is appropriate to try again. He thinks that being able to release 500 square metres of public space into the precinct and being able to create a new building provides a new opportunity to reactivate the space. This becomes fundamental to the future of Federation Square. If you can reactivate the space, then you can ensure that more people will enjoy Federation Square, not less, that more activity will occur, not less, and that more tourists will come, not less.

So you can see that when you add all the things that Donald Bates has talked about in his own op-ed, it weighed very heavily on me. I thought that in fact Donald Bates's contribution was a remarkable one — remarkable because somebody that was originally part

of that design has put forward a view that they got that building wrong. That is remarkable, to be able to stand up anywhere in this place and say, 'We got something wrong'. There should be more of it. I know that, for example, I have done it before in relation to the Christmas Day public holiday two years ago. I got that wrong.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am pretty sure that Mr Finn supports the fact that I got it wrong.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Did you support that I got it wrong, Mr Finn?

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I got that wrong, and I admitted it at the time. We should not be afraid to put up our hands and say we got something wrong and we want to make it right. In his contribution Donald Bates admitted that he got the building wrong, but he believes that he has got it right now.

Ms Fitzherbert — On a point of order, Acting President, under standing order 12.16 in relation to tedious repetition, I am about to finish my period of house duty so I am not going to be forced to listen to this any longer, but I have heard enough about this article in the *Age*, which we have already read, and I would ask that you direct the member to discontinue his speech.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Thank you, Ms Fitzherbert, for that point of order. I do have some sympathy with your view on repetition occurring —

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — I can do more than one thing at a time, Mr Dalidakis. I would encourage Mr Dalidakis to make further and expansive commentary on the motion.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Thank you, Acting President. I am very, very conscious that you can do more than one thing at a time. You obviously had very good primary school teachers.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Well, it is a positive reflection, Mr Ondarchie, on Mr Morris's childhood and having very good primary school teachers that afford him the

ability to do more than one thing at a time. Can I say that the view of Donald Bates as the original architect has significant weighting in this decision. In terms of the public discourse we can be very clear that of course this is important for us.

When we look at it you can understand that Federation Square does in fact mean a lot of things to a lot of people. For your benefit, Acting President, let me tell you that the Apple global flagship store will employ a dedicated events team that will offer a program of up to 70 events per week, all free to the public. I know that those opposite like to charge. They like to add charges all the time. They like to add charges when they are in government; they like to suggest charges in opposition. They are just not happy unless they can increase our taxes and charges all the time, despite what they say. As a percentage of GDP our tax taken in this country under the federal Liberal government has gone up, not down. But in relation to this there are 70 free events —

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, on relevance, we have heard over half an hour of this diatribe that has not got to the motion yet. If the minister wants to talk about new taxes, we can talk about the 12 new taxes the Andrews government introduced despite saying they would not do it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Thank you, Mr Ondarchie. That is not a point of order, but I do ask Mr Dalidakis to continue moving in his contribution.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Absolutely. That is 70 free events per week. Let us just work that out. Seventy events per week times 52 weeks a year makes over 3500 free events annually. I am pretty sure my maths is pretty good. That is over 3500 free events.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, as a former accountant — not that I tell many people that — my calculation is still pretty good. So there are over 3500 free events per year. Let me tell you something. Of those 3500 there is absolutely an expectation that the new store will provide opportunities for existing tenants of Federation Square — that is, our arts and cultural tenants, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and of course the Koorie Heritage Trust — to be able to participate in some of those free events. We expect them to be able to utilise the opportunity and access some of those free events.

Of course Federation Square arts and cultural tenants will be exposed to new patrons, new customers and new people walking through the square, people that will

be coming to the global flagship store, because, Acting President Patten — I do not know whether I have told you while you have been in the chair — this global flagship store will be, guess what, number 5 in the world. There is Milan, there is Chicago, there is New York and I think there is San Francisco, and this will be number 5 — the only one of its type in the Southern Hemisphere.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, Acting President, I draw your attention to the last point of order raised by Ms Fitzherbert in relation to standing order 12.16 that talks about tedious, ongoing repetition. We have heard this again, again and again. I ask you to direct the minister back to his contribution. If he has got no more added value to his contribution, maybe he could sit down.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr Dalidakis, that is repetitive. I have heard it while in the chamber and outside the chamber, so as I mentioned before, continue moving forward towards the end of your contribution. I understand you are the lead speaker, but please continue.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Yes, I agree with you. Let us move forward, because do you know what? Moving forward is being able to get the global flagship store into Federation Square. That is what we are wanting to do. We are wanting to move forward with that as a priority. Why? Because we want to add Melbourne's reputation as the capital of major events around the world to our cultural reputation around the world by being able to host a global flagship store and the only one of its type not just in Australia but elsewhere. Let me just take you through some of those countries: Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. People from all of those countries in the Southern Hemisphere will have to come here if they want to visit a global flagship store. So let us move forward and let us unite under the flag of making Melbourne great again. Let us unite under the flag of making sure that Melbourne retains its position as being the pre-eminent arts, cultural, shopping, coffee, sporting and major events capital not just in Australia but in the world.

Mr Ramsay — Don't you think there's a bit of a clash between the architecture, the design and the Apple store?

Mr DALIDAKIS — Let me take up that interjection. It is an important question that Mr Ramsay asks. He asks about the clash of architecture between the Foster + Partners design and the original design. Mr Ramsay, what I can tell you is that — and let me go

back to the design — I cannot say it any better than the original architect, Donald Bates. Mr Bates wrote in his op-ed that I quoted from earlier and that I quote from again now for your benefit, Mr Ramsay:

We have always felt that when changes have occurred at Fed Square, if we do not carry the role of designer, then the last thing we want is a faux-version of Lab Architecture.

That is the important point. He is, in his own words, not wanting to recreate the original design, because what he has argued is that the design of architecture evolves, and if the original architects are not involved in the new architectural plans, then that evolution means that you should move away from what that architecture was and not just try and recreate the original design. I am happy, Mr Ramsay, at the completion of my contribution to leave you with a copy of Mr Bates's op-ed in his own words. It remains super important to us to honour Mr Bates, to honour the contribution he made as one of the original architectural designers of Federation Square and to honour the vision that he had of creating a commercial opportunity.

I have not really spoken about commercial opportunity and how it fits in with what we are trying to do now and how, unfortunately, it was not included when the original design came to life. Mr Bates said that the ability to fuse together the cultural —

Mr Ondarchie — You already said that.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, I am talking about the commercial opportunity, Mr Ondarchie.

Mr Ondarchie — You already said that.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I think you left the chamber. He said the ability to fuse together the cultural, the community and the commercial is, in his own words, very important to be able to have more people come into the space, not less. He believes that this is an opportunity to bring people into the Federation Square precinct that would not otherwise have been there.

I heard Dr Ratnam talk earlier about the opportunity for commercial tenants to really only be food and beverage retail. Let me tell you, if the projections are potentially accurate and an extra 2 million people come into the Federation Square precinct as a result of the new Apple global flagship store, aren't you going to be happy if you are a food and beverage retailer in that precinct to have a potential captive audience of 2 million people in such a small space — hungry and thirsty, wanting to feed their children and themselves, making sure that everyone gets a piece of pie and a beer, hopefully a cold

beer? I have just been in London, and they serve warm beer. That is just so wrong.

Anyway, you can get a cold beer at Taxi Kitchen, a beverage at 7-Eleven or a coffee at the coffee shop, or indeed you can sit down for a meal. The whole point is that 2 million more visitors to the precinct will see those food and beverage retailers improve their profitability. Surely those opposite that claim to be the protectors of capitalism would absolutely try and embrace that opportunity for capitalism to work and for food and beverage retailers to profit and serve not just the people of Victoria and Australia but the visitors and tourists from around the world that will come to this global flagship store.

We will have only the second global flagship store outside the United States. Do you know where the other one is? Milan. Does that not hold us in great company to be talked of in the same stories as Milan, one of the great historical cities of the world? Its football teams are not so good, but what a wonderful city it actually is. To have Milan, Chicago, San Francisco and Melbourne all spoken of in the same sentence really gives me tingles. It gives me such hope that the metropolis that I was born in, that I live in and that I love can showcase itself to the world. That is something we should embrace, not something that we should eschew. We need to make sure that we get this decision right. We need to make sure that for generations to come we make the right decisions.

I know there are people concerned that it has been repetitious to rely on the views of Mr Donald Bates, but it is not repetitious at all. It goes to the significant role that he played in its original design and the significant role he plays in the support of the new design, the new tenancy, the new public space, the new opportunity, the new commercial activity and the ability to ensure that Federation Square lives long and prospers. It goes to the ability of Federation Square to return to the people and to be a new hope for all to make sure that we can carry on its original vision, as espoused by Mr Bates and his team at Lab Architecture Studio.

It is no surprise to us at all that the Greens have wanted to pull this down at each and every opportunity. They are the original grinch — and may I point out that the Grinch was green as well — that wish to be the opposition to everything. They need to define themselves by what they object to, not what they support. They need to define themselves by opposing commercial development, not by supporting a proposal that will help our community tenants at Federation Square, because an additional 2 million people in the Federation Square precinct will help the Australian

Centre for the Moving Image, will help the National Gallery of Victoria and will help the Koorie Heritage Trust. An extra 2 million people will support our food and beverage retailers there, so the precinct itself will be strengthened, it will be supported and it will be enlivened — the reverse of what the Greens will have you believe.

Sadly the Greens had an opportunity to support a proposal that delivers on the original dreams and vision of the original architect and does not take away from them, but instead they wish to lambaste the architect, they wish to pull him down and they wish to denigrate him. They wish to try and suggest, because he has put forward an independent view, that somehow it is lesser now than what it was when he was the original designer all those years ago.

Mr Davis — Is he retained as an adviser by Fed Square?

Mr DALIDAKIS — Not to my knowledge. I will stand corrected, but I can tell you, Mr Davis, that he makes it very clear in the opening sentence of his editorial — and I am happy to provide you with a copy of this contribution too —

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Mr Davis, let me finish and I will take up that interjection. These are his words, not mine:

I knew that my decision (it's mine alone) to support the changes to Federation Square and allow an Apple concept store to replace the Yarra building would be controversial.

They are his words, not mine, Mr Davis. I have already read this. I am not going to re-read it into *Hansard*, but I will provide you with a copy and you can certainly in your own time take the issue up with Mr Bates.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — He may provide advice, but I would put to you, Mr Davis, that if somebody puts their own name to their own op-ed — their own words — then you should have some level of confidence that they are owning those words. I would certainly not be casting an aspersion that somehow he has been bought off because —

Mr Davis — No, I'm not. I'm just seeking facts.

Mr DALIDAKIS — You are implying and impugning his character —

Mr Davis — No, I'm not. I'm asking a question.

Mr DALIDAKIS — You are suggesting, Mr Davis, that Donald Bates —

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — You are impugning his character by suggesting that he has been bought off. I object —

Mr Davis — I never said anything of the sort.

Mr DALIDAKIS — That is what you have suggested across the dispatch box. I am not verballing you, Mr Davis. It is not possible to verbal you. You are so good at verballing yourself. Let me continue, because this is not a helpful line of debate. This is not helpful in terms of the discussion that we are having here today.

What I am trying to point out, Mr Davis, to you and to other members — through you, Acting President — is that we have an opportunity here to be able to support the development, to support the creation and to support the return of public space, new space and activated space. This is an opportunity to bring 2 million-plus more visitors into Federation Square. That will enliven the other tenants, support the other activities and create an additional opportunity for Federation Square to live up to what has become, as Dr Ratnam said — and this is where I will agree — a much-loved meeting place. Of course it is important to note that Apple's investment is obviously significant. It is significant because, as I indicated earlier, it will have up to 70 free events per week covering the world of music, art and technology, educational presentations and interactive services. We need to make sure that those opportunities are all about the community.

What I can tell Mr Davis is I have been advised — and this is for his benefit given his comments across the dispatch box — that Mr Bates is working with the state government architect, Jill Garner, on this. He is not retained, as I understand it, by Federation Square as you suggested or implied.

Mr Davis — I asked.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Or asked. I will give you the benefit of the doubt, Mr Davis.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I will give you the benefit of the doubt, Mr Davis. I will happily — put this in *Hansard* — take your comments in the spirit in which they were meant. You have been sadly misled.

Mr Davis — By government people.

Mr DALIDAKIS — I am glad to resolve that issue for you, Mr Davis, and to put in *Hansard* once again the fact that even though we are separated by metres we have euphemistically had a group hug and sorted that issue out.

Mrs Peulich — What a horrid thought.

Mr DALIDAKIS — It will not be happening with you, Mrs Peulich. I can assure you of that.

The issue of access to the Yarra River is a very important public policy pursuit. Right now the existing Yarra building stops people from being able to go from Federation Square into the Yarra River precinct. By returning so much more space — up to 500 square metres of public space — this will actually allow a flow of people into the Yarra precinct at a much higher level than we have today. And that landscaping does become important: we want to be more inclusive, not exclusive. We want to embrace, not exclude. We want to ensure that people have an opportunity to enjoy all parts of Melbourne, not have them blocked off by buildings like the Yarra building. We can see that there are a whole lot of other opportunities.

