

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

TUESDAY, 7 JUNE 2022

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable JAMES ANGUS AO

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. DM Andrews MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Mental Health	The Hon. JA Merlino MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J Symes MLC
Minister for Transport Infrastructure and Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop	The Hon. JM Allan MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Higher Education	The Hon. GA Tierney MLC
Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. TH Pallas MP
Minister for Child Protection and Family Services and Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers	The Hon. AR Carbines MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Roads and Road Safety ..	The Hon. BA Carroll MP
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Solar Homes	The Hon. L D’Ambrosio MP
Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services and Minister for Equality	The Hon. MP Foley MP
Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Fishing and Boating	The Hon. MM Horne MP
Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice and Minister for Victim Support	The Hon. NM Hutchins MP
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Suburban Development and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. SL Leane MLC
Minister for Water and Minister for Police	The Hon. LM Neville MP
Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Trade, Minister for Business Precincts, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, and Minister for Racing	The Hon. MP Pakula MP
Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. DJ Pearson MP
Minister for Employment, Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy, Minister for Small Business and Minister for Resources	The Hon. JL Pulford MLC
Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Community Sport and Minister for Youth	The Hon. RL Spence MP
Minister for Workplace Safety and Minister for Early Childhood	The Hon. I Stitt MLC
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. M Thomas MP
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs	The Hon. G Williams MP
Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing	The Hon. RW Wynne MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms S Kilkenny MP

**OFFICE-HOLDERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION**

Speaker

The Hon. CW BROOKS

Deputy Speaker

Ms JM EDWARDS

Acting Speakers

Mr Blackwood, Ms Blandthorn, Mr J Bull, Ms Connolly, Ms Couzens, Ms Crugnale, Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Halfpenny, Ms Kilkenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Mr Morris, Ms Richards, Mr Richardson, Ms Settle, Ms Suleyman, Mr Taylor and Ms Ward

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

The Hon. DM ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

The Hon. JA MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. MJ GUY

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party

Mr DJ SOUTHWICK

Leader of The Nationals and Deputy Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. PL WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals

Ms SM RYAN

Leader of the House

Ms JM ALLAN

Manager of Opposition Business

Ms LE STALEY

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly: Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms B Noonan

Council: Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A Young

Parliamentary Services: Secretary: Ms T Burrows

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT—FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Ms Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Maas, Mr Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	McGhie, Mr Stephen John	Melton	ALP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Brayne, Mr Chris	Nepean	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Britnell, Ms Roma	South-West Coast	LP	Newbury, Mr James	Brighton	LP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Ind
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David	Gippsland South	Nats
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Cheeseman, Mr Darren Leicester	South Barwon	ALP	Read, Dr Tim	Brunswick	Greens
Connolly, Ms Sarah	Tarneit	ALP	Richards, Ms Pauline	Cranbourne	ALP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Crugnale, Ms Jordan Alessandra	Bass	ALP	Riordan, Mr Richard Vincent	Polwarth	LP
Cupper, Ms Ali	Mildura	Ind	Rowswell, Mr Brad	Sandringham	LP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Ryan, Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Settle, Ms Michaela	Buninyong	ALP
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Fowles, Mr Will	Burwood	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Fregon, Mr Matt	Mount Waverley	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hall, Ms Katie	Footscray	ALP	Tak, Mr Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
Halse, Mr Dustin	Ringwood	ALP	Taylor, Mr Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Hamer, Mr Paul	Box Hill	ALP	Theophanous, Ms Katerina	Northcote	ALP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Vallence, Ms Bridget	Evelyn	LP
Home, Ms Melissa Margaret	Williamstown	ALP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Kennedy, Mr John Ormond	Hawthorn	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP—Labor Party; Greens—The Greens;
Ind—Independent; LP—Liberal Party; Nats—The Nationals.

Legislative Assembly committees

Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee

Ms Addison, Mr Blackwood, Ms Couzens, Mr Eren, Ms Ryan, Ms Theophanous and Mr Wakeling.

Environment and Planning Standing Committee

Ms Connolly, Mr Fowles, Ms Green, Mr Hamer, Mr McCurdy, Ms McLeish and Mr Morris.

Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee

Mr Angus, Mr Battin, Ms Couzens, Ms Kealy, Ms Settle, Ms Suleyman and Mr Tak.

Privileges Committee

Mr Allan, Mr Carroll, Ms Hennessy, Mr McGuire, Mr Morris, Mr Pakula, Ms Ryan, Ms Staley and Mr Wells.

Standing Orders Committee

The Speaker, Ms Allan, Mr Cheeseman, Ms Edwards, Mr Fregon, Ms McLeish, Ms Sheed, Ms Staley and Mr Walsh.

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee

Assembly: Ms Allan, Ms Hennessy, Mr Merlino, Mr Pakula, Mr R Smith, Mr Walsh and Mr Wells.

Council: Mr Bourman, Ms Crozier, Mr Davis, Ms Mikakos, Ms Symes and Ms Wooldridge.

Electoral Matters Committee

Assembly: Ms Hall, Dr Read and Mr Rowswell.

Council: Mr Erdogan, Mrs McArthur, Mr Meddick, Mr Melhem, Ms Lovell, Mr Quilty and Mr Tarlamis.

House Committee

Assembly: The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr T Bull, Ms Crugnale, Ms Edwards, Mr Fregon, Ms Sandell and Ms Staley.

Council: The President (*ex officio*), Mr Bourman, Mr Davis, Mr Leane, Ms Lovell and Ms Stitt.

Integrity and Oversight Committee

Assembly: Mr Halse, Mr Rowswell, Mr Taylor, Ms Ward and Mr Wells.

Council: Mr Grimley and Ms Shing.

Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee

Assembly: Mr J Bull, Ms Kealy, Mr Sheed, Ms Ward and Mr Wells.

Council: Ms Crozier, Mr Erdogan and Ms Shing.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Assembly: Ms Blandthorn, Mr Hibbins, Mr Maas, Mr Newbury, Mr D O'Brien, Ms Richards and Mr Richardson.

Council: Mrs McArthur and Ms Taylor.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

Assembly: Mr Burgess, Ms Connolly and Mr Morris.

Council: Ms Patten and Ms Watt.

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Tuesday, 7 June 2022

The SPEAKER (Hon. Colin Brooks) took the chair at 12.02 pm and read the prayer.

Announcements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The SPEAKER (12:03): We acknowledge the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay our respects to them, their culture, their elders past, present and future, and elders from other communities who may be here today.

DEPUTY SPEAKER

The SPEAKER (12:03): Before members move to business, I want to thank the Deputy Speaker for taking the chair last sitting week.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE

The SPEAKER (12:03): On the occasion of the Queen's platinum jubilee, on behalf of the house I want to congratulate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on her lifetime of service. Throughout her reign Her Majesty has upheld her commitment to the people of the commonwealth, and she is greatly admired for that. Early in her reign Her Majesty opened a session of the Victorian Parliament in 1954, and the warmth and gratitude shown by the people of Victoria on that occasion has endured to this day. On behalf of the Victorian Parliament we pay tribute to Her Majesty and express our admiration and gratitude for her dedication throughout her reign.

VICTORIAN INSPECTORATE

The SPEAKER (12:04): I wish to advise that on 31 May 2022 I administered to Catherine Alexandra Cato, the Acting Inspector, Victorian Inspectorate, the affirmation required by section 26 of the Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011.

Bills

ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022

Introduction and first reading

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Solar Homes) (12:04): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021, the Environment Protection Act 2017, the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005, the Climate Change Act 2017 and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:05): I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Solar Homes) (12:05): In summary, the bill will amend the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021 to provide Recycling Victoria with additional powers and functions, the Environment Protection Act 2017 to allow for improvements to better effect the act's intent and operation and the Sustainability Victoria Act 2005 to support information sharing by Sustainability Victoria.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (RATING AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022*Introduction and first reading*

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Solar Homes) (12:06): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Local Government Act 1989 in relation to rates and charges, to make miscellaneous and technical amendments to the Local Government Act 2020, to make miscellaneous and technical amendments to the Essential Services Commission Act 2001, the Accident Compensation Act 1985 and the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013, to amend the Domestic Animals Act 1994 in relation to reuniting pets with owners, and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:06): I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Solar Homes) (12:06): The bill will implement a range of recommendations from the *Local Government Rating System Review* and the Ombudsman's *Investigation into How Local Councils Respond to Ratepayers in Financial Hardship*. It will empower the minister, in consultation with the Essential Services Commission, to set a maximum amount of interest that may be levied on unpaid rates and charges. The bill will also make a range of improvements to the ability of councils to provide rate rebates and apply special rates and charges.

Read first time.**Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.****TREATY AUTHORITY AND OTHER TREATY ELEMENTS BILL 2022***Introduction and first reading*

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong—Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) (12:07): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to provide for various matters in relation to the Treaty Authority, to amend the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:07): Could I ask the minister for a brief explanation, please.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong—Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs) (12:07): The bill recognises the establishment of the Treaty Authority under the Treaty Authority agreement and facilitates its operation. This bill follows a historic agreement reached between the Andrews government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. The bill will allow the Treaty Authority to be established as an independent umpire to oversee negotiations between the government and Aboriginal Victorians. The bill also amends the Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018 in relation to the treaty negotiation framework and self-determination fund. This bill continues the government's strong commitment to treaty, truth, justice and self-determination for Victoria's First Peoples.

Read first time.**Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.**

**CHILDREN AND HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (STATEMENT OF
RECOGNITION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022***Introduction and first reading*

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers) (12:08): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, the Social Services Regulation Act 2021, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021, the Magistrates' Court Act 1989, the Health Services Act 1988 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, to make minor and consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (12:09): I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers) (12:09): The bill introduces an Aboriginal statement of recognition into the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, providing for Parliament to acknowledge that past laws, practices and policies of forcible removal of Aboriginal children have contributed to a legacy of disconnection and intergenerational trauma, entrenched social disadvantage, marginalisation and distrust of the child protection system by Aboriginal peoples. It also includes amendments to the Health Services Act 1988 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, the Social Services Regulation Act 2021 and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Business of the house**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

The SPEAKER (12:10): I wish to advise the house that general business, order of the day 8, will be removed from the notice paper unless the member wishing their matter to remain advises the Clerk in writing before 5.00 pm today.

Committees**PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**

Person Referred to in the Legislative Assembly: Ms Sarah Rees

Mr PAKULA (Keysborough—Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Trade, Minister for Business Precincts, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Racing) (12:10): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Privileges Committee on a person referred to in the Legislative Assembly, Ms Sarah Rees, together with an appendix.

Ordered to be published.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 8

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (12:11): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, being *Alert Digest* No. 8 of 2022, on the following bills:

Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Education Legislation Amendment (Adult and Community Education and Other Matters) Bill 2022

Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Sustainable Forests Timber Amendment (Timber Harvesting Safety Zones) Bill 2022

together with appendices.

Ordered to be published.

Documents

DOCUMENTS

Incorporated list as follows:

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT—The Clerk tabled the following documents under Acts of Parliament:

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978—Order under s 17D granting a lease over Mordialloc–Mentone Beach Park

National Parks Act 1975—Notice of consent under s 40 for Premium Limestone Victoria Pty Ltd to conduct operations within Tyers Park to search for stone

Ombudsman—Investigation into Environment Protection Authority decisions on West Gate Tunnel Project spoil disposal—Ordered to be published

Planning and Environment Act 1987—Notices of approval of amendments to the following Planning Schemes:

Alpine—C62

Banyule—C168

Baw Baw—C143

Boroondara—C354, C379

Central Goldfields—C37

Frankston—C138

Glen Eira—C214 Parts 1 and 2, C241, C242

Golden Plains—GC183

Greater Dandenong—C220

Hume—C243, C261

Loddon—C46

Manningham—C134

Maribyrnong—C175

Melbourne—C361

Mitchell—GC198

Monash—C163 Part 2

Moreland—C220

Mornington Peninsula—C262 Part 2, C267

Murrindindi—C66

Nillumbik—C140

Surf Coast—GC183

Wangaratta—C82, C87

West Wimmera—C35

Whittlesea—GC198

Yarra—C231 Part 2, C302

Yarra Ranges—C196

Victoria Planning Provisions—VC220

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987—SR 36

Magistrates' Court Act 1989—SR 33

Residential Tenancies Act 1997—SR 35

Road Safety Act 1986—SR 38

Service Victoria Act 2018—SR 32

Supreme Court Act 1986—SR 34

Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007—SR 37

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 25, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36

Documents under s 16B in relation to:

Financial Management Act 1994—Order to declare a class of entities as specified entities

Windfall Gains Tax and State Taxation and Other Acts Further Amendment Act 2021—
Declaration under s 3

Wildlife Act 1975—Wildlife (Prohibition of Game Hunting) Notice No 3 (*Gazette S258, 26 May 2022*).

PROCLAMATIONS—Under Standing Order 177A, the Clerk tabled the following proclamations fixing operative dates:

Assisted Reproductive Treatment Amendment Act 2021—Sections 4(3), 5, 6, 30, 39, 55, 56, 57—
24 June 2022 (*Gazette S267, 31 May 2022*)

Domestic Animals Amendment (Reuniting Pets and Other Matters) Act 2022—Parts 1 and 3 other than
section 37—1 June 2022 (*Gazette S271, 1 June 2022*).

Bills

VICTIMS OF CRIME (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME) BILL 2022

Council's agreement

The SPEAKER (12:13): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance Scheme) Bill 2022 without amendment.

AGRICULTURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Council's amendments

The SPEAKER (12:13): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 with an amendment.

Ordered that amendment be taken into consideration later this day.

