



Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Thursday 15 August 2024

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

Acting Speakers

Juliana Addison, Jordan Crugnale, Daniela De Martino, Paul Edbrooke,
Wayne Farnham, Paul Hamer, Lauren Kathage, Nathan Lambert, Alison Marchant,
Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Kim O’Keeffe, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor and Iwan Walters

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

Jacinta Allan

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

Ben Carroll

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

John Pesutto

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition

David Southwick

Leader of the Nationals

Peter Walsh

Deputy Leader of the Nationals

Emma Kealy

Leader of the House

Mary-Anne Thomas

Manager of Opposition Business

James Newbury

Members of the Legislative Assembly
60th Parliament

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Lambert, Nathan	Preston	ALP
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	ALP	Maas, Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Andrews, Daniel ¹	Mulgrave	ALP	McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	Nat
Battin, Brad	Berwick	Lib	McGhie, Steve	Melton	ALP
Benham, Jade	Mildura	Nat	McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Lib
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Lib	Marchant, Alison	Bellarine	ALP
Brooks, Colin	Bundoora	ALP	Matthews-Ward, Kathleen	Broadmeadows	ALP
Bull, Josh	Sunbury	ALP	Mercurio, Paul	Hastings	ALP
Bull, Tim	Gippsland East	Nat	Mullahy, John	Glen Waverley	ALP
Cameron, Martin	Morwell	Nat	Newbury, James	Brighton	Lib
Carbines, Anthony	Ivanhoe	ALP	O'Brien, Danny	Gippsland South	Nat
Carroll, Ben	Niddrie	ALP	O'Brien, Michael	Malvern	Lib
Cheeseman, Darren ²	South Barwon	Ind	O'Keefe, Kim	Shepparton	Nat
Cianflone, Anthony	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Pallas, Tim	Werribee	ALP
Cleeland, Annabelle	Euroa	Nat	Pearson, Danny	Essendon	ALP
Connolly, Sarah	Laverton	ALP	Pesutto, John	Hawthorn	Lib
Couzens, Christine	Geelong	ALP	Read, Tim	Brunswick	Greens
Crewther, Chris	Mornington	Lib	Richards, Pauline	Cranbourne	ALP
Crugnale, Jordan	Bass	ALP	Richardson, Tim	Mordialloc	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Riordan, Richard	Polwarth	Lib
De Martino, Daniela	Monbulk	ALP	Rowswell, Brad	Sandringham	Lib
de Vietri, Gabrielle	Richmond	Greens	Sandell, Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Dimopoulos, Steve	Oakleigh	ALP	Settle, Michaela	Eureka	ALP
Edbrooke, Paul	Frankston	ALP	Smith, Ryan ⁵	Warrandyte	Lib
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Southwick, David	Caulfield	Lib
Farnham, Wayne	Narracan	Lib	Spence, Ros	Kalkallo	ALP
Foster, Eden ³	Mulgrave	ALP	Staikos, Nick	Bentleigh	ALP
Fowles, Will ⁴	Ringwood	Ind	Suleyman, Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Fregon, Matt	Ashwood	ALP	Tak, Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
George, Ella	Lara	ALP	Taylor, Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Grigorovitch, Luba	Kororoit	ALP	Taylor, Nina	Albert Park	ALP
Groth, Sam	Nepean	Lib	Theophanous, Kat	Northcote	ALP
Guy, Matthew	Bulleen	Lib	Thomas, Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Halfpenny, Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Tilley, Bill	Benambra	Lib
Hall, Katie	Footscray	ALP	Vallence, Bridget	Evelyn	Lib
Hamer, Paul	Box Hill	ALP	Vulin, Emma	Pakenham	ALP
Haylett, Martha	Ripon	ALP	Walsh, Peter	Murray Plains	Nat
Hibbins, Sam	Prahran	Greens	Walters, Iwan	Greenvale	ALP
Hilakari, Mathew	Point Cook	ALP	Ward, Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Hodgett, David	Croydon	Lib	Wells, Kim	Rowville	Lib
Horne, Melissa	Williamstown	ALP	Werner, Nicole ⁶	Warrandyte	Lib
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	ALP	Wight, Dylan	Tarneit	ALP
Kathage, Lauren	Yan Yean	ALP	Williams, Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kealy, Emma	Lowan	Nat	Wilson, Belinda	Narre Warren North	ALP
Kilkenny, Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wilson, Jess	Kew	Lib

¹ Resigned 27 September 2023

² ALP until 29 April 2024

³ Sworn in 6 February 2024

⁴ ALP until 5 August 2023

⁵ Resigned 7 July 2023

⁶ Sworn in 3 October 2023

Party abbreviations

ALP – Australian Labor Party, Greens – Australian Greens,
Ind – Independent, Lib – Liberal Party of Australia, Nat – National Party of Australia

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Thursday 15 August 2024

The SPEAKER (Maree Edwards) took the chair at 9:32 am, read the prayer and made an acknowledgement of country.

Business of the house**Notices of motion**

The SPEAKER (09:33): General business, notices of motion 21 and 22, will be removed from the notice paper unless the members wishing their matter to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 2 pm today.

Petitions**Maldon truck routes**

Michaela SETTLE (Eureka) presented a petition bearing 788 signatures.

The petition of the residents of the town of Malden, Victoria and surrounds.

WHY THIS PETITION?

Petitioners draw the attention of the House to the volume of heavy vehicles (GMV of more than 4.5 tonnes) currently moving along both High and Lowther streets Maldon and the impact that this has on both the health and the safety of residents and visitors to this first Notable Town in the state of Victoria. Additionally, we are concerned that the current volume of such vehicles negatively impacts the sensitive heritage fabric that defines the town. We the undersigned have grown increasingly concerned at the impact of these vehicles on the quality of life in our town.

WHAT WE, THE PETITIONERS, REQUEST

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria take action to undertake a comprehensive review of the nature and volume of current and future GMV traffic through Maldon, including residential areas. This to be undertaken with a view to exploration of feasible options for redistribution of the truck route away from the heritage and increasingly dense residential areas.

Meadow Creek solar farm

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) presented a petition bearing 517 signatures.

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria the clear and widespread community opposition to the proposed Meadow Creek Solar Farm, and the community concern with the environmental and financial impact that the proposed development will have on prime agricultural land.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria calls on the Minister for Planning to reject the proposal due to the community and environmental concerns and opposition, including the loss of prime agricultural land, increased bushfire risk, the potential impact to local waterways, flora, and fauna, and the lack of adequate third-party appeals avenues in the planning process

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

Motions**Suburban Rail Loop**

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (09:34): By leave, I move:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Melton for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving Melton South Primary School unfunded, shamelessly neglecting the educational needs of local children and families.

Leave refused.

John PESUTTO: By leave, I move:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Melton for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while breaking their promise to electrify the Melton line, leaving locals with overcrowded platforms, slower trains, longer commutes and less time at home.

Leave refused.

John PESUTTO: By leave, I move:

That this house condemns the Premier and member for Bendigo East for recklessly prioritising the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop, putting all their eggs in one basket while leaving White Hills Primary School unfunded, shamelessly neglecting local children and their education.

Leave refused.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (09:36): By leave, I move:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Eureka for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while shelving the *Western Rail Plan*, forcing the Bacchus Marsh community to have longer commute times, slower trains and less time at home.

Leave refused.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (09:37): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Greenvale for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while refusing to fund the stage 2 duplication of Craigieburn Road, leaving locals with more traffic, longer commutes and less time at home.

Leave refused.

David SOUTHWICK: By leave, I move:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for St Albans for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while abandoning stage 2 of the Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre, showing blatant disregard for community health and wellbeing.

Leave refused.

David SOUTHWICK: By leave, I move:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Kalkallo for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop and not the duplication of the Donnybrook Road and the electrification of the Craigieburn line to Wallan, leaving locals with longer commutes and less time at home.

Leave refused.

Middle East conflict

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (09:38): I move, by leave:

That this house:

- (1) notes the International Court of Justice report advising that Israel's occupation of Palestine is unlawful and that all states have an obligation to neither recognise as lawful nor assist Israel's occupation of Palestine; and
- (2) calls on the Victorian Labor government to end all military ties with Israel, including its memorandum of understanding with the Israeli Ministry of Defense and its partnership with Elbit Systems.

Leave refused.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Tarneit can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Member for Tarneit withdrew from chamber.

Suburban Rail Loop

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (09:39): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Ripon for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while failing to fund duplication of the Western Highway, forcing the people of Ripon to drive on dangerous pothole-riddled roads and putting their lives at risk.

Leave refused.

David HODGETT (Croydon) (09:39): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the government for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving Melba College stage 3 unfunded, neglecting the critical education needs of students and their community.

Leave refused.

David HODGETT: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Ringwood for recklessly putting their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while refusing to contribute funds for the Maroondah Hospital despite promising \$1.1 billion for it at the last election.

Leave refused.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (09:40): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Mordialloc for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving Mordialloc College unfunded, depriving local students of the necessary educational resources they deserve.

Leave refused.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:41): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Carrum for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while failing to fund the much-needed upgrade of Carrum bowls club, disregarding the needs of the local community and their cherished recreational facility.

Leave refused.

James NEWBURY: I move, by leave:

That this house notes the Deputy Premier's constant smirk as the coalition was moving motions condemning the Premier for putting all the government's eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop.

Leave refused.

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (09:41): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Bentleigh for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving McKinnon Primary School unfunded, depriving students of the essential resources they desperately need.

Leave refused.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for Bentleigh can leave the chamber for an hour. Member for Malvern, I ask you to respect the rules of the chamber.

Member for Bentleigh withdrew from chamber.

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (09:42): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the Minister for Health for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while scrapping the Torquay community hospital, denying the community essential health infrastructure.

Leave refused.

Richard RIORDAN: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for South Barwon for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving Belmont High School unfunded, failing local students and families.

Leave refused.

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (09:43): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Eltham for spending over \$200 billion to build the Suburban Rail Loop, at the same time scrapping express rail services on the Hurstbridge line, greatly increasing commute time and reducing service quality for the residents of the City of Banyule and the Shire of Nillumbik.

Leave refused.

Bridget VALLENCE (Evelyn) (09:44): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Laverton for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while abandoning the Sunshine station master plan and neglecting vital transport infrastructure and the needs of this rapidly growing community.

Leave refused.

Bridget VALLENCE: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Monbulk for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion rail loop while abandoning the hardworking ambulance paramedics, who want to provide emergency response in the Dandenong Ranges but instead are sitting ramped at hospitals.

Leave refused.

Jess WILSON (Kew) (09:45): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Niddrie for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while stalling the new Keilor East airport rail station, giving 150,000 people in Moonee Valley no trains, longer commutes and less time at home.

Leave refused.

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (09:45): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Cranbourne for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving Rangebank Primary School unfunded, blatantly disregarding the educational needs of local children.

Leave refused.

Brad BATTIN: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Narre Warren South for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while cutting the Growing Suburbs Fund, leaving rapidly growing communities like Narre Warren South without much-needed investment.

Leave refused.

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (09:46): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Yan Yean for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving stage 2 of the Yan Yean Road upgrade unfunded, shamelessly depriving commuters of the infrastructure they need.

Leave refused.

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (09:46):

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Dandenong for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving the Dandenong Hospital upgrade underfunded, callously ignoring the urgent health needs of the community.

Leave refused.

Sam Groth: On a point of order, Speaker, did you just say no before asking for leave? Can I just seek clarity there?

The SPEAKER: No, I asked if leave was granted, and it was denied.

Sam GROTH: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Werribee for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while refusing to contribute the funds for the next stage of the Chirnside Park oval upgrade, ignoring the community's needs and neglecting local sports infrastructure.

Leave refused.

Chris CREWTER (Mornington) (09:47): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Frankston, who I hope is listening, for putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving school upgrades like Mount Erin College and Mount Eliza Secondary College unfunded, shamelessly neglecting the future of local students.

Leave refused.

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (09:48): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Pakenham for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while delaying the Pakenham community hospital, abandoning the urgent healthcare needs of the Pakenham community's rapidly growing population, and also for the delay in delivering the West Gippsland Hospital as promised in the 2022 election.

Leave refused.

Nicole WERNER (Warrandyte) (09:48): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Box Hill, who I note is not in the chamber, for recklessly putting all their eggs in one basket with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop while leaving Orchard Grove Primary School unfunded, abandoning local students and their future.

Leave refused.

Nicole WERNER: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Glen Waverley, who I also note is not in the chamber, for recklessly pushing ahead with the \$216 billion Suburban Rail Loop without confirmed details on new taxes they plan to impose on Glen Waverley locals through so-called value capture, leaving the community in the dark and facing massive cost blowouts.

Leave refused.

*Business of the house***Adjournment**

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (09:50): I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until 27 August 2024.

Motion agreed to.

*Members statements***Jude Perera**

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (09:50): Jude Perera was the first Sri Lankan born and educated member of this house – indeed of any lower house of any parliament in Australia. It was a source of pride to him that he was elected by a predominantly Anglo-Saxon Australian-born population to be their member for Cranbourne. He said in his inaugural contribution to this place that was a marker of the strength of diversity in our state, because Jude Perera was a champion of multicultural Victoria and a passionate advocate for his community, for Cranbourne and the wider Sri Lankan and Indian communities of Victoria, and he knew that multiculturalism was an essential part of our success, making our state a better, fairer, kinder place. Jude also understood that better relationships with the Indian subcontinent not only strengthened our cultural understanding but created stronger economic ties that have enriched us all.

Jude Perera's life cannot be summed up solely by his role as the member for Cranbourne. He was of course a loving husband, father and grandfather. On behalf of all Victorians I convey my deepest condolences to his family and friends and to the community of people who loved him.

In referring to Jude's first statement to the house, I will finish with his final statement to the house, when he singled out his work in helping new migrants settle in Australia as his proudest achievement – work that reunited families, enriched our economy and further strengthened the diversity of our state. A migrant himself, Jude wanted others to have that same opportunity. That demonstrates a generosity of spirit in Jude that we can all admire. Vale, Jude Perera.

Paris Olympics

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (09:52): A massive congratulations to Leongatha's own Olympic high jumper Eleanor Patterson for starring in Paris and bringing home a bronze medal. Eleanor has been in and around the top echelon of the high jump world since her Commonwealth Games gold medal as a teenager in 2014, and at her third Olympics she brought home her first Olympic medal, alongside compatriot Nicola Olyslagers, who won silver. Eleanor was the world champion in 2022 and has overcome injury to reach the top of her sport. Famous for knitting in her downtime, Eleanor is a champion, and South Gippsland, Victoria and Australia are proud of her. A big congratulations to Gippsland South's other Olympians – skeet shooter Aislin Jones and skateboarder Keefer Wilson – for doing us proud on the biggest world stage.

Beau Vernon

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (09:52): We will be watching as the inspirational Beau Vernon, former Leongatha and Phillip Island premiership football coach, represents the green and gold at the forthcoming Paralympics in wheelchair rugby.

Gippsland South energy infrastructure

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (09:52): Gippslanders' heads are spinning at the moment as a bewildering array of projects, plans and possibilities land on our doorstep, from 12 proposed offshore wind farms, multiple proposed onshore wind and solar farms, the Marinus Link electricity connection to Tasmania, CarbonNet, the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain project, Bass Strait oil and gas

decommissioning, new transmission lines and now VicGrid's ill-considered Victorian transmission plan. We are being consulted at every turn and virtually every day of the week. While I do not object to the consultation it is confusing for the community, and I call on the state government to take on a leadership role to help coordinate all this consultation, especially with respect to offshore wind and its transmission connections.

Jude Perera

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for the Suburbs) (09:53): Today I pay tribute to a very special person: Jude Perera, a dear, kind friend and colleague. Jude was elected to the Victorian Parliament in 2002, representing the seat of Cranbourne in Melbourne's beautiful south-east as a member of the Australian Labor Party. He went on to win his seat three more times before retiring from Parliament in 2018 after a long health battle. Jude passed away on 23 July 2024.

Jude's story and indeed Jude's legacy is one of courage, service and an untiring and resolute commitment to his community and his values. His softly spoken demeanour masked extraordinary strength, political insight and resilience – so much resilience and perseverance. His loss is felt deeply, particularly within the Sri Lankan community. Jude was the first person born and educated on the Indian subcontinent to have been elected to a lower house anywhere in Australia, but Jude's support base was so broad, his recognition in the electorate immense.

Jude joined the Australian Labor Party and entered politics because he could not stand by and watch Victoria be drawn backwards by conservative forces that would strip the rights of working men and women. In his recent memoir Jude detailed a personal and political odyssey from Sri Lanka to Melbourne, Australia. Central to his values was a vision of a just, sustainable and viable economy to foster harmony, economic democracy and social equity. His views were complex, his vision clear: strive for fairness, equity, harmony and solidarity.

My deepest condolences to his loving wife Ira, his two children Judy and Rangana and their families, and his grandchildren.

Jude Perera

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (09:55): Can I add on behalf of the opposition our deepest and most sincere condolences on the passing of Jude Perera, a person who was highly respected, very well regarded and very well liked.

Paris Olympics

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (09:55): The Olympics are a chance for Australia to celebrate the skills, endurance and athleticism of our finest sports men and women. Victoria was well represented in team Australia at the Paris Olympics, and I offer my congratulations to the entire team. I would also like to personally offer my congratulations to Jean Mitchell and Brett Robinson from my electorate of Hawthorn, who qualified for Australia. Jean Mitchell made her debut at the Paris Olympics as a member of the rowing women's fours. Jean's story is truly inspiring. She was diagnosed with brain cancer early in her rowing career and after two years of chemotherapy was able to continue her rowing journey. Jean's achievement of making the Olympics is truly inspiring. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Brett Robinson, who qualified to compete in the men's marathon. Unfortunately Brett was forced to withdraw due to injury, but his determination and sportsmanship speak to his true character and integrity. Brett and Jean have truly done themselves, their country and their community very proud. Can I congratulate again all on their efforts, and we will we watch their careers continue to blossom as they continue to represent Australia in the years ahead.

Jude Perera

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Government Services, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Public and Active Transport) (09:56): As we have heard from other speakers, the wonderful Jude Perera was very proud of the fact that he was the first person born and educated on the Indian subcontinent to have been elected to any lower house of parliament anywhere in Australia, and he should be rightly proud of that, as we all were and remain of him. Jude had incredibly strong ideological foundations and was a very deep thinker. That may not have been well understood by all in this chamber, but for those of us who knew him well it was one of the most compelling parts of the man. His inaugural speech revealed great concern and knowledge about class structures that discriminated against the poor and working classes. It also revealed a great passion – first and foremost in the Sri Lankan context but his thinking was much broader than just that – for the fight to end colonial rule, something that defined his father’s politics and was clearly a great influence on Jude himself. As a staunch Australian republican, I can very much align myself with that and did speak many times to Jude about that. He also saw the opportunity in technologies. In his valedictory speech he spoke about the opportunities in AI, but he also spoke about and emphasised the role of government in mitigating some of the risks and the protection of workers. Jude was a family man. He loved his family deeply. To Ira, to Rangana, to Judy, you have our condolences. Vale, Jude Perera.

Health funding

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (09:58): I want to congratulate the community on its strong action in forcing the Allan Labor government to announce a backdown on its plans to cut health services funding and force hospital mergers. This government demanded multimillion-dollar budget cuts from Victoria’s 76 health services and withdrew longstanding guarantees that ensured they would stay open. For months these demands have caused enormous concern within our community and uncertainty around the impact on healthcare accessibility, local jobs and patient outcomes.

We know that Labor will say one thing and do another. Their announcement last week contained little more than a bucket of money and vague statements about creating a new bureaucracy. Just yesterday we had the Treasurer saying nothing is on the table or off the table insofar as how this \$1.5 billion will be spent – no detail on what happens once the money is spent and no certainty for health services to be able to plan budgets and allocate staffing with confidence. The Minister for Health continues to dodge questions and gives the community no assurances when she merely states there will be no forced mergers. People in the community have invested in placards around the region, which will be left in place to remind the government we will not accept hospital mergers by stealth.

Whether it is more than \$180 billion in debt and climbing, cancelling the Commonwealth Games, \$40 billion in waste and mismanagement on its Big Build projects in Melbourne or massive cuts to health that Labor claims have now been reversed, the community are rightly mistrustful of this Premier and any promises she makes.

Jude Perera

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (09:59): I would like to join my colleagues in acknowledging the loss of Jude Perera, a loved husband, father and grandfather to Ira, Rangana and Judy. My deepest condolences to you and your wonderful family. I know how proud he was of you all and of his beautiful grandchildren. We know when we lose someone in our lives that we all have different ways and unique ways of remembering them, different and unique ways of keeping their memory alive, but for me and the Cranbourne community we have a special way of remembering Jude Perera, because he was our member. And I will not have to work very hard, because I can report to the house that his memory is alive and well.

I am frequently stopped by constituents who he has helped and to whom he has extended the hand of friendship. It has been an extraordinary role that he has played – like the countless times he helped the Sri Lankan diaspora and other community members to settle immigration matters, something that was

beyond his jurisdiction as a state member of Parliament, but he did it all the same and he did it with great care. His memory is alive and well when we travel through the streets of Cranbourne. A fortnight ago at Jude's funeral I sat next to the assistant principal of Cranbourne Secondary College, and I can tell you he speaks often of the legacy that Jude has left for the students of Cranbourne. He was a remarkable person and a fierce advocate, and I am very proud to be able to say vale, Jude Perera.

Mildura electorate tourism

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (10:01): Today in tropical northern Victoria the forecast is a balmy and not overly humid 26 degrees – in the middle of August.

A member: Tropical!

Jade BENHAM: Tropical. Last week Mildura Rural City Council's economic development and marketing genius team pulled off one of the greatest PR exercises Mildura has seen in quite some time, the core message being of course that tropical north Victoria has more sunny days every year than the Sunshine State. In the first 24 to 48 hours after launch, the Tropical North Victoria campaign, featuring Shane Jacobson as our ambassador, was on every major media outlet on the eastern seaboard. For a modest spend, which I am not going to mention now, it has generated 79 million impressions alone, creating approximately \$2.5 million in equivalent spend. Well done to PA, even though he does not want me to mention him, and to Lisa Merritt, Aaron Hawkins and the Mildura Rural City Council economic development team, as well as to Tropical North Victoria's ambassador Shane Jacobson for falling in love with Mildura so his authenticity really comes through. I think we can already put this one down as a successful campaign.

Mallee Track Health and Community Service

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (10:02): The community of Ouyen are concerned that the Minister for Health is deliberately restructuring the board of the Mallee Track Health and Community Service to make consolidation easy. Many constituents in the small but vibrant and engaged community of Ouyen are concerned that the only local left on the board has been forced to resign through lack of proper process and governance.

Jude Perera

Mathew HILAKARI (Point Cook) (10:02): Jude Perera took his place in history as the first South Asian and Sri Lankan-born member of a lower house in any parliament in Australia. He won the marginal seat of Cranbourne from the Liberals in 2002, and Cranbourne has remained Labor ever since but was always worked as a marginal seat. Many activists became staff members working in Jude's office. Jude shared that with Lee Tarlamis on Sladen Street, and that included me and my partner Cassie. Jude did not jealously hold on to staff but allowed them to grow and go, and they have subsequently served across governments and the union movement in Victoria and Australia – something to be proud of.

Jude Perera's fundraisers were the stuff of legend. I still measure every fundraiser against Jude Perera's curry nights. Your template, Jude, has not been matched. If you were a Labor activist in the south-east or if you were a Monash Labor student during those years and you did not attend Jude Perera's curry night, were you ever actually involved?

Jude never forgot where he came from or the values that led him to Labor, from talking about the caste system in his first speech to talking about a better democracy the last time I saw him. Jude was proud of his contribution in this place, supporting abortion law reform, voluntary assisted dying, legalising access to medicinal cannabis and medically supervised injecting rooms. In his final speech Jude talked about the challenges of the rollout of artificial intelligence and automation in employment. He was always thinking about what was over the horizon. Ira, family, thank you for sharing Jude for all those years and making the sacrifices for Jude. Vale, Jude Perera.

Josie Millard

Jess WILSON (Kew) (10:04): Last week I attended the farewell assembly for principal Josie Millard at Kew High School. Josie is an inspirational leader and a true friend whose contributions to Kew High and the broader educational community have been and I have no doubt will continue to be nothing short of extraordinary. Josie leaves an impressive legacy at Kew High. She will be missed and remembered by students and staff alike – yes, because of her commitment to improving the school and its facilities and, yes, because of her advancement of the school’s approach to teaching and learning, but most importantly because she has fostered an inclusive school where every student and staff member is encouraged to reach their full potential in a compassionate environment that embraces individuality while creating a true sense of community. I wish Josie all the best for her next chapter as she takes on the role of principal at Berwick College.

Genazzano FCJ College

Jess WILSON (Kew) (10:04): This week I had the pleasure of attending Genazzano’s annual music concert, always a must on the calendar. It was wonderful to see the remarkable talent of the student musicians on show, from the junior school years right through to the year 12s. A special congratulations to 2024 music prefect Lilly, who not only performed throughout the night in various orchestras and bands but performed a sensational duet and solo, as well as conducting the orchestra and choir in a stirring rendition of the school’s hymn. Lilly has a commanding and inspirational presence on stage and no doubt has an exciting future ahead. I am looking forward to watching her many achievements. Whether it was classical or contemporary numbers, the audience was wowed by the performances, and I congratulate Genazzano on the concert.

Jude Perera

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (10:05): The late Jude Perera, a former member for Cranbourne, was a wonderfully kind person, a passionate advocate for his local community and a person who served this place with a quiet yet stoic determination. I have got many fond memories of Jude, and one is from a caucus conference. Jude held the pool table champion mantle very tightly. He refused to be beaten for many, many hours, and he was a real competitor. He loved a challenge. I acknowledge his passing and the loss to his family, his friends, our state and the wider community. My thoughts are with his family and loved ones at this time.

Sarah Carter

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (10:06): I also wish to acknowledge the incredibly sad passing of Cr Sarah Carter, who was known to many in this house and by so many across the labour movement and the wider community. She was a passionate advocate, a true fighter for many and somebody who truly lived her values. I send my deepest condolences to Sarah’s family, her many friends and the many, many people right across the state who knew her.

Nepean electorate

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (10:07): I am disappointed the Premier has left, because I was hoping she would stick around to maybe listen and acknowledge that the southern peninsula and Nepean actually exist here in Victoria. The warmer weather makes me hope, as we head towards summer and many members of this chamber on all sides will be booking their holidays and starting to head down to my part of the world, that they actually realise that it is not just a holiday destination, that people do live there 365 days a year, that all of the services, the roads, the hospital, the tourism providers, everything that they enjoy during that summer period actually operate year-round and that as they get in their chauffeur-driven cars and they drive down to Nepean and they book their piece of paradise they understand that the electorate of Nepean continues to go neglected in funding from this government.

Rosebud Hospital still remains completely underfunded. As you drive down the Mornington Peninsula Freeway, past those people that live in Dromana, in McCrae, in Rosebud on the sides of the

Mornington Peninsula Freeway, it is one of the only metropolitan freeways left in Victoria that does not have sound barriers to protect those residents from the noise that traffic makes. When members opposite turn up to use our amazing hospitality and have dinner at our restaurants, our bars, they are making life more and more difficult with the taxes they are putting on those businesses. We have heard today about the red tape, the absolute difficulty that they are putting on businesses in this state to do what they need. When they come and swim at our beaches and they are being eroded away – (*Time expired*)

Jude Perera

Meng Heang TAK (Clarinda) (10:08): Vale, Jude Perera. Not only did you create history, becoming the first Sri Lankan-born member of Parliament, you were considered a champion for freedom, a symbol of hope for emerging South Asian communities. I had the honour to first meet Jude Perera around 2016, around the time of his advocacy for Little India in Dandenong. He was a quiet man, a man who was soft-spoken but with a very big heart and a champion for our multiculturalism in Victoria. It is a great loss for us all. Vale, Jude Perera.

Hampton Life Saving Club

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:09): The Hampton Life Saving Club is a hub of Hampton. Each year the club trains hundreds of children and ensures the safety of thousands of beachgoers, and it has helped countless people over its long history. After 10 years on the board, with the last four as president, Andrew Lawrence has stepped down. His leadership has been exceptional. As president he has led on inclusiveness, holding events in recognition of equality, the environment and mental health awareness, and he has been a strong supporter of the Starfish Nippers program and advocated for Bayside council to improve disability access to the beach. Thank you, Andy, for your incredible service.

Animal welfare

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:09): One of the big-hearted schoolchildren in my community, Daisy, shared her strong care for animal welfare with me. Daisy is concerned about sports involving horses and Australians spending too much on gambling. Daisy is heartbroken to know that horses are injured and die each year. Thank you for your big heart and advocacy, Daisy.

Benjamin Johnson

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:10): My grandfather Benjamin Arthur Johnson lived a full 100 years and 86 days. After an incredible life our Bim, a devoted family man and a gentleman, peacefully passed away. His life was full of love for family, and we feel honoured to have had him with us for so long. He was the one constant for our family, a comfort who could be leaned on during hardship and a beaming joy ready to share moments of happiness. We will miss deeply his love, his modesty, his calmness, his few but meaningful words and the bright twinkle in his eye. Rest in peace. Vale, Bim.

Doreen United Soccer Club

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (10:10): I am so proud to represent the teams at Doreen United Soccer Club. They are on the hunt. We are looking to bring home our first state league championship, and on the weekend we went another step closer when the senior women's team crushed Brunswick Juventus. Congratulations to Naomi Harris, who scored two goals, and Jaycee Thomas, who scored the remaining goal. This is the Women's State League 5 North competition, and I am looking forward to seeing them win the grand final. We are top of the ladder, and I want to see that cup come home to Doreen. Congratulations to captain Sarah Lowrie, and thank you to the whole club there, Chris, Paul, Callum, Linda and the crew.

I am really proud to have this club in my community because, as has been recognised by them being awarded a second star as a 2 Star Club Changer team, they are so inclusive of all players. They make

sure that women can participate on an equal level and with equal respect to men. My daughter has trained there with children with different disabilities, and I am so glad that everyone is invited to be part of this winning team.

Mornington Football Netball Club

Chris CREWITHER (Mornington) (10:12): Firstly, congratulations to Mornington Football Netball Club division 1 women on making it to the grand final. My son Eddie and I loved watching the game, waving the red, white and blue. Warragul got up, and I know the member for Narracan is very proud there, but it was a hard-fought game with the lead changing many times in the last quarter. Go, Doggies!