I want to support the work that my department does around the world through our trade and investment office network. We have 22 trade and investment offices around the world, with the most recent one of course in Tel Aviv. Why do I mention Tel Aviv to you? Because Tel Aviv is a beacon of light for technology around the world, just as San Francisco, where Apple comes from, is. This is able to cement the growing global reputation that Melbourne has as a tech destination. Over the two and a half years that I have been the minister for innovation in the government of Victoria we have seen companies like Slack, Square, Zendesk, Etsy, EventBrite and GoPro, some of which are household names and others that are household names within the tech sector.

Either way we have seen a growing reputation for Melbourne to be considered not just as the tech epicentre of Australia but indeed one of the tech epicentres of the Asia-Pacific region. By getting one of the global flagship stores located here in Melbourne we can cement that growing reputation around the world. When you consider, as I have said on a number of occasions, that we will have the only such global flagship store in the Southern Hemisphere and only the second outside of the United States after Milan, that is an amazing opportunity for us to speak not only of our tech sector and our growing importance within the tech

community but also of being one of those cities where we can be a beacon of light unto others just as Tel Aviv and San Francisco have been beacons of light in the tech sector themselves.

Ms Shing — These stores are not just retail opportunities.

Mr DALIDAKIS — As I was saying earlier and as I have been reminded by my colleague Ms Shing, when we talk about what the global flagship store will do it is not simply a retail concept. Of course people will have the ability to purchase from the store, but more importantly you cannot have an activated site where you are offering up to 70 free events a week in the areas of music, technology, educational presentations, interactive sessions — including ACMI, the Koorie Heritage Trust and the NGV — if your primary purpose is retail.

Apple will be in fact giving back to the community. They will be giving back to us in Melbourne. They will be giving back to the tourists that come to view and visit the ability to participate in a new experience, something which we do not have at the moment, an experience that will allow us to participate in the world. We are always talking about how Melbourne and Victorians should embrace what the world has to offer and here we are bringing the world to Melbourne and the Greens wish to take that away. They wish to tell children that there is no Father Christmas and that the tooth fairy does not exist, and we here are trying to defend our growing reputation around the world.

Mr Davis — The tooth fairy? You are trying to defend the tooth fairy and Father Christmas?

Mr DALIDAKIS — We are trying to defend the tooth fairy, that is right. The Greens are the grinchers that are trying to steal Christmas and we are trying to make sure that Christmas is here forevermore. The ability to attract a global flagship store of a company like Apple suggests to everybody that we are a city that has relevance, that we are a city that has importance and that we are a city that we can be proud of. This is an opportunity for Melbourne to be one of only five such cities around the world and only the second outside of North America. It should be something that instils in us a level of confidence and an ability to shine out from where we are, to say that Melbourne matters, Melbourne is on the map, Melbourne is a destination.

Melburnians and Victorians should be proud of what we are able to do here, because Apple wants to be not just in Milan and San Francisco and Chicago; it wants to be in Melbourne. The only place in the Southern

Hemisphere that you will be able to visit one of these global flagship stores, Mr Davis, is here in Melbourne. I know you are a proud Melburnian. I know that you love Victoria more than any other state in this country. I know that you will always try to put Melbourne ahead of other destinations. This is your chance, Mr Davis: join me, walk down the aisle side by side in supporting this opportunity to create here in Melbourne. Walk with me side by side, Mr Davis. Walk with me —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No. We are in a new era of cooperation. We are in a new era where we can work together for the betterment and the benefit of all Melburnians, of generations of Victorians yet to come, of younger generations, of my children — my 12-year-old, my 10-year-old and my six-year-old. May they also have the ability to feel that light, to feel that proud love that Melbourne has to offer by being spoken of in the same breath as Milan, a city with thousands of years of history while Melbourne has a much shorter history.

On my recent trip overseas I visited Bourges, France, and had the ability to tour a cathedral that was built between the late 1100s and 1340. It took 150 years to build this cathedral, and it was an amazing experience to visit it. To think that Melbourne will have the ability to be spoken of in the same breath as Milan fills me with pride. It should fill everybody with pride that Melbourne and Victoria have an opportunity to be presented around the world as somewhere that is more than just a name on a map. Rather Melbourne will be seen as a place that has a soul, a place that has an environment that affords us the ability to support 70 free events per week, the ability to provide opportunities to our existing tenants in Federation Square, including ACMI, the Koorie Heritage Trust and of course the NGV, the ability to see the original vision of Donald Bates finally implemented, the ability to introduce —

Mr Ramsay — I don't think he ever envisaged an Apple Store.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Let me tell you, Mr Ramsay. I do not wish to speak outside the discussions I had with this Mr Bates, but when Mr Bates spoke to me about this concept and put his support behind it, he said that in his original vision there was a Borders store in that building. He told me that when Apple opened its first store he decided at that point it should be an Apple Store. That is what he said to me. I am not making that up, Mr Ramsay. That was a discussion I had with Mr Bates. He always envisaged a commercial space in

Federation Square. Originally he envisaged Borders but then he thought of Apple when Apple opened a flagship store before Federation Square itself was complete. That is in his original op-ed, Mr Ramsay — not the Apple part, but the Borders — where he envisaged commercial activation. He wanted to be able to show there was a mix of community, of culture and of commercialisation. He wanted to ensure that people had the opportunity to come together as one for different purposes and different meanings but to be able to enjoy the space. Regardless of what their purpose of visiting was, they were all able to enjoy it together.

It is a bit like the MCG in some respects, Mr Ramsay. It does not matter which football team you support. You go to the MCG, the mecca of sport, which was the home of the Olympics in 1956 and has been the site of wonderful cricket matches and wonderful AFL games, and you go there to support the sport. You do not just go there —

Ms Shing — I just go for the \$8 chips.

Mr Ramsay — If you're a member, you get a 10 per cent discount now. Did you know that?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I will take that up with you after my contribution, Mr Ramsay, because I fear that that will be the most important discussion we shall have. But the point should not be lost that we have the ability to bring people together and the ability to ensure that commercialisation and community and culture are also there.

I only have a few minutes left, unless the opposition wants to yield more time to me; I am not sure that that is going to happen. But in my final 3 minutes I think it is important that I sum up what I have been saying for the last 57.

Ms Shing — How can you? How is it possible?

Mr DALIDAKIS — I really need 57 minutes to sum up the 57 minutes, but I will try to do my best in 3 minutes. I will start with the fact that the original architect, Donald Bates, supports the design. The original architect supports the return of space. The original architect supports the activation of commercialisation and the ability of that space to be included.

On this side of the chamber we need to be proud when Melbourne is thought of as a global destination, a global tech city, a leading light in the world of innovation. We need to be proud of that. We need not be embarrassed by it. We need not eschew that opportunity. We need to run towards it, not run away

from it. It is great and it is appropriate that we take our place in the world as a leading destination. We need to make sure that Mr Ondarchie can take his grandchildren to Federation Square and say, 'This is a wonderful opportunity —

Mr Ondarchie — I do now.

Mr DALIDAKIS — No, in the future. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to be spoken of in a world where at the moment there is far too much sameness. We have got an opportunity to differentiate ourselves from not just from the rest of Australia but from other countries in the Southern Hemisphere. We have an opportunity to say, 'We are the only one. We are the only place in the Southern Hemisphere that has a store of this significance'. We should embrace this opportunity. We should be proud of it. We should support it.

For that reason, we cannot support the Greens' motion to tear down the fabric of our community, to tear down the dreams of future generations, to run away instead of running towards this opportunity. We need to make sure that as the protectors of public policy the government makes sure that we encourage this investment.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — We are the protectors of public policy.

Mr Ondarchie — When did you take on that role?

Mr DALIDAKIS — We took on that role at the November 2014 election.

An honourable member — No, you didn't.

Mr DALIDAKIS — We did. We as the government took on the role when the good people of Victoria determined that we should be in government, that we should deliver for the people, by the people, with the people.

With that, we will reject the motion. We will vote against the Greens' indulgence. We will not give in to this grinch-like activity and behaviour. We will make sure that we stand up so that people can be proud of what we have delivered for the city, that people wherever they live can know that Melbourne is spoken of in the same sentence as Milan and San Francisco and Chicago, that we are a great city and that we are prepared to fight to be a great city. We will not give that up because the grinch-like to my right want to attack and tear us down.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (15:30) — I am pleased to make a succinct contribution to this debate regarding Ms Ratnam's motion to revoke amendment C314 to the Melbourne planning scheme, noting the extraordinary contribution we have just heard from Mr Dalidakis — a rant by any description.

Ms Shing — It was extraordinary.

Mr DAVIS — Bizarre I think would also be a fair description.

Ms Shing — No, you said extraordinary.

Mr DAVIS — Yes, in the sense that it was not ordinary. The point I would make here is that this is a difficult situation that the government has made much worse. The fact is that many of us who are pro-Melbourne, as Mr Dalidakis alluded to, do want to see development and do want to see groups like Apple come to Melbourne and make a great contribution to our state. They are very welcome to come to Melbourne. I have met with the Apple group — a range of coalition backbenchers have met with them — to hear their take on what is wanting to be achieved here. We have also heard from Federation Square and from others, including a range of community groups, who have strong views to the contrary.

The point here is that the government has botched this process. This is a process that should have delivered community cohesion. It is a process that should have delivered proper community consultation, and it is a process that should have delivered an outcome which had been refined and improved by the government on the way through. Instead of that what we have had is a secretive process where Mr Dalidakis and his secret cabinet subcommittee have gone about the business of the state without involving the City of Melbourne and without properly involving the broader community.

The community has a legitimate stake in this. Federation Square is a meeting place for people from all over Victoria and beyond. It is a place where people come. It is a place that people have grown fond of. I remember the early days of Federation Square and, let us be clear, there were mixed views about the architecture. Often architecture is there to challenge and to break new ground, and it certainly did that. I pay tribute to former Premier Jeffrey Kennett and those who led the charge on seeing Federation Square as the people's square and as a place where the community could come. We had a very good outcome from the centenary of Federation in building that magnificent legacy.

It is true to say that the financial viability of Federation Square is a challenge for all governments — governments of both political colours. I make the point that for most of the time since Federation Square opened in the early 2000s Labor has been in power, for all but four years. Nonetheless, funding Federation Square is a challenge for all governments now and into the future. I take on board some of the points that Mr Dalidakis has made about the original purpose and intention of the building under discussion in these plans. I take on board some of the points that have been made by Donald Bates and some of the original architects.

I put on record a growing concern about the role of the Victorian state architect. I was a supporter of her in this chamber. I actually got up before Jill Garner was appointed to advocate for her appointment and to say, 'This post needs to be filled, and the acting person, Jill Garner, is a perfectly appropriate appointment'. I actually supported her appointment, but I have to say she has disappointed. She has been weak on this and on other key matters. The sky rail architecture debacle, where she changed the advice about elevated rail under pressure from the government, was a travesty. I have told her this, and she knows I have the FOI documents to prove it. She knows that I can see the direct intervention of the Level Crossing Removal Authority in her office to try to change the architectural advice. It was shameful and not good enough in any sense. In this situation involving Federation Square the state architect has again not been strong enough in her advocacy for the people and her advocacy for the future of the city.

Putting all that to one side, we have to look to the future —

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr DAVIS — No, the process here is actually very important. The government's secretive behaviour in hiding this for at least two years and not bringing it to community notice is a considerable problem. Not involving the local council, the City of Melbourne, our central council, and not involving the broader Victorian community is a problem. But we are where we are. We have a planning scheme amendment that has been foisted on the community without proper engagement and we have a proposal from Apple for a particular store.

Let us be clear: there are some advantages to this, including the activation of the connections to the river. I have seen these proposals in detail and I am impressed by that connection to the river. I put on record my belief that that is an improvement in parts of Federation

Square. Let us also be clear, as I interjected across the chamber, that Federation Square is not a pristine outcome. We had former Premier Steve Bracks tampering with and removing one of the shards in the early days, so we are not looking at an outcome here that is the pristine structure designed by the original architects; it has been modified a number of times.

Do I like the architectural shape of the proposed Apple store? It is probably not my cup of tea, but I am not claiming to be an architectural whiz either, and I will leave some of the judgements on that to others. People have in fact made a whole series of points about that. I have had some of the contractual details relayed to me, including the 20-year lease with two five-year options. Some of this should have more properly been in the public domain at an earlier point to give people an understanding of what has actually been entered into.

In terms of the approach of Apple as a figurehead for Melbourne, I think it is an important addition. I think there are some significant points that can be seen from the Apple brand. Mr Dalidakis has spoken about Milan, Chicago, San Francisco and so forth. Melbourne's would be the fifth of the flagship stores, and I think it would be a tourism drawcard. I think it would be an opportunity to advance Melbourne and would act as a flagship for Melbourne's technology sector. But that in no way says that it could not be somewhere else, by the way. It could be elsewhere in Melbourne. It could be on top of one of the new stations. It could be in Docklands. It could be in Federation Square east if the government had not zapped the Federation Square east opportunities. The previous government advertised for expressions of interest in Federation Square east, and we know that these came back during the caretaker period and were examined by the new government, but they were clearly not to their liking. So there are other options that could well have been explored by government. I think the government has to get a little bit stronger in actually advocating for Victoria in the pro-Victorian way that Mr Dalidakis outlined. We need to have a government that is prepared to fight for Victoria and to fight for the very best outcomes for the state.

I agree with the activation of the links to the river. I am not so sure about the actual shape of the store, but leaving that to one side I note that I have met with a number of community activists. I pay tribute to their enthusiasm and commitment to Melbourne and the future of Melbourne. I know that they are running this campaign and advocating in a very robust way with the direct intention of getting a better outcome for the Victorian community.