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

VICTIMS OF CRIME (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME) BILL 2022

Royal assent

The SPEAKER (12:13): I inform the house that the Governor has given royal assent to the Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, and today the Lieutenant-Governor gave royal assent to the Victims of Crime (Financial Assistance Scheme) Bill 2022.

CASINO AND LIQUOR LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022
EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ADULT AND COMMUNITY
EDUCATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022
SUSTAINABLE FORESTS TIMBER AMENDMENT (TIMBER HARVESTING SAFETY
ZONES) BILL 2022

Appropriation

The SPEAKER (12:13): I have received messages from the Lieutenant-Governor recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the Education Legislation Amendment (Adult and Community Education and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and the Sustainable Forests Timber Amendment (Timber Harvesting Safety Zones) Bill 2022.

Committees

PANDEMIC DECLARATION ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Membership

The SPEAKER (12:14): I wish to advise the house that I have received the resignation of Mr Bourman MLC from the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee effective from 26 May 2022.

Business of the house

STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:14): I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 45 relating to the reintroduction of non-government business, to be moved immediately.

Leave refused.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (12:15): I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 45 on behalf of the member for Shepparton relating to the reintroduction of non-government business, to be moved immediately.

Leave refused.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:15): I desire to move, by leave, on behalf of the coalition:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 45 under the name of the member for Shepparton relating to the reintroduction of non-government business, to be moved immediately.

Leave refused.

PROGRAM

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Leader of the House, Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop) (12:15): I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5.00 pm on Thursday, 9 June 2022:

Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022

Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022.

In commending this government business program through this motion to the house, I hope for its unanimous support and passage through the chamber this afternoon. I do note that each of these three

bills carries significant reform or addresses significant areas of public policy that have a lot of interest from people outside of this chamber, and that is why I understand a significant part of the debating time available today will be dedicated to the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, in acknowledgement that this is a bill that is very important to many members of the chamber. It carries significant reform, and there will no doubt be a lot of interest from people outside of this chamber in how this debate is conducted.

I also note for completeness's sake that the government intends to, where the opportunity arises, have the take-note motion that is on the notice paper on the fabulous 2022 budget that was handed down a month or so ago by the Treasurer and that that motion will be returned to over the course of the week in order for those members who have not had the opportunity to make their contributions supporting what is a tremendous budget—a lot to talk about—with record investments in health, education and a whole range of different areas. We want to make sure that members of this place also get the opportunity to speak on the 2022 budget.

I have some level of optimism that this motion will be supported, and in that spirit I will confine my remarks to commending the government business motion to the house.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:18): I can advise that on this occasion the Liberals and Nationals opposition will not be opposing the government business program, and I note that the government business program as proposed by the Leader of the House includes three bills: the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022 and the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. As the Leader of the House has mentioned, there will be many people on our side of the chamber who want to make a contribution on all of these bills but particularly today on the Nazi symbol prohibition bill. This is something that we on this side of the chamber have called for for years, and it is something that we have taken great interest in. I know the member for Caulfield has joined with others across the chamber in working on this issue for many years, so we will have much to say on that one.

I also note that the Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 has returned to this chamber with amendments, and while that is not on the government business program, it is something we will be debating this week through the week. We will have a couple of speakers who want to talk about those amendments, as I understand the minister does as well. So we will come to that when we come to it.

As we come also to the take-note motion, while the vast majority of members on this side of the house did speak on the budget, we welcome the opportunity to have the take-note motion and to have a second go, because there—

Ms Allan interjected.

Ms STALEY: The Leader of the House interjects that we cannot, but unfortunately for her one was a bill and this one is a motion, so all of those who have already spoken on the bill can now speak on the motion. As we had so many faults, errors and omissions in the budget that we were able to point out I know that on this side of the house there are many, many of my colleagues, if not all of them in fact—I suspect all of them—who would like a second go to discuss the many failings of this budget, so we will certainly be taking up those opportunities when the take-note motion comes on.

In conclusion, I do also want to recognise the platinum jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen and the celebrations that have been undertaken over the last three days in Great Britain and across the commonwealth. Her decades of service to the commonwealth and to Victoria are immense, and I put on record my thanks for her service.

I also wish to welcome back to the house the Speaker and look forward to his wise counsel and rulings going forward.

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (12:21): I will just make a very quick contribution on the government business program, which obviously has my full support. The work of the Legal and Social

Issues Committee in getting us towards the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022 has been very important. I commend the work of the chairs at the time, the member for St Albans and the member for Caulfield. This is a very important bill that, as has been said before, everybody I think will wish to have their moment on.

Also the Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022 is very important for adding clarity, and I look forward to debating that one. With some of my experience in local martial arts clubs, with kids being a part of volunteering, it is very important to have some more clarity on that, and I think the members of that industry will be happy with the results there. I will also be looking to making my contribution on the budget because I did not quite get a chance last time, and we have so much to say about what a fantastic budget has been put down. I look forward to doing that, and I think with that brief contribution, we will get on with it.

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (12:22): It is a pleasure to speak briefly on the government business program and to welcome you back to the chair, Speaker. We did miss you last week of course—

A member interjected.

Mr D O'BRIEN: There is no ulterior motive, Speaker, do not worry.

The government business program this week has some important legislation—obviously the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, where the government continues to mop up from the royal commission. I would like to pay credit to the member for Euroa for the work that she has been doing as the Shadow Minister for Gaming and Liquor Regulation in relation to the broader issue and also the legislation no doubt coming forward this week. Likewise on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, as the member for Ripon indicated, there will be quite a number of members on this side who want to speak. I will not be one of them on this occasion. I want to just place on record, though, my congratulations to the member for Caulfield in particular for his advocacy on this particular issue, which has been an issue for his community, for his electorate, and indeed for the wider Jewish community in Victoria. I congratulate him for his advocacy and indeed for bringing the coalition to a position of instituting the Nazi symbol ban, which is now going to be passed through this legislation. I wish him all the best. The third bill, the Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022, I will have more to say on when that bill comes up.

The member for Ripon talked about the take-note motion on the budget and how everyone was, on this side, excited to have another go. At the risk of it being a career-limiting move I might disagree slightly with the member for Ripon, and I am sure the member for Pascoe Vale will agree with me. We have just had what seems like the longest Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing process, and frankly I am pretty over the budget now. But there are still plenty of things—because unfortunately with the way the PAEC system works we often get limited time, which ministers are very adept at chewing up with longwinded answers. There is always something more to say on the budget, and I am sure there will be opportunities for us all to talk about that through the take-note motion as well. I do thank those above that the PAEC hearings are now finally complete, and those will be the last ones for this year. Someone pointed out to me yesterday that that particular inquiry was my 27th Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry, so I think I have certainly done enough on that one.

I would like to echo your comments too, Speaker, about Queen Elizabeth, and at the risk of being a person named Daniel David O'Brien talking up the English monarch, the British monarch, my sincere congratulations and thanks to our Queen. She has been for all of us—in fact there are very few people for whom she has not been—a constant presence, given her 70 years on the throne. She is one of those people who will be remembered for her contribution to our community, to our commonwealth and indeed to the globe. Her steadfast devotion to duty is probably the most incredible thing that we can pay respect to, because through thick and thin, through various difficulties, through the famous *annus horribilis* that she has had—I think she has had more than one—with her family and other issues, she

has been a great friend to Australia as well as the broader commonwealth. I certainly pay credit to her and thank her for the work that she has done for our community for a long time.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (12:26): It is my pleasure also to make a contribution on the government business program. Clearly the focus of proceedings today and perhaps into tomorrow will be the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. I think one of the things that interests me about that bill is the issue of the nomenclature we use in this place. The word ‘swastika’ I think has been widely used by many, including me, to describe the Nazi symbol, and it is as part of the journey of discovery in preparation for debating this bill later today that we have learned that that is in fact an incorrect term—that the word ‘swastika’ is in fact a Hindi term. It is not a German word, and it does not denote a German symbol. So we will be spending some time today, I suspect, talking about the Hakenkreuz and the significance of that particular symbol as compared with what has been known at times—and has been mistranslated in fact—as the swastika.

That distinction is important because it goes to the issue of a symbol not dissimilar to the Hakenkreuz, but nonetheless a distinct symbol, that is used by many in our faith communities. The word itself is a Hindi word. It comes from the ancient Hindi language of Sanskrit, and for all of those in the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Jain communities for whom that symbol is an important symbol we need to be careful in this place in the debating of this bill, I think, to be precise in our terminology, precise in our nomenclature, and make sure that we do not concatenate those two things—that we do not refer to the Hakenkreuz as a swastika or vice versa and that we make clear that when we are dealing with Nazi symbols we are dealing quite specifically with the hooked cross, the Hakenkreuz, and not that symbol that is so important to many in our community.

With that contribution around the moving parts around the bill, if you like, I am very pleased that those opposite are supporting or not opposing this government business program. I think we have got a day’s very serious and very important debate around this issue, and it speaks to frankly just how important this is that I suspect we are going to have a pretty full roster of speakers from both sides of the chamber and indeed the crossbench. I think there will be some terrific contributions on that matter particularly over the course of the day.

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:29): I also rise to speak on the government business program, and in doing so, Speaker, I was thrilled to hear your acknowledgement of Her Majesty’s platinum jubilee at the start of proceedings this morning. Up until that point, I held the mantle of being the only member in this Parliament to utter the words ‘platinum jubilee’ in this place. It was important for you to do that, Speaker, I think, not on behalf of a political party but on behalf of the Parliament, because Her Majesty has served the world with great distinction and in service of people, free of politics, free of the temptation to enter into our daily politics and to be a commentator on matters—free and independent of that. So for you to do that in your place as Speaker this morning at the start of proceedings was a very fitting tribute, and I thank you for doing so.

During the course of this week we will be debating a number of bills and, as other speakers have done, I just want to point out the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022 and acknowledge the significant contribution to the introduction of that bill in this place by the member for Caulfield, the member for Malvern, the member for Brighton and also former member for Eastern Victoria Region Mr O’Donohue, who I know undertook a power of work to bring this side of the chamber to a position where we thought that that symbol should in fact be banned in this state. We will have the member for Malvern heading that debate later this day. The member for Ferntree Gully will head the Child Employment Amendment Bill 2022 debate, and the member for Euroa will head the Casino and Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

I also look forward to making a contribution to the budget take-note motion. There are many things in communities right across this state not represented by government members that frankly have not been delivered. I think it is an important opportunity for us to remind ourselves and to remind this chamber that our first and foremost responsibility is to the people who put us here, the people of our own

electorates, and I know my colleagues will join me in drawing to the attention of this place the fact that our communities in many cases have been simply forgotten by a government who claims it governs for all. I look forward to the proceedings during the course of this sitting week.

Motion agreed to.

Members statements

SPORT & LIFE TRAINING

Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (12:32): I rise today to speak about the wonderful work that Sport & Life Training, SALT, has been providing over the past seven years delivering mental health, culture and leadership education into sporting clubs. Since 2015 this not-for-profit organisation has worked for 21 different sporting codes and has won the trust of sporting clubs, leagues and peak bodies. It also partners with leaders in health education, such as Beyond Blue and Our Watch. I meet often with Dave Burt, the founder of SALT, to discuss the successes of the programs being delivered and the future and ongoing need for more support so that these programs can be expanded. SALT aims to reduce the stigma around mental illness, to increase help-seeking and peer-support behaviours and to reduce suicide. Additionally, they aim to empower people so they can thrive and achieve their best in life. Their allied courses around positive coaching, positive parenting, drugs and alcohol, respect and equality, healthy masculinity and empowerment of women help contribute to the development of community within the club. The sessions are interactive, enjoyable, non-judgemental and are based on the principles of sport and positive psychology. SALT have a specifically designed live quiz, which enables them to obtain confidential, real-time information about what the groups are experiencing or thinking. This changes the nature of the conversations they have with the clubs by answering questions such as: ‘What kind of club do you want to be?’, ‘What is your major purpose?’, ‘What kind of influence do you want to have on the kids coming through?’ and ‘What kind of reputation do you want in the community?’. Clubs develop conviction that sport is not really about sport, it is about people. As we navigate life post COVID, the importance of investing into these club communities has never been more vital.

ELAINE MCNAMARA AND KAREN KYLE

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Leader of the House, Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop) (12:33): I rise today to pay tribute to two great Bendigo Labor women who recently passed away. Elaine McNamara was like pepper and salt: she was in everything. She served our community in many, many different roles. She was a councillor and former mayor for the then shire of Marong, she was a member of Bendigo Community Health Services and Kangaroo Flat Community House and she was a very, very long and proud member of the Australian Labor Party. She also—this is an important part of her contribution to our community—helped found Central Victoria Group Training, the first Bendigo group apprenticeship scheme, bringing together the then four shires of Marong, Eaglehawk, Strathfieldsaye and Bendigo, and that is a great contribution to young people’s skills and careers. Elaine was most certainly a force to be reckoned with.

Karen Kyle was a long-serving secretary of Bendigo Trades Hall, the third woman to hold the role, and she was a strong and powerful voice for working people and their families. Particularly during that dark period of the 1990s, she certainly took it up to former Premier Jeff Kennett against his campaign of privatisation, the winding back of rights for workers to have access to WorkCover and the closures of schools and hospitals in our region.

Both of these women were pioneers in their roles: they advanced the cause of working people, they laid a path for other women in the labour movement in Bendigo to follow—sympathy to their families and loved ones.

MOUNT CAMEL IRRIGATION PIPELINE

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (12:35): I rise today to highlight the great efforts of a group of winemakers from Mount Camel who are working to develop a new irrigation pipeline to mitigate the effects of climate change. In February I was told by the Australian department of infrastructure that they were waiting for a recommendation from the Victorian Minister for Water in order to be able to progress that project and to fund the pipeline. It has been four months, and I fear that this project is still sitting on the minister's desk.