Assistance animals

Chris CREWITHER (Mornington) (10:12): Secondly, there are many people who use assistance dogs in Victoria, whether they are veterans with PTSD or so on, including a member of my family. Currently on public transport guide dogs do not need a pass but assistance dogs do. I wrote to the state minister in 2018 or 19 and then three times over the last year and a half since being elected to state Parliament, calling on them to make assistance dogs the same as guide dogs on public transport. I have not heard back on my latest correspondence, sent several weeks ago, and I call on the minister to finally bring equity around the rules in this regard.

Condolences

Chris CREWITHER (Mornington) (10:13): Lastly, I would like to also note my condolences for the family here of Jude Perera, who passed away recently, along with someone I knew very closely, a former member for the South-East Metro Region Inga Peulich. I also send my condolences to Cr Sarah Carter, who I went to the Solomon Islands with through Save the Children a number of years ago, as well as to Cr Bob Redden in Horsham, who was the Horsham branch president of the Liberal Party as well. Also, lastly, I want to give my condolences to the member for Brighton on the loss of his grandfather Bim.

Koonung Secondary College

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (10:13): I would like to congratulate Koonung Secondary College on its successful production of *Shrek the Musical*. I would like to praise the fabulous cast of Bethani Bingley, Maia Mendez, Alysha Clegg, James England, Indiana Iannotti, Tehmi Harding, Gwen Mander, Emily Nash, Josie Mander, Victor Azubel, Payoja Basak, Lilla Buchanan, Zara Buchanan, Ruth Chen, Stephanie Coleman, Zoe Coleman, Bridget Dods, Hilary Dods, Georgia Fleming, Poppy Fukushima-Taylor, Evelyn Heath, Monty Hilker, Ashton Lonnen, Alice Lyons, Jack Moran, Sophie Newbury, Aliya R-Shakeel, Isabella Triandafyllakos, Darren Tsai, Clio Vassiliades and Zachary Watkins. A performance such as this does not happen without many contributors who cannot be seen on stage, so a big shout-out to all the crew: Jeremy Ball, Ash Jackson, Soorena Abbasi, James Panchmatia, Sirakarn Assawakraichet, Xavier Cronin, Alessio De Luise, Vernice Pang, Kady McGrath, Lachlan Simon and Jennifer Molloy backstage; Ash Jackson, Sienna Forest, Simon Cronin, Hazel Kan, Tom Farkas and Lucy Cooper on sound; Micaela Poon, Lucas Yap, Sabrina Hutchinson, Michael Harding and Zoe Newbury on lighting; Khushi Patel, Lachlan Cartledge, Megan Zerna, Daniel Goulding, Avreen Ram, Afra Eftekhar and Chloe Cooper on front of house; Megan Zerna, Elsa Gee, Jasmine Missen and Chloe Cooper on hair and make-up. And finally, I would like to congratulate and thank the amazing orchestra, as well as all the wonderful parents who assisted with all the costumes and the set and construction.

The Orange Door

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (10:15): Last Tuesday I had the privilege of visiting the Brimbank–Melton Orange Door with the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Vicki Ward. The Melton Orange Door handles an average of 217 referrals weekly, mostly from Victoria Police, with self-

referrals significantly increasing since its start in 2022 and now being the second-highest type of referral. Over the past 22 months the service has shown its value to our community, with 27 per cent of referrals last year coming directly from individuals seeking help. The opportunity to speak directly to caseworkers and staff highlighted the importance of continued funding for this organisation and the communities they assist. I want to thank the hub manager Tilly O'Rourke, director Alysha Batty and the entire Brimbank–Melton team for their vital work supporting victim-survivors. I also extend my gratitude to Minister Ward for her continued advocacy and efforts in the prevention of family violence portfolio.

State Schools' Relief

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (10:16): I also had the pleasure of sitting down with school leaders and students to discuss various areas, including how we can best assist the schools of Melton. State Schools' Relief was one topic that continued to come up in these conversations and how essential it is for many Melton families. All of the schools I met with emphasised that without access to State Schools' Relief, more than half their students would be without uniforms and essential school supplies. Since 2015 the Labor government has provided more than \$42 million to State Schools' Relief for Victorian students, and in the 2024–25 state budget an additional \$32 million was provided for the continuation of the affordable school uniforms program. Without these vital contributions to State Schools' Relief many students would lack essential uniforms and school supplies.

Jude Perera

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (10:16): I acknowledge the service of my parliamentary colleague Jude Perera, the member for Cranbourne from 2002 to 2018. When I was elected to this place in 2010 I was tucked in on the other benches between the experienced MPs Jude Perera and the former member for Geelong and my old boss Ian Trezise. They were great mentors and, in the wilderness of opposition, great company. Ivanhoe – my electorate – and Cranbourne are different worlds in many ways but share many values. They were great discussions with Jude, often on the walk between the old chook house to this chamber for endless divisions between 2010 and 2014.

To hold the support of your community when the government is defeated tells you a lot about the huge regard and respect the Cranbourne community had for Jude. He was part of the Labor caucus that made history in returning to the government benches after only one term out of office, one of the first oppositions to do so in some half a century. It says a lot about the fighting qualities of Jude Perera. We thank him for his service to the community, the people of Cranbourne, the Labor Party and the Parliament of Victoria. Vale, Jude Perera.

Viewbank College

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (10:18): Further, could I just add my thanks to the amazing Viewbank College for their production of *Seussical!* and to Ben Mogford, the technical director. It is my former school, and having been able to contribute some \$11.5 million to the new performing arts centre, they just go from strength to strength. It has been another successful production at Viewbank College.

Altona College

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (10:18): It has been a busy couple of weeks in and around Williamstown, and I was delighted to welcome students from Altona College to Parliament on Friday 2 August. Sixteen students completing their vocational major at Altona College attended, took a tour and learned about the inner workings of our Parliament. I hope they enjoyed their visit, and I wish them the best for the future.

Power House Junior Rugby Union Club

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (10:18): The Power House Junior Rugby Union Club has received a brand new electronic scoreboard thanks to the West Gate Neighbourhood Fund. The new scoreboard will improve the experience for players, officials and supporters alike, and most importantly, the opening of the scoreboard meant that the kids got to have cake for breakfast.

Peter Sadler Removals and Logistics

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (10:19): Peter Sadler Removals and Logistics, which began as a father-and-son business with two trucks in 1997, today employs over 160 people. I was privileged enough to go and visit them the other day. This business has thrived in the west, and it was a pleasure to view its newly expanded warehouse and cold storage. Not only is this business a major employer and service provider, it is also a terrific contributor to our local community, always lending support to local sporting clubs and community organisations. Congratulations for all you do, and thanks to Pete and the Sadler family.

Sarah Carter

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (10:19): Finally, on a much more sombre note, we will say goodbye to a dearly loved friend and champion of the west Sarah Carter tomorrow.

Early childhood education

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Minister for Education, Minister for Medical Research) (10:20): I really want to congratulate everyone that has been part of the Best Start, Best Life program, saving some families \$2,500 per child annually. Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the Gowanbrae Children's Centre, which really reinforced for me what we are doing: transforming early childhood education, providing the best start for children, supporting families with cost-of-living measures and helping parents get back to work and study if they wish. This is what government is about: focusing on early education, primary education and then secondary education and making sure everyone in the Education State has a pathway. To all the team out at Gowanbrae, well done.

Business of the house**Notices of motion**

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:20): I wish to advise the house that the government does not wish to proceed with the notice of motion, government business, on the notice paper but ask that it remains on the notice paper.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, can I seek your advice on a matter that occurred in the house just previously. I understand the government did not wish to proceed with the matter that was referred to earlier. Just for the house's benefit, the notice of motion referred to the Electoral Matters Committee's inquiry into the composition of Legislative Council voting systems. I did not hear the minister say whether or not that matter would be referred to the house later today. I understand that that motion was based on an earlier inquiry that was handed down in July 2024 and that that inquiry set out a number of recommendations. Those recommendations I believe have been made public, and this potential inquiry builds off the back of those –

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I ask the member for Brighton what he is seeking?

James Newbury: Is the government seeking to move that important motion later today?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It has been disposed of until later in the notice paper.

Bills

Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Colin Brooks:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (10:22): I have been waiting all week to speak on this bill. I think this is the fifth piece of legislation that I have had to speak on this week. We have had the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024, we have had the State Civil Liability (Police Informants) Bill 2024, we have had the Parliamentary Workplace Standards and Integrity Bill 2024 coming down from the other place and of course we have the matter to deal with on the Youth Justice Bill 2024. It would be nice if I got paid by the bill this week, but I do not think that is going to happen.

The Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024 could probably best be described as a legislative tidy-up. Its purpose is to make miscellaneous amendments to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994, the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983 and as a consequence amendments to the Monetary Units Act 2004. There is a default commencement date of 1 March 2025, except for clause 17, which has a default commencement date of 18 June 2025.

In terms of examining some of the more notable aspects of this bill, it is interesting that the bill does seem to try and update some administrative arrangements under the Subordinate Legislation Act to bring it into the 21st century. For example, clause 17 would require the government printer to ensure that a physical copy of a statutory rule can be purchased online. I do not know that there are that many government bookshops around – there may be one that still exists or maybe not – but I think that most people probably get their statutory rules, their legislation and their regulations off the internet. So I think it is quite sensible to provide that the government printer must ensure that a physical copy can be purchased online for those who wish to have the hard copy.

The bill allows for a minister to consult with impacted public sector body heads when preparing statutory rules and legislative instruments requiring consultation. Again, you would think that that is a fairly commonsense provision. I am not quite sure why there is a statutory need to provide for it. I do not think there is a law that would prohibit a minister from consulting with impacted public sector body heads in those circumstances, but the government clearly thinks that there is a need to make that explicit in legislation, which is what this bill will do.

There are some broader matters which I will turn to imminently, but the bill does make some changes in relation to the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983, and clause 29 inserts new sections 8, 9 and 10 into that act. In effect it allows for the creation of a consolidated administrative arrangements order. This is intended to make it easier for department and agency staff to find information on administrative changes and arrangements, including by allowing the secretary to publish an AAO consolidated version on the department's internet site.

I suppose this allows me the opportunity to talk about what in government and the public sector we call MOGs – machinery-of-government changes – and over the last 10 years there have been a lot of MOGs under the Andrews and Allan Labor governments. We have seen departments created, we have seen departments taken down, we have seen departments merged and we have seen departments abolished. We have seen statutory agencies created, statutory agencies merged and statutory agencies abolished. We have seen all sorts of administrative arrangements, and for what purpose? Nothing that particularly seems to benefit the poor old taxpaying member of the public.

We know we have got problems because of this Labor government's management or mismanagement of our health system and our hospitals. We know that public hospitals are not meeting targets. We know that ambulances are stuck ramping. We know that paramedics are stuck playing handmaiden to patients on trolleys when they should be out on the road looking after people who need care, and this government's great initiative is to create another statutory authority, create another agency – Hospitals Victoria, this one is called. What on earth is Hospitals Victoria going to do that a government that had its wits about it and a plan could not have already done under existing administrative arrangements? That is my question.

The government can have all the machinery-of-government changes that it likes, but it really seems to be shuffling deckchairs on the *Titanic* rather than actually fixing problems. If the government could point to problems that would be fixed by machinery-of-government changes or would be enhanced by the changes provided in this bill, I would say fine, but I think we just see new agencies, authorities and departments created. We get lots of new people with different titles, certainly lots of communications, lots of spin doctors – no doubt about that – lots of new letterhead, new businesses cards, new this and new that, but how does this benefit the public? I do not know that it does.

I understand when a new government come in after an election and they take office that they want to set things up in a way which suits the style of the government they intend to be. I might disagree with the substance, but I do not disagree with the form of a new government being elected, as the Labor government was in 2014, and deciding to shake up departments, shake up agencies and shake up statutory authorities to reflect its philosophy of government. That is entirely understandable and proper, as long as money is not wasted in that process. But over 10 years we have seen this government go from megadepartments – and I cannot even remember all the letters in the acronym, but I think it was employment, jobs –

Danny Pearson interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: DEDJTR, thank you, Minister – DEDJTR, one of the super departments.

Danny Pearson interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: It was certainly epic in scale and scope if not in performance, Minister.

Tim McCurdy interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: It was very epic in cost, thank you, member for Ovens Valley. But of course DEDJTR is no more. DEDJTR is dead, you might say. And why is that? Because it was not working. This government has come into office, created megadepartments – which probably suited the then Premier's personality and governance style of making as few phone calls as possible to as few people as possible to tell them what they had to do – and now of course we see it is a far more libertarian view, if you like, of more departments, more agencies and more statutory authorities. 'A problem appears in the newspaper? We'll create a new agency to deal with that.' Now of course I think we are getting to the opposite problem: instead of having too few departments, megadepartments with – was it 23 deputy secretaries that DEDJTR had, Minister? It was something like that. It was a ridiculous amount of deputy secretaries for the one department. Instead of that we now have a situation where we have too many, arguably too diffuse a number of departments, agencies and authorities, because of course when everyone is responsible, no-one is responsible. There has to be a happy medium.

I think after 10 years this government is still trying to find the right line and length. This government is still trying find the right structure for running an effective government. I do not think it has done that in 10 years. It is still trying, and I am assuming that the measures in this bill are part of that attempt. But I would urge the government to perhaps be less focused on the mechanics and more focused on the outcomes. That is what Victorians want; that is what Victorians vote for. It is what they pay their taxes for, not to see sandcastles built in the public sector only to be squashed and then rebuilt in a

different way. That does not help anybody except for those who own stationery shops and business card printers.

This bill makes changes to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994, including allowing the Governor in Council to make regulations exempting statutory rules from the application of the act for a specified time not exceeding 12 months. This will in effect extend the application of an existing exemption from regulatory impact statement processes that only apply to legislative instruments or to statutory rules provided that the instrument or rule – this is the key point, and this is where I am going to get some of my material for the next few minutes, I will put you on notice now – is responding to a public emergency, urgent public health or safety issue or damage to the environment, resource sustainability or the economy. That is in clause 9 of the bill.

I have noticed that the government's drafting style in legislation now includes putting in examples, which is something that I think is a relatively modern innovation when it comes to statutory drafting. Normally clauses in statutes are supposed to speak for themselves, but the government now seems to believe that those who read the acts need to be given examples in the statute to explain how they are supposed to work. I would have thought that perhaps clearer drafting in the first place would mean you do not need to provide examples, but the government has decided to go down this path.

Clause 23 includes this under the heading 'Example':

Regulations might be made which exempt a specific class of statutory rule from the application of this Act during a state of disaster declared under the **Emergency Management Act 1986**, a pandemic declaration under the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008** or a national emergency under the National Emergency Declaration Act 2020 of the Commonwealth.

So the government seeks to implement this change, which would potentially provide for less scrutiny, for the avoidance of certain administrative processes, in relation to pandemic declarations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. Can I say I have serious concerns that after the experience of Victoria and Victorians under the heel of this government during the pandemic that we experienced there should be anything that is amounting to less scrutiny or less obligations to be transparent on the part of this government. No Victorian who lived in this state during the time of the pandemic and those declarations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act will ever forget the way in which that power was used and abused by the government – by people working in the name of the government and then ultimately by the government itself when the government moved to make sure that the Minister for Health would in fact be the party signing off on various declarations and measures.

Who will ever forget the banning of playgrounds? Gee, that did so much for public health, didn't it! Stopping kids locked up in their homes from going to playgrounds; didn't we save them a lot! I am assuming that Labor members forget that not everyone has got a big backyard. Maybe there are kids who live in flats and apartments who do not have backyards, whose only opportunity for recreation is to get down to the local playground. But no, the government decided to ban playgrounds under its pandemic laws – absolutely disgraceful. Of course we know this was not aimed at kids. We know this was aimed at those evil people known as parents – parents who were daring to bring their kids to playgrounds and then maybe have a chat with other parents while their kids were playing. What an outrageous attack on public health that was! Imagine parents wanting to have a chat to each other while their kids are playing at a playground, when they are cooped up in their homes for 23 hours a day! What a disgraceful undermining of public health by those evil parents and those evil toddlers wanting to go the playground!

This is exactly why we have very little truck with this government trying to have any less scrutiny over the use of pandemic powers than already exists. And it is very much to the shame not only of the government but can I say also of the crossbench members of the other place at that time who waved through these extraordinary and unwarranted measures to enable bureaucrats and ministers for health to ban playgrounds. That sort of thing is just absolutely appalling. Of course that was not all. We saw police harassing elderly people sitting on park benches in the park because you were only allowed out

to exercise – you were not allowed to rest. You were not allowed to rest if you went to a park. It did not matter if you walked around and you were feeling a little bit hot and you needed to take a breather – no, no, you could only exercise. So you had police out there overzealously policing. This is not a slight on the vast majority of police, who did an exceptional job – many of whom and some of whom I spoke to hated the job that they had been given by the government to try and enforce draconian and appalling powers under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. I felt sorry for the good police officers, which were the vast, vast majority of them, who hated the job that they had been given. But there were regrettably a few who took to it with zealotry. The same ones –

Nina Taylor interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: Well, member for Albert Park, if you want to stand up and justify the police harassing old people sitting on park benches during the pandemic, good luck to you. Then let us go out and see where Victorians stand on that. It was legal for a person to sit there with their family member and have dinner across the dinner table, but then we saw a learner driver and her mother getting fined by police because they were in the same car. Unbelievable. That may have been subsequently withdrawn, but it just goes to show you that the sorts of powers that were used and abused by this government were disgraceful.

And what was the end result? Did we have the lowest mortality in the country? No, we had the highest mortality in the country. Who will ever forget hotel quarantine – 801 deaths because of this government's absolute incompetence. And then the absolute whitewashing known as the Coate inquiry and a Premier who could not remember, who could not recall, whose memory was exhausted, over 20 times. For a man who seemed to be across the detail on everything, he had a very convenient memory lapse when it mattered – before the Coate inquiry – didn't he. So we make no apology for casting a very cynical eye at aspects of this bill, because anything which lessens scrutiny on this government in the exercise of extreme powers should be resisted.

Of course we all remember how all those declarations and powers were health-based. We remember that the curfew was in place to keep us all safe apparently, even though the Chief Commissioner of Police said, 'I didn't ask for it,' and even though the chief health officer said, 'I didn't ask for it.' No, it was an exercise of political power. It was not a medical decision. It was not a law and order decision. It was an exercise of political power by a Premier and a government, supported by a cowardly backbench who were happy to keep Victorians locked up in their homes.

What happened when a brave restaurateur, a small business owner, a single mum from down peninsula way decided to take the curfew on and challenged it in the Supreme Court? Well, the Sunday before the case started the Premier stood up, held a press conference and said, 'Guess what, the curfew's ended. No more curfew.' What a coincidence, Deidre Chambers. Just as the case was about to go to court, the Premier stood up and said, 'We're bringing forward the end of the curfew.' What a surprise. Of course this was not based on politics – no. This was all based on public health advice, I am sure. Yes, right. If you believe that, I have got a bridge over Sydney Harbour to sell you.

We saw the worst abuses of political power by the government, and they led to the worst outcomes. We had the worst mortality of any state in the country, the worst lockdowns of any state in the country, the most economic damage and the most psychological damage.

Members interjecting.

Michael O'BRIEN: I am glad members opposite think it is funny, because I still speak to parents who cannot get their kids into child psychologists to deal with the trauma that they endured during those dark, dark days, weeks, months and years. There is ongoing trauma to children in this state that is going to be with them for life. The decisions of that Andrews–Allan Labor government to lock Victorians up has got such a long tail on it in terms of the damage that it has done. This was all done under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, on which the government is now seeking to actually reduce the level of scrutiny and reduce the level of compliance required by them for declarations made

under that act in this bill today. We look forward to the government trying to justify why, given its abysmal performance during the pandemic, with the greatest mortality, greatest lockdowns, greatest financial damage and greatest psychological damage of any state in the country, it should have fewer safeguards and fewer obligations than it already has. I could talk very unhappily for the next 10 minutes about what this government did.

Tim Richardson interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: Member for Mordialloc, thank you for encouraging me. I will keep going on now. Let us talk about the economic damage that the government's pandemic declarations did. There is a reason why 50,000 people left this state during those times and have not come back, and there is a reason why we are now seeing the Australian Electoral Commission abolish a seat in Victoria. Our population fled Victoria because of this government's incompetence and overreaching, overzealous, overbearing and shocking mismanagement of the pandemic. They are the numbers. There is a reason we are losing a federal seat – because our population has dropped relative to other states, because those people could not bear living under the dictatorship of pandemic orders that made no sense and were not based on science, were not based on health advice but were simply based on political control, and incompetent political control at that.

Members interjecting.

Michael O'BRIEN: I am glad that members of the government backbench think this is funny. They think that what they did to Victorians during the pandemic is amusing. Well, let the record show the member for Mordialloc is having a great old chuckle about people leaving this state, about people losing their businesses and about people losing their lives. They think it is funny. We do not think it is funny. We think it is one of the darkest days in this state's history and this government is responsible for it, because our record was appalling: more debts, more lockdowns, more small businesses crushed, greater debt – a debt that our kids and grandkids will be paying off. And of course it is not all pandemic-related. A fraction of it is pandemic-related, about \$30 billion, but there is the whole \$188 billion that can be attributed to this Labor government between their pandemic overreach and their sweetheart deals with the CFMEU.

I note that Rod Sims, former ACCC chairman, recently attributed about a 30 per cent increase in costs on Victorian government major projects to this government's sweetheart deals with the CFMEU, so we know what the real cost is. We have lost population in this state.

How many small businesses die? Well, the member for Mildura lost one of hers. I walk down Glenferrie Road and High Street in my electorate, and there are still so many closed shops that closed down during the pandemic and have not reopened since. Of course they cannot. They had thriving businesses, but they were put out of business by this Labor government through its pandemic declarations and its overreach. Now if you wanted to look at starting something up, look at the land tax you are going to have to pay, look at the regulation and the red tape, which I was reading about only this morning – the worst in the country. The worst taxes, the worst debt, the worst regulation. Gee, Victoria, the place to be – they do not put that on the number plates anymore, do they. There is probably a reason for that.

This government did more than any to massively damage this state not just during the pandemic but on an ongoing basis. That is why we cannot be very supportive of any measure which is going to be making this government less accountable for its use of pandemic powers in the future. This is a government which has demonstrated it cannot be trusted. Look at the bill we were debating here yesterday, the State Civil Liability (Police Informants) Bill 2024, where the government wants to simply pass a law to make itself not liable for bad things it did that hurt people. It wants to make itself not liable for putting away somebody for 12 years in jail who the High Court said should never have been there. It is just an extraordinary use and abuse of power, but that is the motif of this Labor government. They will use naked political power to meet their own objectives, to meet their own ends,

and they do not give a damn who gets hurt along the way. They do not care if it is individuals, they do not care if it is families, they do not care if it is small businesses, they do not care if it is the entire state. As long as they and their mates are looked after, that is all they give a damn about. It is a government that has clearly run its course. And the polls would seem to indicate that we are not alone in thinking that, despite the poll denialism of the member for Bentleigh. He was very quick to jump onto Twitter and engage in a bit of poll denialism; we all noted that.

Members interjecting.

Michael O'BRIEN: Our primary vote is not quite up to where I had got it, but we are almost there. We are getting there.

We have slight concerns about the measure in clause 23 of the bill. We would seek assurances from the government that it is not going to be used to reduce any scrutiny on the government in relation to pandemic declarations, because we think that is such a serious matter it deserves greater scrutiny. But beyond that it is not a bill that has anything that is overly objectionable in itself or indeed has anything objectionable in it. As Shadow Attorney-General I have a large legislative workload, which I quite enjoy – you would rather be busy than bored – but I do wonder why, when we have very serious issues confronting this state, the government's priority is something which is effectively an administrative tidy up like this. And it is not the first time. We also had the Statute Law Revision Bill 2024 earlier this year, which was effectively correcting typos. This government's legislative program is thin when it matters, but it is bulked out with make work like this bill. I think it says a lot about the government's political priorities that the government is not dealing with some of the real issues confronting Victoria.

Where is the bill to reduce red tape? It was identified today – in a survey done for the government, by the way – that Victoria has the worst red tape in the country. In fact we know that the government has been provided with policy options by the Department of Treasury and Finance to try and alleviate some of that burden, yet the government has taken no action on it. Why are we debating the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024 instead of the red tape reduction bill? Why aren't we debating a small business tax relief bill to try and send a message to our small businesses, our greatest employers in this state, that we support them, we love them, we want them to start, we want them to grow, we want them to employ more people, we want them to thrive?

The fact that this bill is such a high priority for this government – off the back, as I say, of the Statute Law Revision Bill, literally correcting typos – says a lot about this government, that after 10 years this is the best the government can do. The best the government can do is administrative tidy-ups instead of tackling the real issues confronting Victoria.

I am not sure why the government has to prioritise these sorts of matters. They are not massively objectionable in themselves, but it does bespeak a government that has lost its policy heart, that does not really have an agenda anymore. It is managing – it is managing down, it is managing poorly and it is trying to deal with crisis after crisis rather than actually having a vision for the state. Sadly that is what we see sometimes with long-term governments, and I think that is exactly where this government is today. You can have all your administrative arrangements and act amendments as much as you like. You can have subordinate legislation act amendments as much as you like. This does not put a single bit of food on the table of somebody who is unemployed.

I note in the latest ABS data that Victoria has the worst unemployment of any state in the country – any state in the country. This bill will not reopen a small business that was closed because of this government's mismanagement of the pandemic. This bill will not open up a single ambulance to get people off ramping and get those ambulances back on the road. This bill will not reopen a single one of the 43 police stations that have been closed at night by this government this year, including in my community of Malvern.

This bill does nothing to actually improve the welfare of Victorians. It is an administrative tidy-up. It is not necessarily objectionable in itself, but it does speak volumes about this government's inability to confront the real issues facing the people of Victoria.

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC) (10:52): I have just got one question: what did the Statute Law Revision Bill 2024 ever do to the member for Malvern? I mean, really. I loved the Statute Law Revision Bill – honestly. This is an important function of the house. Indeed I think in terms of this bill that is before the house currently, this is part of the engine room of government and of good governance and good legislation. And I think that you have got to make sure you get the basics right and you have got to constantly try to improve the way in which we govern this state, and we constantly update the statute books accordingly.

I do note that clause 10 – and I did not hear the member for Malvern talk about this – refers to the replacement of 'his or hers' with 'the Minister's', possessive. Language is important. Language is very important, and I think that the fact that we are moving away from 'his or hers' to 'the Minister's' reflects the fact that as a society we have acknowledged that pronouns do count; pronouns are important. Now, those opposite might question that, but I would remind them of the great work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who did a lot of work in relation to the philosophy of language, and he said:

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.

You might think, 'Oh, this is all very curious. How quaint. The minister is again riffing on various matters like this.' But I think anyone who has read *1984* knows the job that is performed by Winston Smith, and Winston Smith's job is to look at reducing language as a way of control. And I think that what we are doing here in clause 10 is an act of liberation. This is an act of liberation for all LGBTIQ+ members of our community, because we are saying very clearly and explicitly that you can have a pronoun of 'they' and 'them' and you can be a minister of the Crown. It might seem esoteric, but it is important. These things do matter, and we have got to make sure that the legislation that we administer in this place is common and reflective and meets the aspirations of the community. It is a really important note.

Just as an aside on language, if you will indulge me briefly, after the Chinese Revolution of 1949, Mao Zedong went to Moscow and talked to Stalin about removing Chinese characters and adopting Roman script as an alternative. Stalin said to Mao, 'Don't do it. Stick with what you've got, stick with what you're good at,' which is quite interesting. You could have had a conversation in Moscow in 1951 which therefore changes the course of history. Imagine if you had Romanised language as the basis of modern Mandarin. It is quite curious.

In relation to this bill, again it comes back to focusing on things that matter. I remember I sat down with Robert Clark, who is a former member for Box Hill. He was not as good as the current member for Box Hill, but nonetheless Robert was always interesting. Robert and I on any given day did not agree on many things, and in this place in my first term of Parliament, in the 58th term, we would often be debating each other on different points. Robert was always in attack, and in those days I tended to be – I would not say a centre halfback – probably a back-pocket player. But I remember saying to Robert, 'Why is it a fact that so many of the statute books were dated 1958?' And Robert said to me, 'You've got to understand that every 10 years you would mark up the changes and every 10 years you would then update the statute books accordingly.' That changed, obviously, post 1958.

Language is important and indeed fonts are important. I recall the fact that Steve Jobs dropped out of university. He was just bumming around California, as you did in the 1970s, and he took up a course in calligraphy and started to do different fonts, experimenting with different fonts. You think, 'What's that got to do with the price of fish?' Well, the point here is that Steve Jobs turned around and, when he started to develop word processors, thought it would be really good to have different font types in relation to his programming.

I have got to say I want it known that I loathe Times New Roman. I despise it. Think about this for a moment: Times New Roman is the font of colonisers. If they were colonising the world and they had access to word processors, it would have been Times New Roman. Times New Roman would have enslaved continents.

Members interjecting.

Danny PEARSON: It is true. I loathe it. For a while there I quite liked Arial Narrow.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am going to thank the member for Ovens Valley for the point of order.

Tim McCurdy: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I know it is a wideranging bill and the member for Malvern was very wideranging. However, he did not stray into the areas that we have gone into now: Mao Zedong and Times New Roman. I would just encourage you to bring the member back to the bill, which is about subordinate legislation and administrative arrangements.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a very wideranging debate, and the member for Malvern did set the agenda somewhat. I would ask the minister to come back to the bill, or at least the duck.

Danny PEARSON: I think it is important in relation to this bill that we are looking at modernising and updating the act. Clause 17(1) of the bill refers to the provision that we can publish statutory rules in a digital format. Again, this is incredibly important as we modernise the statute books and we start to embrace all things digital. This leads to more efficient and more effective forms of governing in this state. I note the member for Malvern was quite dismissive of the bill, but those of us who have been here for a while will understand that from a legislative perspective you always need to make sure that you get those little things right and you do not trip up. That is why I think in terms of this work it is incredibly important to look at modernising and updating the statute books to reflect that.