The key thing on these revocation motions is that we need to understand that those reserve powers in the Planning and Environment Act 1987 were kept there for a very specific reason. The Parliament handed powers to the planning minister but retained the right of either chamber, under section 38, to act as a check, a balance, to poor behaviour by governments or inappropriate steps by planning ministers. We have seen a number of cases, and as I said to the President the other day when he delivered his little homily —

Ms Shing — ‘Little homily’? Did you want to be any more condescending with that term?

Mr DAVIS — That is what I think it was, and I think you would agree with it too. The point I made at the time is that one of the concerns we have is the poor use of the planning power by this government, and that is eliciting a response on a series of key issues around the state.

We saw the decision that was made by the government without proper consultation at Ormond, and the chamber took a view on that. We saw the decision that was made on Markham, again steamrolling a community, bulldozing through a community and actually not delivering the proper outcome that people wanted in the community — or even a good public housing outcome in that particular case. In the case of the West Gate tunnel — again a market-led proposal that has not been put in the public domain in the way it should have been — there were the reductions on the contractual arrangements and a whole series of issues. We have said plenty about that, and we will say more in this chamber as we return to debate on that particular revocation motion.

There is a theme here, and that is the government’s misuse of its planning power and its lack of community engagement and consultation. The chamber is very appropriately scrutinising the executive here and saying, ‘No, on some occasions this is the wrong way to go. It is not in the community’s interests, and indeed we should take a very different view on some of those’. On this I say that the government has botched the process, and I hold the government to account for the debacle that has occurred with this outcome here.

I do not, though, believe that we can entirely base this on the government’s mistaken process here. It is a matter where the state’s interest is also important. The state’s outcome in terms of its projection is also important. The opposition has two views about this. On one hand we see the misuse of the government’s approach and the misuse of the government’s power. The second thing is the actual proposal that is before us

in terms of Federation Square, and there are mixed views about that. There are clear views within the opposition in favour of Apple’s involvement in Victoria — strong, strong support for Apple’s involvement but not necessarily at this location. The government, I think, could well have explored, and still could, negotiation with Apple to actually get a better outcome on location.

I do very much believe that a symbol for the state here is this engagement with the tech sector, and Apple, of course being arguably the biggest company in the world at the moment, has a massive contribution to make to this state and obviously more broadly. Their presence here would actually engage the state strongly and position the state strongly.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (15:43) — I will sadly only get to speak briefly on this very important motion that has been put forward by Dr Ratnam, yet again another revocation motion. I did want to speak at length on this issue because this is something I think is important. Unfortunately we heard Mr Dalidakis speak in a limited way but many times over, so we heard a 3-minute contribution repeated 20 times.

I love Federation Square, and I have always loved Federation Square. From the beginning, when I saw that design, I have been one of the ones that thought it was cool. I was a fan of the Buckminster Fuller geodesic dome, and it reminded me of that utopian science fiction that I sometimes long for even though I do love the 19th century Victorian chamber that we are in as well. I visit Federation Square whenever I can, and I am a great fan of it. I have been particularly impressed with the way that we have developed along the river as well, and up until now we have missed that opportunity to open Federation Square up to the river. I think a very important part of this proposal is opening up the river, enabling us to have that greater public space and to wander from Federation Square down there.

I like the commercial aspects of Federation Square as well. I enjoy going to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV). I attend many events at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI). I am a regular at the various restaurants down at Federation Square and also along Birrarung Marr. I really enjoy the space and the area. I join thousands quite often at the big events when we are watching on the big screen, whether it is at a sad event like remembering the Florida nightclub shooting a couple of years ago or whether it is celebrating things like the Australian Open.

I actually do not have a problem with it being commercialised, and I think that involving Apple in a venture in Federation Square is not a bad thing. I do think the process could have been better, and I also said previously, this morning, that I do not think we have brought the community with us as much as we could have. When I speak to people who are not necessarily engaged with this place, they love the idea of having an Apple space. When I have been looking at the various flagships — I have certainly been to their New York store — I think the one that relates most closely to Federation Square is their Chicago store, and that is on the river and has opened up the space down to the river quite beautifully.

Having just been part of Pause Fest, which is a tech conference that was held at Federation Square two weeks ago, and speaking to people from Pixar and various other people, a relationship between Apple and Pixar, a relationship between Apple, Pixar and ACMI or even a relationship between Apple, Pixar and the Koorie Heritage Trust, the NGV or the various other cultural spaces at Federation Square I think could be very positive. I think the modern 21st century style of square is about embracing technology, and I do not think that we as a Parliament could do that effectively. I think working with a company like Apple is a good idea, and I support that idea.

In part of looking at the process, a semirendered, half-considered design being published out there did cause great concern. People saw that building and thought, 'That is ugly. That is not going to work for Federation Square. That is not going to create the space that we want', but that is not the final design and there is a lot more work to be done in creating that space and making sure that that space works for us, that we see the extra open space there, that we see the ability for us to interact with the technology and that that space becomes activated in that way. Personally I think it is exciting, and many of the people I speak to, particularly those with children, also think that this is exciting.

I understand the criticisms here and I appreciate the concerns of some of the people who have written to me, but all in all I do not support this motion. I do support us entering into arrangements like this. I think the process could have been more transparent. Yet again I would say: let us not let the perfect get in the way of the good. I look forward to seeing how this space will take us into this next century and the opportunities that redeveloping that space to take us down to the river provides. I do not support the motion.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (15:49) — I rise today to speak to Dr Ratnam's motion regarding what is going on at Federation Square, and I want to start by saying that this is the people's place. Every great city has a central place, a place where people go and where they can meet. Our Federation Square is such a place and was once voted the sixth best civic square in the world. Our Federation Square, a relatively new addition to marvellous Melbourne, has quickly seeped into what makes our Melbourne, Melbourne.

It is the place you take tourists to start a trip around the city. It is where Melburnians and their families go to see the world's events unfold — stories of despair, stories of courage and also stories of our great sports achievements. It is a place of great celebrations and multicultural celebrations — Indian, Chinese, Thai, Buddhist, you name it. It all happens at our Federation Square — a place where football fans gather after the AFL Grand Final to celebrate their victories, a place where people meet to be happy and sometimes to weep. Whether or not you like the design or the way it interacts with the river is beside the point. It functions as a space for the people. It truly is the people's place.

Daniel Andrews's Labor government seeks to destroy all that we hold dear about Federation Square. Under the cover of the Christmas rush and to avoid too much public scrutiny, the Minister for Planning used his powers under clause 52.03 of the planning scheme to gift a parcel of land to Apple to build a flagship store right in the heart of Melbourne. Minister Dalidakis would claim he made that happen. Minister Eren would claim he made that happen. It is interesting that cabinet is split on whether it is the right decision or not. It is interesting, but they both claim that they were responsible for this. We know that a decision was made without public consultation and without the necessary transparency that this rushed decision deserves.

A building which I think is out of sync with the current design of the surroundings will be constructed where a public building exists that houses the Koorie Heritage Trust and the headquarters of SBS. I welcome new investment and jobs to Victoria, but why there? Why do they have to put the retail store of Apple there? Is there any other place? You do not hear about fundamental changes being made to Trafalgar Square or the Red Square or gardens being added to the Piazza del Campo in Siena, but it is not the first time the Labor government has tried a bit of a sham. We know, leading up to the 2010 election, they tried a whole sham consultation to destroy the Windsor, and plans currently exist and are underway to destroy many, many elm trees on our famous St Kilda Road boulevard.

The destruction of the people’s place at Federation Square will destroy what is a great part of Melbourne. Demolition and then construction is due to start in 2019 after the state election. I want to be a person who stands up to protect and value Melbourne’s unique city landmarks. I think this is a bad decision.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (15:53) — I will just sum up very briefly. Thanks to everyone who made a contribution. It is quite dismaying to hear, but it seems that the lobbyists and corporate interests have got to so many members in this place that we seem disconnected from the Melbourne out there — from the hundreds of people who have contacted us, over the last few weeks particularly, to say they want this project stopped and that they want this Parliament to act in the best interests of both the community at present but also for generations to come. That is what we are talking about: preserving public space for the generations of Victorians to come.

It is unfortunate that Minister Dalidakis is not here, because I want to reply to a number of issues that he raised in his contribution. Firstly, he talked to us about how his government is a protector of public policy, but there is nothing public about what you are protecting. You are protecting corporate and commercial interests and allowing commercialisation of our precious public space. Right across this state there are large swathes of public land that are being sold off right under our noses. This is just another example of it, and there are countless residents and councils who are writing to us to tell us to stop the sell-off of public land and public assets.

You talked about hypocrisy, but I will tell you what real hypocrisy is: this Labor government saying that it has a social contract with people and selling out public housing. Selling out all the public housing land and talking about social housing — that is the height of hypocrisy.

What we have also heard in this place is a total lack of imagination. How disappointing that our Minister for Trade and Investment does not think that we can compete with the great cities of the world. We are a great city of the world. We do not need Apple to tell us that we are a great city of the world. We have our own talents and our civic life. We are the hub of the artistic and cultural elements of Australia. People come to Melbourne from all over Australia to enjoy those things. People come from all over the world to enjoy Melbourne and its culture. We do not need big corporate interests to be the flagship of what Melbourne’s identity is. We can stand on our own two feet, and we need imagination now about what will

make this city even greater. Commercialising our public space is not the way to go to ensure that Melbourne remains a great city and becomes an even greater city in the future.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 4

Dunn, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Ratnam, Dr
Pennicuik, Ms	Springle, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes, 34

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

Pairs

Greens vacancy	Pulford, Ms
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Motion negated.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65

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

That, in relation to amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, which facilitates the delivery of the West Gate tunnel project, this house —

- (1) notes planning scheme amendment GC65 was gazetted on 7 December 2017;
- (2) notes section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 requires the Minister for Planning to cause a notice of the approval of every amendment to be laid before each house of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is approved; and
- (3) contingent on any tabling of the amendment, and pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, revokes amendment GC65.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (16:03) — I am happy to speak against this particular revocation motion. This is a motion that is not only going to affect a future second major river crossing from the west, it is also going to affect a project that is going to employ thousands of Victorians. Some of those thousands of

Victorians will be hundreds of apprentices, as well as hundreds of trainees and our future tradespeople going forward. As I said, hundreds of them will be trained on this particular project. It is a shame that the opposition has got to the point where they feel so irrelevant that they will do anything to oppose everything.

This is an opposition that will do anything — anything that is in their power — to oppose everything, so therefore they support nothing. This is a road project, and I understand the Greens party usually oppose most road projects. They do support rail projects as a rule. Sometimes they are not happy with aspects of rail projects, but they will support them. But the opposition has not supported any rail projects. They will try and say that they are supportive of the level crossing removal program, especially when they take selfies of themselves when they are finished and make a big deal about having called for this level crossing to be removed, but during the process, if the remedy for the level crossing removal is under, they will complain about it going under and they will complain about land acquisition and businesses being affected. They say, 'If it goes over, it's a sky rail and it's the end of the world', despite there being elevated rail through Hawthorn and through Richmond forever.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr LEANE — This just proves my point. Thank you for proving my point. You oppose everything. You oppose every project. It does not matter if it is a rail project or a road project, it does not matter if it is a school and it does not matter if it is in health. Everything gets opposed by this opposition, and then all of a sudden when it is finished, as I said, they love taking selfies in front of the project and trying to claim that they are some special part of it because they called for it. They are not fooling anyone. Please spare us in the future your, 'Yes, we support the level crossing removal program, but'. You have not supported one removal. You have not supported one public transport project. You have opposed every one of them.

You do not support the Melbourne Metro project. Everything about that you oppose. You have become anti-industry and anti-progress. You have become anti-infrastructure. What you have become is the Greens party. There is no difference between you and the Greens as far as being anti-development goes. This is another case where you are 100 per cent proving that that is all you have done this whole term. All you have done is oppose every infrastructure program in this state, and since this government has come to power you have been very busy because there are hundreds of infrastructure projects for you to oppose.

As I said before, when the government came to office we said we would not waste one day in government, and that is exactly what we have done. All you have got to do is drive down through any suburb towards the east, towards the west or towards the north — you cannot go too far south because you will hit the bay — or into regional Victoria and you will see schools being built or renovated, you will see hospitals being renovated or built, you will see the Murray Basin project, you will see a huge rail project, you will see road projects, you will see level crossings being removed and you will see new train stations. There are images for the Mernda station on Facebook today. What a fantastic station that looks like it is going to be. What a fantastic station Noble Park is. Noble Park was neglected by the previous government. They probably would not even know where Noble Park is. At Noble Park there is a fantastic new station that has been a long time coming.

So here we are today where, of all things, there is this complaint about congestion in the west and there is a project to help remedy that, but this particular opposition has come in with a revocation motion. Referring to the previous debate that we just went through, Mr Davis's explanation about revocation motions is, 'If it's a revocation motion from me, it's okay', but if it is a revocation motion from other people, this chamber needs to take that responsibility very seriously before someone pulls the trigger on abusing the planning process by having this chamber implant itself in the planning process. Their current Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly — their outgoing leader — Mr Guy, when he was the Minister for Planning in this chamber, said that this chamber should not be implanting itself into the planning process, but apparently if it is a revocation motion from Mr Davis, then that all goes out the window. But if anyone else brings one in, we need to take these motions and the way we go about them very seriously. I found that very enlightening.