SEYMOUR WELLBEING HUB

Ms RYAN: I urge the new federal Labor government to match the election commitment given by The Nationals to construct a new Seymour wellbeing hub. The hub is backed by council, but it needs the support of the state and federal governments to get off the ground. It would be a really big shame to see that project grind to a halt because of a change of government.

NORTH-EAST RAIL LINE

Ms RYAN: The Andrews government needs to front up and explain why the brand new VLocity train on the north-east line has been so badly damaged that it has been pulled out of service. We have had reports that chunks of the wheels have fallen off, but track inspections by the Australian Rail Track Corporation have found no fault with the track. Instead of V/Line pointing fingers at the ARTC, the government needs to give an honest account of what has happened. People in our region are completely sick of this. We want the blame game to end. We want the Victorian government to be honest about what has happened and to explain why a train but months old—a brand new train—has had to be pulled out of service, leaving commuters stranded and services cancelled on the north-east line.

GISBORNE & DISTRICT BOWLING CLUB

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional Development) (12:36): Congratulations to the Gisborne & District Bowling Club on their victory a few weeks ago at the state midweek pennant championships. In an epic battle, Gisborne defeated the mighty city of Geelong for the premiership title in Moama. Congratulations to the entire team: Russell Walker, Ian Ball, Terry Kelly, Ethan Higgins, David Beardmore, Peter Williams, Tim Rogers, Alan Higgins, Teresa Wylie, Paul O'Farrell, Graham Quaipe, Garry Candy, Kevin Jarred, Louise Ball and Barry Wylie. I was delighted to join the club's victory celebrations to announce the Victorian government has committed \$245 000 to install a brand new synthetic green so the club can play all year round.

WOODEND-HESKET FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB

Ms THOMAS: In more local sporting news, I want to thank the Woodend-Hesket Football Netball Club for hosting me at their inaugural Celebrating Women at the Nest awards. This initiative, supported by our government's Change Our Game program, acknowledges the work of all the women working behind the scenes to keep this great club growing and growing. I want to particularly congratulate Woodend local Anne-Louise Lindner for taking out the new Julie Gove Medal in recognition of her tireless commitment to the club.

MACEDON RANGES REGIONAL SPORTS PRECINCT

Ms THOMAS: Lastly, and at last, I am delighted that work on the Macedon Ranges regional sports precinct is finally underway. Huge congratulations and thanks to Megan Condron and her husband Andrew, to Tamara Collins and to Allan Spencer-Stewart—the precinct has been your dream and your vision. I am enormously proud to be a member of a government that is making it happen. Thanks to minister Ros Spence, re-elected member for McEwen, Rob Mitchell—*(Time expired)*

CLYDE NORTH TELEPHONE RECEPTION

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (12:38): First I want to rise in relation to the issue of phone reception through Clyde North. This is something I have raised in this Parliament before, and it is becoming a

bigger and bigger issue throughout the community, who continue to come to my office and talk about the fact of phone reception that they cannot get. We have heard from the government that it is obviously a federal fault, we have heard from Telstra that it is somebody else's fault and now we see the state government funding other areas. All they are saying in our area is, 'We want to be treated fairly', so the young people who are using it particularly for home education can have the reception they need.

BERWICK SPRINGS FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB

Mr BATTIN: I also want to thank the Berwick Springs Football Netball Club. They are doing an amazing job. They are just a new club getting up and going. It is great to see the club moving into the Clyde North-Berwick area, and Ashley, who is the president, is doing an amazing job. They have taken over the Mick Morland Reserve. For those who do not know, Mick Morland was a long-serving councillor in our area and a very well respected person. He did a magnificent job. Unfortunately he passed away in 2017. It is a true honour to his name to ensure that more people get more active more often in our area.

THANK A FIRST RESPONDER DAY

Mr BATTIN: Tomorrow is Thank a First Responder Day. It is a really important day in our community to get out and thank our first responders, who do an amazing job, whether volunteer or career. I think it is really important at this time that we also acknowledge the work they have done through the Dandenong Ranges as we come up to 12 months since the storms that went through the Dandenong Ranges. We are very proud in the Liberal-Nationals to commit to making sure that there is a new SES station for the Dandenong Ranges, because the pressure that was put on the Emerald SES and other surrounding SESs like Lilydale was overwhelming during that crisis.

JACKSON COOMBS

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke—Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Youth) (12:40): Today I rise to congratulate two locals from my electorate who are following their dreams and achieving their goals. Firstly, to Greenvale local Jackson Coombs, congratulations on being accepted into Harvard's class of 2026. Jackson is 19, and attending the Ivy League university has been a long-held dream of the elite dancer. Although he started tap dancing at the age of nine, Jackson now dances in a number of different styles, including jazz, tap, ballet and hip-hop. Jackson finished at Penleigh and Essendon Grammar in 2020 with a score of 99.85 and went on to Melbourne University last year. He hopes to pursue a science-related major and of course join a dance team. I wish you all the best, Jackson. 2026 will come around before you know it.

KRIS TERZIEVSKI

Ms SPENCE: My congratulations also to Craigieburn boxer Kris Terziewski, who defeated Paul Gallen in a 10-round unanimous points victory to claim the Australian heavyweight title on 11 May. Kris has said that going into the ninth round was unknown territory for him, given the longest he had gone in his previous career fights was to eight rounds. He might have been exhausted, but that certainly was not going to stop him—and the bell going into the tenth round brought new motivation. As a result of this outstanding victory Kris is the first person in 100 years to hold the Australian and the Australasian titles simultaneously—a massive accomplishment—and is now number three in the country and 63rd in the world. At 32 Kris is looking at what comes next and is setting the bar higher still and aiming for world-level achievements. Well done, Kris. No doubt you will accomplish whatever goal you set next.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (12:41): This statement condemns the Andrews Labor government's appalling record of abandoning sick Victorians in the south-eastern suburbs, including Rowville. I have raised two cases of patients who suffered long delays in hospital despite needing urgent treatment.

One constituent arrived at Dandenong Hospital by ambulance with a lung infection and waited 23 hours in the emergency department for a bed. He was left for hours on a ward with two patients who were close contacts of a confirmed COVID case. Another constituent, a cancer patient, attended Monash Medical Centre by ambulance with stroke symptoms. He was discharged days later without an MRI. When Adrian's GP organised an MRI, which identified he had suffered a stroke, Adrian had to wait 5 hours to see a doctor and hours more in a chair and then on a trolley before staff could find him a hospital bed.

While the Premier tries to dodge responsibility and claim that these are unique or isolated cases, hospital stats show patients at south-eastern emergency departments are consistently among the most neglected in the state. Staff are so overwhelmed with patients that only 18 per cent of category 2 patients at Monash Medical Centre, 34 per cent at Dandenong and 20 per cent at Casey hospitals were treated in the recommended time of 10 minutes at the start of this year.

BALD HILL ACTIVATION PROJECT

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (12:43): Last week I managed to pull myself up to the top of 1000-plus steps in Darley after the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events officially opened stage 2 of the Bald Hill 1000-plus steps project and also announced \$2.1 million in funding for stage 3 of the project to go towards an all-abilities trail at the summit. At the top we were able to see views right across Moorabool and Melton to the city on the horizon.

It was a great viewpoint from which to look across to my electorate, knowing that the recent budget will help deliver projects like the Living Local Fund, a fund that will deliver grants for community infrastructure projects and local community grants for equipment and other community projects. It was great to look towards Melton knowing that the Melton suburban revitalisation board will continue delivering on-ground works and initiatives for the local community. It was terrific thinking that we were able to secure \$4.11 million for newborn baby screening to test for conditions and disorders in newborns to support early health intervention measures. I want to thank Emma Tuddenham from Ballarat for her campaign on this matter. Also thanks must go to Minister Pulford in the other place and the great member for Wendouree for their support.

It was also wonderful to look out to the federal seat of Hawke, and I congratulate Sam Rae on becoming the first member for a seat named after a legend of the Labor Party. I also should congratulate Brendan O'Connor, whose seat used to represent Melton. I congratulate him on becoming Minister for Skills and Training. Congratulations also go to Catherine King, whose seat used to include Moorabool, on her appointment as Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

LIFELINE

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (12:44): The amazing services that Lifeline provide across Victoria and in particular in Gippsland are under enormous pressure and in desperate need of state government funding so that the increasing unmet need can be serviced. Due to COVID-19 and other circumstances calls to the 13 11 14 Lifeline crisis number increased from an average of 680 calls per day in 2019 to nearly 1000 per day in 2021. Further, in 2020 more than 300 000 Victorian residents in crisis called the 13 11 14 hotline, but only approximately 160 000—or 54 per cent—of these same calls were answered right here in Victoria.

This is an unacceptable statistic and evidence that not enough funding and resources are being allocated to these tragic cases here in Victoria. If they do not believe me, then the government should read the McKell Institute Victoria report. A report released by McKell Institute Victoria in 2021 titled *Calling for Help: How Crisis Lines Support Victorians' Mental Health* reports that with almost a third of all calls to Lifeline coming from Victoria, there need to be ongoing efforts to increase the capacity of Lifeline's services to meet this demand. My colleague the member for Morwell previously wrote to the Treasurer and the Minister for Mental Health in the hope the Victorian government would

allocate \$5.5 million in the recent state budget to build capacity in Victoria's suicide prevention system and enable Lifeline in Victoria to deliver the crucial services that many Victorians need. I also call on the state government to honour its commitment to deliver all of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, including increased funding for support services such as Lifeline.

BUNINYONG ELECTORATE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Ms SETTLE (Buninyong) (12:46): Last week I had the absolute pleasure of visiting Bacchus Marsh with the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers and my good friend and colleague the member for Melton. We had a really wonderful day visiting lots of just really passionate people. It was an absolute joy to join the U3A Shakespeare group at the library. This group love their Shakespeare and are studying the sonnets. We also met with Renae from the Darley neighbourhood house. Her enthusiasm is just infectious. She loves everything that happens in that house. We had the pleasure of seeing some beautiful ceramic work and fluid painting happening while we were there. Of great importance was the visit to Grant Lodge—just an amazing group of people in their commitment and dedication. It is a publicly owned aged care facility, and the minister announced additional funding for the refurbishment. It is just wonderful to know that those people are going to be getting facilities of the same quality as the staff they have at the moment. In Ballarat the minister met with the Ballarat Foundation to hear about their plans for revitalisation of the volunteer centre, and Les showed us around the Sebastopol Men's Shed. Then we finished the day with Anne Tudor at the world's only dementia trail. Each and every time I visit the trail I am reminded of the care and compassion in our community.

GIPPSLAND SOUTH ELECTORATE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (12:47): I want to pay tribute to the volunteers and staff at our neighbourhood houses throughout Gippsland South for all the work they do to help our local community. Last week I visited Wurruk neighbourhood house, where coordinator Sarah Bardsley and board member Sandra Houghton showed me around. Wurruk runs a series of programs for locals in the community, including a well-utilised food bank, children's engagement programs and many others. From running small training offerings to providing material support for those in need and access to government services in smaller towns and offering a general place for the community to drop in and socialise, our neighbourhood houses play an important role in the community, particularly for those less well off. So many volunteers put in the hours to support their fellow citizens, and I am yet to meet a coordinator who does not put in hours well above what they are paid. To all the neighbourhood houses across Gippsland South, I say thank you.

LOCH SPORT

Mr D O'BRIEN: Congratulations to Sale GP Dr Iain Nicolson, who has begun filling a much-needed void by providing GP services on a part-time basis to Loch Sport. The availability of a doctor has been one of the top two or three issues in Loch Sport for a number of years, and it is fantastic that at least some service will now be available again. Now it is time for the state government to help out Loch Sport on one of its other big issues: addressing the continuing erosion that is washing away the Lake Victoria foreshore. The government has produced plenty of reports. It has money in this year's budget for statewide erosion works, and Loch Sport should be high on the priority list. We have had plenty of reports and multiple consultants engaged. It is time for action.

TONTINE

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (12:49): Broadmeadows has been reimagined while confronting the catastrophes of our times. The vision being delivered is to help this proud, resilient community accelerate through deindustrialisation from a potential rust belt to a brain belt. The latest success is in textile manufacturing, adding to the \$1 billion investment I have inspired for new industries and jobs at the derelict Ford site and Broadmeadows being redefined as an epicentre for Australia's vaccine-manufacturing ecosystem, saving lives and livelihoods at home and abroad.

Tontine made insulation for the motor vehicle industry before Ford closed, marking the demise of Australia's once-proud automotive industry, devastating Broadmeadows in 2016 and defining the loss of Australia's manufacturing scale. But I am delighted Tontine is part of the comeback strategy for Broadmeadows. The company has leveraged a Victorian government investment of \$500 000 with a \$5 million investment and innovation. The result is Tontine will have the capacity to make more than 1.5 million quilts and doonas per year, almost enough to stretch from Melbourne to Perth. This will expand Tontine's employment of 140 local jobs. The Tontine Group CEO, Ian Shannon, was generous, saying that he was delighted to be part of the comeback strategy. I also want to thank him for the enlightened self-interest model being part of that, because the company donated doonas and quilts to the Vinnies centres in Glenroy, Sunbury and Dandenong to protect the most vulnerable people against the icy winter blasts.