The bill is quite wideranging, and again I disagree with the member for Malvern's characterisation. It is not a binary proposition; you need to make sure you do both, that you do the smaller things, such as the Statute Law Revision Bill or indeed the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024 that is before the house, as well as doing the big things, because the two are interlocking – they mesh together – and it is important that they are in harmony. I would also refer again to how important language is and the fact that we need to regularly make sure that we update the statute books to reflect that.

I draw the house's attention to the amendment of section 8 to refer to a website maintained by the department of the minister administering the Monetary Units Act 2004. Once upon a time you would not have had such an inference in the statute books, but it does reflect the fact that you do have these changes now. Indeed I think there will probably come a point in time when we will start to look at having, for example, not so much websites but apps. Basically we are looking increasingly at improving the user experience of people, and we will be looking at starting to have, for example, apps in future legislation.

Again – I am mindful of time, and I am running out of it – Times New Roman is such a bad font. It is so bad. I much prefer Calibri these days.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Danny PEARSON: Arial I thought was good. I am reminded of the fact that I used to quite like Arial because of Aki Kaurismäki, who is a Finnish film producer who produced *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, which is an absolute cracker of a film. The member for Point Cook will appreciate this, because Kaurismäki is a Finn, and the origins of the Finnish language actually came from the Ural Mountains, 8000 to 2000 years before the contemporary era.

Again, like language is important, these bills are important to get right. I note that the member for Malvern was quite dismissive of this bill and the Statute Law Revision Bill, but language is important

and I think this is an important step forward in relation to making sure that we reflect the times in which we are operating and we are legislating. I do commend the bill to the house.

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (11:02): Gee whiz, that was 10 minutes of our lives we will never get back.

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Jade BENHAM: This is exactly what I mean by that. While the minister speaks about his loathing for Times New Roman – and just for the record, Century Gothic is my font of choice – there are problems afoot in this state, and we are spending a day debating things like this. As the member for Malvern said in his leading contribution, there is nothing too objectionable in this bill, but it allows for wideranging debate and there are things going on in this state that should perhaps rather have been discussed and debated in this place this week.

I did want to take a short time just to talk about a few things, and one of those things is not fonts, you will be happy to know, Acting Speaker Hamer, because I did notice the Deputy Speaker was having a hard time keeping it together in the chair, which is probably fair enough. The member for Malvern during his contribution was talking about Labor's mismanagement of the pandemic, which relates to clause 23. Again for the record, clause 23 allows the Governor in Council to make regulations exempting statutory rules from the application of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 for a specified time not exceeding 12 months. This will in effect extend the application of an existing exemption from regulatory impact statement processes. That only applies to legislative instruments or statutory rules provided that the instrument or rule is responding to a public emergency, urgent public health or safety issue or damage to the environment, resources, sustainability or the economy. This relates to the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 and the Emergency Management Act 1986.

Whilst the member for Malvern was speaking earlier he made some references to small business and what the mismanagement of the pandemic did to small business. I am one of the products of that. It affected everyone in different ways, and the lockdowns of course affected people, children, everyone in different ways. But I am going to just give a little account of my recollection of that time in my small business history. I had a small business for 12 years – just. We managed to get another 12 months out of it – I would not even call it post pandemic – during the pandemic. That is ultimately what got me so fired up to get into politics, so I could get on the inside and actually make changes that might help small businesses, having been involved. My parents also run a small business. Luckily for them, they employ people, and their business is structured as such where they received assistance during the pandemic. I was a small business without a bricks-and-mortar location – which is not unusual in this age of the digital nomad – so did not employ anyone. That was part of the business plan when we wrote the business plan. Mind you, it was a five-year business plan originally and we got 12 years out of it, so that is not too bad. It was a plan to not employ people full time from a business management point of view, because we were also a business with a social conscience, understanding that we were there to assist small to medium regional and rural businesses get into the digital world – so digital consulting, social media, websites and all that kind of stuff. We did it at the lowest cost possible, so employing people simply was not an option. We would use freelancers, and the freelance market and entrepreneurship are big business now.

That business model did not serve us very well during the pandemic in setting us up for assistance. The first thing that went was bricks-and-mortar retail shops and food businesses. All of my clients did such an incredible job to pivot whilst the pandemic was happening. We were out in the regions as well, which did not have a case for many, many, many months. Then when the first one came to Shepparton I believe – and I would never hold this against the member for Shepparton –

Kim O'Keeffe interjected.

Jade BENHAM: Yes, correct. Shepparton was the most locked down regional city. We are 6 hours away in tropical north Victoria. One case in Shepparton meant we were locked down, which meant

everything. Businesses did a great job to pivot and to keep operating, but when fat needs to be cut from a business's bottom line, the first thing to go is external resources – things like marketing, digital consulting, things like that. It was tough for me. Luckily I had a husband who was an essential worker, who was growing food. Thank goodness we live on quite a vast open space. Thankfully I did not need to take my kids to a playground. We have 3.5 acres for them to ride around on, so we could still go for our runs and get outside every day, which was very, very lucky for us. I did feel very, very sorry for those inner-city children that could not go to playgrounds, because that would have been heartbreaking. So that was one positive to come out of the pandemic: I got to spend a good six months at home with my children, which I had never had before. But to have one case in regional Victoria originally and then be locked down 6 hours away in Mildura was just incredibly disappointing. We got to the point where we were almost out of it, we were allowed to run a sports carnival – one case, again, 6 hours away somewhere else, locked down. It was horrific.

When it is spoken about in this place about how small businesses did it tough through the pandemic, through the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 and through the Emergency Management Act 1986, people laugh and they mock, and it is condescending from a small business owner's point of view that only just made it through the pandemic. We were still getting tax bills. We were getting no assistance, but they still wanted their tax paid every quarter. That is tough. It is tough enough out there already, particularly for bricks-and mortar businesses – paying land tax, paying rent, all of their overheads skyrocketing, utilities. Small business in this state is so, so tough. It has not got any better since the pandemic; in fact it has potentially got worse.

In tropical north Victoria, right on the Murray River, we can see people leaving the state – real estate agents included, mind you. It is so hard for them to do business in Victoria they literally just jump over the river into New South Wales. They can still trade in Victoria. I have to drive through outback New South Wales on my way to work every single day; 45 minutes of my trip is through outback New South Wales. The development that is going on there is insane. We currently have a resort being built by Rick Kelly, one of the Kelly brothers, and his family Margaret and John – Trentham Waters Mildura. It is in New South Wales, because it was easier to start development, it was easier to get approvals and it was less tax.

To say that small business did it tough during the pandemic is an incredible understatement, but it has not got any better, it really has not. It is tough out there. So I wanted to give my perspective on small business and what these acts and what this clause mean to small business owners and just implore everyone to have a bit of a broader perspective. The member for Shepparton was also a small business owner, and her husband was a small business owner as well, and it was tough, particularly through regional Victoria, while we were trying to get on with our lives, grow food, grow fibre, all while having to conform to rules that were essentially made for the city.

This bill is not going to reopen those small businesses. It is not going to help with their land tax bill. It is not going to put food on the table of Victorians who are struggling with the cost of living. It is not going to open more hospital beds. We are taking an entire day to make technical changes to acts when in fact we could be making real change, and I said this during my contribution on the government business program earlier this week. Although there is nothing terribly confronting in this bill because it is based on technicalities, we could be working very, very hard for Victorians to actually alleviate the pressures from all angles that Victorian families are facing right now. It is just another example that Labor cannot manage money and could not manage the pandemic, and Victorian families are paying the price.

Bronwyn HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (11:12): Listening to the previous speaker talking on and mocking the bill that we are debating today really just demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the importance of such a bill as this. We are talking about a bill that provides for mechanisms to improve transparency, to improve consultation and also to improve access to information for Victorians. In addition to that, with this talk about small business, during the pandemic the Victorian Labor government, as I understand it, gave the most support out of all the states in Australia to small

businesses to help them get through the most difficult global disaster that was happening across the world and assisted as much as possible small businesses, because everybody was doing it tough. We all understand that. No matter what aspect of the community or the economy, it was a difficult time for all of us. But in saying that, it was also a time when this state Labor government provided more support than others.

I had better get back on to the actual legislation, which is the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024. This bill does contain a lot of technical and minor amendments; they do not make huge changes but they do make things work better when it comes to the mechanisms of government. I think this sort of legislation is as important as others. In saying that, I would have to say that I am proud to be a member of a Labor government that really has also introduced some of the most progressive and major change for many years in Victoria, and there is lots of evidence of that. But of course we also need to come up with nuts-and-bolts legislation and make sure that legislation and the way it interacts with Victorians and the public sector is as seamless as possible and as easy to access and understand as possible, and this is what this type of legislation does.

What has been alluded to in the past is that when we are talking about ensuring better access to information, for example, as I think we all know, changing and updating legislation is just as important to reflect the changes in times, the way people go about their business and also technology changes. For example, one of the aspects of this bill is to provide for online access to statutory rules. The government printer is currently required to ensure there are copies of rules that can be purchased from a prescribed bookshop. This bill will modernise the act so that it also provides that such statutory rules can be purchased online as well as at an approved bookshop and that the responsible minister is required to ensure that a copy of the statutory rules is available for inspection without charge. These are all important things to make sure that people are aware of their obligations and also aware of the government's obligations and how it is that they can go about providing and getting that information.

There are also changes, for example, that allow for the consolidation of the administrative arrangements order that need to be made to make sure that they are made and published, and this addresses departmental and agency feedback that it is complicated to research for information on those changes. So again, it makes it easier for people to access. The bill also makes consequential changes or amendments to the Monetary Units Act 2004, and again this is so important because it means that the annual rate that is published on the Department of Treasury and Finance website is available for people. When there is legislation around fines for breaches of law or whatever, the acts talk about a particular monetary unit or units. But that has to be converted into a dollar amount, and that is what this legislation is talking about – so people do know exactly what it means and how much it will be when they are needing to know that information.

While this bill, as we have all talked about, is not greatly exciting or interesting or anything like that, it is important because it facilitates the flow of government to make sure that we all have legislation and regulations that are as easy to use as possible and as well known as we can have them. Under the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 there are provisions to clarify the legislative instruments. Clause 3 of the bill amends the Subordinate Legislation Act to make this act clearer and to apply. So this bill regulates how this legislation is and how it is important that legislative instruments are made and scrutinised. It includes how the public is consulted in the process of making subordinate legislation, because again it is important that the public and Victorians know how they can have input or propose and improve understanding of legislative instruments. This is the sort of stuff that is not your everyday thing, so people do not necessarily know. But, again, this legislation outlines how that can be achieved and what it is, and it provides more clear definitions.

The public emergency changes – there was reference to them a while ago. Again, there are mechanical changes to that act just to ensure that it is updated and made more usable so that the way it operates is much more clear. For example, the changes in clauses 9 and 23 will assist the government when dealing with emergencies by exempting legislative instruments from the requirement to prepare a

regulatory impact statement where the instrument is responding to a public emergency. Of course a public emergency means just that – it is an emergency, action needs to be taken and work needs to be done. In order to allow that to occur in a speedy way, things such as regulatory impact statements are not required as they are in other circumstances. That means the government can then get on with the business of dealing with the flood or the fire or the drought or the state of disaster when it is declared under the Emergency Management Act 1986. Again, this is about making sure that legislation works in a proper way – a way that helps Victorians in going about their daily business and assists Victorians when emergencies and difficult issues arise so that the government can respond accordingly and people can also be made aware of what it is they need to do, what it is that it does and how things are gone about.

The administrative arrangements bill makes it easier to find information online, provides for orders to be captured in one order and consolidated so you are not looking all over the place and also makes other technical changes to the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983 to improve clarity.

In closing, the Victorian Parliament must regularly consider amendments to bills that correct ambiguities, make technical changes in existing legislation or just update the way we do things to reflect the way technology has changed the way we work and live. Keeping this legislation up to date and clear helps to facilitate the administering of Victorian laws. Revisions to legislation are required to keep up with these sorts of changes. It is very, very important that we also ensure that the legislation reflects accessibility so that all Victorians are able to access that information – in particular, for example, online rather than paper copies – because of course we all know that this is how we do business and this is how we find information in most cases, although I know it is also important to have the old ways of providing information. I know just in the Thomastown electorate, for example, we have many, many residents coming in, particularly older residents, who do not have email and do have difficulty getting online. It is also important that this legislation provides for other systems in a variety of different ways so that people have access based on their needs, the way they like to go about finding information and what is most comfortable for them. I commend this legislation to the house and look forward to further debate.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:22): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

What the government is doing in this chamber this week is an abuse of this Parliament. We saw only 10 minutes ago the Minister for Transport Infrastructure come in and spend 10 minutes joking around about whether he likes Times New Roman font. What a fool he is. But he is playing Victorians like fools because he is misusing this place. This place should be dealing with the important issues and challenges of the day, and it is appalling that we have seen day on day of abuse of this place. We have seen the minister come in and talk about his favourite font and we have seen how he looked talking about that, laughing away and giggling away with his backbench about whether he liked Times New Roman.

Yesterday we saw the government try and smash through the Lawyer X bill, only to vote against dealing with it in the other place. What an absolute disgrace. We had it rushed through this place with 1 hour to debate it and then rushed across to the other place. We know what that bill is about – that is purely a whitewash – but there are serious issues this place should be debating.

We have a crime crisis – there is absolutely a youth crime crisis. There have been appalling instances day on day. But there are also other important issues – for example, the lack of government spending in electorates. We saw the member for Kororoit – not someone you would describe as my friend, but nevertheless – raise an important petition signed by almost 5000 people in her electorate. Almost 5000 people, well over 10 per cent of her electorate, said that government expenditure in her electorate was not enough. Item 38 on the notice paper is a Labor member supporting a petition saying that the government is not spending enough in her electorate. It is unusual to hear that from a Labor member, I must say. It is usually the Liberal and National seats that the government purposefully ignores in

terms of government expenditure, but we saw with this petition a Labor member talk about the fact that 5000 people have signed a petition to say that they are not getting enough government funding.

We need to move on from the bill we are currently debating, which is why I have moved the motion to move on from the current debate, because there are important issues. An example of that important issue is the member for Kororoit's motion. I note the member is not here, but perhaps the government will provide the opportunity for a debate on the member for Kororoit's petition. Five thousand people have signed a petition to call for more government investment in her electorate. That would be an issue that would be deserving of debate in this house, not the minister talking about what font he is interested in and giggling about it like the fool he is.

Sonya Kilkenny: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I think we have listened long enough here to some of the unparliamentary language that is being used by the member.

James NEWBURY: What is your point of order?

Sonya Kilkenny: Unparliamentary language that is being used.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): I bring the Manager of Opposition Business back to the procedural debate.

James NEWBURY: Thank you, Acting Speaker, and I do appreciate the fact that you have not overruled my definition of the minister. I also refer to motion 108 on the notice paper in relation to the sessional orders and the need for the government to actually provide answers in question time. We have seen day after day after day the Premier get up and refuse to answer any question. We need to debate the issues that matter to Victorians. We must debate the issues that matter to Victorians, and that is why the coalition has moved to move on from the current debate and on to an issue that matters to Victorians.

Iwan WALTERS (Greenvale) (11:27): It is hard to know where to begin with that tissue of abuse and pearl clutching from the member for Brighton about the proper state of this chamber and parliamentary procedure. This is from the Manager of Opposition Business who orchestrated a walkout during question time from a party which this morning began the parliamentary day, at a time when there were members ready to offer a condolence motion when the family of a late member of this Parliament was here to listen, by instead engaging in a series of ad hominem attacks on members of the government without even knowing what their seats were –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is a procedural debate, which I stuck to, and I would ask that the member be brought back to the procedural motion – not what he may have done this morning, which actually is not of much interest to the chamber.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member was just getting started. The member to continue on the procedural debate.

Iwan WALTERS: I was just getting started, and I will continue. The reason I will continue is to oppose the member for Brighton's motion. I think it is important that we return to the government business program. I have been here throughout the duration of the debate on the bill currently before the house. I was here for the Melbourne for Malvern's contribution, which was a wideranging, expansive contribution, and the member for Essendon, the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, responded in kind, albeit from a slightly different perspective. But to engage in this kind of, as I said before, pearl-clutching sanctimony about the proper way in which time in this house should be spent I think is both unreasonable and inaccurate.

We have had a government business program this week which has been I think addressing some of the really significant issues that Victorians face every day. The Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) bill, for example, provides enabling legislation to a body that provides Victorians with support and services at the most vulnerable possible time of their lives – for victim-survivors of

sexual assault and for those who have died suddenly and their families, who are experiencing extraordinary grief. So to denigrate, as the member for Brighton has, the government business program and to suggest there is no merit in it I think is unreasonable, it is inaccurate and it is unfair.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is not a debate on the government business program. This is a motion that I have moved to move away from the current bill.

Iwan WALTERS: On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Brighton in his own contribution was pretty wideranging and talked about the government business program, not solely the bill currently before the house. I am merely responding in kind to his contribution.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): It is a procedural debate, except the procedural debate is also about whether we should go back to the existing government business program, so I rule the point of order out of order.

Iwan WALTERS: As I was saying, the government business program this week has a number of pieces of legislation which are very important because of their impact on the services and organisations that Victorians – as in the context of the VIFM bill – depend upon at their most vulnerable stage of life. There has been a lot of behaviour by those opposite during this parliamentary week which I think has been deeply disappointing. There have been a number of contributions which have sought to politicise the grief of Victorian families, suffering extraordinary grief –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is, for a start, an outrageous abuse, and I would say: could you please ask the member to be relevant to the motion that is being moved? He has multiple times strayed from the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): There is no point of order. As per my previous ruling, the debate is a procedural debate about whether to suspend the current debate or return to the government business program. I note that the bill that the member is referring to remains on the notice paper.

James Newbury: On a further point of order, Acting Speaker, how is it appropriate for a member to reflect on other members and for you to have ruled that in order?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): There is no point of order.

Iwan WALTERS: In the very short space of time remaining to me –

Emma Kealy: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is a very narrow procedural debate, and during a procedural debate it is not a time to attack the opposition. I ask you to bring the member back to the point.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (11:33): I rise to support the member for Brighton in his move to suspend the government business program and go to debate on issues that are on the notice paper that are important to Victorians. We all come to this place to represent our communities, to table petitions on behalf of our communities, and communities quite often ask: ‘What happens with those petitions?’ What we are saying here today is let us actually debate some of those motions that have been made an order for the next day of sitting and debate the petitions that are on the notice paper.

Let us go and debate the petition from the member for Kororoit requesting that the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to review the urgent transport needs of the residents of Mount Atkinson and Deanside and immediately start the planning and delivery of the Mount Atkinson train station, bearing nearly 5000 signatures. That is a very important issue for that particular electorate. I know that the member for Kororoit is a member of the government, so the government are not going to want to debate this issue, because they do not want to be embarrassed by the fact that they have not actually provided public transport in the west to this particular electorate. So what we are doing on behalf of the people of the west is giving an opportunity for that issue to be raised in this house and be debated. What is the other side of the house so frightened of that they will not debate this motion and

actually talk about the issues that are important to the west? The Labor government has taken the west for granted for years, and the west is starting to rise up and say, 'What about us?' So let us debate that particular –

Sonya Kilkenny: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I appreciate wideranging debate, but I would ask that you bring the member back to the procedural motion that is before the house.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): It is a procedural motion, but the Leader of the Nationals was being relevant to the notice paper. However, can I just remind all speakers that they should not anticipate debate on any matter that is within the notice paper. So you can talk generally but on the procedural debate.

Peter WALSH: I note that the Minister for Planning, who is at the table, is actually trying to gag debate about having services in the west. The westies think they have been taken for granted, and that has just reinforced the issue that they have been taken for granted.

There are other issues that are on the notice paper. The member for Gippsland East has a very important petition that he tabled about the wild dog program here in Victoria and the fact that the government is going to reduce funding to the wild dog program, which will increase the mauling and the cruelty to farm animals but also will actually damage the small marsupials that we have here in Victoria as the wild dogs breed up, because this government has the philosophical view that we cannot actually control feral animals. That is a very important petition that has been tabled by the member for Gippsland East about making sure that the wild dog program is adequately funded into the future.

The other one that is worth debating – if we had the time to speak on behalf of the community – is the one from the member for Eildon on the Mansfield hospital and the fact that she wants to make sure that the Mansfield hospital is sufficiently funded and has control of its own destiny. We have recently seen that there were over 2000 people in Mansfield – effectively the population of Mansfield – that turned out to a rally to make sure they could keep their hospital rather than have it merged or closed like the Minister for Health is proposing here in Victoria.

The last one that is absolutely critical that we would like to debate is the one from the Manager of Opposition Business about changes to sessional orders. Victorians are appalled at the fact that the Premier and ministers do not answer questions. They will not answer questions on the issues that are important to Victoria. All our hospitals in regional Victoria – yes, they are not going to be merged, but they are going to be put in a network where they are controlled by a body that is hundreds of kilometres away.

We want answers from the Premier. We want answers from the Minister for Health about what is going to happen to the health services in regional Victoria. People will have to drive further. Their health will be put at risk. They will not be able to get the appointments they need. There will be jobs lost in our community. There is a total lack of respect for the boards and the communities that have built up those health services over the years, and they are going to be told, 'You are going to be told by the government, you are going to be told by the faceless bureaucrats in Melbourne or in a major regional city, about how you are going to run your health services.' People will not get the service they need, and the health of regional Victorians will suffer.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (11:38): When the member for Brighton stood up I thought, 'Well, okay, let's see what he's going to say,' and I was listening and listening and listening, and I was trying to find a thread, a little bit of sense, a bit of a theory, a bit of something, but instead we got a bit of everything. We got youth justice, we got spending, we got wild dogs, we got some petition – we got a little bit of everything and a lot of nothing, much ado about nothing.

Emma Kealy: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I will take a little while to raise my point of order so the member for Albert Park can refer to the notice paper and look at the motions, because this is a very narrow procedural debate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): What is the point of order, member for Lowan?

Emma Kealy: I ask the member to actually speak to the procedures of today and the actual motion that is put today as to what the next order of business should be. I think I have given her now sufficient time to get her thoughts in order and perhaps look at the notice paper, and therefore maybe she can continue with her contribution.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member for Albert Park to continue on the procedural motion.

Nina TAYLOR: I appreciated the patronising comment; that was just so thoughtful! But I must say obviously those opposite did not want to hear me replay to them what they just said. I am very sorry they did not like hearing the matters they had just been discussing. That is very unfortunate. Maybe they should have thought ahead before there was this wild spray in the chamber, let alone we should actually debate proper legislation that has already been laid out very clearly through the government business program. But if you do not want me to raise the issues – I should say, members in the chamber –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I am offended on your behalf about the way the member is attacking you. I can understand and can cope with her attacks on me, but it is not fair for her to be attacking you.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member for Albert Park knows not to make comments on the Chair.

Nina TAYLOR: Absolutely. It was not my intention to in any way reflect on the Chair. I was simply saying that I found it curious that members of the opposition did not want to hear the matters they had just transacted read back to them because they found them so offensive and intolerable, and yet they feel it is so urgent that we debate them now. This is all very confusing. As I said at the outset, what they have delivered is licorice allsorts. Nothing makes sense about what they are trying to transact here. They are wasting time.

Emma Kealy: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, again, as the member for Albert Park has just said, nothing makes sense. I just want to buy a little bit more time for the member for Albert Park to sort her thoughts because she has not actually addressed the procedural motion that is before the house today. It is a very narrow procedural debate, and I ask you to –

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): There is no point of order.

Nina TAYLOR: As I said, it is extraordinarily curious that the very rationale that the opposition purport to be putting forward to justify wasting time in the chamber now – that they do not want to waste, but they are wasting, time – is exactly what they do not want to hear me enunciate in the chamber. It is curious, yes, because it is, as I say, a bit of something, a bit of this, a bit of that, but nothing to do with the legislative program that we are all here in earnest to transact on behalf of the community.

Having an orderly process in the Parliament says we are here to work, we are here to debate and we are here to do the right thing by those we represent in the community. I am sorry those opposite do not like the subject matter that they raised for this debate. It is really bizarre that they do not want to hear me reflect back to them what they had just transacted in the chamber. That is a great pity. Maybe they should have thought ahead before bringing forward those matters that they do not want transacted – but they do.

You see, the confusion is not with me, it is with the way you are presenting those matters in the chamber, because it does not make sense. There was not a thread. I was waiting, and I could probably wait hours; the thread will never come because they had not thought this through. They just said, ‘Quick, quick, how are we going to interrupt debate? Think of something. Wild dogs – that’s it. That’s

a winner. Go with that. Youth justice' – the only problem is the Youth Justice Bill 2024 has gone to the upper house. But he is trying to get it back. So it is a bit of something, a bit of everything. You had a go. It did not land terribly well; it did not make a lot of sense.

I suggest we come back to the government business program and do what we as representatives are here to do, and that is to transact business in an orderly manner to have the opportunity to debate matters before us and ensure that we can deliver what we have promised to do this week as part of the government business program.

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (11:43): I agree with the member for Brighton that we should suspend the business program today, because quite frankly there are more important things to talk about. We have a lot of speakers still to speak on the budget take-note motion before the house. We have still got speakers waiting there. The point the member for Brighton made is that the member for Kororoit has put forward a petition with nearly 5000 signatures for the Mount Atkinson train station. She is obviously passionate about her electorate and understands that the lack of government spending on infrastructure actually needs debate in this house.

Members interjecting.

Wayne FARNHAM: Well, the passion is there, and if the passion is there, it should be debated. There are a lot of petitions on this paper.

I think the real reason why we have got Labor backbenchers putting forward petitions at the moment is because they are very, very nervous. The recent polls will tell them that a few of them are going to lose their seats, and they are not happy about it. They want their communities to know that they are still fighting for them although the government has forgotten about them, and that is the point of this petition. At the moment we have a very, very nervous bunch of backbenchers, and they know, because all the government's eggs are in one basket on the Suburban Rail Loop, that they need to make a noise somewhere else so their community thinks they care and so their community thinks the government actually cares about them. That is why this petition is on the notice paper, because there are backbenchers over there now that are getting extremely nervous about whether they are going to be here after 2026.

There are a lot of motions on this paper, but the member for Kororoit's petition is about infrastructure and the lack of government spending on infrastructure, like the Bunyip–Longwarry duplication, which was \$380 million over budget, which this government has failed to deliver because of a report that does not exist.

Dylan Wight: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I love the bloke, and I know it has been a wideranging debate, but we are well into issues that are off the notice paper or not on the notice paper and we are far away from debating the procedural motion. I would ask you to bring the member back to the procedural motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member should note that it is on a procedural motion. Any anticipation of debate should be avoided.

Wayne FARNHAM: I am more than happy to come back to it. Let us talk about what is on the notice paper. Item 6, a petition for the Neerim District Rural Primary School, is on the notice paper. This school was threatened with closure. The community got behind it and have got the numbers now to keep that school open, but do you think I can get an answer from the minister about the next step for that community? No, no answer. I have requested meetings and I have sent emails. The community of Neerim district deserve to know whether their school will be reopened in 2025, as promised by the department if they got 12 students. So let us debate that. Let us get the people of Neerim district their school back. That is what they want.

The reason we should move on is because we do not oppose this bill. Why do we continue to debate bills for hours and hours that we do not oppose? There are so many more important things on the

notice paper. I can go to the next item, item 24 on the notice paper: police resources at Trafalgar police station, a petition put forward for a 24-hour police station because they do not have one. They do not have adequate police resources, and that is what we should be spending time debating.

I think the problem is now the Victorian people have woken up. This is why government backbenchers are putting up petitions, because the Victorian public have woken up to this government and their lack of infrastructure. They said and they stated, 'We can have it all,' but the Victorian people are now figuring out we cannot have it all. Our debt is out of control.

There are more important issues on this notice paper than debating a bill that we do not oppose. Let us move on to something more substantial. Let us move on to something that the people of Victoria actually care about, because the bill before us at the moment is not that riveting – and I apologise to the staff, but it is not. Let us move on to something so that Victorian people can have their voices heard.

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (11:48): I imagine that they read the notice paper very carefully before they sought to adjourn debate, because do you remember last time when we let them and we went straight to the nuclear motion? I am sure they read that very carefully.

I am so glad to see how shocked and confused they are by a member of our government representing her electorate. They are confused. Why would an MP go out, listen to the concerns of their electorate and then seek to represent them in Parliament? They are shocked and confused. They do not understand how it works. They have got a bit of confusion that needs to be cleared up, and I am sure after they referred this morning to the 'member for calico' that they have all had lessons today on this procedure. They have all had to sit down and practise saying 'Kororoit', don't you think? There are all these places they have never been to and do not even know how to say, and meanwhile our fantastic member for Kororoit and member for Kalkallo are showing them how to represent people in this Parliament.

We know last sitting week they were the party that walked, and this sitting week they are the party that waste time. What a bunch of posers. This is the extent to which they do not know how to represent their electorates: they do not understand you have to be in the chamber. You have to be in here if you want to represent your electorate. I have got the Benny Hill music ready to play if they walk out again. All government MPs are here –

Wayne Farnham: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, it is a tight procedural motion. I do not see how Benny Hill music is relevant to this motion, and I would ask you to bring the member back to the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member to continue on the procedural debate.

Lauren KATHAGE: One of the arguments they are putting for why they want to adjourn debate is that they feel that there are other things that we could be talking about. But the party of posers, the Hawthorn players, this morning –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on relevance, I would ask you to bring the member to the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member for Yan Yean to continue on the procedural motion.

Lauren KATHAGE: I am talking about them wasting time through this motion and how they do not know how to represent their people. We saw this morning the member for Eildon get up as part of their big stunt – which took how long; it took how much of Parliament's time this morning? – not knowing how to represent her people, because she stood up and sought to condemn me for a fully funded project which I look forward to delivering for my community. So not only are they wasting

time, but if she was really seeking to represent the people in the Parliament, wouldn't she have spoken to me about the project? No, because they are not interested in people, they are interested in opposing.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I can understand that the member has thin skin, but that is not the subject of this debate. I would, on relevance, ask you to bring her back to the motion. This is not an opportunity to expose a glass jaw.

Paul Edbrooke: On the point of order, Acting Speaker, under standing order 110: irrelevant and tedious interruptions to debate from the member for Brighton.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member for Yan Yean to continue.