In the future, motions like this from Mr Davis, as far as the opposition is concerned, should be waved through with no consideration, but motions from any other non-government MP should be taken very seriously in case we are doing the wrong thing by the Victorian planning rules and schemes and the way that the planning schemes have been approached for decades. I know the President did make a statement earlier today about his concerns — I am paraphrasing; I do not want to put words into his mouth — about this being the weekly stunt. But this is the weekly stunt that the opposition has embraced because everything else has failed. They have opposed everything, but these things are getting built, and surprise, surprise, when they are

finished, people like them. People like the new schools. They like the new hospitals. They like the new rail lines. They like not getting pulled up at a boom gate. They like it that the roads are not congested anymore.

Mr Davis can carry on about what an awful project the sky rail is, but I have got to say that satisfaction in that area with that particular project is at 90 per cent. Mr Davis is left standing on that 1950 platform at Noble Park. He is the only one still standing there, looking all sad, because everything has moved past him. He needs to find some sort of relevance, so what he is doing now is going on an adventure that really puts him and his party on all new ground — in deeper water than the rest of his colleagues probably wanted to tread out to. People associated with groups, business councils and so forth that have usually been allies of the coalition are now outraged about the coalition's opposition to the progress of Victoria — to business, to industry, to employment — and to projects that are actually going to improve the efficiency of business in this town such as a second main river crossing. The coalition have got the big industry groups scratching their heads and saying, 'What has happened to the conservatives?'

Mr Gepp — VCCI!

Mr LEANE — The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry! Thank you, Mr Gepp. What has happened to the conservatives when they do not support industry, they do not support infrastructure, they do not support employment? What has happened to the Liberal Party? They used to be at the forefront of this. They used to have the courage to promote projects. This project is not any different. Of course there have to be big holes dug. Of course there will be effects on vegetation. Of course there will be disruption to neighbouring people for periods of time. Of course there is going to be that. We saw it in the four years that the opposition were in government. They were too scared. They were petrified to do anything like that. They did not do any major projects whatsoever.

They promised a lot. There was going to be a rail from Doncaster to the CBD. There was going to be a rail out to the airport. There were all these promises that never actually got delivered, because they went through a period of four years where they just sat on their hands. They sat on their hands, lost an election and their hands were flat — they had sat on them for so long.

We on this side of the chamber are determined to continue to deliver world-class infrastructure. The opposition can keep opposing and keep trying on their stunts, but we are determined — and we have proven

that we are determined — to deliver world-class infrastructure. Only last week one-third of the elevated rail between Dandenong and the CBD was opened and a new station was put in. Only the week before that Mountain Highway was grade separated. In coming weeks Grange Road in Alphington will be grade separated, and on Lower Plenty Road there will be a grade separation. There will be a duplication of rail on the Hurstbridge line. There will be a new tunnel put through. Where there used to be a single line there will be a second line. As I said, all the opposition to this means nothing when these projects are finished. People will appreciate the extra services they will have on the Hurstbridge line when we duplicate part of that line. Mernda rail is going to be finished. The people of Mernda will appreciate that they can walk to a train station, jump on a train and get into the CBD for sporting events, work, school or for whatever they choose to do.

We have had this white noise in the background continually during our infrastructure program. It has not stopped us up until now and will not stop us into the future. I appreciate that the opposition is clutching at ways to grab attention. Some of those are quite unsavoury in some areas unfortunately, but I am sure they will continue to do that. In this area, as I said, we will keep going. The opposition and Mr Davis can be left on that 1950s train platform by themselves, looking sadly up into the air as trains go past on the sky rail and they cannot even hear them. They cannot even hear them so they will not know they are there. Mr Davis will be a sad, forlorn figure, but we will keep moving. One thing that we know is that the people who use the infrastructure that we leave behind in eight or 12 years time will be pleased that this government actually did what it did.

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (16:18) — It is with pleasure that I rise to speak against this revocation motion moved by Mr Davis. I am glad that earlier today, although I was not in the chamber, the President has called out this pattern of behaviour. Every week we see revocation motion after revocation motion. If there is any progress that is brought before the house, what you can back in each and every time is that Mr Davis will jump to his feet and oppose it. If it is not him, it is somebody else. In just the period of time since I have been here — the last eight or nine months — it has been a constant pattern of behaviour. Every time there is a bit of progress talked about, what do we get from this mob opposite? We get a revocation motion. They want to stop everything.

They should look back at their period in office from 2010 to 2014 and ask why they were tossed out. They

were tossed out because they did nothing. They did nothing. Contrast that with the work of the Andrews Labor government, and I think Mr Leane put it eloquently this morning when he said that quite possibly we will go down as the greatest government in this state's history. We are getting the place moving. Jobs, projects, economic growth — you name it, we are doing it — hospitals, schools, level crossings, roads. It is just a never-ending story of progress and it is something that we are very, very proud about.

Contrast that with the mob opposite. They have opposed sky rail, Melbourne Metro, the Ormond railway station tower and the Markham estate redevelopment. I will come to the Markham estate because what we have heard during other debates here today and in other contributions from the Greens, partners in crime with the opposition in relation to this motion, is how they stand up for public housing. What the Leader of the Greens forgets to remind everybody is that when she and her party had the opportunity to support the most recent public housing proposition in this place, they knocked it off. You cannot stand up on one day and say 'I'm a supporter of public housing' when your record suggests something completely different.

This motion is not about pursuing good planning outcomes. It is about the opposition siding with the Greens to try and stymie the government's infrastructure agenda, and it is the biggest infrastructure agenda in this state's history. We know from this revocation motion and other revocation motions that this is nothing more than irresponsible, it is erratic and, dare I say, irrational.

It is interesting. When this revocation motion first appeared on the notice paper I did a bit of research. Do you know that almost 10 years ago Mr Finn stood up in this place on one of his long-winded rants, as he is prone to do —

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr GEPP — Yes, a little bit colourful. He was urging the Parliament. Guess what he was urging the Parliament to do. He was urging the Parliament to find a way to ease congestion on the West Gate Bridge. He was talking about how his constituents —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr GEPP — I will take that up, Mr Ramsay. That is exactly right. As Mr Leane said, if it is not your idea, you do not like it. You have to stand in the way of all the progress. You have to oppose it. You just take the view that, 'We're going to oppose'. You oppose for

opposition's sake. Of course what that means is that at the end of this year when the people of Victoria go to the ballot box you cannot run and you cannot hide. You are going to have to put out there, lay out before the Victorian people between now and then, your policies. What do we stand for? You tell us what you do not stand for but you do not tell us what you do stand for.

Even your own supporters, the people who would normally, traditionally side with the Liberal Party, are abandoning you in this debate. The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr GEPP — Oh, they used to be their best mates but now they are on the outer. They disagree, so they are on the outer. What do they say? They say:

This project will deliver a much-needed second river crossing, cut travel times, reduce congestion and boost livability in Melbourne's west and Geelong.

And:

The government was elected with a mandate to deliver important projects like this one. Contracts have been signed, work has started and the project should proceed.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr GEPP — We will come to VCCI, but we might go to the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA). What did they say? In a press release on 7 February they said:

The use of parliamentary processes to overturn planning decisions for political reasons will have significant consequences for Victoria's economic and housing future ...

The integrity of Victoria's planning scheme is critical to growing the state's economy, creating employment opportunities, and to attracting investment in the housing and infrastructure we need ...

This is the UDIA:

We have a serious problem when members of state Parliament deliberately use parliamentary processes and voting to thwart planning decisions which have already been assessed and approved through the planning process.

There is more. Here is the ad taken out by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Victorian Transport Association, the UDIA and the Australian Logistics Council:

For Victoria's sake, the Parliament must not stop the West Gate tunnel project.

It says:

Using parliamentary processes to overturn planning decisions, for political reasons, would be irresponsible ...

and it goes on. Not even the people who stood up for them previously want to go anywhere near them on this occasion.

I want to talk about some of the important aspects of this project and why we are doing it. We are building this tunnel because drivers in the west — in Geelong, Ballarat and other places — desperately need an alternative to the current bridge situation. We have been talking about it for a long time. Mr Finn has been banging on about it for over a decade.

Mr Leane — Endlessly.

Mr GEPP — Endlessly. The time for talking is over. We have a project that is proceeding and is very much being welcomed by people from western Victoria in particular but also right from across this mighty state. We know that when we build this alternative, the new tunnel, it will take 28 000 vehicles and 8000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 off the Bolte Bridge. It will mean that we will finally ban thousands of trucks from local streets, with 24/7 truck bans to be introduced in 2022 to improve safety and reduce noise. Importantly, it will give our economy an \$11 billion boost. It will create in excess of 6000 jobs, 500 apprenticeships and 150 jobs for former auto workers. Auto workers know how they were treated by the Liberal Party, particularly their mates up in Canberra.

While we are talking about jobs, can I come to another important part of the project and that is the announcement that was made by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Luke Donnellan, along with my colleague from Northern Victoria Region Ms Symes when they announced the site for a \$60 million facility. That will be a new precast concrete manufacturing facility that will attract 400 new jobs to Northern Victoria Region, my electorate. Yet remarkably, Ms Lovell from the other side, Mr O'Sullivan from the other side and Mr Young —

Ms Symes — Our counterparts.

Mr GEPP — Our counterparts in Northern Victoria Region are opposing this project.

Ms Symes interjected.

Mr GEPP — I am pretty certain but I will throw out the challenge. Hello, if you are listening, if you are there, come into this place and tell us that you are

actually going to vote for it. I can promise you this: if Ms Lovell, Mr Young and Mr O'Sullivan vote against this project and for the revocation motion, every day between now and the election whenever we are given the opportunity we will make sure that the people of northern Victoria know that they voted against a job creation project that would directly benefit 400 new workers in northern Victoria. We will not let you forget it.

Last week when I was working up in my electorate I was in Numurkah, Cobram, Yarrowonga, Birchip, Echuca and Rochester. There was not one negative comment about this project. Indeed it was quite the opposite. People were very excited about the economic boost this project will deliver and will mean for northern Victoria. They can see beyond the immediate 400 jobs and into the future prosperity of the state. There was genuine excitement. So I challenge my counterparts from northern Victoria: do not vote against this proposition. This is good for our communities. Vote in favour of it.

Before I conclude I want to talk a little bit about our friends the Greens, partners of the opposition. Why are they doing this? Why are they anti jobs? Why are they anti projects? Why are they anti infrastructure? I think you have got to look a little bit more deeply at what their motivations are. I remember when — and please correct me if I am wrong — either just before or just after the Leader of the Greens came into this place she had a distinctly long interview with Neil Mitchell. He kept putting the question to her, 'What do you want? What do you hope to achieve in this place when you get there?'. 'I want progressive government', she said. I reckon she must have said that about 10 times. At least 10 times during the course of that interview she said, 'I want progressive government'. Well, the Leader of the Greens should know that there is more to being progressive than an ability to order a chai latte with activated almond milk. You have actually got to stand for something. Here you have an opportunity to support jobs — 6000 jobs — and \$11 billion worth of economic boost to the state. There are some fantastic environmental projects that are also attached to this development.

I suspect that the motivation is because of the things that are going on at the federal level a little bit down the road in the seat of Batman, where they want to position themselves. They do not look beyond. It must be difficult for them going beyond Bell Street in the Batman election. I am sure they had to get their GPS going to find it. It must be very, very difficult for them. They want to construct a narrative where all they are doing is pitching to what they believe is their traditional

base. They come in here and say, 'We're pro jobs', but they do not vote for projects that support jobs. They come in here and say, 'We're pro public housing', and yet when they come in here they vote against projects that increase public housing. I think you have got to question the motivation of the Greens and ask, 'What's it really all about?'

We do not forget that at the federal level the Greens preference people like Clive Palmer. We do not forget that they single-handedly took the meat axe to carbon taxes. We do not forget their deal with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who gave us Pauline Hanson. We do not forget that during the interview when Mr Mitchell asked the Leader of the Greens whether or not she had an eye on negotiating for a cabinet seat or a coalition with another party she said, 'I'll consider all options'. We are seeing across the world that multiparty governments are actually becoming the norm. That is obvious in terms of them again and again and again siding with those opposite. We know where their true allegiances lie, and so too does the Victorian community.

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) (16:34) — I rise to speak on this revocation motion and will be opposing the motion on the grounds that the West Gate tunnel project is a vital project for Melbourne and for the state. I will tell you why. First, let me give some details of the project and its development, as detailed in the environment effects statement (EES). The West Gate tunnel project is a major new freeway project designed to relieve traffic pressure on the Monash, CityLink and the West Gate Freeway — the M1 corridor and main connecting route between Melbourne's east and west — to reduce the city's reliance on the West Gate Bridge, to provide a direct freight link to the port of Melbourne and to remove significant volumes of trucks from residential areas in the inner western suburbs. This project will provide twin tunnels under Yarraville in Melbourne's inner west and an elevated motorway connection to the West Gate Freeway with the port of Melbourne, CityLink and the western edge of the central city, delivering an alternative river crossing to the West Gate Bridge.

The West Gate tunnel project has three components. The West Gate Freeway component includes upgrade and widening works between the M80 ring-road interchange and Williamstown Road, providing two additional lanes in each direction to generally increase capacity to six through-lanes in each direction and auxiliary lanes as required. The six lanes will be configured as two sets of three lanes in each direction. The outer three lanes will provide access to all existing connections to the West Gate Freeway and will link to

the tunnels under Yarraville. The inner three lanes will provide express lanes between the M80 ring-road and the West Gate Bridge. Elevated ramps will provide a new connection between the West Gate Freeway and Hyde Street.