CITY OF MELBOURNE CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (12:50): I have been so impressed how the cycling community has come together to urge Melbourne City Council to continue, not delay, their rollout of safe bike infrastructure throughout the CBD. We are in a climate crisis. Transport is Victoria's fastest growing source of emissions. We need massive investment in active transport, like separated bike lanes, from all levels of government to cut emissions, to keep people healthy, to help people save money at a time when fuel prices are skyrocketing, to make it easier to get around and to make riding a bike safe for everyone. Melbourne City Council has been doing some great work rolling out safe separated bike lanes—leading the state in fact—as have many cities around the world in response to more people riding their bikes. I urge—as does the cycling community—Melbourne City Council tonight to continue their plans to roll out safe bike infrastructure across the city.

To the critics: they clearly do not remember what it was like to drive down Exhibition Street prior to the installation of bike lanes, prior to COVID—hardly a dream run, was it? They clearly did not ride their bikes down Exhibition Street before—an entry point to the CBD of major bike routes. Having to weave in and out of traffic during peak hour was completely unacceptable. This is just where they are required. The fact is we need a network, hundreds of kilometres, of separated bike lanes rolled out across the entire metropolitan Melbourne area.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (12:52): Last year Reconciliation Australia encouraged all Australians to take action, not just in National Reconciliation Week but every week of the year. I certainly try to do this and have now made it my practice whenever I speak in my electorate and in other parts of the state to highlight the fact that the Yan Yean electorate is one of the few in this Parliament that bears a traditional language name, meaning 'young boy'. The geographic centre of my electorate is Mernda, which means 'girl'.

The theme of this year's National Reconciliation Week is 'Be Brave. Make Change' and is a challenge to all Australians—individuals, families, communities, organisations and government—to be brave and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation. Voters at the federal election were brave and elected a record number of First Nations people, including Linda Burney, the first Aboriginal woman to be the indigenous affairs minister, and other Labor members Marion Scrymgour, Dr Gordon Reid, Senators Patrick Dodson and Malarndirri McCarthy and our own Jana Stewart.

The Monday after the election I was privileged to attend a smoking ceremony to acknowledge the start of the Bridge Inn Road duplication, and I commend the minister for infrastructure for this great initiative. I also want to thank Alan Thorpe, the CEO of Dardi Munwurro, and their staff and elders, who run an amazingly successful program at Bunjil Place in Mernda, who with the Minister for Crime Prevention I had the privilege of meeting. I also want to acknowledge Natarsha Bamblett, who I had the privilege of hearing speak at the Australian Local Government Women's Association conference yesterday. She is being brave and being the change, a wonderful First Nations Yorta Yorta woman who now lives in the Yan Yean electorate.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA HOUSING

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (12:53): Just under a month ago I raised the housing crisis that we have on the Mornington Peninsula. At the time I made the point that we have the sixth-largest number of rough sleepers in the state and we have exceedingly low vacancy rates in terms of rental properties, and I highlighted not only the lack of action but the lack of even a commentary from the government on the issue. I made the point that we need to utilise our housing assets far more effectively than we do now. So I was interested to read an article in the *Mornington News* on 31 May. They were talking about recently released data from CoreLogic on rental increases by postcode. Seven of the top eight postcodes—so, seven of the eight highest rental increases—were on the Mornington Peninsula, seven of eight. We have got families being forced to sleep in cars, sleeping in tents on the foreshore—when it is 6, 7, 8 degrees in the morning they are in a tent on the foreshore. The council has had to open up camping areas that would normally be closed. Also in the same article there was some commentary around the number of government properties that are empty, that are not available for these people. And just to cap it off, the number of new dwellings to be constructed under the Big Build is 26. Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula have 2544 families on the waiting list, so the Big Build is one dwelling for every 98 families.

TEMPLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (12:55): I will tell you what, I saw a rockstar reception at a Coldplay concert I went to a few years back, and I reckon that was rivalled by the Premier coming out to Templeton Primary School in my community at Wantirna, because I was not sure we would get to the assembly with the amount of selfies. I have since crowned the Premier the selfie king of Wantirna—so the parents made sure. The Premier was there to get an update on the \$9.2 million of works to back in Templeton Primary School and their entire community and to get an update, with construction starting soon. I am looking forward to continuing to work with the principal, Mr McKinlay, out there and of course having the Premier back.

FAIRHILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr TAYLOR: I went to an assembly at Fairhills Primary School recently. The reception, minus the Premier, was not as great. However, it was still fantastic. I got the kids nice and riled up on a Friday afternoon after I formally announced \$600 000 of works. It was not the drainage and sewerage, though, it was \$500 000 or thereabouts that we are delivering for a new multipurpose basketball court—covered across, seating, lighting, the whole kit and caboodle. Ms Beaurain, the principal, and the student leaders out there are very, very excited, and I am proud this government is getting on with that work.

BORONIA BOWLS CLUB

Mr TAYLOR: I announced \$60 000 from the state Labor government to deliver new lighting—100 lux—a competition-grade gym and both lawn bowls greens out at Boronia Bowls Club, a fantastic local club, with \$30 000 from them and \$30 000 from council, a fantastic partnership, I tell you what.

BAYSWATER ELECTORATE LIVE MUSIC

Mr TAYLOR: Live music is back. I was at the Oak Tree Tavern recently supporting live music right there and across our community. It is up and about.

MITCHELL AND CAMERON WHITE

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (12:56): Congratulations to Mitchell White and Cameron White of 1st Chelsea Heights Scouts Group for achieving their prestigious Queen's Scout Award. Twins Mitchell and Cameron are well known locally for their community spirit and willingness to get involved and lend a hand. This is an outstanding and well-deserved recognition of their hard work, perseverance and determination to reach milestones and personal goals and to contribute to our community. Congratulations to both of them and to their very proud parents Peter and Lisa White.

MARK DREYFUS

Ms KILKENNY: I wish to warmly congratulate Mark Dreyfus on his appointment as Australia's Attorney-General. I know how hard he will work to establish a powerful, independent national anti-corruption commission as well as working to restore integrity to appointments to bodies such as the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Australian Human Rights Commission. Mark is an absolute defender of the rule of law and will prioritise holding government to account, instilling and maintaining integrity in our public institutions and making sure that our federal system works to protect and support all Australians.

BONBEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms KILKENNY: I wish to congratulate and commend the school leaders at Bonbeach Primary School for 2022. Congratulations to school captains Sienna Hornek, Asha Brimelow, Kailani Adamson and Giffin Drinan; house captains Bridget Kennedy, Summer Jardine, Mia Stewart, Tigga Johnstone, Frank Blake, Lachlan Cahir, Levi Matheson and Owen Paton. Congratulations to visual arts captains Lydia Fish and Tahlia Breheny; and for Indonesian, Charlotte Shannon and Ruby Parks. I know these terrific students will be fantastic role models and ambassadors for their school.

THE TORCH

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (12:58): It is a pleasure to rise and talk about two events that I attended last week that were very special to me. One was an exhibition that the organisation the Torch held at Glen Eira town hall in Caulfield. The Torch helps Indigenous Victorians who are either in prison or just out of prison but still within the criminal justice system to explore their artistic talents—and there are many artistic talents amongst that cohort. The exhibition of about 400 pieces, which finished on Sunday, was done by about 250 artists. Almost every painting and sculpture has been sold, and all the proceeds go to the artists; not one dollar is taken by the agency, Torch. It is an extraordinary organisation. The recidivism rates of Indigenous offenders that engage with the Torch is substantially lower than other Indigenous offenders. It is an incredible organisation led by Kent Morris, a fantastic leader, and an excellent board. I want to commend the Torch for the amazing work they do in the state of Victoria and have done for years.

CARNEGIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr DIMOPOULOS: Equally as part of Reconciliation Week I attended an assembly of Carnegie Primary School in my electorate—an incredible assembly. Those students and the teachers and staff are so engaged in the importance of Reconciliation Week and National Sorry Day. They had enormous learnings that they shared with me at the assembly. It was a really outstanding way to commemorate Reconciliation Week.

ETHAN NGUYEN

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (12:59): It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay my respects on the tragic death of little Ethan, who sadly passed away on Thursday, 2 June, at Sunshine North. This is a very difficult time for Ethan's parents, family and loved ones after the tragic death, and I know that my community is also grieving at this point. I had an opportunity to attend a small tribute on Sunday with locals who witnessed this tragic event. I send my deepest condolences to Ethan's father, Dinh Phan, and mother, Lisa Nguyen.

ST ALBANS FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms SULEYMAN: On another matter, I would like to thank St Albans Saints football club for the wonderful merch that I received recently from a great club indeed, from Janet the Treasurer. Let me say the St Albans community has had the privilege to have the Saints for many decades in our community. It goes from strength to strength. I want to pay a big shout-out to Janet, the fantastic volunteers and the committee of management at St Albans Saints. They are doing a tremendous job. They hosted a very successful Mother's Day event recently, and the club also had an Indigenous jersey

designed by Indigenous footballer Joshua Carter to be worn in their Indigenous round coming up soon. This success would not have been possible without the executive, the volunteers and the committee, and really we are very lucky to have St Albans Saints.

WAURN PONDS TRAIN STATION

Mr CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (13:01): It was my pleasure two weekends ago to attend a community open day for the newly redeveloped Waurn Ponds train station. I had the absolute pleasure to attend that opening with about a thousand Geelong residents, particularly of course from Waurn Ponds, Grovedale and Armstrong Creek. This is part of the redevelopment of the Geelong train line, which will particularly see a redevelopment of Waurn Ponds station, Marshall station and South Geelong station and which will also see the duplication of the track through the southern growth corridor of Geelong. All of these investments will mean that we have a more reliable public transport system, because many of my constituents catch a train daily to work. The Waurn Ponds station is a key train station within that rail corridor, and I commend Rail Projects Victoria for that work.

Business of the house

NOTICES OF MOTION

Ms HUTCHINS (Sydenham—Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support) (13:02): I advise that the government does not wish to proceed with government business, notices of motion 1 and 2, today and ask that they remain on the notice paper.

Bills

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (NAZI SYMBOL PROHIBITION) BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Ms HUTCHINS:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Government amendments circulated by Ms HUTCHINS under standing orders.

Mr M O'BRIEN (Malvern) (13:03): 'Never again' is a phrase often used in relation to remembrance of the Holocaust. We use these words to recognise the horror of what happened in many of our lifetimes and to make clear our determination as a community that never again shall such inhumanity be allowed to take place. Regrettably, even in a multicultural state such as Victoria—a tolerant state, a harmonious state—there remain people within our community who do not believe in 'Never again'. There remain people in our community who are, for want of a better term, Neo-Nazis. The damage, the pain and the trauma that so many people went through—and the relatives of those people today—must never be forgotten, and that is why we must always be aware and on our guard about those who would seek to downplay or, worse still, to perpetuate or to talk up or to act in relation to this most evil of ideologies—the Nazi ideology.

The *Age* newspaper journalists Nick McKenzie and Joel Tozer did a remarkable series of articles in August last year under the series title 'Nazis next door', and the thought that so many people, often young, often disaffected—misled for sure—but so many people, could willingly align themselves with Nazi or Neo-Nazi ideology is a grave concern. The fact that people who have been the victims of the Holocaust—people of the Jewish faith and culture, gay and lesbian people, the Romani community and others who were targeted by that evil regime—should have to live in a community with people who are seeking to perpetuate such horror is intolerable.

That is why the Liberals and Nationals announced back in February 2020 that if we were elected, we would ban the public display of the Nazi swastika, which intends to incite hate in Victoria. We did so because we listened to the community, because we are determined to say 'never again' and to act to

ensure that never again shall those horrors be perpetrated, not in our community and not on our watch. We know the pain that that Nazi swastika causes when people see it being used to target them because of who they are, because of where they have come from, and it is not acceptable. My friend and colleague the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Caulfield, and the then Shadow Attorney-General, Mr O'Donohue in the other place, announced on 2 February that a Liberal-Nationals government would ban the public display of the Nazi swastika and other Nazi symbols which intend to incite hate in Victoria. This was widely supported and welcomed by many community groups, including the Jewish community, here in this state.

We put this forward hoping it would be taken up in a bipartisan way. The government made some positive noises, but ultimately it took a long time. The member for Caulfield was very strong in pursuing this because he knows it was the right thing to do, and this side of the house knows it was the right thing to do. We introduced a private members bill which got put to one side by the government. So we have been very strong on this. We initiated this and we did it proudly, because we stand up for the values of this state, which include tolerance, harmony and respect for individuals—and you could not be more at odds with that than through the symbolism of Nazi ideology, the Nazi swastika.

The government determined to provide a reference to the Legal and Social Issues Committee of the Legislative Assembly on a number of matters, including the question of the banning of the Nazi swastika. That happened in March 2021 when the report came down, and recommendation 24 of that report was that the Victorian government establish a criminal offence that prohibits the display of symbols of Nazi ideology, including the Nazi swastika, with considered exceptions to the prohibition. The government flagged that it was accepting that recommendation, but it took until 11 May this year for the Attorney-General to announce that the government would be introducing the bill before the house, the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. In the press release announcing the introduction of the bill the Attorney-General said:

The legislation will come into effect a year after passing ...

A year after passing—the government said it was to allow for time to implement an education campaign to raise awareness of the origins of the religious and the cultural swastika as opposed to the Nazi swastika. Can I say, it is very important that people do understand the difference between the Nazi swastika, referred to in this legislation as the Hakenkreuz, and the traditional swastika, which has been used for many, many years by the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities. They are separate symbols, and people of the Buddhist and Hindu and Jain communities should not be tarred in any way with the brush of those who seek to use the Nazi swastika. We do support the notion that there should be an education campaign not just for those communities but for the broader community. People do need to understand the difference between the Nazi swastika and the swastika which has been a culturally and historically significant symbol, an ancient and sacred symbol of peace and good fortune, for the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities. Where we do part company with the government is we do not believe that the important protections in this bill should be put on hold, put on the shelf, for a year while that community education campaign takes place. We believe that the issues that led to the introduction of this bill and the need to protect the community against Neo-Nazis and those who seek to propagate the symbol of that Nazi ideology—those protections deserve to be in place from day one.