Lauren KATHAGE: They were speaking of the member for Kororoit's petition, which is a genuine petition for her people, and that stands in stark contrast to the fake petition that we saw in the upper house. I was privileged to see the leader of that house speak to that motion. The Liberals had gathered all of their esteemed religious leaders there, and our member stood up and explained that the petition was fake, was about something that was not happening. And all the stacked blue Evan Mulholland bags that he brought in to hand out to everyone that came to listen – they went away carrying the truth in that bag. And that truth is that they are fake, they are posers –

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, that is not the correct parliamentary title to use for a member of the other place.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): There is no point of order.

Lauren KATHAGE: I look forward to speaking on the bill on the agenda.

Sam Groth: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the member for Sandringham raised that that is not the correct way to address members in the other place, and I would ask you to bring the member for Yan Yean back to addressing members by their correct title.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): The member's time has expired.

Assembly divided on James Newbury's motion:

Ayes (25): Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Tim McCurdy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, John Pesutto, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells, Nicole Werner, Jess Wilson

Noes (51): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Vicki Ward, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

Motion defeated.

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (11:59): I am more than happy to return to the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024, and I apologise in advance, Speaker, that you have to sit through 10 minutes of this. I am apologising because you are actually filling in for me in the chair, so I do appreciate that.

The SPEAKER: I hope it's a good one, member for Narracan.

Wayne FARNHAM: It will be a ripper. I would like everyone to hang around and listen to this, because it is going to be riveting! The purpose of the bill is to make miscellaneous amendments to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 (SLA), the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983 (AAA) – stop walking out, everyone; this is going to be good – and the Monetary Units Act 1994. There is a default commencement date of 1 March, except for clause 17, which has a default commencement date of 18 June. It makes minor and technical changes to improve the clarity and operation of the SLA and AAA.

The bill makes a number of minor and/or technical changes to the SLA, including clarifying that a local law is not a statutory rule for the purpose of the SLA, allowing the minister to consult with impacted public sector body heads when preparing statutory rules and legislative instruments requiring consultation, requiring the government printer to ensure that physical copies of statutory rules can be purchased online and allowing the Governor in Council to make regulations exempting statutory rules from the application of the SLA for a specified time not exceeding 12 months. This will in effect extend the application of an existing exemption from the regulatory impact statement process that applies to legislative instruments and statutory rules, providing the instrument or the rule is responding to a public emergency, an urgent public health and safety issue or damage to the environment, resource sustainability or the economy. There is an example in clause 23:

Regulations might be made which exempt a specific class of statutory rule from the application of this Act during a state of disaster declared under the **Emergency Management Act 1986**, a pandemic declaration under the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008** or a national emergency under the **National Emergency Declaration Act 2020** of the Commonwealth.

This is the point where we get to what Victoria recently went through in the COVID era and the rules that Victorians had to abide by from this government and what the police had to try and police for the Victorian government. We are talking about a period in Victoria's history when we saw the longest lockdowns anywhere in the world. Victoria was the state that was locked down the most. We had the longest lockdowns, and quite frankly it was a total debacle for the people of the state of Victoria. It was an absolute debacle. The rules changed constantly. People did not know what was going on. I remember at one stage hospitality businesses got literally 24 hours notice and were told, 'You will be shut tomorrow.'

Members interjecting.

Wayne FARNHAM: They did. And those hospitality businesses had to throw out tens of thousands of dollars worth of stock. It was absolutely heartbreaking what these businesses had to go through. I think part of the problem with that point in time that Victoria had to go through was we heard the Premier of the day get up day after day – I think it was 100 days in a row – and say, 'On medical advice, we advise this.' Obviously I was not in the Parliament then, but I do remember questions from the opposition consistently asking the Premier of the day, 'Will you release the medical advice?' I do not think it ever got released.

The rules around it were ridiculous. The member for Malvern brought this up earlier: who can forget the shutting down of playgrounds? You are locked up for 23 hours a day, you get an hour's exercise to get the kids outside, and they have locked playgrounds down. The part of COVID where the Victorian public got really angry was just the nonsensical stuff that people had to do. You could not play on a playground but you could go to a brothel. I do not know how you socially distance at a brothel; I have no idea.

A member interjected.

Wayne FARNHAM: A different playground, yes. But it does not make sense. You could not play golf. It was amazing to me. I was a captain of the golf club at the time at the Warragul Country Club and the local members were very, very upset. One thing that got brought up to me was, 'How come we can't play golf but we can go to Bunnings?' It did not make sense, because I can tell you now, there are not too many golfers that can hit a ball within 1.5 metres of each other when they have to

socially distance from each other. It was an absolute abuse by this government, and I felt very sorry for Victoria Police. Victoria Police had to enforce laws and rules that they were not comfortable with.

The one thing that really sticks in my mind from this period was the poor pregnant woman that got dragged out of her home and arrested for putting up a social media post. Now, to me that was –

Juliana Addison: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I am scratching my head to understand what he is talking about and how this is relevant to the bill that is before the house. I normally speak Narracan, but not today. I do not comprehend –

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Wendouree, that is not the way to raise a point of order. I ask you to come back to the bill, member for Narracan.

Wayne FARNHAM: I will come back to the bill. At the end of the day, on our side of the chamber we do not oppose this bill. The bill is put forward for very good reasons by the government. Our Shadow Attorney-General in his half-hour contribution today did a fairly comprehensive review of the bill, and obviously in his contribution he delivered his thoughts and outcomes. I respect the member for Malvern's work that he has done on this, and no, we do not oppose the bill. I will leave it there.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (12:07): Granted this may not be a bill that necessarily drives deep and profound emotions in the acute moment, nevertheless we cannot resile from the fact that regulations impact all of our lives every single day. When you actually drill down to the regulations that we are referring to more broadly – because of course this is the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024 – there is no question that the elements that we are debating here, or the thread, underpin some of the very necessary democratic processes in our state. So whilst it might not be providing the excitement machine for those opposite – I do not know, maybe they thought every day in Parliament would be a thrill – we are here to work, and sometimes we just have to knuckle down and evaluate and debate and make sure that we process legislation appropriately, because of the ultimate impact it will have on the Victorian community. Fundamentally, if we get to the core of this, what is this about? What does it actually mean for the Victorian community? The bill will make government decisions more transparent – I say that broadly, but I do not think anyone should resile from the fact that that is an important element when we are looking at legislation – and it will make it easier for the community to find information online. Accessibility for community for matters such as we are referring to in this moment surely is not a negative. I would say, on the contrary, this is important and to the benefit of the broader community.

The bill will also improve the operation and clarity around the making of subordinate legislation such as regulations, which I have already referred to, and legislative instruments, and so it is important even if those opposite do not see the value. I would say that regulatory elements are important in our state, amongst the many bills that we have to transact here – not always exciting but otherwise definitely impactful when it comes to what they mean for the community more broadly.

Basically, one of the main things the bill does is amend the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 to make this act clearer to apply. I want to drill down, and this is actually in clause 3 of the bill. If I cut to the chase, correctly characterising instruments as being of legislative character or of purely administrative character is central to the Subordinate Legislation Act operating as intended, because instruments that are of a purely administrative character are exempt from the requirements of the Subordinate Legislation Act. So why does this matter? This is important because if the definition of 'legislative instrument' is incorrectly applied, an instrument may be disallowed by Parliament or could be held by a court to be invalid. Therefore not only are you creating a whole series of processes that are arguably, one could say, wasting time but for the significance of the particular matter that is being transacted they may very well need or warrant a court process. It would seem to make good sense therefore to actually provide that clarity through this instrument so that we can mitigate the risk of an instrument being disallowed by Parliament or being held by a court to be invalid. I hope that the opposition will respect that that surely does have some merit, and hence there is a purpose to actually debating this

legislation today. While there are longstanding guidelines – and I make the emphasis on that word – to assist with this process, it can still be tricky, and this bill will give crucial guidance. I hope that that lends something to the merits of the debate that we are having today.

Another change in the bill is to provide for departmental consultation processes to occur in the development of subordinate legislation. When we are looking at the issue of transparency, this is really being very up-front about the processes that occur. This is in clauses 6 and 12. Currently the Subordinate Legislation Act provides that consultation occurs between ministers, whereas the bill will reflect the reality that it occurs between departmental offices. Again, is this an exciting fact or otherwise? Well, that is a moot point. But it is certainly about being very up-front about how matters actually are transacted, and hence when we are looking at democracy and supporting the processes that ultimately lead to regulations being made and the way that they impact our community there is some strength to these arguments.

On public emergency changes in the bill and exemption grounds for statutory rules, there are two important changes in clauses 9 and 23 of the bill which will assist the government when dealing with emergencies by permitting statutory rules to be extended during emergencies and excluding statutory rules and legislative instruments from the Subordinate Legislation Act – for example, to prevent the automatic revocation of such rules and instruments during an emergency. Turning to the first of these changes, I will explain a little further on this matter. Legislative instruments can be exempt from the requirement to prepare a regulatory impact statement where the instrument is responding to a public emergency, urgent public health or safety issue or damage to the environment, resource sustainability or the economy. No-one is resiling from shedding light on exactly the kind of scenarios that this legislation here is anticipating.

Of course a pandemic is horribly inconvenient – funny about that. Nobody wants a pandemic. Why would anyone want one? Nobody would wish that on anyone. Unfortunately they do occur. I have to say some of the speeches I heard from those opposite I think conspiracy theorists would have really enjoyed. They would have got a lot out of these debates here. That is something to just park there for this moment in time. It is funny, I remember during that time – in an authorised period I should say, just to be very clear about that – the upper house had a trip to Bright. We had a sitting up there. I did a visit to a local farm where they produced pumpkin seeds, and I think they had received a Victorian government grant to support the business. I remember that one of the owners formerly used to work in big pharma. As a result of that he said he planned ahead for the pandemic because, working in pharmaceuticals, they know, not unlike insurers et cetera, that from time to time there are global incidents that can gravely impact the health of human beings. So he actually anticipated that because of his experience in the pharmaceutical industry. Albeit pandemics are inconvenient.

I do find extraordinary the number of public health experts on the opposition team – oh, that is right, they do not have public health experts. They certainly speak as though they are, and I do find that curious. I am just going to leave that there.

The core elements of this bill are sound: on the one hand transparency, and on the other hand anticipating that human beings actually are vulnerable and that there are moments in time against all the best wishes and all the best attempts of all of us when we can fall horribly ill, so it is always good to know that there is a wonderful healthcare system in this state and wonderful people who are looking out for our best interests. I remember in Italy there were people who were fighting to get respirators in that early part. There were thousands dying day after day. I remember seeing coffins on the street in New York and whole buildings of people dying because of course not everyone was an expert in the pandemic, funnily enough – although there are some public health experts over there, or they purport to be. It was a very traumatic and tragic period in history. I also remember a federal Liberal government that delayed providing vaccines.

When we look at these issues we should look at them with a holistic regard instead of just diminishing it to ‘Oh, my hip pocket’ and other things. There are broader issues. The pandemic did impact everyone

in a devastating way; hence it is very necessary that we have legislation that anticipates the vicissitudes of human experience. This is why there is merit in debating this legislation here today and why there are these very nuanced and important changes that have to be properly transacted in a very open and up-front way.

Kim O'KEEFFE (Shepparton) (12:16): Today I rise to stand and make a contribution on the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024. As we have mentioned in the chamber, this is a fairly straightforward bill and perhaps it could have been done in a more timely manner to get this through the chamber. I do note the member for Albert Park also acknowledged clause 23, which is an important part of the bill in discussion today when it comes to declarations of the states of emergency that we have all experienced over a period of time. It would be good if you stayed in the chamber, member for Albert Park. I have got some really important contributions that you might be interested in, but that is okay.

The reforms listed in the bill, coming back to the bill, are all minor and technical in nature, as I have mentioned, and address issues identified by the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well as other government departments in the administration to improve the operation and clarity of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 (SL act) and the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983.

Clause 1 sets out the purposes of the bill, which are to make miscellaneous amendments to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994, to consequentially amend the Monetary Units Act 2004 and to make miscellaneous amendments to the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983. The Subordinate Legislation Act requires that the minister must in the preparation of statutory rules and legislative instruments and, when the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 guidelines require consultation, ensure that consultation occurs with any other minister whose area of responsibility may be affected by the proposed statutory rule or legislative instrument. In addition, the bill provides that the responsible minister may consult with any relevant sector body head whose area of responsibility may be affected by a proposed statutory rule. This is intended to give the responsible minister a broad discretion to consult with public service bodies, public entities and special bodies as relevant.

It is interesting to see that the bill does provide that a failure to undertake this consultation will not affect the operation of the statutory rule or legislative instrument. Public consultation under this government and its ministers has been significantly lacking, and time and time again communities are left out. It is definitely an area in this place that must be done better. Time and time again we see a lack of public consultation, leaving the voices of those that are often best informed and with lived experiences not having the opportunity to contribute.

The recent shock announcement of the closure of the Dhurringile Prison is a prime example. Just over a month ago a media release was put out by the Minister for Corrections in the other place announcing that Dhurringile Prison, which has a significant impact on my electorate and the member for Euroa's electorate, will be shut down. The staff were notified 90 minutes before the media release. It is appalling this announcement was handled the way it has been handled. There has been no consultation or insight into the lead-up to this announcement, which also significantly impacts local businesses who provide goods and services. Last week the member for Euroa and I held a community meeting, and many attendees called on the government to show interest in their communities and show up and actually engage with the people that this is affecting. The question for many attending was: why was there no consultation to prepare and to assist those who have been so severely impacted?

Some other amendments noted in the bill: clause 3(2) amends the existing definition of 'statutory rule' by inserting 'or a local law made under division 3 of part 3 of the Local Government Act 2020' after 'or locality' to clarify that such local laws are now statutory rules for the purpose of the SL act. This amendment is intended to remove any doubt about municipal councils being subject to the SL act when making local laws.

Clause 7 substitutes for 'Department of Justice' the 'Department of the Minister administering the Infringements Act 2006'. This change is intended to ensure that the department responsible for administering the Infringements Act 2006 is consulted about a proposed statutory rule, which provides for the enforcement by an infringement notice.

Clause 9(2)(a) replaces a reference to 'the annual rate approved by the Treasurer in relation to the state budget' with a reference to 'the annual rate fixed by the Treasurer in accordance with section 5 of the Monetary Units Act 2024'.

When it comes to the budget there are many changes that this side of the house would like to see. Wouldn't it be great if we could put in place that this government address their financial mismanagement and cost blowouts, actually acknowledging that Victorians are in a cost-of-living crisis, and prioritise health, housing, education and much-needed services and infrastructure instead of blowing billions of dollars on the Suburban Rail Loop and the debacle with the CFMEU, which has run rampant on taxpayer-funded construction projects.

Clause 26 makes consequential amendment to the Monetary Units Act 2004 by inserting new section 5(8) to provide that the Treasurer must ensure that the annual rate 'as soon as practicable after it is fixed' is published on a website maintained by the department for the minister administering the Monetary Units Act 2004.

Clause 29, which inserts new sections 8, 9 and 10, provides that:

The Secretary may prepare a document that consists of an Order made under section 3, as amended from time to time.

I note that the intention of these new sections is to ensure that the public can more easily access resources to inform themselves of the current or past responsibility for legislation and administrative arrangements.

Another significant element of the bill is public emergency exemption. Currently under the act legislative instruments can be exempt from regulatory impact statement processes where the instrument is responding to a public emergency, urgent public health or safety issue, or damage to the environment, resource sustainability or the economy. The bill will extend these emergency exemptions grounds to apply to statutory rules that have not already been extended under section 9 of the Subordinate Legislation Act.

Whilst we are talking about public emergency, urgent public health and the economy, the pandemic was a debacle here in the state of Victoria. We were the most locked-down state, and in fact Shepparton was the most locked down regional city. At one point we had 20,000 people in isolation – this is a third of our city. Supermarket click and collect went down and we were running out of food. I was the mayor at the time, and it was a crisis like I had never seen before. And do you know what happened? The community took it into their own hands, setting up food relief stations and a convoy of people using their own vehicles to get food and medical supplies to the people. We could not depend on this government at a time when we needed them most.

And of course who could forget the debacle with the hotel quarantine – or the lockdown of playgrounds, which was appalling. They could not leave the house, and keep in mind some people do not have yards. They were locked up in apartments with no outlet – literally locked up in their homes. My daughter was living in an apartment in Melbourne with her partner at the time, locked up with no connections, no yard or outlet and not able to leave Melbourne for months. I saw firsthand the impact on her mental health and the choices made during that time that still impact her today. Then there are those who were unable to go to loved ones' funerals, restricted numbers at weddings and the list goes on.

We know the impact of the pandemic is still ongoing, and we know that many businesses did not survive. We know the impact on people's mental health and that many children are still struggling to

get back into the classroom. My niece, a year 7 student, was homeschooled for months following the pandemic. In fact she did not really get to experience her first year at high school, in what should have been an exciting time. She still struggles and is in need of mental health support.

One thing that definitely came out of the pandemic is that regional communities were there for each other, and we see it time and time again. The floods are another example where this government let our communities down. Last sitting week the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee handed down its final report of its inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria. In the committee's final report it exposed and highlighted the government's failure to plan and respond to flood emergencies. The report contained 90 findings and 73 recommendations, from which the Allan Labor government has many lessons to learn with respect to flood preparedness, flood warnings, emergency response and recovery. It is vital that the government –

Ros Spence: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on relevance, I have been listening to the member for quite a while, and I think she has strayed very far from the bill. I would ask you to bring her back.

Emma Kealy: On the point of order, Acting Speaker, the member is directly referencing clause 23 regarding emergency management.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): There is no point of order. The member is being relevant, and the member can continue.

Kim O'KEEFFE: In particular recommendation 45 of the committee's report recommends that the Victorian government improves the flood warning systems so that warnings are accurate and that the most up-to-date information is delivered in a timely way, clear and easily understood; and makes sure that relevant formats are in place. A number of Goulburn River towns, including Shepparton, Mooroopna and Toolamba, which are all communities in my electorate of Shepparton district, did not receive VicEmergency alerts for the peak flooding weekend of the 2022 floods. Every Victorian should know that the VicEmergency app can give them the information that they need about whatever is going on, and it should be accurate, reliable and up to date. It is clear from the committee's inquiry and final report that this was not the case.

The committee held a public hearing in Mooroopna. It is critical that those that are directly impacted are heard. The floods highlighted the extreme need for the Shepparton bypass causeway between Shepparton and Mooroopna, which was completely shut down during the floods and caused a complete disconnect of the two towns. This was an example of emergency services being directly impacted, and the management was a major concern raised in the flood inquiry. I will finish it there.

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (12:26): I am so pleased to stand here this afternoon and speak on the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024, because sometimes it is the smallest changes that are the most impactful. Indeed I was just sitting here wondering how many speakers those opposite would have on their list, and I thought, 'Well, this is a bill that probably doesn't sound as exciting to some people.' But jeez, I have not seen that many of them make a contribution to a bill in some time, so this one really must be meaningful to those opposite. But I am standing here to speak on this bill today because I love speaking on these sorts of small but really important changes that we make to legislation in this state.

As someone who spent many years in their career trawling through some really intense legislation – the National Electricity Rules, in fact, which is a really, really solid piece of legislation and many pages in volume – it was these kinds of smaller nuances that from time to time I would come across and make a note of so that the next time the federal government, in that case, was making a legislative change I could try and make a submission and whack these in. So I thank people that have picked these things up and worked hard to make sure that they are here in this bill before the house this afternoon.

This bill is yet another one of those really technical amendment bills which make small legislative tinkering just here and there. The changes nevertheless are important. They are about process and administration. What this bill does make is changes to the way in which subordinate legislation works – in particular, regulations that impact our day-to-day lives. Things like road safety, building regulations, even food safety, are subject to subordinate legislation. Changes to these do not come through bills like this one, and we normally do not debate regulatory changes. A lot of them are here in the Parliament but they are tabled and we approve them. But the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – and I will call it the SL act – we are amending today is the main act that governs how these regulations and other legislative instruments are made and are scrutinised.

The changes in this bill are not too drastic, but the main purpose of them is to ensure that our departments, who interact with these pieces of legislation on a regular basis, can work as smoothly as possible. I am going to give you an example of this: the bill is going to provide some assistance to interpretation of legislative – I love this, because I spent so many years looking at things like this in my role, particularly at Energex in Queensland many years ago – and administrative characteristics, which will assist public servants whose role includes interpreting this SL act and working out if it applies to particular subordinate instruments.

This is an important distinction because what this does is it tells us whether or not those regulations are subordinate to the SL act, because under the current legislation, instruments that have a purely administrative character are exempt from the act's requirements. This change has come about because what we know from feedback brought to us by departments which exercise this legislation is that there are significant grey areas where they could benefit from more precise guidance, which means that this act could be clearer to apply.

I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall during those conversations, because I can only assume that those public servants would have been so passionate about getting them here before the house to finally change. If any of them are listening, I will say on behalf of this side of the house that this one is for you guys, and we are very pleased today to be debating it here in this chamber.

Getting changes through to make an act clearer to apply is not always an easy thing to do. In my experience, in the energy sector it could take many years to get changes before Parliament to change legislation that then filtered down to what I was working on, which was compliance with energy networks in relation to the National Electricity Rules. It could take a lot; a lot of work was put into it. Here before us there are longstanding guidelines that the department use to help them with this, but what this bill will do is give them a bit of extra guidance, because extra guidance is always an important thing. It will help identify instruments that are of a legislative character if they include things like offences, regulations that set out mandatory requirements to take actions or refrain from actions, importantly, that apply to the public at large or a large class of people, or regulations that include penalties or other sanctions for noncompliance. If a regulation or other legislative instrument has these features – such as road safety regs that, for example, may impose a fine – these are less likely to be legislative in character and therefore fall under the Subordinate Legislation Act.

In addition to this, the bill also aims to improve the way that consultation takes place on the making and development of subordinate legislation, and there has been just a little bit of discussion from those opposite around consultation here in Victoria undertaken by our government. I do reject the premise that consultation is not undertaken correctly or in good faith. There is so much consultation that goes into bringing legislation and reforms before this house in the lead-up to introducing bills for us to debate. The consultation that I think they probably dislike most is that we are not spending hours and hours and hours consulting with them on matters that we are trying to push forward in the interest of all Victorians in this place.

But back to the bill: we just talked about how the bill aims to improve the way that consultation takes place on the making and development of subordinate legislation. Currently, whilst the legislation states that consultation takes place between ministers, this does not actually reflect the reality that a lot of

these discussions that take place – and they are really important discussions – take place between departmental offices. As such, the bill amends this requirement to now allow for consultation to take place between public sector body heads. This does not really change anything, but it is an important reflection of how these arrangements work in practice and it puts it expressly on the books, which is always a really important thing.

One of the more interesting parts of this bill, which I found surprisingly informative – I did not know it – is that there is currently a legislative requirement that physical copies of statutory rules must be printed and must be supplied by the government printer for purchase from a prescribed bookshop. The first thing I thought was, ‘Well, what bookshop is that, and where is that located, so I can bolt down there and get a copy?’ If anyone is listening is actually wondering, the prescribed bookshop is TIMG bookshop, which is located all the way at the other end of Bourke Street. If you have got nothing to do after Parliament finishes this afternoon, you could pop on down there and actually see what they have on the shelves.

Further to this, the legislation requires that the minister make available a copy of the statutory rules, a physical copy related to their portfolios for inspection by the public. The public come in and they are looking to see what this is, and they make it available for the public for free at their department office or other office specified in the *Government Gazette*. What this bill does is improve requirements – I think it kind of gets with the times – for there to be online access to the statutory rules. While this may seem insignificant, if the rules cannot be accessed, inspected or acquired by the public, then if someone commits an offence under those rules they will have a complete defence and will not be able to be penalised. That is something I did not realise, and I thought that was a really interesting nuance. So next time you are down the other end of Bourke Street or doing anything down that end of the city, you might see that bookshop and you will know that it has a very special place in the heart of Victorian legislation, and you can understand why.

In summing up in the next 15 seconds, this is another really important bill before our house. They are small changes, but they are meaningful. If nothing else, we will be saving paper with people being able to access these rules online. I commend it to the house.

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (12:36): Acting Speaker Farnham, I rise to speak on the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024, and who would have thought a couple of tradies like us would be talking on such legislation here in the chamber. As the member for Laverton articulated then, it is necessary that we do clean up and streamline a few bits and pieces that are in this bill. Of course, as she was just saying before, it stops the need for so much paper. Well, that is a perfect thing to happen because the white paper industry was ripped out of my area down in the Latrobe Valley, so we cannot actually use Australian-made white paper anymore. We have got to have imported white paper, which does get stuck in the printers as it goes through every now and again. I am wondering, the bookshop that is down the end of Bourke Street, if one day you and I may make our way down there. But in all seriousness, we do need to move through and do our work and do our homework on these bills and amendments that come through. We will do our best.

I would like to thank the member for Malvern – he has had a massive week this week in the chamber talking on a lot of bills – for being the lead speaker and helping us out with our research as well as we move through. In saying that, the purpose of this bill is to make miscellaneous amendments to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 (SL act), the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983 and consequently the Monetary Units Act 1994. There is a default commencement date of 1 March 2025, except for clause 17, which has a default commencement date of 18 June 2025. I could not find out why it was not the day before, on the 17th, but so it says here, it is 18 June 2025.

Clause 23, which a few of us on this side and on the other side have spoken about, inserts a new paragraph into section 28(1) of the SL act to provide that the Governor in Council can make regulations exempting statutory rules or legislative instruments from the application of all or any provisions of the

SL act for a specified time not exceeding 12 months. The example in this section reinforces that the Governor in Council might make regulations to maintain the status quo of regulations which would otherwise expire due to the operation of section 5 during a period of a state of disaster or national emergency, of which we have had a few of late.

This will allow a government to deal with the emergency and then return to complete the remake of the statutory rule that would have otherwise expired. They did give an example in the bill briefing: regulations might be made which exempt a specific class of statutory rules from the application of this act during a state of disaster declared under the Emergency Management Act 1986, a pandemic declaration under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 or a national emergency under the National Emergency Declaration Act 2020.

I just want to concentrate on this clause for a little bit and take us back a few years, not to the pandemic, as others might think I might do, but to the floods that we had in Traralgon back in 2021 and how still to this day we have ongoing issues with trying to get things repaired and fixed down there. In June 2021 the flood went through Traralgon and the emergency management plan was put in place, but it was put in place a little bit too late for the residents of Traralgon around the CBD and also the ones that live along the Traralgon Creek. Further to that, there have been investigations and reports were tabled in 2022 underlining the faults and mishaps that took place. People with houses that were flooded were trying to access clean-up and also insurance to actually fix the houses. Those houses, two years on, are still being worked on to make sure that they are livable again.

I just want to touch on the Traralgon Football Netball Club. Since the 2021 floods they have been without a home, without workable rooms for both the football and the netball people and also the female football side of it. The entire Traralgon Recreation Reserve was devastated when the water came through. The Traralgon Men's Shed is a wonderful organisation. They are currently still in the existing building that was flooded. All their tools and all their hard work back in 2021 was ruined. A lot of the machinery that they did have was from fundraising and people donating goods. At the moment they are still after a new venue to be put into.

We want to make sure that when we do have these emergencies we act on them very, very quickly. We do need to have rules in place that take over existing rules so if we have an emergency these rules can run concurrently until the emergency is over.

It was funny – or not funny – for the emergency services that went into the three-storey building that looks over the Traralgon CBD. They actually parked their cars across the road at a new venue in an underground car park. There were live feeds going around of this flood disaster that we had in Traralgon, and all you could see was the underground car park filling up and their cars floating. They could nearly see this live as it was actually happening. We need to make sure that when we do have these events we do have procedures in place that can override whatever else is happening at the time to make sure the work is done.

I touched on before how Emergency Management Victoria had released a report into its handling of the storms in June 2021 that flooded parts of the Traralgon community and left thousands without power. Almost a third of the residents surveyed in this report did not receive a warning call. Normally when a flood would come through, I think there are stages. It used to go to the council, and they would ring up the residents in that area, but there was no prior warning. I think the first phone calls that people started getting were when they were actually knee-deep in water in their houses. So to be able to circumnavigate this and make sure these procedures are in place is a good thing, and I hope we can do that into the future.

Also, just touching briefly on this, we have talked about the pandemic and the public health system, which also come under clause 23. Of course we all know of the devastation for people who were locked down to try and keep them safe. As a small business operator running a plumbing business down in Traralgon and the Latrobe Valley, we were working in aged care facilities, so we were

classified as emergency services to actually go in and make sure that the day-to-day running of those places went on. I remember, when we were allowed to go out into the supermarkets, the panic on people's faces when they were not able to find any toilet paper on the shelves in regional country towns, and this was right across the state at the time. People were made to feel helpless because they were locked down, there were food shortages in the supermarkets and the supermarkets were diligently trying to make sure that there was enough for everybody. The lockdown of the playgrounds was a big one for young mums and dads with their families. So we need to make sure when we actually have all these things happening that clause 23 is invoked and we can have special rules that are put in place that make sure we run as we should and give the people of Victoria the confidence that these things are in place.

As noted by the member for Malvern, we do not oppose the regulations and things that need to be done in this bill. Once again I do thank the member for Malvern for all his help with being able to stand and talk about this today.

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (12:46): I am pleased to rise and speak in support of the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024. There are a couple of things that I would like to focus on in my contribution today. The first of those is around government responses in emergencies, which is a theme that has been dwelt on by most speakers so far during our discussion of this bill. What this bill does is make sure that during an emergency the appropriate legislative instruments and administrative arrangements are appropriately maintained or initiated so that the time that is needed for focusing purely on the emergency response is devoted and is available. That is really emblematic of this government, which has provided such strong support to communities during times of emergency. In fact just yesterday we heard in the south library from local government representatives, and there was a comment about the excellent coordination between this government and local councils during what have been a really tough few years for Victoria with floods, fire, landslips and the like. I commend all parties for working together so well during those times.

It reminds me of some of the great work that the fantastic Minister for Local Government has done in making sure that funds are made available really quickly to councils so they can get on with the immediate work of cleaning up and responding. We know that the Council Support Fund, a further \$8 million, was recently provided for relief and recovery efforts. And not only do we have those immediate responses, but we know that recovering from an emergency is a multistage and long process. As a member that represents areas affected by Black Saturday, indeed it is a decades-long process for people to heal after such an event.