The tunnel component includes two tunnels — one inbound and one outbound — under Yarraville, catering for three lanes of traffic in each direction. The tunnels will extend from two southern portals — entrances and exits — located along the West Gate Freeway to the west of Williamstown Road and to the west of the Newport freight line railway to a northern portal located east of Whitehall Street and north of Somerville Road, to the west of the Maribyrnong River in Footscray. The outbound tunnel will have a length of approximately 4 kilometres and the inbound tunnel approximately 2.8 kilometres. A tunnel ventilation structure will be located at each exit portal.

The port, CityLink and city connections component includes a crossing of the Maribyrnong River, connections to the port of Melbourne, an elevated road above Footscray Road and connections to CityLink and the central city. Connections will be provided to both sides of the port of Melbourne via MacKenzie Road and Appleton Dock Road. Inbound and outbound connections will be provided to CityLink, along with connections to Footscray Road, Dynon Road and a widened Wurundjeri Way extending through to Dynon Road. Widening works will be undertaken on the Princes Freeway between the M80 ring-road interchange and Kororoit Creek Road, providing an additional westbound lane on the Princes Freeway to tie in to the widened West Gate Freeway. The project will also require the localised relocation of nine high-voltage electricity transmission towers within the vicinity of the West Gate Freeway and the realignment of the north Yarra main sewer through Yarraville.

The West Gate tunnel project will deliver over 14 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, creating a continuous link from Werribee to central Melbourne and providing new and safer connections, and more travel choices. Upgrades will include the Federation Trail, replacing existing pedestrian bridges in the vicinity of Wembley Avenue and Rosala Avenue; a new veloway over Footscray Road; new pedestrian bridges over Williamstown Road, Stony Creek, Whitehall Street, Moonee Ponds Creek and Footscray Road; the new Footscray Road connection to the east of CityLink; and a pedestrian bridge adjacent to the Dynon Road bridge. The project will enable the government to extend 24-hour truck bans in the inner west, removing up to 9300 trucks from residential streets. The urban design concept for

the project provides for the creation of almost 9 hectares of new community open space, including new public park areas in the cities of Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong and Melbourne, and significant improvements to existing public open space.

The West Gate tunnel project was first proposed by Transurban in March 2015. That proposal was made pursuant to the Victorian government's *Market-led Proposals Guideline*. Transurban's proposal led to discussions with the Victorian government and key stakeholders; the preparation of the business case by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources to test the merits of the project; and extensive joint development work undertaken by Transurban. This work culminated in the preparation of a reference design for the project. In December 2015 the government released a business case, totally unprecedented at such an early stage of a massive infrastructure project — unlike those opposite, who hid the east–west business case because it was going to dud Victorians 55 cents for every dollar invested. The government then announced that it would proceed with the project and was progressing Transurban's proposal under Victoria's *Market-led Proposals Guideline* to the 'exclusive negotiations' stage of the process.

Also in December 2015 the Minister for Planning declared the proposed project works to be 'public works' under the Environment Effects Act 1978, triggering the requirement for the preparation of an EES. The project works were redeclared in May 2017 with the new project name and works as confirmed in the selected tender design. The EES described the potential effects of the project on the environment and recommended ways to avoid, minimise, offset or manage any adverse effects.

Throughout 2016 and early 2017 the Victorian government conducted a competitive tender process for the design and construction of the project informed by the reference design. This process resulted in the selection of the CPB Contractors and John Holland joint venture to design and construct the West Gate tunnel project subject to the successful completion of the EES process and the issue of key project approvals by the responsible statutory authorities. The EES assessed the design and construction approach proposed by the CPB-John Holland joint venture. Transurban would have ultimate responsibility for delivering the West Gate tunnel project. This includes ensuring that the design and construction contractors — and any other contractors working on the project — fulfil their obligations and that all environmental requirements

applying to the design, construction and operation of the project are met.

Let me detail why Melbourne needs the West Gate tunnel. Melbourne is now the nation's fastest growing capital city, heading for a population of more than 7 million by 2051 and on track to overtake Sydney as Australia's biggest city within 40 years. The growing pains are already acute in the city's west, which continues to be one of the fastest growing regions of Melbourne due to a combination of land use change, urban renewal in the inner suburbs and residential development of the outer suburbs. Alongside this unprecedented population growth the Victorian economy is shifting away from its traditional manufacturing base to one formed around knowledge-based services. These developments are reshaping Melbourne, leading to changes in where people want to live, where jobs and businesses are based and where centres of economic and industrial activities are located.

As industries in the services sector — such as health care; education; and financial, professional and technical services — continue to grow, an expanded central Melbourne is becoming Victoria's main generator of high-value jobs and a highly desirable investment, business and residential destination. At the same time specialist manufacturing and related industries are moving to outer areas of Melbourne in the west, north and south-east, attracted by large parcels of available land with good access to the major road network.

In the city's west, revitalised suburbs are growing strongly, attracting new residents and businesses as the region takes advantage of its proximity to the central city and available land to create a more diverse and dynamic economic base. Melbourne's role as a national import and export logistics hub is also contributing to strong growth in the movement of goods around the city and the state. In particular, container trade through the port of Melbourne is forecast to grow steeply, reaching 8 million standard containers a year by 2035 — 3.5 times the current level. The growing freight task is generating an increasing demand for the movement of goods on the city's freeways, changing preferred access routes to and from the port of Melbourne and leading to additional heavy freight traffic moving from the port through the inner west.

These shifts in population and economic activity are placing increasing pressure on Melbourne's transport network, particularly the already constrained connections to, from and through the city's west. Recent initiatives planned or underway, such as the

M80 ring-road upgrade, the regional rail link, the Metro Tunnel project, the removal of 50 metropolitan level crossings and upgrades to major suburban arterial roads, are improving cross-city connectivity. However, further improvements are needed to secure new economic and employment opportunities, move goods more efficiently and reliably to domestic and international markets, and support urban renewal and residential and commercial development in the central city and the west.

The West Gate tunnel project will address five critical transport challenges, the first being inadequate transport capacity on the M1 corridor. Traffic volumes along the M1 have increased steadily over the last decade, and the West Gate Freeway corridor now carries up to 200 000 vehicles each day between the M80 ring-road and Williamstown Road. There is a high level of congestion on the corridor and feed-in roads, travel speeds are less than optimal for a freeway standard link and the corridor has insufficient capacity to cater for the future significant growth in travel demand forecast over the coming decades.

The second challenge is an over-reliance on the West Gate Bridge. The West Gate Freeway carries more than 60 per cent of all trips across the Maribyrnong River and Yarra River. By 2031 between 240 000 and 250 000 vehicles will use the West Gate Bridge each weekday. This heavy reliance on the bridge makes the Victorian and Melbourne economies vulnerable to incidents and disruptions on the bridge, a susceptibility that is exacerbated by the shortage of viable alternate river crossings.

The third challenge is inadequate port and freight connections to cater for growth. The M1 corridor is Melbourne's most important land freight route. With the freight task forecast to triple by 2050, an additional 9000 trucks per day are expected to use the West Gate Freeway and the West Gate Bridge by 2031 and truck volumes are forecast to grow on unsuitable roads in the inner west. Providing reliable and timely freight access on a 24/7 basis to the port of Melbourne and key freight and industrial nodes is critical to managing the growth in freight.

The fourth challenge is reduced amenity in the inner west. The absence of an efficient freeway connection between the west and the port of Melbourne combined with growth in port-related freight means that increasing numbers of trucks pass through residential areas in the inner west. Some arterial roads through residential areas such as Francis Street and Somerville Road in Yarraville and Buckley Street and Moore Street in Footscray now carry high volumes of trucks

each day, significantly reducing amenity and safety in these areas. There are a lot of things that can be said about this project, how significant it is and how efficient it will be.

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (16:49) — We have heard a lot in relation to this motion since it was first brought on for debate, and as Mr Eideh has just indicated, there is a lot more that could be said about it. But some of the key themes that are emerging relate to the responsibilities that properly exist for effective opposition, the responsibilities that exist for the purposes of being consistent when developing policy and the responsibilities that exist to act in the public interest when undertaking a publicly elected role.

It would seem that these concepts are relatively straightforward when you think about them on a superficial level, and yet when you get down to the brass tacks of what happens within the parliamentary process, all of a sudden everything is up for grabs. What we have seen repeatedly now from the opposition is a preparedness to oppose no matter what and to oppose despite common sense, despite merit and despite the ongoing benefits that the actions being taken by this government will convey in economic terms, in social terms and in a way that accommodates our booming population — not just now but into the future — and that provides certainty, improves the everyday lives of Victorians and maintains our place as industry leaders when it comes to not just what we deliver to our state but what we provide to the nation as a whole and what we provide when sitting amongst our international partners on a global stage as part of global economic movement and development.

We have had the benefit of three years now of a government which has absolutely prioritised action rather than prevarication and that has absolutely prioritised getting the job done in a myriad of different ways. This has culminated in actions which have delivered not just record economic investment into the state, not just the maintenance of our AAA-plus credit rating according to both Moody's and Standard & Poor's, not just the development of, at last count, around 316 000 new jobs, over half of which are full-time jobs, not just an investment of over \$8.5 billion into regional Victoria and not just a record investment into education and into the opportunities being afforded to everyone from our smallest and newest Victorians right through to people who are reliant upon a state to provide good, effective and targeted health care.

We are seeing in this state more investment in infrastructure than has ever occurred in the state's

history. People talk about the Kennett years as years in which a lot happened in Victoria, and we know from the numberplates of that era, some of which you will still see on the roads from time to time —

Mr Ramsay — ‘Victoria — on the move’.

Ms SHING — Mr Ramsay does indicate the slogan that was in place at the time: ‘Victoria — on the move’. It is interesting to note that we have delivered over double the amount of infrastructure that was invested in when Mr Kennett was at the helm — over double. On top of that what we have done is deliver record investment in doing precisely what it was that Mr Kennett thought was such a priority that he put it on numberplates. We have invested in roads and rail. We have invested in infrastructure, including through the lease of the port of Melbourne for a record \$9.729 billion, to make sure that in fact we are taking care of the infrastructure needs of this community and not just in metropolitan Melbourne, not just in the suburban areas or the peri-urban areas but in regional Victoria as well.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms SHING — I will take up your interjection, Mr Ramsay, about how much of that has been spent in regional Victoria. I can tell you, Mr Ramsay, that \$8.5 billion has been spent in regional Victoria under this government. I know this because I see the benefits of this in my own community in the Latrobe Valley every single day. I see the benefits of this whenever I travel around the state and see where and how new schools are popping up, where and how new roads are popping up, where and how we are taking care of industry links and business development opportunities to maintain the potential and the momentum that we have delivered to the state through hard work, through not shying away from action, through not sitting lazily in our offices and talking about anything other than delivering outcomes that improve the everyday lives of Victorians.

We never undertook a colouring-in competition for the purposes of understanding what might be a good look for Flinders Street. We never undertook a process that involved 3D printers as part of an education solution for secondary schools, which is a policy the former Liberal government took to the election last time. We never undertook a process involving a sneaky side deal for a project that had as its heart a negative return on the business case investment.

But what we see here now from the opposition that was then the government, a government that was all but

dead and staggering in the houses of Parliament — it was staggering through the motions and doing everything it could to avoid any hard work — is the all too convenient call that everything should be blocked because there is a facile, superficial reason not to proceed. And do you know what? They can spin all of the stories they want to Victorians about why this project is so repugnant that it should not be allowed to proceed, but the bottom line for all of this — and Mr Kennett would be pleased with this — is that this project will enable Victoria to continue to be on the move. This project will create more of the jobs that those in opposition were unable to deliver when they were in government. This project translates directly to investment that will slash congestion from Geelong right through to Pakenham and that will reduce travel time more than you can say for the failed east-west link project — the traffic modelling for which, as Mr Leane indicated when he was on his feet, showed that you would arrive at the airport before you had gotten out of the shower. That is something worthwhile to consider in *Hansard* because it shows that those opposite, when they were in government, were unable to deliver anything of substance or of value in relation to infrastructure and large-scale major projects that would deliver a substantive benefit.

This project that they are now seeking to block, along with their mates the Greens, will in fact create 6000 jobs, many of which, as Ms Symes indicated in her contribution, are in regional Victoria. Many of them are in areas that will bring on additional apprentices and additional trainees, and that will create job opportunities for veterans, for people who have been out of work for significant periods of time and for people who are benefiting from our jobs guarantee and from our plan to drive employment and meaningful, secure terms and conditions for Victorians now and into the future.

But those opposite do not care about that because they live in a tactical la-la land that involves opposing things simply because. When it comes to actual policy development they are more than a little light on the ground. Their policies are to complain. Their policies are to obstruct. Their policies are to deny. Their policies, on the basis of their conduct in opposition, are to deny employment duties — to deny opportunities to up to 500 new apprentices on this job, to deny opportunities to trainees and graduates, to deny opportunities to up to 150 auto workers to be retrained and redeployed.