The government, in the 15 minutes before this debate was brought on, advised the opposition of house amendments which the Minister for Corrections has circulated before the house. Rather than saying that in 12 months time the bill will take effect, the government is now saying, effectively, through these amendments, that in six months time the bill will take effect. The Liberals and Nationals say this bill contains protections which are important today, and these protections should be put in place the minute this bill receives royal assent. There is no case for waiting. We should not have to wait to end the hate, and that is why this bill should take effect immediately. I can announce that a Liberal-Nationals government, should we be fortunate enough to secure a mandate on 26 November, will implement this bill in full on day one. At our very first opportunity this bill will be implemented in full because, as I say, you should not wait to end the hate.

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria are a body that the Attorney-General thought highly enough of—and rightly so—to ask to join her for the government’s announcement of the introduction of this bill, and they obviously praised the intent of the bill, just as they have praised the Liberals and Nationals and particularly the member for Caulfield for his great work in initiating this whole notion when we announced our position back in February 2020. I refer to a letter from Daniel Aghion SC, the president of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. This is to the member for Caulfield, dated 17 May 2022. The letter states, in part:

However, we would ask you to do what you can to encourage the Government to consider amending the bill to immediately ban the public display of Nazi swastikas, rather than delaying the ban for 12 months. There is a concrete reason why we make this request. Regrettably, only 24 hours after the Attorney-General’s announcement that this bill would be introduced, the Beth Weizmann Jewish Community Centre, in which the JCCV has its offices, was vandalised with swastikas by two individuals. This incident occurred during work hours while I was in the building hosting a small community meeting for the Israeli Ambassador. The delay in this bill’s introduction means that the two men arrested—and anyone else who seeks to display the Nazi swastika in public during the next 12 months—cannot be charged with this soon-to-be crime.

The voice of the Jewish community is very clear: they do not want to wait 12 months; they do not want to wait six months for the protections in this bill to be put in place. They have asked for it to take place immediately. The Liberals and Nationals support this call, and if we are elected, we will act on that call and ensure this bill is implemented in full on day one.

Turning to the provisions of the bill itself, we note that clause 3 of the bill commences with a relatively lengthy statement which refers to the historical use of the swastika as an ancient and auspicious symbol of purity, love, peace and good fortune in Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and other religions and notes that it was misappropriated by the Nazi party and the Third Reich in Germany. That is a very accurate summation. Again, I reiterate that this Parliament in debating and hopefully passing this legislation shows nothing but love and respect for those Victorians who use the swastika in its ancient and culturally appropriate way. This bill is not aimed at those people or those communities or those faiths in any way. Those people still have the absolute right to display publicly and to use publicly the ancient swastika, which has been part of the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities and other religions for many, many years. This bill is specifically prohibiting the public display of the Nazi swastika, which I think is how most people in the community would refer to it, or, to use the terminology in the bill, the Hakenkreuz.

New section 41J defines a Nazi symbol, which is what is banned, as ‘a Hakenkreuz, being a symbol of a cross with the arms bent at right angles in a clockwise direction’ or a symbol that so nearly resembles it that it is likely to be confused with or mistaken for that symbol. This bill only applies to the Nazi swastika or the Hakenkreuz; it does not apply to other insignia of the Third Reich. People might be aware of the symbols that were used by the SS and other things, and I am sure people have seen enough museums or war movies or *Hogan’s Heroes* to know that there are other symbols of the Nazi regime. But this bill is very specific, this bill is very targeted, and only relates to the Nazi swastika or Hakenkreuz.

The element of the offence is that a person must not intentionally display a Nazi symbol. That is the first test: has a person intentionally displayed the Nazi symbol or not? They must not intentionally display the Nazi symbol if the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the symbol is associated with Nazi ideology. So a child who has no concept of what a Nazi swastika is or its historical overtones or the immoral acts with which that regime is associated who draws such as symbol without having any understanding of what they are actually doing or the context of it would not be caught by this legislation.

The second element is that the display occurs in a public place, a non-government school or a post-secondary education institution or occurs in sight of a person who is in a public place, a non-government school or a post-secondary education institution. So this does not ban the display of the Nazi swastika or Hakenkreuz in private settings. One of the questions which was raised during the bill briefing I had with the minister’s office and the department was in relation to a fairly infamous incident

many years ago where a prominent member of society was dressed up in what I guess they would term fancy dress, which involved a Nazi uniform. The question was whether that conduct, if that happened in Victoria, would fall foul of this bill, and the answer was that if it took place in a private place and not in view of anybody who was in a public place, then no, it would not fall foul of the bill. However, if it did take place in a public place or in view of somebody in a public place, then yes, that conduct would be caught.

I do have some sympathy for the government. In seeking to legislate a ban of this nature, you do have to draw lines, but you also do need to have appropriate exemptions. If we are to make sure that generations to come understand the evil of the Nazi regime and the horrors of the Holocaust, it is important that people are able to be educated. That is why this government, through the bill, does provide for a number of exemptions where the public display of the Nazi swastika can be permitted. That is absolutely right, and that is appropriate.

New section 41K of the bill sets out some exemptions where a person does not contravene the act in certain circumstances. First of all, there are some qualifiers. The display must have been engaged in reasonably and in good faith. We are not talking about people who think that they can be smart alecs and who seek to cause pain and hurt and target vulnerable sections of our community and then rely on what they regard as a loophole, because their actions must be reasonable and they must be in good faith, and I think they are important qualifiers to these exemptions.

To look at what the exemptions are, they can be for a genuine academic, artistic, religious or scientific purpose. For people worried about whether there could be a public screening of *The Sound of Music*, obviously set during the Nazi occupation in Austria, with the uniforms appropriate to the time—no, you will still be able to watch *The Sound of Music*. That is not a problem. It would come under a genuine artistic purpose. Academic purposes: people are still able to be educated, to understand about these matters—and religious and scientific purposes as well. For a genuine cultural or educational purpose: so museums and displays of World War II memorabilia—or ‘relics’ may be a more appropriate word than ‘memorabilia’, I think ‘memorabilia’ glorifies it too much—that is another exemption. I did ask about RSLs. I know that my local RSL does have uniforms from World War II, from both Allied and Axis powers. I would be fairly sure that in one of those display cabinets there would be something, whether it is a uniform or a helmet or a dagger or something, that would have a Nazi swastika on it, so the question was quite reasonably, ‘Would our RSLs still be able to continue to have their historic displays there?’, and the answer in the bill briefing was that yes, that that would be for a genuine, cultural or educational purpose. I think, again, that is entirely appropriate. We are not talking about whitewashing history, we are not talking about trying to rewrite history, we just want to make sure that people are not able to be threatened by the abuse of that symbol, that Nazi swastika, as a symbol of the Third Reich, because that is what we have seen happening.

There is another exemption in making or publishing a fair or accurate report of any event or matter of public interest. So, again, it is quite sensible that there should be freedom of the press and there should be the ability to fairly and accurately report a matter. So if, for example, there was a protest and people had signs that had the Nazi swastika in breach of the law, it is not a matter for newspapers or television or journalists generally to have to censor that. If it is a fair and accurate report of an event, then that should be an appropriate exemption, and we do support that exemption in the bill. Finally, another exemption is if the action is genuinely and reasonably in opposition to Fascism, Nazism, Neo-Nazism or other related ideologies.

Proposed section 41K(3) provides that:

A person does not contravene ...

the act

if the Nazi symbol is displayed on the person’s body by means of tattooing or other like process.

I suppose this is a recognition that there are practical limits to how this Parliament can legislate, and there are practical limits to the ability of legislators to interfere with what people do on their own bodies. Why anybody would want to go and have a Nazi swastika tattooed on their body is beyond me. It is well beyond my comprehension. You can only imagine it would be an action of somebody who either has no appreciation for what that symbol means to so many people or perhaps more chillingly has every appreciation for what that symbol means to so many people. But I think this is an appropriate recognition that there are limits to the ability and the propriety of this Parliament seeking to impose the community's view on individuals, and for that reason tattooing is not caught by this bill.

There are exemptions for law enforcement and intelligence agency members acting in good faith and in the performance of their duties and for those acting in good faith in the course of official duties connected with the administration of justice or the prosecution of offences. The Police Association Victoria I think rightly questioned why there is a good-faith requirement in this part of the bill. Surely a member of law enforcement or a member of an intelligence agency acting in the performance of their duties can be assumed to be acting in good faith, so I would be interested if the government has some further views on why that additional qualifier is necessary. Sergeant Wayne Gatt from the police association raised that concern with me, and I put it on the record because I believe it is one that the government should respond to. Again, we are not suggesting that off-duty police officers or intelligence agency officers can do whatever they like with swastikas, but we are talking about an exemption that already requires them to be acting in the performance of their duties, so I suppose the question is: why is good faith necessary as well?

The bill also provides in proposed section 41K(6) that a child cannot be prosecuted for an offence without the written consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Again I think this is a sensible safeguard. I think that the idea that a child would necessarily know what they were doing if they were displaying a Nazi swastika is questionable in itself, and I think it is appropriate that any decision to prosecute a child under this bill should be elevated to the DPP so that appropriate discretion can be considered as to whether it is appropriate or not.

In terms of how the bill operates—so, all right, if somebody has contravened the bill, what then happens?—proposed section 41L empowers a police officer to give a direction to a person to remove a Nazi symbol from public display where the person is the owner or occupier of a property on which the Nazi symbol is being displayed and the police officer has a reasonable belief that it is in breach of the bill. This may be done in writing or orally and may include a period for compliance. If a direction cannot be given in person, it can be given in writing or left at or on the relevant property or vehicle where the Nazi symbol is being displayed. Contravening such a direction without a reasonable excuse is an offence, and there is a penalty of 10 penalty units, currently \$1817.40. I should note that the maximum penalty under the bill for the offence of publicly displaying the Nazi symbol is 120 penalty units, which is currently \$21 808.80 or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

The bill also provides in proposed section 41M that search warrant provisions in the Crimes Act 1958 apply to this offence as if it were an indictable offence, which has the effect of making it easier to obtain a search warrant, as normally it can be quite difficult to obtain a search warrant in such circumstances.

In my consultation with different community groups on this bill it would be fair to say not every group with which I consulted was fully supportive, and I note that Liberty Victoria did express some misgivings about this bill. In the response from Liberty Victoria they noted that the expansion of the criminal law is not an appropriate or effective way to achieve the government's objectives and:

There is a risk that the law will have unintended consequences which undermine its objectives.

Now, I do understand the free speech concerns that some groups may put forward. This is novel legislation in this state to ban the public display of a particular symbol, but it is legislation that is very carefully drafted, very carefully targeted and done for a very good reason. This is not some arid

academic exercise. This is not guarding against potential future actions. We have got, sadly, Neo-Nazis living amongst us, as has been demonstrated by some excellent journalistic work.

It is important that we send a very clear message as a Parliament, as a community and as a state that we believe ‘Never again’—that we believe the Nazi swastika has no place in this society as a symbol of hate. As I say, this is not an academic exercise. This is about protecting people who are targeted and who are threatened by the display of this symbol by people who are designing to and trying to cause fear and terror in the lives of our fellow citizens. So while I understand the arguments against this bill from an absolutist, free speech point of view, I do not agree with them, because this particular symbol means so much and is so powerful, and therefore it is appropriate that the state take the action that it is seeking to take through this Parliament.

The feedback I have had from Jewish community groups has been obviously supportive, with the exception of the government’s delay in wanting to make this legislation effective. Let me just reiterate: the Liberals and Nationals will make this bill effective from day one if we are elected in November this year. We should not have to wait for the protections in this bill to take effect. We can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can protect the vulnerable in our community and educate the community at the same time. I cannot think of many other pieces of legislation where the government has said, ‘Here’s a vulnerable group of people who are deserving of protection, but you’re going to have to wait for 12 months or six months before you can get that protection’. We have tried to work with the government on a bipartisan basis. When we proposed this reform, when we proposed the bill, the government said, ‘Well, we want extra time to go through our processes’. We have tried to support that as much as we can, but at the end of the day, this initiative was one from the Liberal and National parties. It is one that we have pushed very hard for. We support this bill, but we do not believe that our Jewish community or in fact any community in this state should have to wait for the protections that this bill provides. We should not have to wait to end the hate, but the opposition does support this bill.

Ms SPENCE (Yuroke—Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Youth) (13:32): As the Minister for Multicultural Affairs I am very pleased to speak today in avid support of the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022 and the amendment that was moved earlier to bring forward the commencement date from 12 months to six months. I want to begin by acknowledging Victoria’s strong and vibrant Jewish community, a community of survivors which has endured relentless persecution and vilification over the course of centuries. Sadly we are reminded far too often that antisemitism is alive and threatening, not only through the memories of the Jewish people during World War II that are passed down from generation to generation and not only through the current rise of extreme far-right groups which glorify one of the most hateful ideologies in human history but also through the casual displays of racism and antisemitism, which can be the most insidious and destructive because they show how deeply ingrained these harmful attitudes and behaviours are in our society. They tell us that we have still got a long way to go before we can eradicate these attitudes. We must do everything that we can to eradicate these attitudes, because as long as we turn a blind eye to these casual displays of racism and antisemitism there will always be the potential for dangerous and hate-filled scenarios to unfold, and we have seen these scenarios transpire in recent times in Victoria, across Australia and of course overseas. We cannot pretend that it is not happening, which is why this government does not shy away from the challenge of ending the threat that antisemitism poses to the Jewish community.