We take emergencies really seriously. We know that in the 2024–25 Victorian budget there has been really strong support for our emergency services. For the CFA we have had funding for 15 primary response urban pumper appliances to be replaced. They are for domestic structural fires but have important breathing apparatus as well. In the area that I represent, grassfires are one of the key risks, through greenfields to new estates, so when an emergency like that occurs, facilities like this are really important. There are also the new aerial platform pumpers for Fire Rescue Victoria in the 2024–25 budget, another example of how this government is supporting emergency responses.

It is a big figure: \$300 million across government for fire, flood and storm recovery from recent emergency events, and some of that includes temporary accommodation. We know the member for Ripon was right there with her community when they were impacted by fires, at the temporary accommodation services, talking with her community and standing side by side. We know the member for Monbulk was with her community when they experienced terrible tree and land falls during the storms; she continues to fight for her community through her #TellTheTelcos petition to make sure that people are still able to use the phone during times of emergency, and I absolutely support her in that work. On using the phone, the 1800 hotline has been funded in the 2024–25 budget along with regional coordination for disaster relief and recovery. And I give a small shout-out to BlazeAid, who have done some great work in my area and all across the country now, for the work that they do to

support farmers after fires and other emergencies. To their fantastic volunteers who give so much of their time and to their CEO Melissa Jones, well done.

Plenty CFA was part of a trial of the new emergency management radios, and I know that it made a good impact there and it was rolled out subsequently to other CFAs. At Doreen CFA we do have some sadness with Captain Robert Bury stepping down and ending his time as the leader there, and from his time he is just so well regarded in our community. His leadership has gone beyond just the CFA to be a leader for our whole community, and his integrity, his advocacy for the CFA and his concern and care for the volunteers that he leads have been exemplary. Our community is so thankful to Captain Bury for all he has done, and we wish him well with his wife Carole in this next stage of his life.

The other thing about this bill which I want to touch on is around transparency. This bill ensures, as we heard from the member for Laverton, that if you go to that bookshop or if you go to the particular website you will be able to find all the details of the relevant legislative instruments et cetera there, and that transparency is a hallmark of our government. It is a hallmark of our government that stands in contrast to the most famous politician, I think, against transparency, who liked to say ‘Don’t you worry about that’ to journalists who dared to ask about what his government was up to. And I of course speak of Joh Bjelke-Petersen; don’t you worry about that. This is another example of the work this government has done to improve transparency. We are the government that made major reforms to FOI laws in 2017, and thanks to those reforms we have got a single body to oversee Victoria’s FOI public sector privacy and data protection laws, and that makes it easier for people to access government information. We gave the information commissioner more investigative powers than its predecessor and introduced faster response timeframes for all FOI applications.

We talk about the accountability triangle and the three points of the accountability triangle, which are us as the elected representatives, the citizens and the bureaucracy. What this bill does is it makes sure that that triangle is complete through the sharing of information between those different points of the triangle. I know from work overseas how important transparency is to ensure that good services are provided to citizens so they can see and understand what the government is doing and what rules and laws apply to them.

I would also like to say that another aspect of how this government has improved transparency in Victoria is by being the government that passed the strongest donation laws in Australia. The strongest donation laws in Australia were passed by this government. They provide for real-time disclosures, and that improves transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Those opposite think that they have a total monopoly on these topics, and they absolutely do not. When we came to government we took what the *Age* described as ‘a lame duck body in its original Baillieu-era form’, IBAC, and gave it the strongest powers it ever had, and that was in 2016. So we will not take lectures from the opposition on matters of transparency and integrity. Actually I think IBAC was formed – wasn’t it something to do with Liberal Party councillors? Anyway, strong donation laws – *(Time expired)*

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (12:57): I move:

That debate be now adjourned.

I ask that the next order of business be considered in the following context. On 19 July the International Court of Justice stated that Israel’s occupation of the Palestinian territories is unlawful. Its discriminatory laws and policies against Palestinians violate the prohibition on racial segregation and apartheid. It also advised that all states have a responsibility not to aid or assist Israel in its occupation. So all states must review all diplomatic, political and economic ties with Israel, including business and finance, pension funds, academia and charities.

I am interrupting this debate today because in light of the tens of thousands of Palestinians dead, the hundreds of thousands starving to death and now this ICJ report nothing could be more pressing than ending Victoria’s complicity in these crimes and doing everything in the government’s power to end the genocide. That means the Victorian government cancelling its secret memorandum of

understanding with the Israeli Ministry of Defense and that means ending this government's partnership with Elbit Systems, Israel's largest weapons manufacturer, and placing sanctions on Israel until it ends this genocide.

I do not want to be this person. I am very much aware that many people in this place find my approach abrasive. I am very aware that people would rather I not insist on raising this issue. I have been instructed to use the tools available to me within the Parliament rather than disrupting outside the rules. I would rather do that, but when there is so much community anxiety and disquiet around this, when there is so much silencing and political censorship going on and when the Greens are the only voice within this place to be raising the concerns of the community and standing up for the lives of the tens of thousands that have been murdered, I have no choice.

This decades-long oppression and violence has come to this. Is everyone else in this chamber seeing what I am seeing? Babies dying alone in incubators; children with their faces and their limbs blown off; boys and men stripped, blindfolded and herded like animals; children shot by snipers; polio; hepatitis; starvation; humanitarian aid blocked; water turned off –

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): Member for Richmond, we are now going to break for lunch.

Sitting suspended 1:00 pm until 2:02 pm.

Business interrupted under standing orders.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

Suburban Rail Loop

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:02): My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the member for Kororoit tabled a petition signed by Mount Atkinson and Deanside residents saying that they are in 'dire need for any form of public transportation'. The Premier has recklessly committed \$216 billion to the Suburban Rail Loop. How will these residents benefit from SRL East?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:03): I am delighted to answer a question from the Leader of the Opposition about the investment that we are making in transport infrastructure in all parts of the state – in the east of Melbourne, in the west of Melbourne –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Transport Infrastructure! This is not a good start to question time. The Premier, without assistance from either side of the chamber.

Jacinta ALLAN: Of course the question referred to infrastructure investment in both the west and also in the east, and when it comes to delivering the Suburban Rail Loop this is a project that the state simply cannot afford not to build. The business case that was released in August of 2021 demonstrated that it brings positive benefits to the state in terms of getting cars off local roads, in terms of delivering a train line to Victoria's and Australia's largest university, Monash University, which currently does not have a train line –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the Premier is responding generally rather than specifically to the question. The question asked about the member for Kororoit's petition, which talks about the dire need for public transport in the electorate of Kororoit. I would ask you to bring the Premier to that question.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for South-West Coast is warned.

Jacinta ALLAN: On the point of order, Speaker, I was answering the question directly around the benefits that come from the Suburban Rail Loop. That is the question the Leader of the Opposition asked, and that is the question I am answering.

John Pesutto: On the point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was very specific. It was about the benefits to the people of Mount Atkinson and Deanside of SRL East.

The SPEAKER: The question referred to public transport, the question referred to the Suburban Rail Loop and the question referred to the benefits of the SRL, so I believe the Premier was being relevant to the question that was asked.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, is it now the practice of this place that on any question a minister can pick out one word and somehow speak about that one word rather than the substance of the question? The standing orders require a direct response. Pulling one word out and speaking to that generally clearly does not go to the substance of the question.

The SPEAKER: I have addressed this matter previously. Leader of the Opposition, I will rule on this point of order. I have addressed this matter previously. The Manager of Opposition Business knows that the preamble forms part of the question. If the Premier is being relevant to the preamble and the words within that preamble without directly answering the question, there is nothing I can do, because the Premier has the opportunity to answer the question as the Premier sees fit.

James Newbury interjected.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the point of order, Manager of Opposition Business. If you have a question about my ruling, you are welcome to put it in writing or to come and see me in my office. This is not an opportunity to question my rulings, Manager of Opposition Business.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, I want to clarify that you said that the Premier did not respond to the question. That is all I am asking.

The SPEAKER: The Premier was responding to the question, and the Premier was being relevant to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: Given there will be benefits to all Victorians from the delivery of the Suburban Rail Loop, as I was saying, from the –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: It is extremely disrespectful when a member is on their feet to interject with such noise. The Premier, without assistance.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Nationals, you are warned.

Jacinta ALLAN: Of course when it comes to investing in transport infrastructure, we are delivering that across the state, and the Leader of the Opposition did refer to the needs of communities in the western suburbs for public transport services. That is why very soon I will be visiting Melton to see how we are making Melton level crossing free. Melton will be level crossing free as we remove the dangerous and congested level crossings in the Melton community. It is quite simple. Those who have never delivered a project do not understand the importance of delivering these projects.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the government changed the sessional orders to add relevance to order 58. It was the government who expanded the operation of the relevance provision to ensure that answers were responsive to a question. Nowhere in the nearly 2 minutes that have passed during the Premier's answer has the Premier addressed the needs of the people of Mount Atkinson and Deanside. Can I ask that you direct the Premier to at least respond to the actual question?

The SPEAKER: I am not sure what your point of order is, Leader of the Opposition. Was it on relevance?

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to *Rulings from the Chair*. Speaker Plowman in 1996 made the rule that repeating the same point daily, that raising the same point of order regarding the answering of questions without notice each day, simply wastes the time of the house, and I ask that you make a similar ruling on the pointless, self-serving points of order raised every single day by –

The SPEAKER: When points of order are raised, I ask that they be succinct on the point of order.

James Newbury: Further to the point of order, Speaker, I assure you the opposition will not raise that point of order if the government responds to a question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have ruled on the point of order. The Premier has concluded her answer.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:10): The petition tabled by the member for Kororoit also said that every morning these residents ‘fight traffic driving on already congested roads to drop our kids at school’. The Premier has recklessly committed \$216 billion to the Suburban Rail Loop. How many cars will the SRL East take off the roads in Mount Atkinson and Deanside?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:11): Do you know what takes cars off local roads? It is removing level crossings, it is investing in train services and it is investing in bus services, and that is exactly what we are doing. That is exactly –

John Pesutto interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: That is what you asked. That is exactly what you asked: how do you reduce congestion –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Premier’s answer. The member for Kew can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Member for Kew withdrew from chamber.

Jacinta ALLAN: We have recently made a significant announcement of increased bus services, particularly in the north and west communities. Particularly when the Leader of the Opposition is focused on these areas, he might know that we are adding bus services for communities like Melton South – there we are, Melton again – Thornhill Park and Cobblebank station. Of course we are, as I mentioned before, also removing dangerous and congested level crossings. We will continue to invest in public transport services across the state.

Ministers statements: Indian Independence Day

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:12): Today is Indian Independence Day, and I wish the Victorian Indian community a very happy 78th Indian Independence Day. When you consider that Victoria’s largest source of international students is India, the ninth-largest source of foreign direct investment is India and our two-way trade with India is valued at almost \$3 billion, you can understand why I am proud to be making my first trip as Premier in a few weeks time to India. We are so proud here in Victoria that we are home to Australia’s largest Indian community. More than a quarter of a million Indian-born Victorians live in our state. That is a quarter of a million mums and dads, kids, business owners, students, doctors, nurses, artists and engineers who are all working hard, making a fabulous contribution to our community and our economy and raising their families here.

It is one of the most important economic and cultural partnerships our state could have. That strong partnership with India means opportunities for Victorian businesses and families to succeed. Strengthening that relationship with India is not just about building our relationship even further, it is also about connecting people and business. And then there is of course the sharing of culture, that cultural engagement and that shared love of cricket as well. We also know that India is an enormous place of innovation, invention and opportunity – opportunity that every part of our state should be able to share in. We have long valued that strong and enduring bond our state has with both India and our strong Indian communities here in Victoria – a wonderful community of strong values, traditions and culture, who every single day make our state stronger, fairer and better. Once again, happy Indian Independence Day.

Suburban Rail Loop

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:14): My question is to the Premier. The contract awarded last year to dig SRL tunnels was for \$3.6 billion. Will the Premier pledge that no further SRL contracts will be signed while hospitals are being forced to reduce services and cut staff?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:15): There were two points in that question from the Leader of the Opposition. The answer to the second part of his question is that he is wrong. We are putting record funding into our world-class hospital system to treat more patients and to support a growing workforce than ever before. And the answer to the first part of his question is no.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:15): With no Commonwealth money received, no detail on value capture and our health system in crisis, why is the Premier committed to signing all SRL East contracts?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:16): We have, can I say, a world-class health system here in this state that is staffed by more hardworking healthcare workers than we have ever had before working in our hospital system. The work that they do every single day is work that we should value and respect and celebrate, and we should not put about claims that are simply wrong and, can I say, more than a little offensive, on behalf of all of those hardworking healthcare workers.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, I ask that you draw the Premier back to the question about why she is committed to signing all SRL East contracts.

The SPEAKER: I ask that points of order not repeat the question. The Premier was referring to contracts. She was also referring to the health system, which the Leader of the Opposition referred to. She was being relevant to the question. The Premier has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: education

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Minister for Education, Minister for Medical Research) (14:17): We know on this side of the chamber that education is the most important investment you can make. On that side of the chamber they think education is just a nice thing to do. On our side we invest every day in education. Just last week I was out with three champions of education in central Victoria. There was the member for Wendouree, a former schoolteacher, from her local community, representing her local community. Right next door to her too was the member for Ripon, a proud product of public education. And there was the member for Eureka, a proud product of our TAFE industry and saving TAFE.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Deputy Premier not to incite the members.

Ben CARROLL: We held a principals round table. We visited schools right through –

Members interjecting.

Ben CARROLL: I would like those opposite to just be silent for a moment, because what we did do was open up the brand new Ballarat Specialist School. It says everything about a government that it is upgrading every single one of the 82 specialist schools around our state through the great advocacy of the member for Eureka for the hydrotherapy pool, the great education that they are getting, the phonics education – everything they are getting.

We are the Education State. We are putting in record investment of \$35 billion. The shadow minister for private education cannot even ask a question when NAPLAN results come out this week, because in every category, at almost every level, behind the ACT, Victoria is leading in education. We are doing everything we can too. The shadow minister is being kicked out, and the former shadow minister went to London only to return for the libel case next week. Is it any wonder they are talking about changing their name from the Liberal Party to the Libel Party?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gippsland South will leave the chamber for half an hour, without –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: You can leave the chamber for an hour.

Member for Gippsland South withdrew from chamber.

Health services

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:19): My question is to the Premier. The Premier has admitted that there will be back-office job losses in the health system. Is a ward support assistant, responsible for transporting medical equipment, X-rays and patient records, a back-office job which will be cut?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Transport Infrastructure, I am going to have to ask you to leave the chamber for half an hour. I will not tolerate members being called names across the chamber.

Minister for Transport Infrastructure withdrew from chamber.

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:20): Last week, along with the Minister for Health, we announced \$1.5 billion in additional funding for our hospital system, which is the funding that our hospitals have told us that they need to continue to deliver that world-class health care that we know our Victorian community relies on and that will continue to support the delivery of frontline services.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): Ward support assistants enable doctors and nurses to spend more time helping patients. Will the government intervene to ensure that so-called back-office jobs, like ward support assistants, are not cut by hospitals?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Member for Narre Warren North is warned.

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:21): I want to make this very clear to the Leader of the Opposition and the Assembly today. Labor governments will always back hospitals, always back nurses and always back frontline services.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, can we just for once get a straight answer from the Premier?

The SPEAKER: The Premier had just commenced her answer. I will give her an opportunity to respond to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: I will say that again. Labor governments will always back our hospitals, we will always back our nurses and we will always back the world-class care our hospitals provide. I will say this to the house: every time a Labor government has followed a Liberal one, we have had to repair the damage of the cuts that that government –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on standing order 58, the Premier is simply abusing standing order 58. At no time today has the Premier gone anywhere near the substance of any question asked. Every time a point of order is called, the Premier sits down midsentence.

The SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

James Newbury: The Premier is at no point relevant to the question. For the second time –

The SPEAKER: So your point of order is on relevance?

James Newbury: Yes, on relevance.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Manager of Opposition Business, you just need to say that it is on relevance. The Premier has concluded her answer.

Ministers statements: regional rail

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Government Services, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Public and Active Transport) (14:23): Today I rise to update the house on the Allan Labor government’s transformation of regional rail services across our state. We have taken action to address cost-of-living pressures for many Victorians by capping V/Line fares at no more than the metro daily rate, which is \$10.60. More than \$80 million has gone back into the pockets of Victorians since the fare cap took effect in March last year. I know from speaking to the member for Ripon that her community in Ararat is making the most of our fairer fares, with passengers saving about \$50 on a return fare to Melbourne.

Ararat commuters had another very important milestone to celebrate recently. The community came out to celebrate the 20th anniversary of passenger trains returning to Ararat, services that Labor returned after those opposite closed them down. The Allan Labor government is building on this legacy by adding more services to the Ararat line and running more modern VLocity trains. Just today I announced that the first of our latest order of 23 new, modern, locally built VLocity trains has hit the tracks in the west of our state, meaning more capacity for the up to 200 extra V/Line weekend services that we are currently in the process of rolling out. Just like those opposite closed the Ararat line to passengers, I remind the house that they closed the Maryborough line too, and let us not forget the Bairnsdale line.

Today this Labor government is adding more services to our regional networks, including of course the Ararat line, and running more modern VLocity trains across our regional network. While some opposite are worried about pending court actions, the Allan Labor government is taking real action to transform regional rail.

Michael O’Brien: On a point of order, Speaker, standing orders preclude members from discussing any matters that are sub judice, yet members of the government are constantly referring to matters that are sub judice. I would ask you to enforce the standing orders and sit down members who do this. The rules apply or they do not.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bentleigh, you can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Member for Bentleigh withdrew from chamber.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Speaker, there is no point of order. The only comments that have been made by members on this side of the house are in relation to what is in the

public arena. Everyone knows that the Leader of the Opposition is being sued by numerous members of his party, of course in the case being led by Moira Deeming in the other place.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the House! It is not funny. Sub judice is a serious matter. Any public or media comment on any issue, particularly in the judicial system, does not preclude the application of the sub judice convention in the house. Therefore I ask members to be very careful about what they say in relation to matters that are in the public domain and before the judicial system.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Malvern, it is not an opportunity to pat yourself on the back. Before I call the next question, I acknowledge in the gallery the Pakistan Consul General Moazzam Shah, who is in the upper gallery today. And while this is not normal procedure for the house, the Clerk has indicated that it is okay as she is a fan, I also acknowledge Wasim Akram, who is also in the gallery with us today.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Fans will come to order!

Windsor Community Children's Centre

Sam HIBBINS (Pahran) (14:28): This might not be the in-swinging yorker that Wasim Akram would provide, but I will do my best. My question is for the Minister for Planning. Windsor Community Children's Centre have operated out of their Union Street home in Windsor for 27 years, providing high-quality community-run early education to local families. The land they are on is zoned public use education. Swinburne, which was gifted that land by the state government, now wants to kick the centre out, rezone the land so it can be used for commercial purposes and sell it for a profit. The Minister for Planning has the power to stop this land from being rezoned. Minister, local families want to know: will the government ensure common sense and community needs prevail and stop this rezoning?

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for the Suburbs) (14:29): I thank the member for his question. As this is a live planning matter before me at this moment, I cannot comment any further on it. But there is a bit of history to this matter. Allow the process to run its course, and we will make a decision on the merits when that matter next comes before me.

Sam HIBBINS (Pahran) (14:30): If I could take the minister back to prior to this process starting, local families are rightly angry and perplexed as to why a government which calls this the Education State and spruiks reforms that will increase access to early education would even consider rezoning land that is used for educational purposes in the heart of the inner city – a rezoning that would make accessing early education in the local area even harder. Minister, why did the government even give Swinburne permission to sell the land without first ensuring the future of Windsor Community Children's Centre?

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for the Suburbs) (14:30): That is not a matter for me. It is a matter that is properly referred to the minister in the other place, and it may be that you wish to refer your matter to her.

Ministers statements: major events

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Environment, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Outdoor Recreation) (14:31): Just to settle the nerves of those opposite, do not worry; I will not be giving out any medals today. Today I rise to update the house on Victoria's unrivalled major events calendar. Here in Victoria we do not just have a packed summer calendar or a packed winter calendar, and unlike South Australia we do not spend the whole year talking about

one weekend of footy played in our state. No, here in Victoria we have a packed major events calendar all year round, and this spring is no different. We have got the *Pharaoh* exhibition, which Minister Brooks knows about, on right now, bringing 500 pieces of ancient Egypt and 150,000 people into the centre of Melbourne. We have got the MotoGP, a premier race on the global circuit that I know the member for Bass is looking forward to, and the Melbourne Cup, which I know the Minister for Racing is raring and ready to get out of the stalls for. We have got the AFL Grand Final, the Australian Open golf and Always Live across Victoria with Missy Higgins, the Offspring, Jack White and more. The rest of the country would be jealous to have just one of these events; we have them all.

Still, even with all that, there is another major event highlighted in the calendar of those opposite – 16 September – one event that I know the Leader of the Opposition will plea not to miss. And who knows, there may be another major event on the cards for those opposite. The member for Malvern threw down the challenge –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business is warned, as are members on my left side.

Steve DIMOPOULOS: The member for Malvern threw down the challenge this morning when he broke ranks and claimed the party was better off under him.

We are the major events capital for so many reasons, because of continued investment across successive Labor governments, because of unrivalled infrastructure and because we have a community that shows up all the time. We are the major events capital of the country, and the Allan Labor government is making sure that title is not going anywhere.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Frankston, an hour.

Member for Frankston withdrew from chamber.

Ambulance services

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:33): My question is to the Premier. On Tuesday night, according to our dedicated paramedics, only 1 per cent of ambulances were available for the Victorian public. Will the Premier commit to appearing before the Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into Ambulance Victoria?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:34): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and the opportunity to acknowledge how day in, day out, 24 hours a day, seven days a week our hardworking paramedics work so hard to save lives and protect the community. That is why we have invested heavily, doubling the number of paramedics on the road, and of course that came –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, this is a joke. This was a very simple question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask you to be succinct in your point of order, Manager of Opposition Business.

James Newbury: Relevance.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. That is all you need to refer me to. I do ask the Premier to come back to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: I absolutely will come back to answering the question, because we are proud of our investment in our paramedics, doubling the number of paramedics on the road today on what there was in 2014 following the Liberal government's war on paramedics – the war that they had on paramedics.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is defying your ruling.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is debating the question. I ask her to come back to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: In terms of inquiries that are established by members of the Legislative Council, it is up to the members of that inquiry and the members of the Legislative Council to determine the form and processes around that inquiry. I will say, to be absolutely clear, consistent with practice for a very, very long time on both sides of the house –

Sam Groth interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Nepean can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Sam Groth interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Nepean can leave the chamber for an hour and a half.

Member for Nepean withdrew from chamber.

Jacinta ALLAN: It will not be happening next week; he is out for three question times. It is a well-established practice for members of this house to not appear before parliamentary inquiries held in the other place, and I will be following that well-established practice. Whilst members of the Liberal Party are participating in political activities in the Legislative Council, we will focus on –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, as you have ruled earlier on this question, the Premier is debating the question and is now defying your ruling again.

The SPEAKER: I ask the Premier to come back to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: I have answered the question directly around appearing before Legislative Council committees. I have made that absolutely clear because what my focus is on is supporting our hardworking paramedics. We have doubled the number of paramedics who are working here in Victoria. We will never treat our paramedics the way the Leader of the Opposition did when he was a member of that government.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, again I would ask you to bring the Premier back to the question rather than just simply being unpleasant.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on that point of order. The Premier has answered the question. She was debating the answer. The Premier has concluded her answer.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:38): The Premier has now told the Victorian people she will not appear before the Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into Ambulance Victoria, so why in those circumstances did the Premier commit to appearing before her own formal review by Greg Wilson into the CFMEU's misconduct but will not commit to appearing before an urgent inquiry into Ambulance Victoria?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:38): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I will say this to the Leader of the Opposition and to all paramedics in this state: we will never attack them for being as –

John Pesutto interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: You know where this is going, don't you? You know where this is –

John Pesutto interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: I'm not, am I? Oh, okay.

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question was very specific about why the Premier is prepared to appear before her own review but not a review that was endorsed by all non-government members in the Legislative Council.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I am sure you do not want me to remove you from the chamber. Premier, I ask you to come back to the question that was asked.

Jacinta ALLAN: The question I was asked asked questions about the union representatives that represent construction industry workers and paramedics. I will say that it does not matter whether you are a construction worker, a nurse, a paramedic or a teacher. We will not attack you for being a militant union thug in the way the Leader of the Opposition did when he was in government.

Bridget Vallence: On a point of order, Speaker, I understand that answers need to be factual. The Labor government is at war with paramedics right now, and they have not finished their pay dispute. I ask you to bring her back to the question.

The SPEAKER: I reiterate that points of order need to be succinct. They are not an opportunity to make a statement. I cannot determine whether the Premier is being factual or not. But, Premier, I ask you to come back to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: We will back our paramedics and stand with them. They will never forget the way they were treated by the former Liberal government that the Leader of the Opposition was a member of.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, in the last 30 seconds you have asked the Premier to come back to the question twice. You have ruled it, and the Premier has defied you twice. I would ask you to act and deal with the Premier. This is outrageous.

The SPEAKER: I cannot force the Premier to answer in the way that the Manager of Opposition Business would like. I do ask again that the Premier come back to the question that was asked.

Jacinta ALLAN: The question did go to the review that we are conducting in terms of addressing the issues here in the construction industries, but we will also stand with all workers against any attacks from a Liberal government.

Ministers statements: Spring Racing Carnival

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (14:41): I rise to update the house on the world-class calendar of events that Victorians can enjoy this spring, supported of course by the Allan Labor government. Just last week I met with racing ministers from all over Australia and heard a similar story about the importance of racing across the country. We are here for the horses, although I see a few long faces in the opposition because September is coming, and I do not just mean the Spring Racing Carnival. I am looking forward to getting back to Caulfield with the member for Bentleigh for the first group 1 on 31 August, the Memsie Stakes. From there it only hots up as we race towards the famous Melbourne Cup Carnival, the biggest major sporting event in the state of Victoria, which makes an economic contribution of some \$470 million. But it is not all about cup week. Can I just say there are plenty of other major events coming up on the calendar. It is packed. The Spring Racing Carnival reaches every corner of the state, and in regional Victoria alone racing supports some 9000 jobs and makes an economic contribution of some \$1.17 billion.

Of course it is not just the Melbourne Cup that stops the nation, because there is an even bigger event this season that we have been waiting for. Everyone has been saddling up for the hottest 10 days of September. The member for Mordialloc put this best when he said it is the defamation case that stops the nation. I hear there are a lot of starters in this race –

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Thursday 15 August 2024

Legislative Assembly

3051

Michael O'Brien: On a point of order, Speaker, I would have thought the minister would have the wit to have changed his statement given your ruling. I would ask you to bring him back to being within the rules.

Anthony CARBINES: On the point of order, Speaker, I may well have mentioned that there is a case, but I have not mentioned any details relating to the case. I ask that you rule the point of order out of order.

The SPEAKER: I think I made it very clear that references to matters before our judicial system are not to be used in the chamber.

James Newbury: Further to the point of order, Speaker, a number of rulings by Speaker Brooks – I am sure he appreciates my referring to them – have made it very, very clear that attacks on the opposition in ministers statements are out of order.

The SPEAKER: That is true. I do ask two things: the minister will not attack the opposition and will not refer to matters that are before our courts.

Anthony CARBINES: No, I will not do that, Speaker. I say that it is an Allan Labor government that continues to support tens of thousands of racing jobs across every part of Victoria. We also support the multibillions of dollars that the racing industry generates for the Victorian economy, and we will continue to support those jobs. Can I just say that we are here for the horses – we love the horses – but it is a new nightmare on Spring Street for the Leader of the Opposition this September.

The SPEAKER: The house will move to constituency questions.

Cindy McLeish: On a point of order, Speaker, I have two matters that remain outstanding, both for the Minister for Environment, one lodged on 20 June – well overdue – and one from even longer, from 2 May. 610 is a constituency question and 1339 is a question on notice that is outstanding.

Constituency questions

Eildon electorate

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (14:46): (760) My question is for the Minister for Education. Pantom Hill Primary School need help with their bushfire preparedness. They need essential works to manage and maintain their fire protection system, which is aged and failing. The current government funding only relates to vegetation management. The works required extend well beyond that. Will the minister make funds available to the school through this program to meet their needs or provide an alternative method to support Pantom Hill Primary to become more bushfire-safe? This school is on the bushfire at-risk register and requires additional funding to manage its systems. The underground pipes are pitted, so the system is prone to leaks, causing water damage to the school grounds. The costs are beyond the school budget. Funding for repairs would help ensure the safety and security of children and the teachers, should there be a bushfire event. The minister was happy to put out a press release stating:

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring local schools are as safe and prepared as they can be.

So please do not let down the Pantom Hill Primary School community, and ensure proper funding and standards.

Tarneit electorate

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (14:48): (761) My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, how many people in Tarneit have made use of the community pharmacy pilot? The community pharmacy pilot has been a groundbreaking initiative, allowing trained pharmacists across Victoria to treat conditions such as shingles, psoriasis and uncomplicated urinary tract infections. Additionally, pharmacists are now able to resupply oral contraceptive pills and provide essential health and travel vaccinations. We recently celebrated an important milestone, with over 15,000 services delivered

under this pilot. I wish to thank the minister for visiting a local pharmacy in Tarneit to discuss the pilot's success both in our community and right across the state. This milestone is a testament to the initiative's pivotal role in delivering timely and effective health care directly within our communities. I look forward to the minister's response.

Morwell electorate

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (14:48): (762) My constituency question is to the Minister for Public and Active Transport, and the question I ask is this: is the new platform at the Morwell train station not in use because of issues with signalling upgrades along the Gippsland line? The Gippsland line upgrades, which have been happening for a number of years now, are starting to materialise, but we are yet to see the benefits that have been spruiked. The new platform at Morwell train station seems to be complete and in theory it is meant to allow more frequent and reliable services along the line, but it is not in use and people are starting to ask questions. We know that there are issues with the signalling upgrades and that is why a number of other projects along the Gippsland line have stalled, like the notoriously dangerous and unfinished Bank Street intersection upgrade. There are whispers that these signalling issues will not be resolved until 2026 at best. So, Minister, again, is the new platform at the Morwell train station not in use because of issues with signalling upgrades along the Gippsland line?