This attempt to stymie this progress and this project ignores the fact that on merit it has substantive benefit. On merit it is a project that enjoys the support of

industry stakeholders, who are usually the ones cheering from the coalition's corner. In this regard I note that everyone from the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry through to the Australian Logistics Council through to Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and the Victorian Transport Association is urging the opposition — the Liberal-Nationals-Greens opposition — to support this project because they know in the real world that this project makes sense, because they reject the tactical opposition that is the hallmark of those who sit opposite and because they know that taking 28 000 vehicles, including 8000 trucks, off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 off the Bolte Bridge makes good sense. It makes good sense from a supply and logistics perspective. It makes good sense from a goods-to-market perspective. It makes good sense in relation to congestion and productivity. It makes good sense for a city that is, as Mr Kennett would have it occur, on the move. It makes good sense when we are looking at a state which is enjoying record growth. It makes good sense.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:00) — I rise to speak on the 2017–18 budget papers. Of course it is the budget papers that raise the budget that will run the Parliament for the year. As part of running the Parliament for the year the budget deals with all of the costs of any sitting of Parliament. In former parliaments it has dealt with the costs of running a regional sitting of Parliament.

I have been to many regional settings of Parliament throughout the state. We have seen them run in Bendigo and Ballarat on a couple of occasions. They ran in Bendigo and Ballarat in 2001. In 2002 as a candidate I attended a regional sitting of Parliament in Benalla. Regional sittings were held in Geelong and Colac in 2005, with the Legislative Council sitting in Colac. In 2008 they were held in Lakes Entrance and Churchill, and the Legislative Council sat in Lakes Entrance. In 2012 Bendigo and Ballarat were again the host cities for regional Parliament.

These regional sittings of Parliament have given each of these communities the opportunity to highlight their cities to the entire house of Parliament that has sat in their city. I have seen many local governments use these to their tremendous advantage. Whether it was by having civic receptions, having meetings with members

of Parliament while they were in the city or conducting visits either side of the sitting days, they have certainly used them to promote their needs and to highlight the benefits of investment in their regional cities.

Unfortunately my hometown of Shepparton has never had the opportunity to host a regional Parliament. Early in 2015, in fact on 6 May 2015, I actually called on this Premier to hold a regional sitting of Parliament in the City of Greater Shepparton during this Parliament. The only answer I got from the Premier was a couple of lines to say that his government had no plans to commence a program of regional sittings in this term of Parliament. This is a great shame for Shepparton because we have a number of needs that we would like to have highlighted to this government. But I am pleased to say that last week my leader, Matthew Guy, committed to having regional sittings of Parliament once again after a change of government following this year's election, and one of the cities that will host a regional sitting is Shepparton.

As Matthew Guy told the *Shepparton News* when he was up there last week, he does not intend to take Parliament there just for one day. He intends to take it there for the entire week, which would be a great opportunity for people in Shepparton to highlight all our needs around infrastructure, rail, health, education and many other things that we have been lobbying for for quite a long time.

I was very surprised to read in the *Shepparton News* on 16 February that Suzanna Sheed, the member for Shepparton in the Assembly, and Jaclyn Symes, a member for Northern Victoria Region, opposed Shepparton hosting a regional sitting of Parliament. Both Ms Symes and Ms Sheed are in their first term of Parliament. They have never actually experienced a regional sitting. They have not seen the benefits that can be gained for local areas when they are able to highlight their needs to members of Parliament through those regional sittings.

In fact Shepparton spent an enormous amount of money back in 2014 to hold a week-long expo in Queen's Hall to highlight their needs to members of Parliament. This could be done so much more easily and effectively if a regional sitting was held in Shepparton. It would also give many school groups, other service groups et cetera in the town the opportunity to come and see Parliament operating. I am absolutely shocked that Suzanna Sheed and Jaclyn Symes want to deny the people of Shepparton this opportunity to highlight our needs to all members of Parliament and to see Parliament at work without the expense of travelling to Melbourne.

Of course we know Jaclyn Symes is a Labor member, so we expect her to oppose a coalition policy, but we have to ask why Suzanna Sheed opposes it. Is it because she is no longer Shepparton's voice in Spring Street but rather the government's mouthpiece in Shepparton?

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee: fuel prices in regional Victoria

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:05) — I would like to make some comments in relation to the work that the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee did in the inquiry into fuel prices in regional Victoria. It has long been a passion of mine to strongly advocate that regional Victorians get a competitive price in the marketplace for their fuel. It has been disappointing and frustrating that over many, many years I have seen, particularly in what was my local area of Colac, discrepancies of up to 12 cents between fuel sold there and fuel sold to my colleagues in Geelong. I felt that margin was too large and there was some profiteering being engaged in by both the supply chain wholesaler and retailers.

I must say — with no disrespect to the chair and the committee, most of whom I see do not actually live in regional Victoria — that this is probably the last report this Parliament needs to do in respect of regional pricing of fuel, because we have had a plethora of reports on fuel prices, particularly fuel prices in regional Victoria. There seems to be a distinct discrepancy between the cost of fuel at the bowser in regional Victoria and the city.

If we go back to the Rudd government, we had FuelWatch, which was supposed to highlight and provide data and transparency on what companies were charging at the retail end for fuel. We had a Senate inquiry in relation to fuel prices, particularly applicable to regional Victoria. I remember Allan Fels of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on many occasions stamping his foot saying it was unfair that regional Victoria was paying significantly more for fuel than what was being paid in the city. Even now I observe there is a margin, but a smaller margin, in fuel prices both in regional Victoria and the city.

I looked through the findings and recommendations of this committee's report, and despite their best efforts there appears to be nothing that anyone can do in respect of trying to draw in the price discrepancy between fuel in regional and metropolitan areas. Retailers say it is all about volume sales. Obviously there is potential for more volume in the city than there is in regional areas, and we know there is more

opportunity for discounting in the city than in regional areas. We know there is a cost to bringing fuel out to regional areas, particularly where there is lower volume. We understand that, and of course we would not want to interfere in the marketplace with respect to regulating any sort of price for specific region areas. I think that would be to our folly.

All we have really got and all I can understand from this report is the importance of making data available and making sure transparency is at its best for regional fuel users to make a decision by having all the information and understanding of where the prices are set, including the apps that are used where retailers scrutinise regularly what their competitors are doing, and obviously by taking the opportunity when fuel prices are dropping, particularly it would seem at the start of the week rather than at the end of the week. There is also an opportunity for market groups, and I have been part of a fuel buyer market group in my locality where you are able to bring together a number of users that provide the sort of bulk purchase that would provide some form of discount, and many of those have been quite successful over a period of time.

I did want to note that of course part of the pricing of the fuel is the excise. We know the federal government takes 40.3 cents per litre as fuel excise, and it is important that that excise that has been taken from the fuel price is actually used back on our roads to the benefit of motorists. It is important Victoria has a fair share of that fuel excise that is collected by the commonwealth to be put back into our road infrastructure to support particularly our regional motorists, who as we know and as we have heard many times in this chamber are having to suffer significantly the very poor state of our road networks and highways. There is an expectation, given that there is significant tax drawn out of the fuel price, that it is returned back into regional Victoria, which will help alleviate the price discrepancy.

Victorian fire services review: report

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:10) — This afternoon I rise to make my contribution to reports, and in doing so I would like to discuss the *Report of the Victorian Fire Services Review*. It is a report that I have looked at on a number of occasions because I think there are some very interesting comments in there in contrast to what is happening in today's world in terms of volunteers.

Part of the report looks at increasing leadership training, and this is a focus that I would like to talk about today.

The report says:

The increasing demands on firefighters have also placed increasing demands on their leaders at the operational level. Leadership is a skill separate to technical skills.

This is something that is very, very important. Indeed what I find quite absurd but not surprising is that this Andrews Labor government continues to slap volunteers in the face time and time again. Indeed it was very distressing to read recently and to talk with volunteer firefighters about the fact that the government has seen fit, after eight years, to remove the Valuing Volunteers program grants from Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV). Within that VFBV had offered for the last eight years a volunteer leadership scholarship program. It also — and I will speak on this in a moment — within that Valuing Volunteers program looked at a welfare and efficiency survey that was also important.

The leadership scholarship program was initially open just to County Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers across the emergency sector, but it has been broadened over that eight-year period. The VFBV developed and fully funded that program, expanding it to the Victoria State Emergency Service, to coastguards, to Ambulance Victoria, to Life Saving Victoria and to St John Ambulance Australia through a combination of their funding and the government grant. In that eight-year period we have had over 300 volunteers look at and learn how to be leaders and how to upskill and improve their leadership skills. This was often done in conjunction with the Chisholm Institute.

From my electorate alone in the last eight years we have had 62 CFA members in the south-eastern region go through this program. Many of them I know, and many of them are outstanding people who have been able to contribute back into their fire brigades and back into their communities at a much higher skill level and in a much more broad and encompassing way by going through this particular program. It also ends up that the fireline qualification is completed and they have a certificate IV.

Indeed the VFBV annual report talks about some of the attributes that they learn from that course. It goes on to say that the coursework and assignments are spread throughout the year and look at leadership, decision-making, planning, safety and risk management, team effectiveness, making presentations, managing projects and engaging the community. All of these things are highly desirable for our volunteers who are leading brigades and serving our community, but this Andrews Labor government has seen fit to cut that funding and not enable it to continue.

They have also cut the funding to a welfare and efficiency survey which was used in the past five years across the sector. It was indeed the largest survey across CFA volunteers and was used as a benchmark for behavioural attitudes and for important policy decisions. They have cut that funding. This is another attempt to kibosh, to stifle and to stymie the CFA volunteers within our community.

This is on top of the fact that the Andrews Labor government has also cut the voice of the CFA, the *FireWise* VFBV publication. In truth if we add the loss of that publication — that grant was only \$60 000 — and the approximately \$100 000 that the other grant came to, it comes to, by comparison, chickenfeed to this Andrews Labor government that they squander in a variety of ways. Yet this is so important to our volunteers. It is so important to the CFA and also to those other emergency services and support services volunteers, yet this government chooses to cut that out — to cut the voice, to cut the leadership capacity within these people — and I think it is an absolute shame.

Victorian Multicultural Commission: report 2016–17

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:16) — I wish to make a few remarks on the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) annual report of 2016–17. If we read the rhetoric of the government and the report, often the commonly used sort of objective is to strengthen the social cohesion of our community. We know what that means: it means encouraging people to retain their cultural links, to be proud of their cultural origins but to also take a full and active part in Australian society — in our Victorian community — and be proud Australians. As I go to various festivals, citizenship ceremonies and events and meet with delegations, could I say this concept of multiculturalism is something that is broadly embraced by our communities.

In particular this occurs within our multicultural communities and is seen in the celebration of Australia Day on 26 January. That is not to say that the celebration of our national day, Australia Day, is something that seeks to whitewash or rewrite history. It is an opportunity to mark any injustices or hurts of the past, to celebrate what we have become as a nation and to share in the aspirations for an even better life in this wonderful country.

Unfortunately the rhetoric of the government falls far short of its actions. If we have a look at some of its notable failings, what we see is an increasing tendency

by this government to politicise multicultural affairs, to divide the community and to in actual fact work to the contrary of its stated objectives and its public rhetoric. We see that in the manner in which the VMC's role has been changed dramatically. It has now been subsumed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. It does not have its own dedicated budget, it does not have its own dedicated staff and it does not have its own strategic plan. For a statutory authority that spells out quite clearly the fact that it is a statutory authority only in name. We see that because the VMC has been relegated. Its logo is often replaced by the government's logo on banners. The role of determining who is invited to various events is undertaken and managed. These events have previously seen high levels of bipartisanship or I could say even multipartisanship. It is now more closely managed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and therefore unfortunately politicised. It is beyond anything that I have seen for a long time and it is counterproductive.

We see, for example, the VMC's mismanagement of the African communities and some of the challenges facing these emerging communities, which are diverse. Fifty-four countries make up the continent of Africa and there are challenges that come with migration and with living in a different culture — whether it is parenting, whether it is inability to find jobs, whether it is not having a skill set because you may have missed out on an education — but this government is focused on one thing: not helping those communities to actually deal with their challenges and capacity building but politicising them. Their focus was actually on establishing a Labor Friends of African Communities group, which was actually launched here at the end of November 2017.

I would have thought that the focus should have been on helping African communities, and with that the support of an apolitical party that does good work could be expected. In the meantime we have seen the issues of African communities grow more significant for them and for the community. We see, for example, people who have been very closely aligned to Labor being used as mouthpieces for the government, Mr Deng being one. We have seen the reports of Mr Deng and some of the comments that he has made; he is a very capable young man. Kot Monoah — I know Kot, a community leader — is also stepping into a much more political role, which I think is regrettable for the African communities because there is diversity but that diversity extends to political diversity and that is something we ought to steer clear of. The African community task force which the commissioner has formulated is not balanced. It has not been properly constructed. In actual fact this sort of task force — a

multi-agency task force — is something that I called for some time ago, but the government has actually failed to do that to address their concerns.

The web of relationships between Labor MPs, their staff, donors and grants allocation is another serious area that needs investigation, and I will be calling on the Auditor-General, or perhaps an upper house committee, to investigate this web of deceit and manipulation in what should be a very important role of the government of the day.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (17:21) — I am pleased to make a contribution on the state budget for 2017–18 in the statements on reports and papers section tonight and note that we have a number of large projects in operation across the state at the moment. Many of these are being botched by this current government, the Andrews Labor government, but they are important projects that should be delivered better. We have the sky rail, which is being run very poorly and being foisted onto the community. It is very clear that the government did not have a mandate to build the structure that it is seeking to build, and it is very clear that it hid this from the community before the election.