That brings me to this bill, which is unique and which is unprecedented. This bill is a first for our nation, and I welcome and commend the New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmanian governments for also committing to adopting similar regulatory reform. This bill is incredibly important in our collective quest to eradicate the scourge of antisemitism from society. It is incredibly important when we think about the unfortunate spate of incidents where the public display of Nazi symbols was used by various individuals and groups to intimidate and to convey a message of hate and intolerance.

It is incredibly important when we think of January 2020, when a Nazi flag was flown on private property in Beulah in the Grampians in north-west Victoria, where a group of Neo-Nazis were publicly

chanting racist slogans and displaying hateful insignia, or the graffitied Hakenkreuz at the Gary Smorgon Oval in Albert Park, or more recently the defacing of corflutes in the federal electorates of Macnamara and Kooyong, or the stickers that were plastered throughout Caulfield, including on the community centre, the day after this bill was introduced. These are reminders of why the bill that we are debating is so important and necessary.

This is a great day, and we have so many members from both sides of the chamber lined up to speak on this bill. We are going to hear some really personal stories and reflections throughout the day. I look forward to this legislation passing through both houses without contention, because when it comes to racism and vilification in Victoria, we should not hesitate to unite in this Parliament to crush it, and I am glad that we will.

I would like to recognise the extensive work of the Legal and Social Issues Committee, which led the inquiry into the anti-vilification protections in Victoria, and I thank the chair, the member for St Albans, and all of the members of that committee for their work. I would also like to give special thanks to the religious, legal and community groups which were consulted in the development of this bill and helped to shape it. This extends to the core consultative group, which comprised faith leaders from the Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities, which are particularly impacted by the bill—because it is important to distinguish between the more recent association of the swastika with Nazism and indeed the misappropriation of the swastika by that hateful regime and the legitimate cultural and religious use of the swastika, which has long been a symbol of good luck and prosperity for Hindu, Buddhist and Jain communities. In fact the Nazi hate symbol that is often referred to as the Nazi swastika is correctly called the Hakenkreuz, and we want to ensure that this legislation does not confuse the two.

Our legislation recognises the long history and the significance of the swastika to the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain communities to ensure that their religious and cultural freedoms remain protected. And before the new law comes into effect, based on the consultation that has been undertaken by the Attorney-General, we will run a community education campaign to raise awareness of the origins of the swastika, its importance to the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities and its distinction from the Nazi hate symbol. We have heard that the Liberal and National parties do not want that to occur before the bill is implemented, but I will leave it for them to explain to those communities why they do not want that to happen, even though those communities have asked that that happen first.

To be penalised under this new law, the Hakenkreuz must be intentionally displayed in public with the knowledge that it represents Nazi ideology. In addition to the legitimate cultural and religious use of the swastika, Nazi hate symbols may continue to be used for educational, scientific, artistic or academic purposes. This legislation is designed to prohibit the use of Nazi hate symbols whenever their use seeks to divide us, to incite vilification and to breed hate. It is designed to stamp out malicious acts of antisemitism, which cause an immeasurable amount of harm to our society and particularly to our Jewish community.

For many the horrors of the Holocaust may seem a long time ago now—only they were not. Most adult Victorians have a parent or grandparent that lived during the times of World War II. This atrocity took place in our modern history, and the widespread pain and destruction which resulted from the greatest act of antisemitism should not be underestimated. It should not be forgotten. We should absolutely not ignore it when we see sprouts of it beginning to grow again. Tragically, we need not look further than the weekly newspaper to know that the attitudes and the behaviours that give rise to antisemitism are still present. We have got an opportunity now to stamp out hate and to give it no room to grow.

I support the bill for a number of reasons. I support the bill because it will recognise the religious and cultural use of the swastika. That is, the offence will ensure that the swastika can continue to be used for religious and cultural purposes, such as being displayed at temples, to acknowledge the swastika's important contribution for Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities. I support the bill as it targets

persons that intentionally display a Nazi hate symbol in public who know that the symbol is associated with Nazi ideology. I support the bill as police powers will support the enforcement of the offence and enable immediate steps to be taken to address the harm caused by its public display. But most importantly I support the bill as it will help reduce racism and vilification by making unlawful the public display of this insidious symbol of hate in our neighbourhoods and across the state.

This bill sends a really clear message that Victoria does not want and will not tolerate antisemitism—not now and not ever. The introduction of this bill could not come at a more poignant time, with the Community Security Group reporting 490 antisemitic events in Australia during 2021, a 38 per cent increase over 2020 and the highest on record. This is an important bill, and this is a necessary bill. I thank the Attorney-General for her work in bringing this bill forward. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (13:41): I rise standing very proud that we have a bill before the Parliament that has generated so much interest, that is really creating history in the Parliament of Victoria and that is something we can all be proud of. This is not something that individuals should be taking credit for and it is not something that one side of politics should be taking credit for; it is something that we should all be united in taking credit for, because it is something that is overdue for all of us—not just for the community that I represent, the Jewish community; not just for my family; not just for my wife's family, who are survivors of the Holocaust; not just for her grandmother, who when she came here to Australia hid her Jewish identity; and not just for her father, who up until the age of his bar mitzvah did not know he was Jewish and who went to school and then finally when he asked, 'Who are those people that wear a kippah or a yarmulke on their heads?', his mother said, 'They're Jewish and so are you'.

This is a very important day. We have heard already from members about the rise of antisemitism. We have heard that only 24 hours after the introduction of this bill the Nazi swastika was plastered right throughout my electorate of Caulfield and on the building of the Beth Weizmann centre, the very group that actually came here and stood with the minister making the announcement. It is for that reason—not that we are trying to play politics—we support this. We absolutely support this. It is for that reason that we just say, 'We need to do it now. The time to act is now'. We are united in ensuring that we educate.

We have been talking about this for a number of years. In 2020 we, the Liberal-Nationals, announced that we would call on the ban if we were elected. We were about to introduce a private members bill into the Parliament, and then I worked with the then multicultural minister, the member for Richmond. Together we said, 'We're not going to introduce a private members bill; we will work together', and we made that undertaking. I worked with the member for St Albans, the member for Brighton and a number of members of the Legal and Social Issues Committee to work through the important work to get to where we have today, so we do this united.

We do this with the Indian, Hindu and Jain communities, and they are understanding of the importance. I met with a number of their leaders to understand that their symbol was hijacked by Hitler, was hijacked by the Nazis. A symbol of peace and a symbol of integrity was hijacked and used for evil. It is their symbol, and it is for that reason we should ensure that those people that use it as a symbol for evil should face consequences when they use it. It is for that reason we need to act immediately so that for those people, who within 24 hours sought to use that symbol to attack vulnerable people, there are consequences for doing that.

In 2019 we saw the increase of antisemitic attacks right throughout the state, and they continue to rise. We have an aged care facility in my electorate, and that facility had a swastika painted on the front gates. Many of those people living in that centre, Emmy Monash in Hawthorn Road, are in fact Holocaust survivors. On the front of their home there was a swastika—the very symbol that they escaped—being used again to traumatise them.

It is for that reason that we all stand here today united, to ensure that this symbol of evil is not used against them and against all, not just the Jewish community—against the LGBTI community, against the Chinese community during the pandemic. In fact many of those that seek to use it attack those vulnerable people that cannot defend themselves. People ask me about banning things and say, ‘Well, if you ban the Nazi swastika, where do you stop?’. There is no other symbol that has the evil of killing some 6 million Jews during the Holocaust and seeking the final solution to wipe out Jews back then. That symbol being used today, a symbol from the past with that evil being used today—that is why we must do this. That is why we must stand united to do this.

In the little town of Beulah a flag was flown outside a Holocaust survivor’s house. I contacted the mayor at the time and said, ‘I believe there is a swastika that is being flown in your community’, and the mayor said at the time, ‘Yes, and we think there is a Holocaust survivor that lives in the town’. She did not know at the time it was next door. I rang that gentleman, who was in his late 70s. He actually came from my area of Caulfield and he decided during his retirement days, ‘I’m just going to get away from it all and move to a town of less than 2000 people and enjoy my retirement days in Beulah’. He never thought, after escaping the Holocaust to come to Caulfield and then go to Beulah, that someone would actually use that symbol again against him. I said to him, ‘What can we do to support you?’. His answer was, ‘It will be okay. I just won’t go outside’. He did not want to face it, and nor should he. When the police tried to work to get the symbol, the flag, taken down—and, I might say, it was great work along with the council—we had to bluff our way through to get that flag taken down. We tried to hide the fact that there was a survivor in that town. Unfortunately, as we know, media tend to find this stuff out. But again, that individual should never have had to go through that—no-one should.

So when people ask me about banning things and they say ‘Where do you stop?’, you stop when you hurt people. You do not allow people that are vulnerable to be targeted. Hate in all forms should be stamped out. I am a big believer in freedoms. I am a big believer in being able to express yourself and not censoring people, but not when it is targeting people who cannot defend themselves and not when it is something that is used in the way that this is used, an evil symbol like this, to target individuals.

Yes, we need to educate people, and I commend the work that is being done in our schools. I commend the work that was started by the former Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, to ensure that every state and every territory in Australia would have a Holocaust museum to educate people. We heard the Minister for Multicultural Affairs talk about this and the fact that these evils were not so long ago. The unfortunate thing is that 25 per cent of people in Victoria are unaware of what the Holocaust even was. Twenty-five per cent are unaware of the forced extermination, of Hitler and his evil regime. We must learn from the past to ensure these things never happen again. We must educate our young. We must educate them to ensure that this stuff does not happen again.

That is why this is such an important step for all of us. That is why everybody that stands here today, no matter from what side of politics, should be united, because we are, and should be proud, because that is what we are. We are taking a bold step here, a really bold step. It is long overdue. I thank the member for Malvern for the work that he has done. I thank the minister for the work that she has done. I thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, all the committee members and everybody that has had a hand in this. This is a really proud moment for all of us. The member for Brighton, who is in the chamber with me, worked with me on a lot of this stuff, through a lot of the details, met with community members and went down to the Holocaust centre time and time again and met with survivors with tears in their eyes—tears of joy in their eyes—to know that they would not be targeted again because we would have their back and we would stand up against this hate.

That is why we can be proud. That is why this is so important. That is why there are times for politics and fighting and arguing—we always have the opportunity to have those points of difference—but that time is not now. The time now is to stand united and proud. The time now is to get this done. And the time now is to do it now. I do say that, yes, we need to educate, yes, we need to inform and, yes, we need to ensure that the symbol of the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist communities is protected and given back but not used for evil, because when it is hijacked for evil, as it was by Hitler and as it is now,

there need to be consequences. That is why even though the amendment before us today has moved from 12 months to six months—a step in the right direction—the time to act is now, not in six months time. Do not fire the gun without the bullets. What we have done is we have given the powers of telling people we are going to ban something without the consequences, and that is why I say and that is why I plead: let us get this done, but let us get this done today.

Mr HAMER (Box Hill) (13:51): I too rise to make a contribution on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, and I do so very proudly as a son of a Holocaust survivor and a grandson of a Holocaust survivor, on both sides, and I do so in memory of all of my family who were killed during the Holocaust and all of those others in the Jewish community and many other communities who were killed at the hands of the Nazis. But I also do so with a heavy heart because of the fact that such an offence is actually required in this day and age and is needed to combat the continued racist vilification and in particular the antisemitism that continues around the world and that we continue to see particularly in our own state.

A number of incidents have already been mentioned, but the ones that come to mind are—I think it was in 2019 as well—where a number of people put on fake Nazi uniforms with the Hakenkreuz on their arms and walked into a number of stores and walked around the streets in regional Victoria and of course, as has been mentioned, you could hardly move around the electorates of Kooyong or Macnamara and not come across a defaced sign of the local members of those places. And what did those members have in common? It was that they were both Jewish members of Parliament. And make no mistake: the reason why this symbol was being used to deface these members of Parliament was that they were Jewish and that the symbol continues to be used as a symbol of hate and a symbol of continued antisemitism and vilification.

I do want to just reflect a little bit about what it means for me from a personal perspective. As I raised in my inaugural speech, my father was born in prewar Poland. He was a very young boy when the Nazis invaded Poland. His family moved to a small town by the name of Staszow in south-west Poland, where the struggle for survival was real. Shootings and beatings on the street were a regular occurrence. But in hindsight they were the good days, if they could be compared like that. That was until the all the Jews in the town were forced into a ghetto, and then the word got around that the ghetto was to be ‘liquidated’, which is a terribly euphemistic word, where all the Jews were going to be moved off to the nearby death camps. Fortunately my father, who at that stage was probably all of about five years old, managed to escape the ghetto before the liquidation with his mother and his sister and some broader members of the extended family and then went to hide in the forest for two, 2½ years.

At any moment he could have been given up. You can imagine as a five-year-old boy how hard it would be just to keep quiet in those times. We complain it is a cold day today, but it is nothing like a cold Polish winter, where it can get down to minus 30, minus 40 degrees, with very few clothes and very little food. They had to rummage from place to place and at any point in time could have been given up, and life would have ended and I certainly would not be here today.

I also want to reflect briefly on my mother’s family. Both of my mother’s parents were born in Berlin, either side of the First World War, and Berlin in the 1920s was a vibrant cultural place—it had been recovering from the First World War. But as the 1930s progressed and as the Nazis took over, the edicts against the Jewish community became stronger and stronger. Fortunately at that time Jews were allowed to leave Germany, and my grandfather was able to get to America in 1934. My grandmother came to Australia in late 1938, and her uncles waited until almost the very end. They saw Kristallnacht firsthand while they were in Berlin, and they came out, I think it was, in April or May 1939, so just before the start of the war and before any opportunity to escape was gone. I am enormously grateful for the gift that they have given me and the opportunities that they themselves and their parents in particular took at that time, taking journeys into the unknown just to make sure that they could survive.