Sunbury electorate

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (14:49): (763) My question is to the Minister for Education, the Deputy Premier. Minister, what is the expected completion date of this government's upgrade and modernisation of Goonawarra Primary School, in my electorate? This government has a strong and proud record of investing in education both within my local electorate and right across the state, building the Education State and giving every child the best opportunity. Investing more than \$10 million to upgrade Goonawarra Primary is a significant and important undertaking, something that I know the local community is incredibly excited about. We know that investing in education within local communities is critically important for both teaching and learning, for generating pride within local communities, for inspiring students and for offering what will be a very important best start in life. I look forward to the minister's reply.

Brighton electorate

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:50): (764) My question is to the Premier, and I ask: when will the state Labor government live up to its ironclad commitment to replace the existing school crossing on Glen Huntly Road with a proper pedestrian-operated crossing? The Labor government has failed to replace the crossing for years. The replacement is needed, the site is dangerous and the crash data shows it. The crossing supports several schools and a childcare centre and is heavily utilised as a pedestrian thoroughfare which joins both sides of the Elster canal walking path. VicRoads has acknowledged the need for a proper crossing at the site, having previously confirmed it as a high priority. The department of roads initially consulted with the community about installing a crossing but mistakenly proposed to install it 200 metres away from where it was needed. A year ago the department confirmed they had got the location wrong, but since then the community has been stonewalled. In August last year the minister confirmed the ongoing intention to install the crossing in writing, but for the last year the silence has been deafening. Premier, Labor should live up to their promises.

Narre Warren North electorate

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (14:51): (765) My constituency question is for the Minister for Health. In my electorate of Narre Warren North we are very lucky to have the Narre Warren Priority Primary Care Centre. The priority care centre sees people with low acuity conditions such as fractures, burns and mild infections. My question is: what difference has this centre made to the local community in terms of accessibility to local bulk-billing emergency care?

And, with indulgence, I would like to wish my very close family friend Dot Rowe a very happy 75th birthday.

Mornington electorate

Chris CREWTHER (Mornington) (14:52): (766) My constituency question is for the Minister for Housing. Can the minister provide information on when the Labor government will support real initiatives to alleviate the homelessness and housing crisis on the Mornington Peninsula, including in my electorate of Mornington? Last week was Homelessness Week. Mornington Peninsula now has, I understand, the fourth-highest level of homelessness in Victoria, with an estimated 1000 to 2000 people who are homeless and doing it tough. I was honoured to watch a documentary last week produced by Mornington Community Support Centre called *The Ranch*. The documentary sought to shine a light on locals living rough and urged policymakers to create and fund change. I have been tirelessly urging the state government to intervene and solve the homelessness crisis on the peninsula. The government needs to take action soon and do something for our most vulnerable.

Monbulk electorate

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (14:53): (767) My constituency question is to the Minister for Education. The Monbulk electorate has seen significant investment in our schools, and most recently Emerald Secondary College received \$8.77 million in funding to complete the remaining stages of their master plan. It is a tremendous local school that is growing from strength to strength. For many years the school community has worked hard to build on and improve this school, activate school pride and identify ways to make the learning experience better for each and every student. Having spoken with students many times, I know how eager they are to find out the progress of these exciting school upgrades. Could the minister please advise: what is the timeline for delivering this build?

Kew electorate

Jess WILSON (Kew) (14:54): (768) My question is to the Minister for Public and Active Transport. Will the minister consider reviewing the 109 tram route with a view to adding more accessible stops? I have raised the issue of the lack of accessible tram stops on the 48 and 109 tram routes before. Today I want to draw the minister's attention to Cotham Road in Kew in particular, which is home to St George's Health Service. Part of the St Vincent's Hospital network, St George's provides aged care, rehabilitation, geriatric evaluation and management and a number of community-based treatment services. It should be a no-brainer that there would be an accessible tram stop outside this facility for outpatients as well as visitors. Cotham Road will soon be home to a new joint venture between Medibank and over 40 specialist doctors offering a new model of care in the form of a short-stay surgical facility. Given these two facilities are in very close proximity to each other along the 109 tram route, Cotham Road is the ideal location for new accessible tram stops.

Bellarine electorate

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (14:55): (769) My question is for the Minister for Emergency Services. With the recent investment in a retrofitting of our CFA ultralight vehicles, including a compressed air foam based external deluge system and radiant heat shield curtains, when will this be rolled out to the Bellarine volunteer fire brigades? I recently visited the Leopold fire brigade to hand over a brand new tanker and spoke with several of the CFA stations and brigades in my electorate, all filled with dedicated volunteers looking after our community. With incidents such as grassfires, scrub fires, bushfires, house fires, road accidents and floods all occurring over time in my electorate, and with a growing population, we need to ensure our emergency fire services have the state-of-the-art equipment to ensure our volunteers remain safe while performing their vital services. I would like to thank and acknowledge all our firefighters. We are grateful for your commitment to the Victorian community.

*Bills***Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024***Second reading***Debate resumed.**

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (14:56): Water turned off, a politically manufactured famine – I do not mention these horrors gratuitously, I raise them to ask this Labor government, to ask the Premier: what will it take for this government to say ‘No more’? The *Lancet* journal estimates that the true death toll could be almost 200,000 people. We will never fully know the pain and circumstances of each one of those deaths.

I interrupt the debate today because while all this is happening Labor continues on its lethal partnership with Elbit Systems, whose weapons Israel has boasted are battle-tested on Palestinians – combat proven on human animals. Illegal munitions containing white phosphorus, designed to burn the flesh off the bone; flechette projectiles, designed to go straight through the body; cluster munitions whose bombs break up into smaller explosives that are detonated sometimes years after conflicts have ended – these are horrific weapons that cause unspeakable damage. War, destruction and genocide is the mission of Elbit Systems, whose machine and human testing centre for excellence this Labor government proudly launched, funnelling taxpayer money into the industry of war.

I interrupt this debate because Labor is pumping more money into death and destruction and will give Elbit a platform to showcase their weapons in Melbourne as it hosts the largest defence conference in the Asia-Pacific in September. The world’s major weapons manufacturers will exhibit their products and make deals with governments – weapons manufacturers that supply Israel’s genocide: BAE Systems, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Elbit Systems, Thales and NIOA. Labor cries poor, but it is spending unthinkable amounts of taxpayer money on perpetuating war and genocide through the Land Forces expo, and it is because war is to this Labor government a lucrative transition industry. Weapons have been made to fight wars and now wars will be fought to feed the weapons economy. How much more of this live streamed genocide will we take before Labor cuts ties with Israel’s genocidal regime? I have interrupted debate today to call on the government to cancel its memorandum of understanding, to end its partnership with Elbit Systems and to pull its funding for the Land Forces expo.

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (14:58): For clarification, I believe that at the moment we are debating whether or not we adjourn the government business program and what we are currently debating, which is the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024. My understanding – and I am not sure if the member for Richmond is aware – is that if this motion were to be, hypothetically, successful in adjourning the debate, the next thing that would occur is we would move to item 2 on today’s government business, orders of the day, which is the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024. We would then start debate on that. So I am not sure if that is the intention of the member for Richmond, but as I see it, that is exactly what would occur. I am not overly familiar, obviously, with all the conventions of the house, but that is my understanding of what would occur if we had this division and somehow we did not have the numbers and it was a successful motion. That is exactly what would happen. I am curious to know if that is the intention – if that is what is being sought here.

For those who are ready to speak on the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill – people who have spent quite a bit of time looking into this, who have contributions to make – I would imagine that they might feel they need to continue speaking about this because this is legislation which affects the people of Victoria. It is incredibly important that as a government we adhere to our government business program so that we can pass the laws that are affecting us here today in Victoria. Victorians have asked us to stand here in this place and do this for them. So it is quite important, in my opinion, that we continue with debating this particular bill. I will not be speaking

on it but I know there are others who are ready to, and I am always interested to hear the contributions of everyone in this chamber at all times.

Again, I am just checking with the member for Richmond that she understands that what would occur if this motion to adjourn this debate that has been put to the chamber were successful is we would move to the next debate, which is on the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024. That is what would be achieved if the motion put to the house were successful. I am being quite enlightened by this; it would be quite interesting for me actually to see what would happen if this occurred. So without anything further I submit that we do not adjourn the debate on this particular bill, because I think we have a duty to speak to it and to continue the program the government has seen fit to put before the house today and which has been accepted.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:01): The Greens have attempted to move today from the business of the house to debating the conflict in the Middle East, and it is a matter that they have sought to debate repeatedly in this place, not in a constructive way but in a destructive way. No-one in this chamber wants to see people hurt. Nobody wants to see young people – any age of person – hurt. We want to see our community band together; we want to see our rich multicultural community band together at this difficult time as this difficult, in fact heartbreaking, event is happening on the other side of the world, a place where the member for Caulfield and I recently went. It is heartbreaking, and I am sure every member in this place wants to see an end to that conflict, wants to see peace and wants to see all of the good people of that region flourish and have wonderful lives.

To know that the Greens have again attempted to rip the social divide in this state is simply shameful. We will not support the Greens' attempt to do so. In fact earlier on the motion the member spoke about the fact that charity should no longer flow to parts of the Middle East. Think that through: we have an argument that is being put that is pulling the social fabric of our community apart and asking people to choose sides in a conflict where both sides are full of innocent people. There is only one group of people that we can all unite in being opposed to, and that is terrorists.

We need to be careful with attempts like this, which hopefully will not see too much light other than the Greens' media pack that are standing outside the chamber with their cameras ready. We know why this is being pulled – so that the social media can be filmed on the way out of the chamber. This type of motion will only hurt the fabric of the Victorian community, and we cannot stand for it.

Every time there is an attempt by the Greens to do that we have to stand united in this place and say, 'No, we will not allow that. We are a rich multicultural community.' There are elements around the world of extremism, and that clearly is ripping apart some of the edges of the fabric of Western countries, and there do need to be conversations around whether extremism fits within the value set of Western countries.

My view is that it does not, because you need to ensure when you have a people and a country and a community living together, that for the people within that community – of course they can be rich and vibrant and from all across the world – there has to be just a basic set of fundamental values that binds that community together, not in any way to take away from the richness of that social fabric but to make sure that the people around us live well and prosper. So there is a conversation around extremism. What is not a conversation that should be had in this place or any other place is whether or not an innocent person who has been hurt or died is more important than another innocent person who has been hurt or died.

This place I am sure is almost united in saying the events in the Middle East are deeply heartbreaking. Many of us feel so incredibly moved by them, but what we have to do as community leaders is stand together and say 'Let's not allow anybody to rip apart the social fabric,' which is not easy to make in a community, but it is easy to pull apart. We have to stand up against any attempt by anybody, let alone a member of this place – shame, a member of this place – to pull apart that social fabric. So the

coalition will be siding with the government in ensuring that this motion is voted down, and I hope the Greens consider stopping moving this type of motion in this house.

Paul EDBROOKE (Frankston) (15:06): Member for Brighton, we do not usually agree on things, but we are wholeheartedly agreeing on this. We have a situation here where there are people in this chamber that ignore the fact that we are here to legislate and provide policy for the people of Victoria and instead use this chamber to divide, to virtue signal, to use emotive language and to wax lyrical on social media. I think I am an agent for change. I think everyone in this house should be an agent for change, but I fail to see what we would be changing by supporting adjourning off the government business program to go with the Greens motion – which would be down the line anyway.

When we talk about MOUs, I have done a little bit of reading on this. There were several MOUs that were used in the debate by the Greens member. I think the fact is that some of the evidence around those MOUs is not being used correctly; it is actually being used to divide this house. Certainly this house is no stranger to virtue signalling, but I would hate to think that I am up here talking now and being broadcast on Instagram by the Greens while someone is commentating me – which could actually be against standing orders as well – because I am having my opinion here.

I do not support the motion to adjourn off this debate. I would remind people in this house that if you have watched the news anytime in the last little while, the war in Ukraine has not gone out of fashion but it has for some people. There are still people dying overseas everywhere. We need to keep in mind when we are talking about this that we are sensitive to the fact that there are people hurting everywhere, there are families hurting everywhere. This divisive kind of politics does us no good.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (15:08): I rise to speak against the member for Richmond's motion and adjourning off the debate to speak on their motion. As we speak now there are 111 hostages that still are being held by Hamas, and they have been held for 311 days. We have not once heard from the member for Richmond or from the Greens calling on those hostages to be released. We have not heard once from the member for Richmond or from the Greens condemning Hamas – a terrorist organisation. We have not heard once from the Greens calling out why this war started in the first place. As the member for Brighton has quite rightly said, and the member for Frankston as well, this is something none of us want to be talking about. None of us want war. We all want an end of war. We all want peace. We do not want to see people killed on any side, on either side. But there is one thing that is clear: there is one party that is absolutely divisive, and that is the Greens on this issue. This is an issue that quite frankly we should not be talking about in this Parliament. And if we want to be talking about it in Parliament, let us talk about the things that are affecting Victoria and Victorians.

Not once have we heard the Greens condemn the incidents of 10 November, when we had a number of pro-Palestinians go out hunting for Jews in Caulfield on the sabbath. Not once was that condemned. Not once have we seen any condemnation of graffiti being scribbled on Mount Scopus college saying 'Jew die'; we have not heard that condemned once from the Greens. Not once have we heard the Greens stand up and condemn the situation at Officeworks where a Jew was refused service by somebody who was a pro-Palestinian activist. Not once have we heard the Greens or the member for Richmond condemn it, even when we had families that had lost loved ones and that had hostages still in Israel in this Parliament to tell us members of Parliament about their situation. Not once was it condemned. Not only was it not condemned, the member for Richmond was taking photographs and sharing them on social media. This is appalling. This is a Greens Party that is so divisive, trying to fuel hate and fuel division, and all it is doing is sparking antisemitism in our community. The Jewish community, quite frankly, has had enough of the Greens. They have had enough of the shameful, divisive nature of the game that the Greens want to play each and every day. It is a political stunt.

Elbit Systems and the MOU that they have signed are about supporting Australia and ensuring that our Australian Defence Force are as strong as they possibly could be for Australians and for Victorians, not the other way around. Do you think we are going to be able to export our intelligence and our defence forces to Israel? That is not what this is all about.

This is about targeting Jews. It is about targeting the Jewish community. It is about inciting hate, and it is about riling up the people on the front steps, giving them a grab, saying to them, 'Keep going, keep shouting out "From the river to the sea", keep talking about genocide,' because that is what 'From the river to the sea' says. Every time the member for Richmond and the Greens friends say 'From the river to the sea' it is a call for genocide to get rid of every single Jew in Israel. 'From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free' means every Jew that lives there will be sent packing. And largely we are not hearing anything about the thousands of Israelis, both Arabs and Jews, that have been displaced since the war, that are living literally with the clothes on their backs and nothing more, because of the Hamas attack in the first place.

We all want peace. We all want an end to the war. We also want the end of the attacks, the Jew hate and the antisemitism that the Greens do each and every day. Victorians are sick and tired of it. The protests that we see and all this kind of stuff are fuelled by a political party that is all about votes and not about ensuring that we have social cohesion back in our state. This is a great multicultural state. We celebrate each and every person, no matter who they are and where they come from – except if you are a Jew, according to the Greens. That is why it is shameful, it is divisive and it is an attack on the Jewish community, and quite frankly the Greens and the member for Richmond need to grow up.

Michaela SETTLE (Eureka) (15:13): I rise to speak against this motion. I do note that we have had only one person speak for this motion, and it suggests to me that perhaps even within their own party there are variations on this motion. I object to much that was said in the preamble. The suggestion that nobody else but the member for Richmond understands the pain and suffering that is happening to all sides during this awful conflict is offensive. I will agree, however, with what she did say in her preamble: that many of us find her aggravating. I will agree to that point. What I would say as well, though, is that this is just a stunt, and it is using this house to push a very personal barrow to win votes. The last time that I saw such flagrant disregard for the processes of democracy was when Donald Trump's followers stormed Capitol Hill.

The Greens come here to play with no respect for the institutions of this house. They are no better than Trumpians. They are populists, and they are singing a populist line and offending the order of this place in pursuit of populist appeal. As was pointed out by the member for Monbulk, this motion from the member for Richmond will achieve nothing but a 20-minute ramble. Even if we were to adjourn off this debate, which we will not, the next order of the day is to return to the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024, and I think it speaks everything to the lack of respect and the lack of understanding of the procedures of this house that this procedural motion has been brought solely for 5 minutes of imagined glory on their social media. So I wholeheartedly speak against this adjournment, not because I do not care about the many, many people that are suffering during this conflict, not because I do not care about the ramifications across the whole of the world that we are seeing – I refuse to support this motion because I object to the game playing, the populism and the Trumpism of the member for Richmond.

Assembly divided on Gabrielle de Vietri's motion:

Ayes (4): Gabrielle de Vietri, Sam Hibbins, Tim Read, Ellen Sandell

Noes (74): Juliana Addison, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Martin Cameron, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Chris Crewther, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Wayne Farnham, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Mathew Hilakari, David Hodgett, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Emma Kealy, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Tim McCurdy, Steve McGhie, Cindy McLeish, John Mullahy, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, John Pesutto, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, Michaela Settle, David Southwick, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat

Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallence, Emma Vulin, Peter Walsh, Iwan Walters, Vicki Ward, Kim Wells, Nicole Werner, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Jess Wilson, Belinda Wilson

Motion defeated.

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) (15:23): I rise to speak on this bill, which makes some small technical changes to the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 and the Administrative Arrangements Act 1983. As I said, there are a lot of little technical things in this bill, but they speak to matters of government, especially when they are aimed at making life a little easier for those involved in Parliament's day-to-day work.

We will start with the Subordinate Legislation Act or, as it has come to be known, the SL act. Changes made to this act through the bill we are discussing include clarifying its key definitions to help people interpret the terms 'legislative character' and 'administrative character', which are central to the act's operation and application. The need for these changes has been identified by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and other departments, and the changes are also supported by all relevant stakeholders who were consulted on the bill. In short, concerns have been raised by departments and agencies that there was not enough information to help them distinguish between legislative and administrative character. They were concerned that the current definition of 'legislative instrument' used in the act is not clear enough and hinders them in trying to work out whether an instrument is subject to the requirements of the act.

It should be noted that 'legislative character' and 'purely administrative character' are not defined under the SL act, although section 3(2) of the act does provide a non-exhaustive list of instruments that are considered to be purely administrative under the act and there are SL act guidelines that do provide some guidance for staff on the principles they should apply when considering what is or is not a legislative instrument. This just goes to show exactly why the definition of 'legislative instrument' needs to be clarified.

Determining whether something is legislative or administrative is really important for the proper application of the act and indeed even the proper functioning of Parliament itself. If the definition is not applied properly, an instrument may be disallowed by Parliament or considered to not comply with the act and be declared invalid by a court. You can see why the departments and agencies raised their concerns. They need to be able to determine whether an instrument is legislative or administrative in order to meet the requirements of the act – and Parliament by extension. This bill will have real, practical implications and will effectively eliminate the issues raised by the DPC and other departments.

What the bill actually says about the difference between the instruments of purely administrative character and instruments of legislative character essentially can be summed up by saying one applies to individuals and one applies to groups. Under this bill we clarify that those instruments considered to be purely administrative generally apply to a specific person or a small number of people. On the other hand, instruments of legislative character are clarified to be those that can generally be applied to a large group of people or the wider public and include offences or have mandatory requirements for people to do or not do a particular thing, with penalties applying for noncompliance.

The bill goes beyond just considering the administrative, legislative and other character of an instrument. Other amendments to this bill will make an express provision that consultation with public sector body heads can occur. This will reflect the departmental consultation that goes on when developing the subordinate legislation that the SL act deals with. Note that it is an extension of consultation requirements within the act, not a requirement, but nevertheless it is important to clarify.

The proposed changes within this bill will also help to modernise the SL act and make statutory rules easier for the public to see. For example, they will require that the government printer aim to ensure that a physical copy of a statutory rule is able to be purchased either online or via an approved

bookshop. A further amendment will require that the minister or entity responsible ensure a copy of the rule is available for free on a departmental website. This is because we are strengthening accountability for the people we are here to serve. It also amends the act's definition of what a statutory rule is so that the act will now specifically say that a local law is not a statutory rule. So now local councils will know that they are not subject to the SL act.

This bill adds a new emergency exemption ground for statutory rules, bringing them into line with the emergency exemptions available for legislative instruments. In short, if this bill passes, a minister will be able to issue an exemption certificate as long as the proposed legislative instrument is not for more than 12 months duration and is necessary to respond to something like an urgent public health, safety or emergency issue or something that could damage our environment or economy. This will make sure the government can still respond quickly to urgent situations, something we have obviously had to do in the past. There will still be oversight for these situations in the form of appropriate consultation with relevant figures and reviews by the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, as per the SL act. As you can see, there is a thread of fairness running throughout this bill – fairness for those who have to apply it and for those people and things who are or will be subject to it. We will always govern with fairness and equity in mind.

The last lot of changes to the SL act were in 2010. The amendments made at that time divided subordinate legislation into two categories: statutory rules and legislative instruments. These amendments promoted greater scrutiny of legislative instruments. The changes we are discussing today will further clarify and correct the provisions that arose from the 2010 amendments. In this way we are building on the work we have already done to make this act stronger.

The amendments we are proposing today are minor and administrative in nature, as we have heard from the various contributions in the chamber. Largely they are insertions and clarifications, but that is not to say that they are not important. After all, it is the little things in life that count, and in this case those smaller parts add up to collectively make an important whole – or fill a hole, as is the case here. By inserting additional provisions into the act this bill will greatly assist departments and agencies as they go about their jobs and will ensure that what they do is legal and effective.

To the second part of the bill, which deals with the Administrative Arrangements Act, this bill provides for changes in admin arrangements for ministers, departments and officers, including updating references in legislation and elsewhere – things like portfolio changes or changes of departmental function. On the subject of clarity, the AA act means we do not have to enact new legislation to amend such references every time something changes. This will save us valuable time and simplify the behind-the-scenes processes as we get on with the task of governing while continuing the thread of clarity and fairness that I spoke to before. While technical, the changes are nevertheless vital for good governance.

One of the biggest changes we are proposing through this bill is to allow for a consolidated version of administrative arrangements orders to be made by the secretary instead of the minister responsible or the Governor in Council. The secretary may also allow this consolidated version of the AAOs to be published online. This purely administrative function is once again about clarity and accessibility. With this bill members of the public will be able to more easily access and see the AAOs and the history of the legislative or administrative arrangements in question, and interpretation of them will be made easier not just for the public but for all of us here today. Essentially, it is about cutting red tape. Clarity and fairness are two qualities this government prides itself on delivering. The changes proposed in this bill are certainly technical, but that is what they boil down to: making government processes clearer and fairer. I commend the bill to the house.

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (15:32): As the designated survivor in the chamber this afternoon for the opposition, I rise to make a contribution –

Members interjecting.

Richard RIORDAN: Sorry, I am joined by one other assistant survivor here in the chamber for this stimulating legislative program that the Victorian government has again dished up to the Parliament this week. They are having to trawl through legislation that was made in 1899 and other older acts to try and find something to talk about. You would think that at a time when the state is going broke, projects are being cancelled left, right and centre and the government is single-handedly failing to build any homes or get any houses built –

Members interjecting.

Richard RIORDAN: They do – and I am getting a bit of feedback from the government at the moment – talk about new houses, but they do not talk about extra houses. This government has only brought to the homeless of Victoria 492 homes over six years, which is a pretty impressive fail. So we have got this legislation we are talking about today, the Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024, which seeks to clear up a few i's and cross a few t's here and there on the legislative program. I refer to a point made by the member for Bass in an earlier contribution when she talked about this government priding itself on clarity and fairness. If ever there were two words that could never be associated with this government, they would be clarity and fairness.

One of the clauses in this bill, clause 23, refers to providing a few sneaky little extra powers to the government of the day. I was looking at that and thinking it deals specifically with emergency management legislation and under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 the declaration of a pandemic. Of course Victorians have certainly dealt with states of emergency from time to time, but we had not really ever dealt with a mass pandemic.

One of the things I think everyone in Victoria learned at that time is that government has to be prepared to have more scrutiny, not less scrutiny. And why do I say that? Well, because there were some very mixed results in Victoria's experience of the recent pandemic that we all endured for a couple of years. In fairness, I was one of the few parliamentary members who was involved throughout that process through the PAEC, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, where we were left with the role of scrutinising and this government was not remotely interested in being scrutinised or monitored or given any extra analysis of decisions being made. We time and time again had a Premier and senior ministers who said, 'These are not our decisions, these are someone else's decisions,' and the 'someone else' was anybody from the chief health officer to other senior bureaucrats, who all said, 'We're only able to do what the government tells us to do,' and we ended up in a very circular motion with everyone making the decisions but no-one being responsible for them.

We know now a lot of people got hurt in the pandemic. A lot of families still today are suffering. I think there is not a member in this chamber that will not have constituents in their electorate, particularly teenage children – later teenage children I think more than any other group – who really copped a hiding during the pandemic. They copped a hiding because of the disconnect and some of the unforeseen consequences of pandemic legislation. But had we been prepared to have more open, honest and transparent discussions about the decisions the government was making at the time, we may well have found out that we could have tweaked them and done a better job of the pandemic.

So when I read in here that the government, strangely, is seeking to actually allow itself to have the ability to make more regulations and more decisions with less scrutiny in those two areas, I cannot really see a great value in that, and I would hope that our colleagues in the upper house will use the opportunity through the greater level of democracy that can exist up there from time to time, where the government cannot always get its own way. I would hope that in that environment people are prepared to look a little more carefully at clause 23 and ascertain whether in fact that power is entirely necessary for the government of the day and whether in fact we can build more safeguards in. When people write to us, when community groups come to us and when the facts and the figures prove to us that we do actually have to listen, we have to be prepared to change direction sometimes, because we are finding that this government has a very, very poor track record of listening. Particularly in the last

two years and the term of government before that, they have, luckily, had a strong majority which has dulled their listening senses, there is no doubt about that. They are not inclined to listen very well, and it will be very interesting to see how the current Premier listens.

We saw today in question time once again that people can offer up ideas, can offer up criticisms and can offer up problems and we have a government and a Premier particularly who I think is averaging somewhere between 10 and 30 seconds per answer, and I do not think that is a benchmark for open and transparent government. For a government that might pride itself on clarity and fairness, I would have to say it is a pretty low benchmark. What we are seeing in this current Labor government under the new administration that is running, the new Premier of Victoria, is a real culture of 'We're going to make even less accountability; we're not going to be held accountable at question time', which is a many centuries old tradition in the Westminster system where the government of the day answers questions from the Parliament and puts it out there so the whole community knows. We have really seen now over multiple weeks the trend of the new administration, where they are just not prepared to answer questions at all, and we are actually increasingly seeing a ludicrous situation where just one word can be picked from a question and the Premier in particular will filibuster.

Iwan Walters: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, on relevance, as fascinating as it is to hear the member for Polwarth's reflections on question time, it is not entirely germane to the bill.

Richard RIORDAN: On the point of order, I would just like to respond that it is entirely relevant because I am referring to clause 23, which references the ability of the government to listen to the community and give feedback. I would suggest to my fellow member that in fact I am being entirely relevant talking about question time because it is the living proof of how this government cannot be trusted. I would suggest that that point of order is out of order.

Nathan Lambert: Further to the point of order, Acting Speaker, I would note that the member for Polwarth's comments and defence on standing order 109 directly contradict the substantive point he is trying to make, and I ask that you rule his point of order out of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Daniela De Martino): I would say this has been quite a wideranging debate, but I will bring the member for Polwarth back to the bill, please.

Richard RIORDAN: In the minute and a half I have left to comment on this remarkably thin effort – although, mind you, it is not as thin as yesterday's offering on the Prahran Mechanics' Institute – I would say, in my eight years, possibly this week has led to one of the flimsiest legislative agendas that this government has been able to put up. Correct me if I am wrong, but I think the Minister for Police's urgent, critical piece of legislation that he wanted to bring to the house, that he wanted done and dusted by today I think it was, has managed to have the wheels fall off. He is nodding with agreement there. He has had a delayed legislative agenda there, the minister at the table, the Minister for Police.

The opposition has looked at this bill and reviewed it cautiously. We have passed our concerns on to our colleagues in the upper house, and hopefully in that environment we will see greater debate, particularly on clause 23.

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (15:42): I thank the member for Polwarth, but I move:

That debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024*Second reading***Debate resumed on motion of Anthony Carbines:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

And Michael O'Brien's amendment:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted and replaced with the words 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government:

- (a) properly consults with the medical profession in Victoria on the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine;
- (b) ensures that victim-survivors of sexual assault can obtain timely forensic medical services; and
- (c) improves safeguards for the use and sharing of personal information held by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine.'

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (15:43): It is a great pleasure to rise and add my contribution to the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024. This week I have heard some great contributions on this bill in this place, and it is great to have the opportunity to add to this debate. This bill ultimately replaces the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Act 1985, the VIFM act, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine's enabling legislation. This bill will support the VIFM in maintaining its status as a world-leading forensic medical institute. The VIFM provides independent forensic medical and scientific services that support the justice system. It works with families of deceased victims of violence, police, the courts and other Australian and international jurisdictions.

Although I knew a little about the VIFM's work, after doing some research for this bill and looking further deeply into their work, I have been amazed at the amount of incredible things that they do to support our community. While it is a statutory government agency with its core function to investigate the causes of death, the VIFM also operates as a department of forensic medicine in partnership with Monash University and houses the Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria, providing tissue for transplant. As I alluded to, there is a long list of things that they do that service our community, the scientific community as well, our justice system and indeed the Victorian community.

Some of those things are incredible. They assist with human identification services for all reportable deaths in Victoria. They provide clinical forensic medical services, which involve the examining and first-line treatment of victims of crime, alleged perpetrators and police detainees, including fitness for interview assessments. They assist with disaster victim identification services in emergencies and fatal events such as bushfires, which we have seen and which we know are part of our landscape here in Victoria. They do support families who are going through the coronial system, including assistance throughout a death investigation and genetic counselling services. They assist with toxicology analysis on behalf of Victoria Police, of samples collected from drivers who are suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They provide data intelligence to inform government policies, consultancy services, missing persons identification using DNA – and I will talk a little bit further about that in a moment – a tissue bank, and education and training services for forensic scientists.