Today I was pleased to join a very large crowd, a significant gathering, on the corner of Albert Road and St Kilda Road. Many people there were very concerned about the state government's approach to the construction of the Metro Tunnel. This is an important project, a project that is needed to deliver the additional capacity, but it should not be beyond the wit of government and community in Victoria to deliver projects without trashing our heritage. We see that large European cities are able to deliver major projects without the loss of their important heritage, and in this case the state government has, in my view, adopted an appalling process of trying to crunch through the legitimate concerns of local community and not listen at all.

The attendance there was significant and included not just myself but my colleagues Ms Fitzherbert and Ms Crozier. Also Barry Jones was there speaking as a former state MP and former federal Labor MP. He was highly critical of the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, and her approach to a number of these major projects, particularly the tunnel. Barry Jones made some very clear points. A former Governor, Alex Chernov, was there as well, and he joined the group who were prepared to stand up and say, 'Enough is enough. This should've been constructed in a different

way — a way that did not destroy the very important avenue of trees that is part of St Kilda Road'. Derryn Hinch was there as well, so we actually had a federal senator attend to make some very clear points about his disgust and concern as he sees trees being torn down in a way that is not necessary.

When I addressed the group I made the point very clearly that in fact there were alternate locations and alternate ways of doing the construction. I am aware of at least two worked-up alternatives, including one which the previous government looked at which was further to the west. A group of local and experienced engineers also put together a proposal which would have seen a different alignment and different approach to the loss of trees. This proposal was a very thoughtful one, but I was concerned that Jacinta Allan, instead of independently assessing it, immediately gave this proposal to the Metro Tunnel authority, effectively asking it to check its own homework. It is hardly surprising that the authority said, 'Oh, no. We're doing it the right way'. Unfortunately the state government would not, in an independent way, consider alternative approaches that could have delivered less destruction, less loss of trees and a more mature approach to this sort of construction.

I was proud to join that group today. I pay tribute to all the activists who are determined to protect our important heritage along that corridor. St Kilda Road has recently, as we know, been permanently listed, along with the Domain and Government House — that whole precinct through there — on the National Heritage List. This is an important step that I congratulate Josh Frydenberg for taking.

But you have to ask real questions about what was going on with Heritage Victoria. On the Monday, when the national heritage listing was gazetted formally, it became clear that in fact late on the Friday night the head of Heritage Victoria, Steven Avery, who has popped up from somewhere — I do not quite know where he has come from, but he is a recent appointment to the position — made the decision, seemingly in the knowledge that on the Monday there would be a national heritage listing. He gave the go-ahead. He said, 'Start your engines. Start your chainsaws. Start your crushers. Away you go, and you try and beat the national heritage listing'. What a shameful and disgraceful approach. Daniel Andrews is a bully. He is bullying communities, and he is leaving a legacy that is not what Victorians expect.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Recycling industry

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:26) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and it is concerning the increased cost to municipalities caught up in China's import ban on recyclable waste. Greater Shepparton City Council is one of these municipalities, and it has written to the minister requesting assistance. The action that I seek from the minister is that she act on the Greater Shepparton City Council's request, which is twofold: one, in the short term to provide financial assistance in the form of an interim payment from the landfill levy funds to local councils affected by the change; and two, in the medium term to provide assistance in establishing new markets and local processing plants of greater capacity and higher standards so that the stricter recycling conditions can be met.

The announcement by China in July 2017 of an import ban on certain categories of recyclable waste always had the potential to impact on local councils throughout Victoria, which are reliant on their recyclable waste being sent to China for disposal. The councils affected by this ban are those that contract Wheelie Waste to collect recyclable waste, which then delivers the waste to a third party, Visy Industries. Because of this ban, four local councils in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region, being Greater Shepparton, Macedon Ranges, Hepburn and Mount Alexander, now face higher costs to continue their recyclable waste collection programs.

Greater Shepparton City Council contracts Wheelie Waste to collect recyclable waste from approximately 28 000 properties throughout the municipality. This results in approximately 8300 tonnes of kerbside recyclable material each year. Under normal circumstances Wheelie Waste then delivers the waste to Visy Industries, which in turn transports the waste to China. Because of the Chinese ban, Wheelie Waste is now required by Visy to pay a gate fee to deliver recyclable waste. Greater Shepparton City Council estimate that if this fee was passed on to council by Wheelie Waste, the total annual increase would be in excess of \$1 million. This represents an increase in council rates to ratepayers of 1.5 per cent.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council are already incurring higher costs as they are currently paying Wheelie Waste an additional fee of \$60 per tonne of recyclable waste collected until 28 February pending further legal advice.

It is concerning that the Andrews Labor government has known of this looming crisis since the Chinese announcement in July but has done nothing to address the financial ramifications for local councils, which may ultimately be passed on to ratepayers. Moreover, no apparent planning has been undertaken by the minister to explore new opportunities to recycle locally.

The state government collects landfill levies from all local councils in Victoria, estimated to be \$180 million per year. This money goes into what is termed a sustainability fund. It is time the minister stepped in and utilised this bucket of money to assist those local councils affected by the ban to ensure any additional costs incurred do not result in rate increases for the ratepayers.

Thompsons Road–Allen Street, Bulleen

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:30) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Roads Safety. I have recently been contacted by an elderly constituent who lives on Allen Street, just off the very busy Thompsons Road, in Bulleen. Due to a pedestrian crossing just up from the intersection, cars often back up and block the intersection, making it difficult to turn onto Thompsons Road. She often needs to wait over 20 minutes just to turn out of her street. The action I seek is for the minister to progress the installation of keep-clear signage at the intersection of Thompsons Road and Allen Street in Bulleen to facilitate access and egress.

Point Cook police station

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (17:30) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Police. I am calling on the minister to establish a new 24-hour police station in Point Cook. This is something that I have been advocating for for some time now, and the shooting two days ago in Point Cook illustrates exactly why this is needed. The community are getting increasingly concerned, the community are getting increasingly impatient and the community are agitating for protection. Quite clearly they deserve this protection. It is time for this government to listen to the concerns of the Point Cook community and commit to building the police station.

Gippsland rail services

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (17:31) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Public Transport in the other place, Ms Allan, and it relates to the investment of \$530 million in the Gippsland rail revival and the work being undertaken to make sure that we can duplicate sections of track, add additional platforms, improve upon the \$9 million that was allocated in the 2017–18 budget and also make sure that we can improve the travelling experience of people along our line who use it regularly to get to other parts of Gippsland and also down to Melbourne, whether it is for work or medical appointments.

As part of the discussions in relation to the use of funds under the asset recycling scheme as debts paid to Victoria, I ask the minister to provide information and updates as to the project office for this \$530 million project and for other regional rail projects to be based in the Latrobe Valley and to provide opportunities for the overall project, or parts of that project, to be managed from within the Latrobe Valley to continue to create the jobs that are driving employment opportunities for this particular region.

Midland Highway upgrade

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:32) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Luke Donnellan, and it is in relation to a meeting I had with the Batesford community last week. They drew my attention to their concerns in respect to the business case that is being prepared by VicRoads for the Midland Highway duplication. The issue for them is that they are very concerned that the preferred route, or the preferred option, for the duplication of the highway will go through the centre of the town, which has quite sensitive areas and a very steep hill.

As part of the options VicRoads, as I understand from that meeting, have not considered what the community see as option 5, which is a northern bypass that would take some of that particularly heavy traffic off the proposed duplication to the north side of Batesford and then onto the Geelong Ring Road. One concern they have is that the current road that does divide the town is quite narrow. It has a quite narrow bridge. It has quite environmentally sensitive parkland areas around the centre of the town. As I said, it has a very steep gradient where trucks tend to have to use their air brakes going down to the bottom of the valley and then use quite a lot of revving horsepower to get back up the other side. If you duplicate that with the proposed road

duplication, of course the noise and the impact on that environment will be quite severe.

The action I am seeking from the minister is that he advise VicRoads that they should look, as part of this business plan, at another option in respect to moving duplicated traffic not through the centre of the town of Batesford but away from the centre of the town. I am not being prescriptive about what route or what road should be used in relation to that, but certainly option 5, which the community have expressed is their preferred option, should be part of the discussion. Obviously an upgrade of Gheringhap-Fyansford Road may be another option. But I do not want to be prescriptive and I do not think the minister should be. However, I do think it is important that he direct VicRoads to make sure that as part of the work that is being done for the business case for the duplication a bypass option or the upgrade of a current road be considered so at least some of the concerns of the community around a potential duplication through the centre of the town can be avoided.

Cannabis decriminalisation

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (17:35) — My adjournment matter is for the Attorney-General. We saw in a *Herald Sun* front page this week an estimate that the trade in illegal cannabis in Victoria has now topped \$8 billion a year. While we are spending millions of dollars on policing this, the criminals are making billions in profits. I did some back-of-the-envelope calculations on this. If we were to legalise and regulate the sale of cannabis and tax it at 30 per cent, that would be \$2.4 billion that could be invested in schools, roads, hospitals and public transport, but more importantly it would be \$8 billion removed from the criminal market. Much of that money is used by these criminals in further crimes, and some of it, we know, is being siphoned off internationally into terrorist activities. It would also reduce the absolute level of crime in our community. Again, according to the back of the envelope, it is around a 15 per cent reduction, providing much-needed relief to our strained criminal justice system.

We have seen that California, the fifth largest economy, on 1 January went down this path. It is a complete paradigm shift, and they are expected to generate hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in state taxes and smash crime syndicates. Canada will go onto this system on 1 July. They expect to completely eradicate the black market sale of and criminal profiteering on cannabis through taxation and government regulation. So we are not Robinson Crusoe here. It is not a radical approach. It has been done in

other jurisdictions around the world. Accordingly, the action I am seeking from the Attorney-General is for him to commission an economic assessment of the cost of criminalising cannabis and the savings that could be realised by legalising it.

The PRESIDENT — I assume that your action is the cost of decriminalising?

Ms PATTEN — I will just repeat that: the action I am seeking is for the Attorney-General to commission an economic assessment to look at how much the current criminalisation of cannabis costs us and the savings that could be realised if we legalised it.

St Albans Leisure Centre

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:38) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the Minister for Sport. Last week it was my very great pleasure to meet with the mayor and the CEO of the City of Brimbank. It is, I must say, a delight to see the City of Brimbank now bubbling along nicely after some major problems some years ago. One of the highest topics on the agenda for the discussion that we had was the St Albans Leisure Centre. I visited the St Albans Leisure Centre probably about three years ago, and to say that it was a bit shabby would be somewhat of an understatement. It was not flash at all. I thought then that it was way beyond repair. The mayor confirmed my view and informed me that in fact the centre has deteriorated significantly since I last visited. She offered me a tour of the centre just to make sure that I am aware of exactly what the situation is.

The Brimbank council has very big plans for the St Albans Leisure Centre. Apart from the leisure centre itself — the pool, the gym and everything that goes with a leisure centre — they will also attach a community centre on the same site, and of course it will serve not just St Albans but Taylors Lakes, Hillside, Taylors Hill, Keilor and the suburbs right around there. It will no doubt be a major plus for the Brimbank community. Certainly I could not possibly think of any reason people would travel to visit the current St Albans Leisure Centre, because quite frankly it is just not worth it.

What I am asking the minister to do tonight is join me in visiting the St Albans Leisure Centre so that he can see for himself the very sad state that it is in, so that he can make what I am sure will be a very quick assessment of the need to pour some resources into a new centre, into replacing the centre that is there now, and make a commitment in the fullness of time, as they say in certain circles, to committing the sorts of money

that we will need to replace it. I am asking the minister to join me at his convenience. I will contact the mayor, Cr Giudice, and certainly we will have a great deal of pleasure in showing him around and ensuring that he is well aware of the needs of the area of Brimbank and certainly of St Albans.

Water policy

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (17:41) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Water, and the action I am seeking is for the minister to inform irrigators in northern Victoria when the review of delivery shares will be complete to provide some certainty for those irrigators, because they certainly do need that certainty to operate their businesses. As we know, Labor unbundled water in 2007, and that is essentially when the ownership of water and land were able to be separated where once they were connected by law. It is 10 years since that unbundling process occurred. It is now time for a review of that scenario, particularly the delivery shares and the cost of delivery shares in Victoria, because we need to ensure that it is fair and equitable for all people who are involved with the water, whether they be irrigators, the environment or the communities.

Much has changed since that time, particularly around the ownership and entitlement framework in relation to water. We all know the impact that the Murray-Darling Basin plan has had since its inception a few years ago and the ongoing challenges we have in relation to that. It is now time for the minister to publicly come out and inform irrigators when that review of the delivery shares will be undertaken, because the coalition have recently announced that we will be having a review if we get back into government, and we expect that to happen on 24 November this year. The shadow Minister for Water, Steph Ryan in the Assembly, has come out and said that we need to undertake this review, and we certainly will do that.

There are significant concerns that the delivery shares are acting as a handbrake in regional communities which have lost water as a result of the Murray-Darling Basin plan and particularly as a result of the unbundling of water from landownership. Some believe that the current storage costs are unfairly favouring traders, as well as the bulk entitlement environmental water holders, over actual irrigators. If the coalition is elected in November, it will be undertaking a review of the pricing framework to ensure that storage and delivery charges being applied by northern Victoria's rural water authorities are fair for everyone.