I reflect back particularly on those days and how that relates to this bill at hand. When you look back at the archival footage that you see, particularly of Germany in the 1930s, you see things such as the

Nuremberg rallies and the symbolism of those rallies. I think the member for Caulfield touched on it, and he said it was a hijacking of the ancient symbol of the swastika—and that is exactly what it was. They used that symbol as a symbol of hate, as a symbol of what they saw as Aryan supremacy, to create an inferior class of people amongst the Jewish community as well as amongst other communities, and that was driven into the population day in, day out. Through the archival footage you see how street after street after street would hang these flags. Every artefact that related to any part of the government would have this symbol, and it was a symbol to reinforce that control and that idea of Aryan supremacy over others. So this continued hatred and antisemitic behaviour was something that fed right through the entire Nazi regime until it was defeated in 1945.

I do want to talk briefly about education as well, and continued education on the Holocaust is crucially important. Particularly I have been really pleased that this government has introduced compulsory Holocaust education at year 10 level across every school in the state, and I think it is so critically important that students of that age learn about the Holocaust and about what it made and what it meant for antisemitism.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Members

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

Absence

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:01): I advise the house that I will answer questions for the portfolios of health, ambulance services and equality this week.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Premier. Mark from Bendigo is currently waiting for spinal surgery. He is in constant pain and on addictive opioid pain relief medication. He is a former police officer, and pain has left him unable to perform daily tasks and activities that once brought him joy such as footy umpiring. Mark was placed on the elective surgery waiting list in September 2020 and listed as a category 2 patient, with admission within 90 days being desirable. As of 1 June 2022, he has been waiting 621 days. Mark was recently advised by his neurosurgeon that surgery will not take place in the foreseeable future, and it may well be another 600 days before the surgery can occur. What does the Premier have to say to Mark, who is in the gallery today, as to why the crisis in Victoria's health system has failed him so badly?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Just before calling the Premier, I remind members not to refer to members of the gallery.

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:02): Heeding your advice, Speaker, I will not refer to anyone in the gallery, but let me thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and acknowledge the service of the constituent or the individual that the Leader of the Opposition references. If I am provided with further details—not publicly, if it is not the wish of the person involved to do so publicly—provided I am given that person's details, I am more than happy to firstly determine whether that person is a public patient, a private patient or a private patient in a public hospital, for instance; is it a WorkCover matter, all of those matters; what hospital, what surgeon and all of those matters. I am happy to follow that through and provide a comprehensive response.

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: Well, to those opposite interjecting about the fact that this individual is in the gallery, the Speaker has just indicated that it is against the rules of this house to refer to someone who is in the gallery. So if that is not the definition of a cheap point by those opposite—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Members on both sides!

Mr ANDREWS: If the Leader of the Opposition provides me with further details, then I will provide—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gembrook is warned.

Mr ANDREWS: Again, is it about you or about the individual you have raised? Because you have raised 50 different cases and provided the details of nine to my office—nine. So there are more than 40 that have not been provided, and a cynic might say that that is about those asking the question rather than the person they are pretending to advocate for. If I am given the details, I give a commitment to the individual involved, to whom I am not allowed to refer, as per your ruling, to follow that up with the health service concerned.

In a broader context it is important to acknowledge that COVID-19 has cancelled tens of thousands of surgeries. That is regrettable. That is not the outcome that anyone wants. It is certainly not an outcome that anyone chose. It is the circumstance that we and New South Wales and every state in the country and every nation in the world confronts, and it is why just a little earlier this year, confirmed in the budget delivered just a few weeks ago, we provided \$1.4 billion to do an elective surgery catch-up right across the system, growing total capacity from about 200 000 to 240 000 operations each year, every year—not a blitz, but growing capacity all the way across the system for every year, including things like, for instance, taking over the Frankston Private Hospital and turning it into a public elective surgery centre. So the funding is there, but there is no denying the fact that there is significant catch-up that needs to be done because of this pandemic. If the Leader of the Opposition provides me with the details, of course I will follow up and make sure that the most appropriate response has been provided to the individual in question.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): Despite suggestions from some opposite, Mark's case is real, and he is in the Parliament today.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right! I warn members on both sides of the house, if there is further shouting across the chamber, they will be removed without warning.

Mr GUY: At present it appears Mark may wait more than 1200 days for surgery that should be done within 90. Mark's current medication regime consists of Naproxen and opioid pain relief, Endone. He is also living with a back support brace, reducing his quality of life. What guarantees can the Premier give Mark that he will get his surgery within the next 90 days rather than waiting almost four years?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:06): Classification of patients is a matter for clinicians. I am not a clinician, nor will I in answering this question pretend to be one. I am not a neurosurgeon. I am not an orthopaedic surgeon. Clinicians, not politicians, ought to determine the categorisation of patients. However, what I am very keen to make sure is that no patient waits any longer than is absolutely necessary given the catch-up that we have to do. There is not \$1.4 billion there for fun. It is \$1.4 billion there to get people the surgery they need. If I am provided with the information, I will follow up and make sure that the system is working as best as it possibly can and that this individual or any Victorian gets the surgery they are entitled to as fast as possible. There has been a global pandemic, and it has cancelled tens of thousands of surgeries—again, a clinical judgement made on the best of advice. It is regrettable, but it is a reality.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: RURAL AND REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:07): I am delighted to be able to rise to update the house on the government’s record investments in regional and rural Victoria. We are very proud that the budget just a few weeks ago invested some \$5.7 billion in projects right across regional Victoria, bringing our government’s total investment since we were first honoured to be elected to some \$36 billion. That is how much we have invested in regional Victoria, \$36 billion, or to put it another way, five times what another government did when they were on the Treasury benches—not double, not triple, but five times more than those who would today pretend to be all about regional Victoria.

Mr Riordan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Polwarth can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Member for Polwarth withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS: Thank you, Speaker. I am delighted to continue: five times—not once, not twice—five times.

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: If only noise mattered! The cabinet table is round, but the National Party are always sitting in the corner—always. And we hear the voices from the Nats. They lost their party status, so convincing was their record of investment. Others today can run around regional Victoria making guarantees. The only thing that is guaranteed with a change of government is cuts and closures and sucking up to big corporations. That is what we will get—the toenails of the state, a fifth of the level of activity, a fifth of the level of funding if you are lucky. We are proud to have invested in regional Victoria because we know that when regional Victoria is strong, Victoria is strong.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My question is again to the Premier. Suffering agonising abdominal and chest pain last month, Bec was sent by her GP straight to emergency. The northern suburbs mum arrived at the packed Austin emergency department at 10.00 am. An elderly lady also waiting told Bec she had been there from 6.00 pm the day before and was still waiting to be called, so Bec left. Still in severe pain, the 41-year-old then went to the Northern Hospital. The queue just to get to triage was out the door. Bec was crying. She said, ‘I’m in so much pain. I really need to see a doctor. Could you please get a doctor for me?’.

Eight hours later Bec was examined and told she needed emergency surgery to remove her gall bladder. She finally had surgery four days after she first sought medical attention. Will the Premier apologise to Bec, who suffered due to the government’s mismanagement of our health system, leading to dangerous clinical outcomes like this?

Mr Staikos interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bentleigh can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Member for Bentleigh withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:10): First of all I would offer a personal apology and an apology on behalf of the government. I do not want to see any patient right across our system getting anything other than first-class care. That is the first point. The second point: I will not accept the contention of the Leader of the Opposition about mismanagement or a lack of care or a lack of funding. The Leader of the Opposition needs to acknowledge something just as I have acknowledged it—that anyone who is let down by the system is not only deserving of an apology but deserving of an email across so that we can follow up and learn from it. That is exactly it. If it is good enough to raise, then it is good enough to send an email so that we can learn from that experience and provide any additional support that that person may need.

But just as I have made that acknowledgement, the Leader of the Opposition surely must acknowledge there has been a global pandemic and it is not over yet. What it means is there are three records: there is record funding from our government, there are record patients who need treatment and there are record numbers of staff who are at home sick and not able to work. When you add those three things together, despite the best efforts—our recruitment, our investment over all our time in office and the most recent budget—there is still, because of record demand and record numbers of staff who cannot work, very, very significant pressure.

I thank every member of our team—every nurse, every ambo, every doctor, every cook and cleaner and ward clerk, allied health professionals—all of them. I thank them for their commitment, their skill and their compassion. I thank every patient who knows and understands that they are doing their very best and that the government is supporting them in unprecedented terms. I thank those patients for recognising that of course the sickest patients get treated quickest. Everyone is doing their level best. Our health staff have been through two years like no other, and despite the suggestions of some, our health staff are valued and our health staff do an amazing job. I will not stand for them being criticised by those looking for their own political advantage, because if they cared about the patients that they were referencing, they would send the details through so that we could make sure they got every support they are entitled to and so that we learned everything we might learn from their experience. You would simply press send on the email, wouldn't you, or you would write a handwritten note, or you would do whatever you might do, and then there could be follow-up. In any event, of course I apologise. I do not want any patient to get anything less than what they need in their moment of need. If the details are provided to me, unlike the other 40-odd that have not been, I am more than happy to have the department and the treating hospital follow up to make sure that this person is properly supported.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): A 41-year-old mother needing emergency surgery to remove her gall bladder had to take herself to two separate hospitals and wait four days to be given emergency surgery. How much longer will Victorians have to wait for the government to fix the health crisis that the government has created?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:13): Again I completely reject this because the facts simply do not bear it out—the notion that apparently there has been no global pandemic. Apparently there is not one staff member who is at home sick, not one—so not actually 1500—not one even, not one. Apparently we do not have issues of deferred care. Apparently when I speak to Dominic Perrottet and he describes exactly the same thing happening in Sydney, he is wrong as well. At the end of the day it is about putting patients first, not putting politics first, and I will not be lectured by people who could not cut enough, could not close enough and now cannot even forward the details of the people they pretend to care about. We will continue to back our staff with record funding and support to treat more patients. We repaired the damage you did, and we will repair the damage that COVID has done as well.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: RURAL AND REGIONAL INVESTMENT

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional Development) (14:14): I rise today to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is delivering the largest infrastructure build in Victoria's history, benefiting every corner of our state. We have already heard from the Premier about this government's record investment in rural and regional Victoria, but let me tell you a little bit more about how the Andrews Labor government is getting the job done, from delivering job-creating projects to upgrading hospitals to opening new schools and building the roads and rail that our communities need and deserve.

Through our signature Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund we have invested more than \$700 million to deliver the infrastructure and the jobs that are needed in rural and regional Victoria. Only last week I was at Frew Foods in Stawell, where they—with some help from our government—are creating 250 new jobs, nearly doubling production capacity and growing international exports of our world-class lamb. Our record \$2.9 billion investment in health infrastructure includes more acute care beds in Shepparton, a rehabilitation facility in Mildura and a further \$300 million for the Regional

Health Infrastructure Fund, which of course delivers great upgrades right across the state. We are building new schools, including upgrading 14 specialist schools in regional Victoria, meaning that every special school in the state will have been upgraded by the Andrews Labor government. It was great to join with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety for a stakeholder event last week in Ararat, where we took the opportunity to outline the \$13 billion of investment this government has made into regional roads and rail, delivering the infrastructure once again that our community deserves.

PORTLAND DISTRICT HEALTH

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (14:17): My question is to the Premier. In January, Jo from Portland had a CT scan which determined she had an abdominal mass. An MRI confirmed multiple large uterine fibroids and a cyst on her right ovary. Her gynaecologist told her she required an urgent hysterectomy, and she was told it was category 1 and needed to be done within three weeks. Due to the government scaling back services at the Portland hospital, she was sent to Warrnambool, where her surgery remained urgent. But on 26 May she was told that the closest appointment was now 12 months away. Jo suffers from a numb and aching left leg due to the pressure of the tumours, heavy periods and constant severe stomach pain. For Jo, her condition is having a severe physical and psychological impact. What does the Premier say to Jo who, due to the scaling back of services at Portland, is now in a longer queue and has no idea when she will have the vital surgery which will change her life?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:18): I thank the member for the question. Firstly, no-one wants to see Jo or any Victorian unable to access the surgery that they need. No-one wants that, and that is why it is so challenging and regrettable that for the best of reasons we had to—the government had to—follow advice and hospitals had to make very difficult decisions to pause elective surgery because of this virus at various points throughout the last 2½ years. That is the first point.

The second point, and I am happy to correspond with the member about this, is that it is my advice that category 1 surgery has continued throughout the pandemic and that we have—to a very, very high, well into and beyond the 90th percentile—delivered category 1 surgery within the clinically recommended time. But the case that has been raised would not seem to accord with that so I am more than happy, if the details are provided, to raise that with South West Healthcare and the department. That is the second point.

The third point is the government has not scaled back services at Portland District Health service—quite the opposite. That is completely and utterly wrong. To suggest that Portland and district health service do not have more money than they have ever had—wrong. If they make individual decisions as a community board—a board from the community—about the profile of services they will run based on safety, quality, demand in their local community and workforce availability in their local community, if they make those decisions, then that is the governance model we have in Victoria working as it should, not directed by the ‘big government’ down in Melbourne but instead a hospital for locals run by locals and, might I say, one of the biggest employers in that local community. I have had the great pleasure in different roles over my time in public life to visit that hospital and to meet with staff and to meet with the then board members.