The government did conduct a review into the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Act to ensure the institute remained in a good position to continue its best practice forensic services. In addition to that review, the government has invested heavily into their services with a \$100 million-plus investment into the VIFM since the 2021–22 state budget, which has allowed them to really build upon their capabilities, including through an MRI machine. Building upon that review, the bill introduces some principles to guide the VIFM's work, a new governance structure and clarifications of its objectives and functions, as well as introducing a data-sharing and information-sharing framework.

Ultimately, as we do in this place with many acts that need to be reviewed or looked at, we are modernising the VIFM in its standard of public sector governance and service delivery. It will ensure

that this facility remains well positioned as a world-class and best practice forensic service. So why are these reforms needed? The enabling legislation needed to be looked at as something that has not been changed for over 30 years, and the reforms, as I said, do modernise the VIFM to meet community expectations.

In looking at the research and looking at this bill, I learned that the VIFM was established in 1985 to provide those forensic and pathology scientific services to the State Coroner, but since that establishment we have obviously seen such significant scientific and medical advancements. Since 1985 our technology has certainly advanced. In 1985 in the UK there was a gentleman who made what was called the very first public call on a Vodafone mobile phone in the UK. The mobile phone was only just being introduced in 1985, and we certainly have seen changes in our technology since then. I note also from looking at the research and looking at the work that the VIFM did there was a senior scientist that had worked at the VIFM for three decades, and he described what the advancements looked like to him. He described how when they first started doing research it was like detecting something the size of a beachball in an Olympic-size pool, and nowadays it is like looking for a marble, they can now zoom down into such detail.

Today the VIFM is a world-class medical institute that supports the coronial, criminal and other legal processes, and I would like to highlight in the time I have got left some of the significant work and interesting cases that they have worked on. In the event of a death that does need to be investigated, they can conduct a routine screening test for 327 different illicit substances, prescription drugs and poisons. Bloods are usually taken, but hair strands and eye fluid can be forensically examined as well. Cases can be straightforward or they can be very complex. Some can be recent deaths, and others can be cold cases.

By chance, one of the cold cases that has been investigated is when in 2017 a snorkeller found some remains at Shallow Inlet, which is near Sandy Point near Wilsons Promontory. Those remains were handed over to the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, who started to do an investigation. They knew that the remains belonged to a male aged in his 20s or 30s who was about 170 centimetres tall. They were able to get DNA, but it did not match any of the databases that they had. So they decided that their last chance was to then try and use forensic investigative genetic genealogy, or FIGG as they like to call it. That involves people uploading their own DNA to a database in a genealogy sense for family history – a family database. They ultimately found, after a lot of work and some good luck, that the remains were those of Christopher Luke Moore, who was a World War I veteran and a farmer who had gone missing there. They found a match with two of Christopher's descendants, one from his mother's side and one from his father's side. They had uploaded their DNA to that genealogy database. It gave the VIFM researchers an opportunity to build upon that family tree, and the family were then able to know what happened to their relative. I think this is an example of the incredible work that they do there.

I think too, notably, that the principles of this bill and why it is so important are really to modernise the legislation but also to consider, as much as possible, how the work that they do needs to have respect for cultural beliefs and those impacted by events. Additionally, this bill does underscore the need to acknowledge the significant nature of events that the institute addresses and responds to and how they need to do that with sensitivity and empathy for those that have been affected. While the VIFM's primary role is to serve the justice system, it often works by engaging people who have endured extremely difficult circumstances, and taking a respectful and considerate approach is integral to that part of the VIFM's mission. This is about modernising the work that they do, a new governance structure and some clarification around their objectives and functions and information sharing, and I commend the bill to the house.

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (15:52): I also rise in support of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024, and can I start by echoing the sentiments of the member for Bellarine in acknowledging some of the wonderful contributions that have been made in relation to this bill from both sides. I think there have been some really interesting and valuable contributions. I think part of

the reason is because the community really does tend to hold a high degree of interest in matters of forensics. I think everyone would be pleased to know that the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM) is considered one of the very best. It is a world-class forensic medical institute that sits at the heart of coronial, criminal and many legal processes, and it has undoubtedly been one of the great advances in criminal justice over the past 30 years.

But this was not always the case. I can see the member for Greenvale sitting here, and I know he is an avid student of urban history. I was interested to see the journey that we have taken to get to this place in terms of matters forensic, particularly as they relate to coronial investigations. I was reading that initially after the colonial settlement of Melbourne bodies were often stored and inquests were held in pubs. That was because they were the coolest places – not in terms of them being the place to hang out, but literally because they would have had thick bluestone walls and probably thick bluestone cellars, and the basement of a pub would have been the coolest place, in temperature, in which you could actually store a body and then undertake some forensic investigations.

Obviously as the population grew the health concerns and the stench became a bit too overpowering. You would not probably want to be going to the pub with the line-up of bodies in the basement. So it was decided at that time, and that was back in the 1850s, that a central morgue should be established, and by the 1890s that had become the main site of coronial inquests. The old Melbourne City Mortuary in Flinders Street carried out this work until 1951, and then the institution was moved to the extension of Flinders Street, where it operated until 1988. As the years passed it was becoming apparent that the facilities of the mortuary were inadequate and incompatible with the expectations of modern society. As described by Professor Vernon Plueckhahn, the professor of forensic medicine at Monash University, in his history of the establishment of the VIFM:

The foyer of the building was often filled with bereaved relatives, witnesses, lawyers and police waiting for an inquest to start. Odours from the mortuary usually permeated through the crowded foyer. Distressed relatives called to make formal identifications had to find their way through the crowd to the identification room. No dignity existed for either the living or the dead.

By the 1950s the College of Pathologists of Australia had raised their concerns that the standards of forensic pathology in Australia were not uniform and that in many areas autopsy work was not satisfactory. The college recommended that a forensic pathologist have access to laboratory facilities in the fields of histopathology, bacteriology, biochemistry and toxicology to enhance the quality and reliability of medico-legal death investigations.

Over subsequent years we saw successive Victorian governments come to terms with the need for reform. It was in 1975 that the then Attorney-General Vernon Wilcox QC established the Coroners Court Review Committee, which was tasked with inquiring into whether existing arrangements for the identification of deceased persons, post-mortem examinations and forensic toxicology and analytic services were satisfactory for present and future needs. In its final report, which was submitted in February 1977, the committee recommended that all coroners autopsies in Victoria be performed by or under the supervision of a qualified pathologist, who had access to ancillary services such as toxicology, serology, histopathology, microbiology and radiology.

Finally, when the Cain government was elected in 1982, we saw the fast evolution of forensic medicine infrastructure in Victoria. This was the basis for the establishment of the initial Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine – the act that we are seeking to repeal today – and the institute itself, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Pathology, opened in July 1988, providing Victoria with a new purpose-built building for the provision of forensic pathology services to the coroner, courts and the wider community. As the Premier said at the time, at the opening of the institute:

With the opening of this Institute we leap 20 years ahead. Now, for the first time in Australia, there will be a team of Forensic Pathologists working with state-of-the-art technology in a state-of-the-art building, to provide comprehensive high quality services to the coroner, the courts and the people of Victoria. They are essential services.

I think we even read that it was very visionary at the time, but as the Premier at the time said, 'We are looking 20 years ahead,' and now we are 40 years ahead. This is a good opportunity to revisit the act that was introduced at that time and the institute that was developed to make sure that it is actually fit for purpose at the moment.

The institute, particularly at the time when it was opened, was groundbreaking, bringing together forensic, medical and scientific expertise under one roof and including formal academic activities in its operations. For instance, the partnership created between the Victorian government and Monash University saw the establishment of the department of forensic medicine within its medical faculty. We also created a world-class IT system to handle and process the case load and manage data stemming from its work, established expert boards – well ahead of almost any jurisdiction in the world – and exported our findings globally and supported other jurisdictions in times of disaster. The VIFM also oversees the crucial work of the Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria, it partners with the Australian Sports Brain Bank to investigate post-mortem examination of people who have participated in sports with risk of repetitive head injury, it engages in teaching and research to improve public health and safety and of course it undertakes research into sexual assault to help us protect the community from this means of offending.

We do have a lot to be proud of, but even the finest institutions require the appropriate legislation to ensure that they can step into the next era with confidence. This bill seeks to replace the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Act 1985 as the enabling legislation and ensures that the VIFM can continue to enjoy its well-earned status as a world-leading institution in forensic medicine.

I am proud to say that this Labor government has a solid record of supporting the work of the VIFM. In 2021, \$93 million was delivered to build its capacity in essential service delivery, including through the addition of MRI capability, lab equipment, infrastructure improvement and new case management systems. In 2023 an additional \$19.47 million was delivered to help its transition to a new clinical forensic medicine service delivery model that meets victim-survivor needs and expectations and ensures a sustainable and efficient service.

The government conducted a review of the VIFM act to ensure it remains well positioned to continue to provide best practice forensic services. The bill implements key findings from the review and is the final plank of reform for this vital service. The key features of this legislation include the introduction of principles to guide the VIFM's work, a new governance structure, clarification of VIFM's objects and functions and an information-sharing network. The bill introduces principles that aim to guide VIFM in a people-centred approach to service delivery and commitment to excellence and clinical and research governance and to improving public health while serving the justice system. It also introduces a new governance structure, one designed to meet best practice standards for public entities. Key reforms in this structure include moving to a skills-based governing board and introducing two key leadership roles, those of chief executive officer and director of forensic medicine. The VIFM continues to provide outstanding service for the people of Victoria, and I commend the bill to the house.

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (16:02): I too rise to speak in support of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024. This bill is nothing short of what families and victim-survivors deserve. This bill means that we will continue to improve the services that are available to people in their time of need and to give them their dignity after they have passed away. That is the sort of government that we are: we care for people at the hardest times in their lives, whether it be following an attack, an accident, an emergency, a bushfire or indeed family violence, because this government will always stand for people in their greatest hour of need. The onus is on us to make sure that we have the structures, the systems and the institutions in place to care for people when they are so vulnerable. This is people at their most vulnerable, and so it is appropriate and it is right that we have done what we can to ensure the most respectful service and the best support for people and their families.

This bill comes after we have already invested \$100 million in this institute to ensure updated technology and infrastructure and other needs, and the technology is such that it has been featured and celebrated in news articles and is considered some of the best that is available. But as we know with, for example, education, it is not just the buildings; it is the care and the expertise of the teachers inside and the systems that we have in place in education. And with this, it is not just the \$100 million we have spent on infrastructure and technology; it is about the principles and the skills of those who inhabit that building and use that infrastructure.

We have this bill before the house that seeks to really clarify and strengthen a few things related to this institute. One of those important changes is to ensure that we have a skills-based governance board to make sure that the direction of the institute, the guidance of the institute, is provided by those who know from professional and personal experience what the best way is to deliver this service in a way that is high quality, in a way that is accountable and in a way that provides the dignity and respect that people deserve. That skills-based board will be made up of multiple people. They will work together with the director and the CEO, because another one of the changes that this bill seeks to introduce is that, rather than having the director of medicine or the technical person being across the governance and management of the operations of the institute, it creates the possibility for a second role, a CEO. Just because you are a good director, it does not mean you are a good CEO – just as, just because you are a good member for Nepean, it does not mean you would be a good opposition leader. This bill seeks to create the opportunity for the board, if they so wish, to hire on merit both a CEO and a director. That skills-based board will be accountable to the Attorney-General and through that to this place, and so this will ensure the appropriate level of oversight for such an important service, which as I said before, cares for people at the most vulnerable points in their lives.

That is why it is really important as well that we have really clear principles set out, really clear principles that help to guide the board, the CEO, the director and the staff, when they are performing their functions or powers, on what should be guiding them. Some of those principles are: meeting professional standards relating to scientific integrity and ethics; pursuing benefits to the community and to the justice system; and – this one speaks to me particularly – recognising the significant nature of the events to which the institute's services relate and the need to be sensitive and responsive to persons affected by those events; promoting public health and safety; promoting the administration of justice; respecting the cultural beliefs of persons affected by the events to which the institute's services relate – another very important principle in such a multicultural community; and recognising the diverse needs of Aboriginal communities, including the importance of self-determination and connection to culture, family, community and country.

I think this legislation does a really great job of listing the principles there, and I think that they are a fine set of principles for any institute to be led by. On the last one there around self-determination, we know that this government has worked hard to embed the principle of self-determination across all of its work, across the departments and across the agencies – because we know that self-determination needs to be a guiding factor, a guiding principle, in the making of decisions.

I will be interested to learn more about how the institute – and I probably should have done this research ahead of this contribution – ensures that people with intellectual disability are carefully and thoughtfully supported during difficult times. We know that women with disability are seven times more likely to be sexually assaulted than women without a disability, so I am sure that the fine leaders there at the institute have made sure that their staff and those they support are able to support people, especially people with intellectual disability, in such a time.

I referred there to a statistic, and we know that this institute through its work over such a long period of time has gathered information – data – that would be really informative and really helpful for different parts of the system and the work that they do, so this legislation will also clarify how the institute can use and disclose information for purposes other than the primary purpose of collection. That could be in dealing with coroners, police, the courts and other agencies or institutions. We know that it would benefit them to have an understanding of the type of knowledge that this institute has

gathered, so I think that is a great clarification in this legislation, which will be welcomed by the police and the coroner and other agencies. This information-sharing network will make sure that there are appropriate disclosures, clearing up the legal ambiguity and making sure there are safeguards in place, because again, this is a vulnerable time in people's lives and I am sure that they will want to be reassured that there are safeguards in place for such personal information.

I started my contribution noting that this is legislation that seeks to ensure the best for victim-survivors in their time of need, and I note at the table we have the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence. She leads our government in supporting victim-survivors. Our government has worked so hard to improve standards – for example, through the multi-agency risk assessment and management framework and through Orange Door – and I know that our hardworking minister continues to develop innovative ways to ensure that nobody in their time of need is left alone and everyone knows that they have our full support. I commend this bill to the house.

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) (16:12): I too join the contributions happening here in the chamber to speak on the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024. Although the institute is in Southbank, a bit of a way from Bass, that does not mean the work, obviously, is any less important. We have had some very heartfelt contributions on this bill. I know a lot of members have been speaking on the annual report, and it is quite a comprehensive document. I draw the chamber to their motto, which is 'Veritas omnia vincit – truth conquers all'. They do groundbreaking research. They have an exemplary international reputation. They address multiple specialist forums worldwide and are a respected and highly regarded team of doctors and scientists, legal and information technology staff, researchers and scholars. Their independence and commitment to the discovery of truth are also to be commended, as too is their really empathetic approach to the victims of the vicissitudes of life, as mentioned in the annual report, who come within their ambit.

There are also a swathe of publications and specialist books, and we have heard those spoken about as well: *Ned Kelly: Under the Microscope*; *Guidelines for Medico-Legal Care of Victims of Sexual Violence*; *The Forensic Pharmacology of Drugs of Abuse*; and the *Handbook of Forensic Anthropology and Archaeology*.

Forensic science is going on all around us every day even though we often do not realise it. In a nutshell forensic medicine uses medical knowledge to solve crime and support the justice system. The Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine is that key plank of our legal system, working closely alongside our police and courts providing expert evidence that is needed for the proper and fair distribution of justice, and it is home to some of our most skilled medical minds. The institute also works alongside families and hospitals, especially as the home of the Donor Tissue Bank of Victoria, and conducts teaching and research activities to help further community understanding of forensic pathology – truly a hub of knowledge.

The institute has played a key role in solving some of the state's most notable crimes and mysteries, like uncovering the real identity of the Sandy Point skeleton last year. Nor is its work limited just to our state. As I have mentioned, they undertake work nationally and internationally, engaging with medical and forensic practitioners in other parts of the world to share knowledge, build capacity and contribute evidence in some cases. Overall, it is an incredibly important part of our community and one that needs to be supported to ensure it continues to play an effective role for our state far into the future. We can be rightly proud that Victoria is home to this world-leading facility and proud of the reforms that we are seeking to implement through this bill, which will strengthen the institute for future generations.

The Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine is currently undergoing a series of reforms supported by us here in the Allan Labor government. In 2021 it received \$93.1 million to support the development of its capability and service delivery. This included new equipment and infrastructure improvements. Then in 2023 our government granted the institute \$19.47 million as it transitioned to a new service delivery model to better meet the needs of victim-survivors. We undertook a review of the governing

act, and that leads us to today. This bill currently before us implements the key findings of that review to complete a series of reforms it has undergone in recent years. It is time to sign off on this body of work and let the institute get on with its important work. By July 2025 the changes laid out in the bill will come into effect if passed. It sets out to achieve three key things: to establish the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, to repeal the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Act 1985 and to amend acts as a consequence of these changes.

A major part of the bill before us deals with the governance of the institute. The institute that will officially be established under the bill will have a number of objectives, much as it does in its current form, including providing or assisting in the provision of forensic services and human tissue services; overseeing Victoria's forensic services; assisting the Coroners Court; contributing to public health and safety, the administration of justice and a reduction in preventable deaths; and contributing to the development of knowledge, practice and innovation in forensic and human tissue services through research, teaching and training. Its functions will include conducting medical examinations at the direction of the coroner, forensic medical examinations, receiving reports of reportable and reviewable deaths to refer to coroners, taking possession of bodies, providing information about the coronial process to family and next of kin, receiving human tissue and providing teaching and training and conducting research, among other things.

The institute will have a governing body consisting of up to eight members plus a chair, all with relevant knowledge in forensic medicine related science, governance, criminal justice or commercial, operational, legal or financial matters, appointed on the recommendation of the Attorney-General. The board will then appoint a CEO, ensuring the organisation is all aligned on key decision-making as it looks to the future. The bill also provides for the appointment of a director of forensic medicine, someone with expertise in science and forensic pathology. The director will advise the CEO on matters of clinical governance and forensic and human tissue services and will supervise teaching and research at the institute.

At every step this refreshed organisation will be guided by Victoria's foremost experts in the field and by rigorous standards in science, medicine and governance. It will continue to be an organisation that Victorians, the nation and the world can trust in matters of forensic pathology and take pride in. Added to this, all the way through these changes the bill requires that those carrying out a power or function under the bill should recognise the importance of the institute's work and the sensitivity attached to it as well as meeting professional standards of scientific integrity and ethics, principles that the institute itself and the people that work there also uphold each day in their work.

The bill contains sundry other administrative details – things like updating other acts with the name of this new bill – that taken together will result in a cohesive, refreshed Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine ready to take on the specialist tasks needed to ensure our justice system continues to run smoothly. It is a jam-packed bill. There is a fair bit of work to be done before the commencement date next year, especially on the governance side, so it is imperative that we get on with passing the bill, and with this in mind I commend the bill to the house.

Vicki WARD (Eltham – Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Employment)
(16:21): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

*Motions***Budget papers 2024–25****Debate resumed on motion of Steve Dimopoulos:**

That this house takes note of the 2024–25 budget papers.

John MULLAHY (Glen Waverley) (16:21): I rise to take note of the 2024–25 budget papers. This year's budget was titled 'Helping Families', and it certainly does that. This budget focuses on the right priorities – easing the cost of living and investing in our future – and builds on a fairer and stronger Victoria. Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic we knew that Victoria's economy would need support and time to recover from what was a one-in-100-year-event. Our government took the necessary measures to keep our economy moving and our state growing. This meant that we needed to spend additional money to stimulate and support small businesses and Victorians. Now, with international pressures, we are fully aware of the rising cost of living, and this budget takes sensible and proactive measures to help Victorians.

Victoria is proudly the economic powerhouse and centre of Australia's economy. Gross state product per capita is higher than pre-COVID levels, and we are the fastest growing state in the country, equating to the strongest rebound since the pandemic. Momentum is growing, with record jobs growth and 600,000 new jobs created since the depths of the pandemic. Let me repeat that: that is 600,000 new jobs created for Victorians who have the dignity of work and a pay cheque to come home with.

This budget invests in working families in the Glen Waverley district, funding initiatives in multiple sectors to improve service delivery and ease the cost of living. I am proud that we continue to invest in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, a place of diversity and potential. As part of a total package of \$28.78 million, this budget supports the continuation of the Eastern Community Legal Centre's MABELS program. This program provides early intervention for women experiencing family violence through a health–justice partnership with maternal and child health services. A continuing pattern of behaviour needs to be met with determined action. On average police attend a family violence incident every 6 minutes in Victoria. Family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children. One woman is killed nearly every week in Australia due to family violence, and an estimated 22 per cent of Australian women aged 18 and above have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.

The impacts of family violence are multifaceted, whether they be physical, emotional, psychological or financial. Many are victimised multiple times, and they unfortunately do not recover quickly from their traumatic experiences. I know too well that family and domestic violence is often a case of life and death. I recall going to the police station with my friend to support her in filing for an AVO against her abuser. Heartbreakingly, this was not enough. We lost my dear friend Wendy Chow at the hands of a pathetic coward. Although Wendy is no longer here with us today, her memory lives on, and our efforts to combat these disgraceful acts of violence continue.

The vast majority of violence is committed by men. The way in which men conduct themselves in both private and public situations must be better, and this government is taking nation-leading and actually world-leading action. We have appointed the member for Mordialloc as the first ever Parliamentary Secretary for Men's Behaviour Change. Whether it be examining the role of social media or researching cultural factors, I am proud to be part of the Allan Labor government, which is taking proactive action, and I thank the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence at the table for all her work in this space.

Responding to family violence also requires a significant health response, and this budget continues to build on an extensive record of investment in Victoria's health system. In an overall budget package of \$572.5 million, significant funding has been allocated to expand the hospital capacity at Monash Health Clayton's emergency department. With major works to start next year, there will be a seven-floor expansion of the Monash Medical Centre, delivering a new intensive care unit, birthing suites

MOTIONS

and operating rooms. Projected to be completed in 2029, this will provide a capacity of up to 7500 more surgeries and 2400 more births annually – and a shout-out to my daughter, who was born at that hospital. She has just gone home sick, unfortunately, today. These improvements will directly benefit the residents of the Glen Waverley district as they will have access to world-class medical facilities close to home, and I know my constituents will be extremely grateful for that.

Since coming into government in 2014 this government has continued to provide record funding in our health sector as the cost of running the system has continued to increase. Victoria's public hospitals since we came to government now employ 5000 additional doctors and 13,000 additional nurses. Elucidating an appropriate and extensive understanding of the pressures hospitals face, we are providing more than \$5 million in an overall budget package to provide inpatient bed-based treatment and care for patients with eating disorders. Monash Health has excellent facilities and provides the necessary services for people with eating disorders, and this funding continues to provide the certainty and security that both the patients and the hospitals deserve. Investing in the healthcare infrastructure our state needs creates jobs, saves lives, cuts waiting lists and takes pressure off our hospitals. Only the Allan Labor government will deliver the hospitals and health care that Victorians need.

The single greatest investment a government can make is in education. We know that for every school built, \$2 for every \$1 invested in education is returned, but money cannot quantify the life-changing impacts of supporting our young people. In seeking to provide greater pathways for young people to engage in and pursue their passions, we are investing \$23 million to support students in completing their vocational education and training certificate. This includes \$2.7 million for the Education First Youth Foyer down at Holmesglen TAFE in my electorate. In a purpose-built accommodation facility, this program helps young people who have experienced homelessness with specialist support from youth workers and teachers to support them in their education. It is an excellent program, growing students' both academic and practical skills, and it is delivered in partnership with Launch Housing and the Brotherhood of St Laurence. I sincerely commend the work that they do at the foyer, and I trust that continuing investment by our government is helping some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Additionally, our free kinder program has saved 140,000 families up to \$2500 in fees. We have also initiated the Glasses for Kids program, which will help 110,000 kids to receive free vision screening and prescription glasses. An extra \$19 million from this budget will help kinders renovate and upgrade early learning facilities as part of the Building Blocks grants program. We are expanding classrooms and native gardens as well as upgrading existing technology and outdoor play spaces. Both of these amazing projects have received additional funding in this year's budget and this in conjunction with the new school saving bonus will make a real difference to families. The school saving bonus is a one-off payment to families with children at government schools and families with children at non-government schools who need it most. As a parent with a young daughter, I know the costs of sending a child to school certainly do add up. From uniforms to camps, excursions, incursions, supplies and extracurricular activities, the school saving bonus will assist with the cost of living and go a long way to ensuring that kids do not miss out.

On top of these extensive support programs, in this budget there is \$6 million to extend the Get Active Kids voucher program, which provides up to \$200 to help eligible families with the costs of sporting club registrations, uniforms and equipment. Many children are at their best on the footy field, on the netball court or on the cricket pitch. Sport provides an opportunity for kids to be the best versions of themselves, showcasing their leadership, teamwork and resilience. It also brings the community together, fostering long-lasting friendships, and that is why am proud to note that the 2024–25 budget funds two magnificent community sport projects in my electorate. Firstly, \$500,000 of funding has been announced for the delivery of a new pavilion at Brandon Park Reserve in Glen Waverley. Home to the Mazenod Football Club and the Mulgrave Wheelers Hill Cricket Club, this reserve is frequented by many all year round. With a soccer pitch and cricket oval, this widely used facility will greatly

benefit from the rebuilding of the existing pavilion, which I must say is in a little bit of disrepair and is not functional for women's sport at the moment.

In further positive news for our community the Allan Labor government is investing \$300,000 to resurface the Central Reserve south oval in Glen Waverley. We are just going to have to wait till the member for Ashwood's Waverley Blues finish up their season this year, and then their Mount Waverley Reserve will be upgraded. A resurfaced ground will mean better irrigation and drainage, leading to better playing conditions. With a brand new surface the chance of injuries will decrease and the standard of play will increase.

I know the Mazenod Old Collegians Football Club and the Mazenod Panthers all-abilities football club, who both play their footy there, are very excited that their home ground is receiving an upgrade. The old collegians have an excellent football program in place, with boys and girls teams for the juniors and men's and women's for the seniors, and the Panthers do an incredible job in providing an opportunity for people with an intellectual disability to compete and to participate in sport. The Panthers are great. I really do think that these upgrades are a symbol of the values that this government holds – bringing people together, not dividing, investing in the future and supporting inclusion for everyone, no matter their background or ability.

How could I not mention the government's record on the infrastructure agenda? The Metro Tunnel will transform the way Melbourne's transit system operates. Opening next year, Victorians will see the benefits of eased congestion on the city loop and more frequent services. It is only because of the Labor government that this is being built ahead of schedule, and the 2024–25 budget invests more than \$233 million to continue the works and upgrades as well as recruit and upskill train drivers.

I am also delighted to mention another infrastructure project. I must give a warning; it might get some people a little upset over there. Of course I am talking about the SRL, and as a proud Labor government member representing the eastern suburbs of Melbourne it is not lost on me how the people of Victoria have voted in favour of the Suburban Rail Loop.

A member interjected.

John MULLAHY: I will get to that. As the name suggests, this project forms a loop around Melbourne's metropolitan region. Connecting different train lines, it will lead to an easing of congestion and faster travel times and it will take cars off our roads. This project is more than just upgrading our train lines. It contributes to moving Victoria to a greener and more energy-efficient state. The SRL will also drive economic growth and create hubs in our middle rings, which will reshape our city. Areas around the new stations, such as Glen Waverley, will be areas with options for education, food, leisure and services, and having many of these areas connected to each other will help improve Melbourne significantly.

It will also host diverse housing options. I do want to commend the work that has been done and will continue to be done in planning reform to allow for medium and higher density housing to be built. For far too long the development and supply of housing has been blocked. Progress in dealing with housing affordability has met with the barriers of not only the Liberal Party but also the Greens political party. They choose to spin false narratives and play political games, while their council counterparts continue to block new houses being built in their local government areas. For all of the talk of nimbyism, it would be best if the Greens had a good look at their own backyard.

But this government is pushing on, through actions and not in words. We will implement the changes that are required for our state to become a more accessible place for all. Not once but twice the SRL has been taken to an election and voters in the east have overwhelmingly endorsed it – and in saying so I give a special shout-out to the eastern bloc as well as Mr Leane and Ms Terpstra in the other place. As the representatives of Melbourne's east we all look forward to the SRL being delivered. While the Liberal Party can yet again seek to cut the SRL, we on this side will stand staunchly opposed to cutting infrastructure investment, cutting the 6000 jobs and cutting an opportunity to modernise our public

transport system. It is the same old Liberal trope of cutting investment, cutting jobs and cutting projects.

I do also note in this context that this government is making nation-leading investments into infrastructure. Many remember with disgust the actions of the former Liberal federal government. That government refused to acknowledge that Victoria even existed. They did not remember we existed when they robbed us of our fair share of the GST allocation or our fair share of infrastructure spending. The only time they managed to find Victoria on the map was when undermining our public health response throughout the pandemic, attacking the thousands of frontline workers. To fill the void of a hopeless Liberal government, this state has stepped in – and beyond. We are continuing to progress with important projects, such as removing 110 level crossings by 2030, and it is great news that only the other day our 84th dangerous and congested level crossing was removed.

I will conclude by noting the record jobs and economic growth we have here in Victoria. This is a budget that reflects the priorities of our government in helping families with the cost of living. I know my constituents will welcome the investment made in the Glen Waverley district and beyond, and I am proud to take note of the responsible 2024–25 Victorian state budget.

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (16:36): I am so happy to follow that contribution. I am more than happy to rise on the take-note motion for the 2024–25 budget. I did not think I was going to get to it this year the way the government was going. Thankfully they have listened and have guillotined bills today so we can talk on this. The fact of the matter is – and this is the reality of this government – Labor cannot manage money and Labor cannot manage projects, and Victorians are paying the price. They are paying the price. Before I get stuck into this, we do have to go back to the 2022 election and have to go back to the previous Premier. We have to look at what the previous Premier said at the 2022 election, with the Deputy Premier at the time, the now Premier, right beside him. He stood up there like the Messiah, arms spread, and he said, ‘We can have it all. We can have the SRL, we can have the hospitals and we can have the schools.’ He stood up there proud as punch.

But the reality is now that that is not the case. It is not the case, and I do not know how government members are standing up saying that this is a great budget when it was reported that in their caucus meeting there were people in tears – and I do not think they were tears of happiness. I do not think they were tears of happiness when the government had shelved 100 projects that affected their electorates. I know the member for Bass – I respect the member for Bass; she is a nice person. In Wonthaggi, stage 2 of her hospital has been delayed. The member for Pakenham is another nice person; I have a lot of respect for the member for Pakenham. The Pakenham hospital still has not been started. So to stand up and spruik that this is a great budget is unbelievable. I just cannot believe the conviction that the government backbenchers have when they get up and go, ‘Yay, this is great budget, but we’re not getting the things we were promised.’