Valuing Volunteers

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:43) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Emergency Services, the Honourable James Merlino, in the other place. It relates to the cancellation of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria 2018 volunteer leadership scholarship program. The action I seek from the minister is that he immediately reinstates the Valuing Volunteers program grants under which the volunteer leadership scholarship program is funded.

The Andrews Labor government has contempt for volunteers. If Mr Andrews did not, he would not withdraw this type of funding particularly designed for enabling and capacity building our volunteers. The scholarship was certainly funded over the last 10 years, and in that 10-year period, through Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, over 320 volunteers have gone through that program and come out in a highly skilled space.

Initially it was funded, as I said, through the Valuing Volunteers program and also through the volunteer fire brigades. They expanded it to include not just the Country Fire Authority (CFA); they also looked at and included the Victoria State Emergency Service, the coast guard, Ambulance Victoria, Life Saving Victoria and St John Ambulance. The course was run in conjunction with Chisholm and was broad in nature. It encompassed leadership skills, organisational skills and networking skills. Indeed it was project based and the participants got to choose a project, whether it was a current one or one they developed in teams. At the end of that period of time they came out with a certificate IV qualification that they undertook in their own time and on weekends. Indeed in my patch in Eastern Victoria Region there were 62 CFA members who graduated from that program, enabling them and capacity building them to be better volunteers and better community service personnel.

It also comes under the watch of the Valuing Volunteers program grants. With the withdrawal of that support, a welfare and efficiency survey has also not been able to be funded. This had occurred over the last five years and was certainly used as a benchmark to assess wellbeing and problems within the volunteer fire brigades. Here we see the government saying it cares about volunteers, but instead it is ripping away important grants that enable volunteers to be better placed to serve the community and better support and protect our state.

School cleaners

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (17:47) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Education, James Merlino, and it concerns the small business operators that have school cleaning contracts at the moment — many of whom have contracts through to the year 2020 — that have been told across the board their contracts are to be cancelled from 1 July this year. These are small business operators who for many years have been cleaning schools, and they are generally mum-and-dad businesses — and good people — sometimes generation after generation.

They do a lot more than just clean the school. Many of them put the school flags out in the morning and do minor repair works across the school. In fact there have been occasions when the alarm has gone off either late at night or during the school holiday period and it is the cleaner that comes in to reset the alarm and make sure everything is all right. They are good people. Their work is based on a very basic contract, which they go over and above. They have spoken to the minister previously because of an issue that I have raised here before. He has written to one particular operator and commended them on their 35 years of service to school communities. He goes on to say:

I understand that some business owners and staff are unhappy with the direction of the new school cleaning reform; especially where the business is run by people such as you and your family, who have consistently done the right thing and have a good name to show for it.

The government are saying there are some school cleaning contractors who have not done the right thing by their employees and that is not acceptable. But to make a carte blanche decision right across the whole industry and cut everybody out of their contract is also unacceptable.

What the minister has done is ask the Department of Education and Training to commence a consultation process whereby they will understand a business's personal circumstances and through that process help them with practical support. The practical support this particular constituent of mine has been offered is some counselling, some business planning and some help to transition from a cleaning business to something else. What does he want them to do? Fly planes? Build rockets? Perform surgery? What is it that he wants them to do? These people are good people. As it says in his letter to them, they are good people that have worked hard and looked after their school communities over and above. They have invested in a serious amount of equipment to make sure they can do the right thing by

their customers, and across the board the minister has cancelled their contracts despite them having them until 2020.

When the government made the decision to alter the taxi industry, they created a Fairness Fund — some would call it an unfairness fund — that gave compensation to taxi owners —

Mr Davis — Or didn't.

Mr ONDARCHIE — or didn't, as a result of their personal circumstances. The action I seek from the minister in my adjournment is to advise me of the compensation plan he has for these small businesses that he regards as doing a good job to protect them from this bad decision he has made to cancel their contracts.

St Kilda Road

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (17:49) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, and it relates to Ms Allan's and the Premier's total disregard for the protection of an iconic boulevard, that being St Kilda Road. This area is now on the national heritage list, thanks to the Honourable Josh Frydenberg, who took this necessary step. Minister Frydenberg understands that the precinct around Kings Domain, Government House and the Shrine needs protection from any further reckless decisions by a totally dismissive and destructive ideologically driven government such as we have in place here in Victoria with Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan.

The ignorance and arrogance of Ms Allan in calling the listing of the area by the Honourable Josh Frydenberg a political stunt aimed at stopping the project — referring to the Metro Tunnel project — from going ahead is in itself extraordinary. Nobody is saying we do not need more public transport infrastructure to cope with a modern city and population growth that requires more services.

Mr Davis — Barry Jones said today he was advocating for public transport.

Ms CROZIER — But it is clear from Jacinta Allan, who is hell-bent on doing a shallow dig that is cheap and nasty, that she just does not care about the history of this area. Countries around the world dig tunnels every day — under oceans, cities and parklands — and do not destroy the assets above. That is what Jacinta Allan has done — destroyed a historical asset of this city, of Victoria and of Australia.

Together with Mr Davis, Ms Fitzherbert, and the Liberal candidate for Prahran, Katie Allen, I attended a community protest earlier this afternoon that heard from some eminent speakers, including, as Mr Davis has referred to, the Honourable Barry Jones. Mr Jones, like so many others, has condemned this ill-thought-through decision by Jacinta Allan. The chopping down of elms and the destruction of the area, which is part of a century of history, is evident as you travel down St Kilda Road. When asked about the impact of the axing of trees, Ms Allan said:

For every one tree that's being removed in this area, two trees will be replanted.

The action I seek from the minister is that he provide an assurance that the trees are already being cultivated to be replanted as soon as possible and an assurance that Ms Allan will override any decision made by the cities of Port Phillip and Melbourne to ensure that the two-for-one trees that will be replanted will be elm trees to reinstate the boulevard that has been so terribly decimated by this government.

Ms Shing — On a point of order, President, I have previously been ruled out of order or taken to task over contributions I have made in the adjournment debate on matters which have been characterised as sailing dangerously close to a set speech or indeed constituting a set speech when I have not in fact had notes. I note that in this instance Ms Crozier has in fact in large part read from a document in what appeared to be a set speech of a political nature that went beyond the action being sought and went extensively to a history and background for this process that would appear to contravene the point that you have taken earlier around set speeches in the adjournment debate.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

The PRESIDENT — I do note Mr Ondarchie's interjection, and I do note in that context that Ms Crozier has used paper and you use telephony.

Ms Shing interjected.

The PRESIDENT — You do. Members are able to use notes, and I have indicated — and this is a consistent position that I have had — that for 90-second statements and adjournment items I am prepared to accept members reading notes because there is a short period of time involved in those proceedings and that process. They are running against the clock with the matters that they raise, so I am actually prepared to accept notes in both those areas of our daily proceedings. That is a consistent position that I have had all the way through. In respect of the matter that

has been raised, the action item itself is obviously perfectly in order. There was some context. If I were to come down heavily on Ms Crozier in terms of context tonight, my goodness, I could have a field day at question time.

South Melbourne public housing estate

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (17:54) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police in the other place. Last Thursday I attended a meeting at Park Towers, which is a public housing estate in Park Street, South Melbourne. There were around 60 tenants there to discuss crime and safety on the estate. There were many eloquent words from the tenants about how they had been affected. One woman in particular spoke about how she and her child had not known what Park Towers was like until they went to live there, that they were shocked by this and that when she is not taking her daughter to school they tend to, in her words, hide in their rooms for 80 per cent of the time.

What I want to do is quote from a document, which is a copy of *Tenant*, which is the Park Towers newsletter, because I think that explains the problem more eloquently than I can. It says:

There is a gang that now roams the building robbing people by knife point according to Victoria Police, who reported that these attacks having resulted in people being stabbed.

...

On top of this I know ... that calling 000 and asking for police to attend doesn't mean they will come.

It is not rare to get a call back from 000 dispatchers and to get asked if you really need the police to attend.

I have heard of this anecdotally from other tenants who have experienced no police arriving. The newsletter says:

The main reason police don't bother to show up is that by the time they get here the perpetrators have usually scurried off because we don't have daytime security that can attend the scene of crime until help arrives.

It says that this is not the fault of the very good South Melbourne police, who are doing their best to, in their words:

... crush this appalling violent gang. They are, but without essential daytime security services criminals can easily escape.

It says that tenants have written to their local member, the member for Albert Park in the Assembly, who is also the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, to

request that he insist on providing daytime security.

They say:

We want it and South Melbourne police want it.

I know that is true, because the local police have told me that this is the answer to this problem. The tenants wrote to the minister in December, and they do not yet have an outcome. That is why they were heckling him at this meeting of tenants last week. What they are proposing is four daytime guards that are in addition to the night-time guards that are there at the moment.

To give some examples of the crime that is going on, there are some horrific photos of lifts discovered sprayed with blood in January. The newsletter says that there was a gap of about an hour before the police and ambulances turned up and that:

Within that time an old man was manhandled and smeared in the blood of the perpetrators and a shirtless suspect ran out of the building covered in blood.

Since the meeting last week I have had an email thanking me for attending and saying that since then they have had arson in the floor 22 laundry and also another stabbing.

I support having the extra guards, and I know that the police do as well. However, the action that I am seeking from the Minister for Police is to provide additional police in South Melbourne to assist in addressing this crime at its source.

Caulfield–Dandenong line elevated rail

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (17:57) — My urgent matter for the adjournment tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport, and it relates to the sky rail construction on the sky rail corridor in my electorate. The section through Murrumbeena witnessed, it appears, yet another incident last night. We have had a series of incidents in the construction phase, including oil being sprayed across people's houses and domestic pets. We have seen oil sprayed on several more occasions. We have seen the dropping of a large steel plug and the knocking of tiles off the roof of a house. A series of incidents has occurred.

Last night, I am informed, a house in Ella Street, Murrumbeena, had a large sheet of flat metal fall onto it. This is a serious matter. The corridor, as people will know, through that sky rail area is very narrow indeed. This, I am informed, is quite near to a childcare centre that abuts the rail corridor too. The point I would make here is that it appears the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA), which is, let us be blunt, a very

slippery body and not to be relied upon in its pronouncements, appears to have changed its story on electronic media over the last few hours. That appears to follow a call made by an LXRA official to the owner of the house, or the person who they thought was the owner of the house. It turns out that the owner of the house had in fact sold to the LXRA under the voluntary purchase scheme.

The point here is that it is chaos at the LXRA. It is chaos because of the pace at which this construction is occurring and it is chaos because they are cutting corners on safety. Let us be clear here: the risk is —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — And you ought to know this and be worried about the safety of workers. Even John Setka is getting into the LXRA.

The PRESIDENT — Mr Davis, talk to me; don't talk to them.

Mr DAVIS — I am sorry, President. I was provoked and distracted. I will return to the point that I am making here. I obviously do not know the full details of this as yet, but I will get to them. What I do have are very solid reports of this large chunk of sheet metal falling on a house in Ella Street. What I want the minister to do as a matter of urgency is investigate these reports and ensure that the safety of both those in the construction sector nearby and also the residents whose properties abut this huge construction zone is actually guaranteed.

Responses

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (18:01) — There were 13 matters raised in the adjournment this evening. I will refer those matters to the relevant ministers.

I have written responses to adjournment debate matters raised by Ms Lovell on 8 August 2017 and Ms Symes on 15 November 2017.

The PRESIDENT — On that basis, the house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 6.01 p.m.

Wednesday, 21 February 2018

JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

Legislative Council vacancy

Honourable members of both houses met in Assembly chamber at 6.17 p.m.

The Acting Clerk — Before proceeding with the business of this joint sitting it is necessary to appoint a Chair. I call the Premier.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (18:17) — I move:

That the Honourable Colin Brooks, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, be appointed Chair of this joint sitting.

I understand he is willing to accept the nomination.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) — I second the motion.

The Acting Clerk — Are there any other proposals? There being no other proposals, the Honourable Colin Brooks, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, will now take the chair.

Motion agreed to.

The CHAIR — Order! I draw the attention of honourable members to the extracts from the Constitution Act 1975 which have been circulated. Please note that the various provisions require that the joint sitting be conducted in accordance with rules adopted for the purpose by members present at the sitting. The first procedure, therefore, will be the adoption of rules.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (18:18) — Chair, I desire to submit the rules of procedure, which are in the hands of honourable members, and I accordingly move:

That these rules be the rules of procedure for this joint sitting.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) — I second the motion.

Motion agreed to.

The CHAIR — The rules having been adopted, I now invite proposals from members for a person to occupy the vacant seat in the Legislative Council.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) (18:18) — I propose:

That Ms Huong Truong be chosen to occupy the vacant seat in the Legislative Council.

She is willing to accept the appointment if chosen. In order to satisfy the joint sitting as to the requirements of section 27A(4) of the Constitution Act 1975, I also advise that I am in possession of advice from the state director of the Australian Greens Victoria that Ms Huong Truong is the selection of the Victorian Greens, the party previously represented in the Legislative Council by Ms Colleen Hartland.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) — I second the proposal.

The CHAIR — Are there any further proposals? As there are no further nominations, I declare that nominations are closed.

Motion agreed to.

The CHAIR — I declare that Ms Huong Truong has been chosen to occupy the vacant seat in the Legislative Council. I will advise the Governor accordingly.

I now declare the joint sitting closed.

Proceedings terminated 6.20 p.m.