I want to talk about the Treasurer, a fellow who has got a similar haircut to me. Again, the Treasurer is not a bad guy. But I did feel sorry for the Treasurer. I felt very sorry for the Treasurer. And where has the member for Glen Waverley gone? He has done a runner, and that is a shame, because this goes to his point. The Treasurer said he was very upset with the federal government because Victoria was not getting its fair share, and I agree with him 100 per cent. The Treasurer stated that Victoria makes up 26 per cent of the population of Australia and we should get that amount of infrastructure spending. I felt sorry for him; I did. I was looking at him and I could see a bit of a tear in his eye. I thought, ‘The bloke needs a packet of tissues and some Tim Tams just to comfort him a bit,’ but I agreed with him. But it is a pity. The Treasurer is very, very hypocritical, because when it comes to infrastructure spending he does not practise what he preaches – far from it. The Treasurer stated that Victoria should get 26 per cent of the federal budget for infrastructure because Victoria makes up 26 per cent of the population. Well, I will say this to the Treasurer: regional Victoria makes up 25 per cent of the Victorian population, so how come regional Victoria does not get 25 per cent of infrastructure spending? In fact out of the \$96 billion, regional Victoria is getting \$2 billion. How is that fair? How, on one hand, can you blame the federal government for not giving you adequate funding, and yet you

turn around and do not give that same funding to regional Victoria? No-one can dispute that that is a hypocritical statement.

The Suburban Rail Loop is a massive problem in Victoria, because it is draining all the money. It is a big black hole of debt that this government is putting us into, and it is affecting the whole of Victoria. Even today the Premier delusionally said that the Suburban Rail Loop will benefit all Victorians. It will not. It does not benefit the seat of Narracan in any way, shape or form. It does not benefit the seat of Mildura, and it does not benefit the seats of Gippsland East, Gippsland South or Morwell. That statement is a blind statement. Although the Premier says, 'I'm from regional Victoria,' she does not care about regional Victoria, and that is a problem.

That is a problem in my electorate. In this budget the single biggest issue my electorate has is a new hospital. I have just heard the member for Glen Waverley talk about hospitals and about how great his hospitals are – well, my hospital is stuffed. It is the best way to put it. I would love to use more language, but it would be unparliamentary so I will not do that. My hospital was promised to start in 2024, yet, guess what, in this budget there is no more funding. When will the hospital start? It affects a catchment of about 130,000 people. We have a hospital that is in disrepair. My electoral officer's wife went in for a procedure – a gallstone removal – and for recovery got put in the maternity ward. If anyone says to me, 'We're investing in health in Victoria,' I will call BS on that, purely because I do not see it invested in my electorate. It was the one big commitment that my electorate has had in as long as I can remember. The then Premier came down. It was a bit of a half-baked announcement; it was in the backyard of someone's house in Warragul. They said, 'We're going to build a hospital. There is \$610 million to \$675 million, and it will start in 2024.' Well, it has not started. It is not even close to starting. Looking at the budget papers and the fact that it is not in the 2024–25 budget, hopefully, fingers crossed, it may get into the 2025–26 budget. If we are really lucky, guess when it will start, if it is going to start at all: probably about October 2026. And why is that? Because there is an election around the corner. But I will not be holding my breath, because we have seen the government fail on hospitals time and time again. They failed to deliver one in Geelong, they failed to deliver one in Bentleigh and they failed to deliver 10 community hospitals as well. They have failed on those commitments, so why would West Gippsland be any different? It was the only real announcement of any significance.

But there was another announcement of significance in my area, and that was for the Drouin Secondary College. The Drouin Secondary College got a commitment of \$11.7 million from this government, but, guess what, the budget papers came out, and guess which school got shelved? Drouin Secondary College. And why would that be? It is a Liberal seat.

Jess Wilson interjected.

Wayne FARNHAM: And they have run out of money. The only commitment they got out of this government at the last election was the Drouin Secondary College. They have got asbestos in there – it is a college. In reports, Warragul and Drouin have been the fastest growing areas in Australia in the last decade, and the one thing they could have done to help Drouin, which was to invest in the Drouin Secondary College, has been shelved.

Jess Wilson interjected.

Wayne FARNHAM: With 28 other projects, as the Shadow Minister for Early Childhood and Education rightly points out – another 28 other projects. But no, the Minister for Education said, 'We'll be done by 2026.' That is rubbish, because you have no money. The money is gone. I mean, I have heard the Premier talk about us getting in our DeLoreans and going back in time. Well, I tell you what, the people over that side love a DeLorean. They love going back to 1999. Obviously we are all big fans of the film *Back to the Future*.

A member: Or not.

Wayne FARNHAM: Well, it is a good film. There is a song in that film by Huey Lewis and the News. Huey Lewis and the News wrote a song, and there is a line in that song, and this is why I think it is very pertinent:

You don't need money, don't take fame
Don't need no credit card to ride this train

Well, you could not be any further from the truth in Victoria, because our credit card is maxed out and the government is proceeding with the Suburban Rail Loop – the biggest black hole of money that this state has ever seen. It is not costed properly, and your federal Labor mates do not even want to back it. You go, 'It's great, we've got a federal government.' They do not want to back the SRL. So how good is that?

Let us go to airport rail link. We heard the airport rail link was having a dispute and we could not start it because Melbourne Airport did not agree. Well, Melbourne Airport finally gave up – maybe under pressure, maybe they just wanted to get it done. They said, 'All right. Fine. We'll go above ground.' Then what happens? 'Oh, no, we can't do that for another four years.' Well, why not? Because all the money is going into the SRL, and airport rail link will now be deferred for another four years.

The amount of taxes this government is introducing on this state is beyond ridiculous. The lowest of low, the lowest tax you can ever introduce, is a death tax, and that is what they have done – a 650 per cent increase on probate on wills. The poor person that has passed away, they have already paid their taxes God knows how many times over, but 'No, no, no. We just want to punish them that little bit more and tax them again when they're in the ground.' That is absolutely disgraceful. It is disgraceful that the government has brought that tax in as well.

Quite frankly this is a state in crisis. We are a state in crisis because of our debt. The forecast is it will be \$188 billion. And what is the interest bill today and our forecast interest bill? \$15 million to \$26 million per day. Oh, yes, our economy is doing good! Yes, we are great fiscal managers! Bullshit. It is the worst fiscal management I can imagine. When the interest starts to exceed the revenue you have created to pay down the debt, you are going backwards at a very severe rate, so nobody can stand here and tell me in this chamber that our economy is in great condition, because it is not. Walk down Bourke Street. Observe Bourke Street. In the first 150 metres you will see nine empty shops. That is an indication of this economy.

There are not very many private cranes around Melbourne. The cranes we see are government cranes on government projects, with a CFMEU flag attached, which is adding 30 per cent to the cost. But if the economy was booming you would see a lot more private cranes in the air, not on government projects.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Nathan Lambert): I remind the member for Narracan that the word 'you' is a reflection on the Chair.

Wayne FARNHAM: I am trying to shout over the rabble over that side, Acting Speaker. I have a great deal of respect for you, but if you could bring them to order that would be appreciated.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Nathan Lambert): If the members on my right could come to order, the member for Narracan can continue.

Wayne FARNHAM: Thank you, Acting Speaker. I appreciate that. The sign of a good economy is when you have private investment, not private departure. We have had over 7000 businesses leave this state. Oh, yes, everybody wants to do business in Victoria! Rubbish. They are all going to South Australia. They are going to New South Wales. Even Tassie is picking up the slack, but not Victoria – no, no, no. But this economy is good! We get out there, and they say this economy is great, but what did the RBA say the other day about the Victorian economy? That it is dragging Australia down. That is a quote from the RBA, and I would trust the RBA over the member for Point Cook any day. I would much, much prefer their opinion than the member for Point Cook's.

This budget was an absolutely terrible budget. Two major commitments in my electorate – both shelved. The only thing you actually did was make two major commitments. My roads are in disrepair. I sat down with the Premier and begged for \$3 million for a roads study. I told him why – got nothing. But what happens? Geelong gets a \$4 million scoreboard they did not even want. For goodness sake. The sooner this government starts to invest in my electorate, the sooner I will say it is a good budget. But this budget is rubbish.

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (16:51): It is a pleasure to rise and have an opportunity to speak about this budget from this year and what it means for the Bellarine electorate. As a fairly new member to this place, being elected in 2022, this is the second budget that I have experienced in this place, and it really is a privilege to represent the Bellarine electorate. Not only is it beautiful in its landscape – it is a beautiful area – but it has a really strong sense of community as well, so it is a privilege to do this role. In doing this role I work extremely hard every day, whether it is meeting constituents, stakeholders or community groups to understand the work that they are doing or assisting people with many of their state issues. It is a real privilege. I meet many members of the community who are also big advocates for their work and for their passions and the projects they are undertaking, all for the betterment of our community. I am really fortunate and appreciative of the level of engagement that the Bellarine community constituents have with me – they understand their towns, they understand their priorities and what is important to them.

In doing this role I confidently say that this government and previous Labor governments have invested heavily into the Bellarine electorate, but when you are in government you realise and know that there is always more to do. That is what budgets do. They not only direct funds to projects but also demonstrate our values and our priorities. Being a regional MP, though, it is really important to me that our economy works in our regions. In the Bellarine we have a really strong tourism and visitor economy, and our Victorian regional unemployment rate does remain still below the national average, which is an incredible achievement, at a low 3.7 per cent, and Geelong is at 3.5 per cent. In the nearly 10 years since the Labor government was elected, over \$45 billion has been directly invested into regional Victoria, an average of \$4.5 billion a year. In the four years prior to that, only \$7.2 billion was invested – that is only \$1.8 billion per year, and I think that is a stark contrast that we can see. We do invest heavily in our regions.

Visitor expenditure in Victoria also hit a record high of \$37.8 billion in the year ending in December 2023, and thanks to that strong investment in our economy and our major events calendar, events in Geelong and the Bellarine are also particularly strong. We are booming, with around \$13.2 billion in major projects completed or underway or in the pipeline. It is absolutely incredible, the things that are happening in the Geelong region. The member for Narracan was talking about cranes. We have plenty of cranes in the sky, particularly the one at the convention centre at the moment for an absolutely terrific project that is underway in Geelong. It is going to see a real benefit to our region.

This budget has been really important for the Bellarine electorate as well, and there are a couple of projects I would like to highlight in particular that were earmarked in this last budget. One of them was a community farm called Farm My School that is at an old soccer pitch at Bellarine Secondary College. They have turned an old soccer pitch into a working farm – it is absolutely incredible. They are growing their own food and produce, they have a vineyard and they are wanting to do an orchard soon, and they are not only using that food to feed the Bellarine community – you can get veggie boxes delivered to your door or pick up a veggie box – but also using it in the canteen and in their food technology space at the school. What is really exciting about that project is that it is giving opportunities for students to learn horticultural and farming practices and have a pathway to a career maybe in that field. I have had the Treasurer visit; I have had Premier visit recently as well to see that amazing work that they are doing. They are creating a really diverse opportunity for students.

In another really exciting project at that site they have Deakin University now looking at the link between growing food and actually getting your hands dirty – so students getting into the dirt and growing the food – and what that means for what they call biomes, which is your gut health. They are

eating the food that they grow, and they are going to look at the link between that and anxiety and depression and general mental health and wellbeing. It is a really exciting project. I look forward to seeing what the results show. Already early research is showing you are what you eat – we know that, but it is showing that link between your gut health and your mental health. So that will be an exciting project happening at Farm My School, which we proudly had investment for in this last budget.

Speaking of keeping active and healthy, this budget is also investing \$6 million to extend our Get Active Kids vouchers, and that is the voucher that helps eligible families with the costs of sporting club rego, uniforms and equipment to participate in sport in their local communities. It is a fantastic initiative that really stops any barriers to families and children participating in sport. I know it makes a huge difference to families of the Bellarine. Particularly I know uniforms, boots and equipment can be expensive, and it is really important that we remove those barriers for families.

Another exciting project that was in this last budget was funding to support the Portarlington ferry service, and that is a service that is from Portarlington over to Docklands. It is an absolutely incredible link that we have from the Bellarine, not only for those local commuters that like to travel to work from Portarlington to Melbourne, but it also really supports the tourism and the regional jobs that we have on the Bellarine. So many tourists come from Melbourne over to the Bellarine to experience our wineries, beaches, distilleries, cafes, food and shopping, and it is an absolutely convenient and very pleasurable alternative way to visit our electorate. I was really pleased to see further funding in the budget for the Portarlington ferry. It is important to our local economy.

We have continued to also support food relief across our state and particularly for the Geelong and Bellarine region. We know that the cost of living is really an issue for families at the moment, and we should not have people worrying about putting food on their table, and that is why we have invested in supporting organisations that deliver food relief. Funding will be distributed to six of the regional food hubs, and that includes the Geelong region. I am really excited also to see that additional funding of \$2.5 million for neighbourhood houses and \$2 million to invest into organisations at a local level, and they will be able to apply for grants to support the food relief that they are delivering. I often speak to an organisation called Feed Me Bellarine that assists families in my electorate with food relief, and they are very excited to be able to apply for this type of funding and receive support for the good work that they do across the Bellarine.

This budget particularly is really important for the Bellarine. It is only one budget that I speak about today, but it is about building on previous budgets that really show our values and show the important agenda that this Allan Labor government has set for this state. I am really proud to be able to represent the Bellarine and support our communities.

The SPEAKER: Order! The time set down for consideration of the remaining items on the government business program has arrived, and I am required to interrupt business. The member will have the call when the house returns to this debate.

Bills

Prahran Mechanics' Institute Repeal Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Melissa Horne:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

The SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Subordinate Legislation and Administrative Arrangements Amendment Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Colin Brooks:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

The SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Anthony Carbines:

That this bill be now read a second time.

And Michael O'Brien's amendment:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted and replaced with the words 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government:

- (a) properly consults with the medical profession in Victoria on the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine;
- (b) ensures that victim-survivors of sexual assault can obtain timely forensic medical services; and
- (c) improves safeguards for the use and sharing of personal information held by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine.'

The SPEAKER: The minister has moved that the bill be now read a second time. The member for Malvern has moved a reasoned amendment to this motion. He has proposed to omit all words after 'That' and replace them with the words on the notice paper. The question is:

That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Those supporting the reasoned amendment by the member for Malvern should vote no.

Assembly divided on question:

Ayes (54): Juliana Addison, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Daniela De Martino, Gabrielle de Vietri, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Sam Hibbins, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Tim Read, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Ellen Sandell, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous,

Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Vicki Ward, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

Noes (24): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Martin Cameron, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Tim McCurdy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keefe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bridget Vallenge, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells, Nicole Werner, Jess Wilson

Question agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

The SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Housing

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (17:08): (781) The adjournment matter I raise is for the Minister for Housing in the other place. The Allan government has promised to build 80,000 homes every year for the next 10 years, and my question to the Minister for Housing is: how many of those promised 80,000 new homes have been built in my electorate of Murray Plains in the last 12 months?

As I said, the government has promised those 80,000 new homes each year for the next 10 years, and we are in desperate need of those homes. My office is currently dealing with a number of families who cannot find housing, and that is why it is so critical that the Allan government actually keeps those promises to build those new homes, because those families that we are dealing with just cannot get any help anywhere for a house. Of those 80,000 homes, my expectation would be that 25 per cent of the Victorian population lives in regional Victoria, so 25 per cent of those 80,000 new homes should be built in regional Victoria. That is 20,000 homes per year for regional Victoria out of that commitment to building 80,000 new homes.

A good place to start for those new homes would be Swan Hill, in my electorate, where one of the major builders there has actually started to lay off staff because it does not have enough work to keep all its staff employed. There is the land in Swan Hill, there is the demand in Swan Hill and there are the workers available in Swan Hill to build those homes, so what we need is the government to keep its promise to build those 80,000 new homes per year for the next 10 years, and particularly to build 20,000 of those homes in regional Victoria, because they are so desperately needed. I want to make sure that a fair share of those homes are in my electorate. As I said at the start, I ask the Minister for Housing to tell me how many homes are built in my electorate of that 80,000 each year.

Melbourne Polytechnic Preston campus

Nathan LAMBERT (Preston) (17:10): (782) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Skills and TAFE, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me in a visit to the Melbourne Polytechnic campus on St Georges Road in Preston to discuss the bright future of that campus. As the minister will know, the campus does have a very long history in Preston. The Preston Technical School was first

built there in 1937, and there have been a lot of physical expansions and organisational changes since. But fundamentally the buildings continue to do what they have done for many decades now, which is provide high-quality practical, vocational education. The courses were free when the school started in 1937, and many of them are of course free again today under the Allan Labor government's free TAFE program, including those in early childhood education, hospitality, cybersecurity, Auslan and other in-demand sectors.

But beyond the educational aspects of the campus, it is also an important community space. It is a very large campus – 7 or 8 hectares – and many local residents walk through it or use it to access the Nara early learning centre, the playground at Margaret Walker reserve and the HP Zwar oval, which is home of course to the West Preston Sharks and also the Preston Bullants Junior Football Club. I should give a shout-out to John Pappas, Gabrielle Olarenschaw and all the committee members there. We can hear the sirens from the ground at our place. They start at about 8:30 on a Sunday morning and go all day, so it must be a solid day for the volunteers. We commend their efforts.

For all of us who do regularly walk through that Melbourne Polytechnic campus, you cannot help but notice that the buildings on the Cramer Street side are not heavily used. I do recognise local resident Mick Bellairs, who first raised this with me. Mick had the idea of turning them into more green space and sporting fields, like Edinburgh Gardens, further south, which is certainly worth considering, though I note to Mick there is already a lot of green space and a lot of sporting fields in that neighbourhood. But suggestions like the ones he and other residents have raised are exactly the sorts of things being considered as part of our Preston activity centre planning process, run of course by the Minister for Planning as part of our housing statement.

If the Minister for Skills and TAFE does get the chance to come up and visit, we might also discuss with her how her thinking for that campus's future as a TAFE institution aligns with the Minister for Planning's thinking about the broader Preston central area. We thank the minister very much for her consideration of our adjournment matter and look forward to her response.

Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (17:13): (783) My adjournment debate this evening is for the minister for environment and climate change, and the action I seek from the minister is to have a meeting with the chair and committee of the Great Ocean Road Communities Network. The reason my community would like to meet with the minister is they have grave concerns about this government's ability to fund and adequately support one of its very own instruments, being the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, GORCAPA. This community network represents some 20 community-based organisations, and I will read them in. They are the Aireys Inlet & District Association, Anglesea Community Network, Apollo Bay Community Voice, the Bellbrae Residents Association, Friends of Lorne, Friends of Point Grey, Geelong Environment Council, Greater Torquay Alliance, Kennett River Association, Otway Forum, Port Campbell Community Group, Princetown Wetlands and Estuary Preservation Group, Save Anglesea, Skenes Creek progress association, Southern Otways Landcare group, Southern Otways Sustainable group and Wye River Separation Creek Community Association. These community groups, who have an active role in each of their communities along the Great Ocean Road, have grave concerns that the current funding model for the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, GORCAPA, is absolutely not sufficient and unable to complete many of the promised community projects.

I refer very specifically to the unfunded, incomplete projects. They include the redevelopment or fixing up at Point Grey in Lorne. That is a project that the community has been waiting on since at least 2014. There have been endless promises and money has been allocated, and it is incomplete. There is the Apollo Bay Harbour, which is now going through its third iteration of project planning and consultation. Meanwhile the fabric of the harbour continues to crumble. We have the iconic Twelve Apostles at Port Campbell, where there is no shortage of breakdowns. We have the stairs to the Loch Ard Gorge currently closed, the public access to the arch currently closed and a project to upgrade

visitor facilities still in the pipeline and incomplete. On top of all that are the various other community projects and public places and spaces right along the Great Ocean Road that continue to be left to run down and are inadequately funded.

GORCAPA, the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, have simply been put in place by this government without the sufficient funds. It is of great concern that we are seeing billions spent on projects to nowhere here in Melbourne, and funds for basic community infrastructure and basic services for visitors and tourists that help our regional economies, most importantly in the seat of Polwarth, are not being looked after. Minister, I urge you to meet with this committee and give them your commitment to funding.

The SPEAKER: Member for Polwarth, can you clarify which minister your adjournment matter was to? We have a Minister for Environment and we have a Minister for Climate Action.

Richard RIORDAN: The Minister for Environment.

Rental reform

Meng Heang TAK (Clarinda) (17:16): (784) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and the action I seek is for the minister to provide an update on how the Allan Labor government's renting taskforce is making Victoria's renting system better and fairer. I was delighted to join the minister along with Consumer Affairs Victoria director Nicole Rich and the new renting taskforce officers in Clayton recently as they attended inspections of rental properties for the first time.

Backed by a \$4 million investment from the Allan Labor government, the renting taskforce is using intelligence and market analysis to boost monitoring of rental campaigns, conduct targeted inspections and act on identified breaches. In Clayton in my local community more than 60 per cent of the properties are rentals, making it an important location for the taskforce's first-time inspections. It was fantastic to see the enthusiasm of the taskforce team, who are attending rental inspections in Clayton and the surrounding areas and checking that rental properties meet the mandatory minimum standards and that agents and rental providers are meeting their obligations.

Rental minimum standards in our state include things that most people would reasonably expect in their homes, such as a functional kitchen and lockable external doors and being structurally sound and waterproof. Victorians who suspect properties available for rent are being falsely advertised and not meeting minimum standards can alert Consumer Affairs Victoria directly through a new complaints form online. This is a fantastic initiative which will make the rental market fairer for everyone in our community. I thank the minister and look forward to her response.

Foster carers

Nicole WERNER (Warrandyte) (17:18): (785) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Children, and the action I seek is for the minister to increase the carers allowance for foster carers for the first time since 2016. Foster carers are the unsung heroes of our society. They open their homes and hearts to some of the most vulnerable children in Victoria. They provide not only a safe place to live but also love, stability and hope for a brighter future. Their contributions are immeasurable, yet the support they receive from our government does not reflect the value of their work. They are volunteers who juggle their own careers, families and interests to provide life-changing care, attention and guidance 24/7 to 12,000 of the most vulnerable children in our society.

For years now foster carers have been facing an untenable situation. The allowance they receive has remained unchanged since 2016. In the intervening years the cost of living has surged, and the financial strain that foster carers face has become increasingly severe. Despite this, Victoria has the lowest care allowance rate for foster, kinship and permanent care in Australia. The inadequacy of this allowance was highlighted in a KPMG report which called for a 67 per cent increase to the base care rate. Despite

the clear recommendations and the pressing need for action, the government have kept this report cabinet in confidence because they know how bad the situation is.

On this side of the house we recognise the essential role that foster carers play in our society and are committed to advocating on their behalf, and we will keep fighting until they are fairly compensated for the work that they do. In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all foster carers. Your dedication and sacrifice are inspiring, and we will continue to fight for you.

Cranbourne electorate telecommunications infrastructure

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (17:19): (786) My adjournment matter is to the minister for Government Services, and the action I seek is that the minister joins me for a discussion about connectivity at an upcoming chai and chat. It will be terrific to join the community and celebrate the announcement of two new telecommunications towers for services for Clyde and Clyde North. We are very fortunate to have a partner in Canberra in the Albanese Labor government and a terrific Labor member for Holt, who has been working very hard to resolve this issue. It is no secret that the former Liberal–National government spent nine years neglecting, delaying and pushing away Victorian infrastructure, and yet those opposite sometimes seem to forget that telecommunications is in fact a federal government matter. Those opposite might well consider contacting the federal member for La Trobe to discuss what happened over the 10 years that the federal member had a seat at the ministerial table. It is a productive opportunity at a chai and chat to discuss what that means for telecommunications in the federal sphere but also to consider what happens when the Allan Labor government has a partner in Canberra. I very much look forward to the minister’s visit to Clyde and Clyde North and to discussing the importance of connectivity, especially for those who are trying to access their children’s school networks to stay connected and to be able to communicate with others.

South Barwon electorate schools

Darren CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (17:21): (787) My adjournment this evening is to the Minister for Education, and the action that I seek from him is that he engage in consultation with Geelong’s traditional owners, the Wathaurong people, to identify two Indigenous names for the two new schools that the Allan Labor government is building in the Armstrong Creek growth corridor. This approach that has been traditionally adopted by this government in utilising traditional owner group names promotes harmony and reconciliation, and I think it is a fantastic opportunity to engage with them with respect to identifying appropriate names for the Charlemont and Warralily primary schools that will be built in the years to come.

St Kilda visitor economy

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (17:22): (788) My adjournment is for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events. St Kilda has a vibrant visitor economy with amazing experiences that bring many tourists to our great state of Victoria. From the wonderful Luna Park to the Palais to the redevelopment of St Kilda Pier – now well underway – to the many cafes, pubs, restaurants, live music venues and the fabulous foreshore, there is so much to enjoy in the St Kilda precinct. So the action I seek is for the minister to visit the St Kilda precinct to discuss the local visitor economy in St Kilda in the lead-up to summer.

Dhurringile Prison

Kim O’KEEFFE (Shepparton) (17:23): (789) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Corrections in the other place, and the action I seek is that the minister pauses the decommissioning of Dhurringile Prison. The recent announcement that Dhurringile Prison was closing at the end of August was a shock and has had a significant impact on the staff, prisoners, businesses and the community in my electorate. This is a historic heritage site that needs in-depth consideration regarding the future of the site, and it is premature to come in and decommission the site without a plan or a consultation process with the community.

Recently more than 100 community members filled the Dhurringile hall to share the impact of the closure of the prison and also to offer suggestions for the potential future use of the site. The closure of the prison will leave 170 onsite staff without a job and will have a significant impact on the local economy. Staff were given just 90 minutes prior notice to the media announcement of the closure of the prison. Staff were offered positions at other prison sites, but they are hours away from where they live. You cannot expect people to relocate their life when they have a home, a family, their partner working locally and children at school. It is not an option for most. As you can imagine, this has been extremely stressful on the staff, the prisoners, businesses and the community. Staff spoke at the community meeting, and ongoing support is critical to help them through this life-changing time. Many surrounding local businesses provide goods and services to the prison, and we also heard of the significant financial impact on many local businesses.

An outcome from the community meeting was to form a committee to be able to inform the government about the history and the significance of this site and to have a consultation process so community members can share their suggestions for the future of the site. The main building on the site is a magnificent mansion that is heritage listed and registered with the National Trust of Australia. We do not want to see the building sit dormant like the current secondary school site that has been sitting dormant and boarded up since 2022. We should not be rushing to decommission the Dhurringile Prison.

Ballert Mooroop site

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD (Broadmeadows) (17:25): (790) My adjournment is for the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, and the action I seek is for her to join me on a visit to Ballert Mooroop in Glenroy. The Ballert Mooroop site is precious to both our local community and the First Nations people of Victoria. The site has a rich history of education. Gary Murray, now a proud member of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and the Murray clan, was educated there when it was Glenroy High. The wonderful Mariella Teuira, president of the Itiki Sporting Club, was one of the founding students of Koorie Open Door Education, which was opened there by Aunty Margaret Gardiner in 1995. The adjoining Will Will Rook kinder has one of the best bush kinder programs in the state, and the Glenroy Specialist School next door educates kids with disabilities from all around the region.

Sixteen years ago we were able to celebrate a shared-used agreement for the open space between the council and Koorie Open Door Education, and it was one of my proud moments on council. But unfortunately the school was closed in 2011 by the Liberal government after a long community battle. I met my good friend Mariella during that battle, who was there day after day with Dotty and so many others fighting for the school. Later, together with Gary Murray and others, we were able to negotiate through council and the Department of Education the keeping of the spirit tree and the ceremonial ground before the special school was built on the western side of the site. The spirit tree holds a special place in many hearts and is where respected teacher and elder Uncle Tom used to sit with the kids from the school when they were feeling troubled. Unfortunately Uncle Tom passed away at the site.

It was a proud moment in 2017 when the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples first came to the site to sign the education department lease, and the land was subsequently subleased to the Wurundjeri. I thank Wurundjeri elders, particularly Uncle Andrew, the late Aunty Marg and Uncle Bill, for their continuous work and advocacy on the future of the land. And I thank the council and Wurundjeri for their upgrade and upkeep of the land and for working together to complete the path that allows people like my dad, who used a wheelchair, to access and enjoy this precious space.

Responses

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (17:27): The member for Murray Plains raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Housing, and the action he seeks is that the minister tell him

how many new homes will be built in his electorate as a consequence of our government's commitment to deliver 800,000 homes.

A member interjected.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: You sought an action. It took you a while to get there, but you got there, and I am sure the minister will respond. The member for Preston had a matter for the attention of the Minister for Skills and TAFE, and the action that the member sought was that the minister join him at the Melbourne Polytechnic campus on St Georges Road to discuss our government's commitment to TAFE, training and growing careers, jobs and opportunities for young people in Melbourne's north but also discussing the possibilities for that TAFE institute. The member for Polwarth sought an action from the Minister for Environment, and that is that the minister has a meeting with the Great Ocean Road Communities Network.

The member for Clarinda raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and that is that the minister provide him with an update on the Allan Labor government's rental taskforce and the commitment of our government to making renting fairer and better for people in Victoria but particularly for the constituents of Clarinda. The member for Warrandyte raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Children, and the action she seeks is that there be an increase in the allowance for foster carers. The member for Cranbourne raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Government Services, and I am sure that the Minister for Government Services will look forward to joining with the member at a chat and chai with her community to talk about connectivity in her electorate and the work that needs to be done with the federal government, after years of neglect from the former Liberal-National government when it comes to delivering the telecommunications services that we need.

The member for South Barwon raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education, and the action he seeks is that the minister engage with the traditional owners, the Wathaurong, to identify suitable traditional names for two new schools being delivered by the Allan Labor government in the growth area of Armstrong Creek. The member for Albert Park raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, and the action that she sought is that the minister join her in one of Melbourne's most iconic places – that is, St Kilda – to talk about the visitor economy and the opportunities that are presented in St Kilda. The member for Shepparton raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Corrections, and the action that the member seeks is that the minister pause the decommissioning of Dhurringile Prison. The member for Broadmeadows raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, and that is that she join with the member on a visit to Ballerit Mooroop in Glenroy, and I am sure that is something that the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples would really look forward to doing.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, members. Thank you, clerks and attendants. The house now stands adjourned.

House adjourned 5:31 pm.