They took their responsibilities to their local community very seriously. The member for South-West Coast would do well to not reflect on those nurses and doctors and those people who serve on that board through a great sense of community awareness, support and activism. Like all of our country hospitals, they are filled with people who are highly skilled, highly compassionate and highly effective. So I reject the fairly cheap political point that the member tried to weave into her question. If the member provides me with details of the case in question—because it does not accord with the briefings that I have received in relation to category 1 surgery—we will follow that up, we will make sure that the system is working as best it can and if there is anything we can do to have this category 1 patient treated within the clinically recommended time, we will waste no time in doing that.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (14:21): Under this government the Portland hospital has lost anaesthetic training, ophthalmology and maternity services. Local doctors now say they have no confidence to conduct general surgery where simple blood transfusions may need to take place. When will the government restore these services and give Portland back the health service it deserves?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:21): In terms of what Portland deserves, what they do not deserve is a series of questions being asked in this place, where in the last sitting week or perhaps the one before Portland hospital had to take to Twitter to reassure people that what had been put to this place by those opposite was wrong. I will confirm this for the honourable member, but my recollection of the matter is that an anaesthetist was sick. Next thing: all anaesthetics have been cancelled, allegedly; everyone's surgery was off. That was of course not the case, and the hospital had to take to Twitter to combat the misinformation put forward by those opposite. If it is about the patients, come forward and work with us. If it is about the politics, well, you can keep doing that on your own.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PALLAS (Werribee—Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Industrial Relations) (14:22): It gives me great pleasure to update the house about the government's ongoing commitment to building infrastructure in regional Victoria. You may have heard some nonsense claims recently that just 13 per cent of infrastructure funding in the 2022–23 Victorian budget is to be spent in regional Victoria. That is in fact nonsense. This was followed by a promise by those opposite to spend 25 per cent of future infrastructure funding in budgets in the regions. Well, I have got some news. If next year's budget invests just 25 per cent of asset funding in regional Victoria, that would be a 10 percentage point cut from the whopping 35 per cent of state infrastructure funding invested in regional Victoria.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! When the house comes to order! The member for Yan Yean and the member for Euroa can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Members for Yan Yean and Euroa withdrew from chamber.

Mr PALLAS: The Premier is right: they even manage to learn how to cut from opposition. That is right: 35 per cent in this budget, not 25 per cent and definitely not 13 per cent. I do not know who is doing their cherrypicking, but if they worked on any farm in the state they would be sacked from their job, which is about on brand because in their last four years of office they invested just \$7.2 billion across regional Victoria compared to \$36 billion under this government. You could say it is comparing apples and oranges. Let me try some other figures: \$2.3 billion, which is how much we are investing in regional infrastructure in this budget alone, including \$1 billion in regional health infrastructure; 3.4 per cent, which is the regional unemployment rate, nearly half of what we inherited from those opposite; and 1.2125 per cent, which is regional payroll tax relief, one-quarter of what those opposite left.

COVID-19

Dr READ (Brunswick) (14:24): My question is to the Premier, and it relates to the ongoing crisis in our hospitals. Our ambulance and hospital system is struggling to cope right now with more than 500 COVID inpatients, the equivalent of filling up a large public hospital, and staff are away sick and exhausted, so COVID is both reducing the number of staff and increasing their workload. We are already averaging around 100 COVID deaths each week, and so hospital staff are asking me why aren't we doing more to prevent COVID transmission in the community as we move into winter with things like campaigns to encourage Victorians to wear masks more often indoors. What more does the government plan to do to reduce COVID transmission in the community?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:25): I thank the member for Brunswick for his question. He does reference winter, so if I can just move away from COVID for one moment, it is not unrelated. The question is: 'What are you doing?'. Well, just last week the Minister for Health—who

I am sure would love to be here today except that he has got COVID himself—announced on behalf of the government free flu vaccinations. So the question was about winter, respiratory conditions, taking pressure off our nurses. I would have thought free flu vac—the other point too is not racing to make the announcement as if the announcement is the only thing that matters. We had a bit of that out of Canberra—vaccination announcements that were not backed up with a plan. We took the time to sit down with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, to sit down with the AMA and to sit down with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and to develop a plan so that when we made an announcement of free flu shots they could actually get into people’s arms—a novel concept, one that we really do wish had perhaps been employed by a former federal government at a national level.

But let us not digress. The key point here is I am asked what we are doing—well, free flu shots. Flu puts enormous pressure on our health system, particularly when you think about flu and COVID together. The point I was making earlier on in response to a question from a member of the Liberal Party is of course we do have issues of deferred care, people who for the best of reasons have not gone and got care during the pandemic. They are now sicker than they would otherwise be. We do have some—not all, but we do have some—primary care providers who are refusing to see respiratory patients.

Dr Read: On a point of order, Speaker, I do not need to remind you what the question was about, but I was wondering if you could remind the Premier it was about COVID.

The SPEAKER: It was a fairly broad question. I think the Premier is being relevant to it.

Mr ANDREWS: With the greatest respect to the member for Brunswick, some GPs refusing to see patients with respiratory conditions is all about COVID. And I thought the question was actually about staff who have apparently spoken to the member for Brunswick and urged the member for Brunswick to ask me this question. In any event, regardless of what the member for Brunswick has asked, let us be very clear about this: ‘What are we doing?’ was the question. The notion that after 2½ years anyone in Victoria does not know about the efficacy of masks; that is to say—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for South-West Coast can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Member for South-West Coast withdrew from chamber.

Mr ANDREWS: On the notion that Victorians need to be reminded about the efficacy of mask wearing, the clear public health benefits of mask wearing, together with the benefits of getting vaccinated—first dose, second dose, third dose and getting a flu shot as well or a fourth dose if you are eligible for that—the notion of hand hygiene, the notion of distancing and the notion of ‘Don’t go to work if you’ve got symptoms, instead get tested if you’ve got symptoms’—I reckon that Victorians know a bit about all of that because they have lived it for 2½ years. So, with the greatest of respect to the member for Brunswick, I do not think a further TV commercial campaign or a ‘campaign’, as he puts it, is necessarily needed. People know and understand, and that is why if you go down to the shops or on public transport or to lots of other settings, you see people making their own decision to wear a mask, just as some in this chamber made that decision today.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (14:29): I thank the Premier for his answer. SARS-CoV-2 is mainly spread through the air, but when we go into shops, bars and venues we frequently see hand sanitiser everywhere but air purifiers are much less common. The government has an excellent program subsidising air purifiers for businesses, but it seems to be little known or used. As we head into winter will the government contact all businesses and workplaces with up-to-date information on how best to reduce airborne transmission to protect their staff and customers and by extension protect our hospitals and our health workers?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:29): I am indebted to my honourable friend the minister for COVID recovery. There is a program. If the question is that we ought to advertise it more,

then I will take that more as a comment than anything else. There is a program. It has been quite successful. I do not accept that HEPA filters and other air filtration devices are not common. That is simply wrong. I can think of 111 000 units that have been put in every classroom in every school across our state, and that is well in advance of many other places across our country. There are many businesses that have availed themselves of that particular program, and again I would have thought that businesses across the state know only too well that doing everything you possibly can to keep COVID out of your workplace is a good thing to do. They have been doing it for the last 2½ years.

I should correct the record: it is every school. Not every classroom needs one of those filters in fact.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: REGIONAL TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PAKULA (Keysborough—Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Trade, Minister for Business Precincts, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Racing) (14:30): One of the most rewarding parts of my portfolio is the ability to get around regional Victoria to announce regional tourism infrastructure funds and grants that we have made. The \$633 million *Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan* allows us to do that, both through the Enabling Tourism Fund and the Regional Tourism Investment Fund. Just last week I was able to join the member for Bendigo West, the Deputy Speaker, at Porcupine Village in Maldon to announce \$1.7 million for new accommodation, a wildlife sanctuary and a new function space. I was also in Horsham to speak to the council about their City to River project and announce \$2 million for their City Oval and Sawyer Park precinct to make it a year-round event space for music and the like.

I have not been able to get everywhere, so the Attorney-General, a member for Northern Victoria, was up in the King Valley just the other day to announce support for the Mountain View Hotel, Dal Zotto for its home of prosecco, Pizzini Wines for its new restaurant in Whitfield, Darling Estate to develop a new cellar door and allow the winery to attract visitors year round and indeed Brown Brothers in Milawa, which is bringing together its cellar door and restaurant, allowing visitors to see and learn about a working winery. The Minister for Small Business was down at Budj Bim to announce \$7 million for their cultural education space. Our investment in tourism infrastructure in our regions is absolutely unparalleled. What it means for those regions is more visitors, more economic growth and more jobs for those communities.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:32): My question is to the Premier. When two-year-old Tina was recently vomiting profusely with a 40-degree fever at night, her Templestowe parents went to the Royal Children's and were told the wait would be hours, so they decided to go to the Monash Children's. Her parents have said:

We were told to wait another four hours. It means six hours we needed to wait in hospital in emergency ...

The last resort was Cabrini, where Tina was finally treated. When hospital staff are so overworked that children cannot be seen in an emergency, will the Premier finally admit that our health system is in the worst crisis in our state's history?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:33): It is clear to everyone that the last 2½ years have put extraordinary pressure on our health system. There is no denying that, and if you want proof that no-one is denying it—at least no-one on this side of the house—there is a \$12 billion boost in the budget delivered this year plus many, many, many other decisions to support our health workforce and our health system in the last two years, in fact in each and every budget in each and every year that we have been honoured to govern this state.

We do not cut health funding. We do not close health services. We do not go to war with our workforce. We do not give nurses the bird—we do not do that. So my willingness to be lectured by people who do exhibit that sort of behaviour is pretty low. What is more, people who are happy to raise case after case—I know as a parent and as the Premier, no-one wants to see any parent have to

go through that, of course not. That is why recently we have expanded some secondary services at the children's hospital—a triage, if you like—away from the emergency department for those who have gone to the children's but, unlike this case, can be sent somewhere else, just around the corner in fact, to get the care they need. They still need care, but if they cannot get it in their local community—GPs, for instance, may not be seeing patients—they go to the children's. That is a perfectly natural thing to do, but they are overwhelmed with cases that are more acute. This is a secondary service that has gone online just very, very recently.

I am not referring to this case, but if you are prepared to raise the case, then just send the details. I am happy to speak to the Secretary of the Department of Health myself and say, 'Professor Wallace, can you please follow up these 40-odd cases for me and get me answers on all of them, and if there are any learnings, let's get on and make sure we learn from these cases'. I am happy to do that because it is not about the politics on this side of the house, it is about the patients. If you are raising a case of a former police officer who needs surgery, I am happy to follow it up, and I will do that. If you are raising the case of parents of a two-year-old who could not get the care they needed when they needed it, give us the details, and I will follow it up myself. The list goes on and on.

Of course there is real pressure. One only wonders what might have happened if the pandemic had arrived before we repaired the damage done to our health system by those opposite or if we had followed the public health advice of those public health experts sitting here to essentially let it rip. You know, the member for Kew and others said, 'No rules. No rules. There is no pandemic. It's all about the bats'. You know, if we had done that, imagine where we would be today.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:36): This family had to travel from Templestowe to Parkville to Clayton to Malvern to have their daughter seen when she was profusely vomiting and suffering a high fever. If a family cannot have confidence that their sick two-year-old daughter will be seen in a reasonable time in the middle of the night, can the Premier inform Victorians what they are meant to do instead?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:36): Despite the questioning from the Leader of the Opposition, every family ought to know and be certain about this: every member of staff in every hospital is under enormous pressure but has equal support from this Labor government. Every family ought to know that every member of staff across our health system has compassion and skill and is a person to be proud of—not to essentially criticise with these political questions. When you cannot even provide the details of the case study you are referencing, then you have no credibility whatsoever. You are raising these questions not for the patient but for yourself. For that the Leader of the Opposition ought to be ashamed.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie—Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (14:37): It is my pleasure to rise to update the house on our record investment in road maintenance, which has seen us deliver 1100 projects since September—1500 kilometres of roads in regional and rural Victoria rebuilt and resurfaced under our government. We are also adding some 1800 jobs to the pipeline, many of them local jobs in regional and rural Victoria. But it gets better. On this side of the chamber we are making sure we only renew and rebuild Victorian roads, because we know what happened last time with that website and those roads overseas in Europe and North America that were going to be upgraded. We are only doing roads that live in country—

Mr Edbrooke interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Frankston can leave the chamber for the period of 1 hour.

Member for Frankston withdrew from chamber.

Mr CARROLL: But we are not stopping there. Just in this budget there is \$780 million to resurface and rebuild more regional country roads, and some 12 000 kilometres of regional and rural roads have already been rebuilt and resurfaced under our government.

A member interjected.

Mr CARROLL: I will tell you about those, very much so. If I was in the National Party, I would be pretty quiet at the moment, because ‘Click here to vote’. If you have a look at it, ‘Click here to vote. Your votes will be presented to the minister’. Before the last election the National Party were rolling out ‘A website won’t fix country roads’, but now websites do fix country roads.

Ms Staley: On a point of order, Speaker, I note that the minister is attempting to use props, and I ask you to counsel him not to do so. But I would also like him to answer: when he drove home from Ararat, did he drive in all the potholes that have opened up on the road?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister, when the house comes to order.

Mr CARROLL: I tell you what, our candidate in Ararat is a young superstar that is really getting on with the job. She has got the minister there doing round tables with the regional development minister. We are rebuilding those roads. But it gets great because here it is—you have got to find the authorisation: ‘the National Party, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne’.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! When the house comes to order. Before members leave the chamber, I just wish to ask ministers assembled in the house to take away a reminder today—some homework. There are outstanding constituency question answers, adjournment items and questions on notice that need to be answered within the time frames set out in the standing orders. I ask ministers to come back to the house with those answers.

Mr Wells: On a point of order, Speaker, just following on from what you have just said in regard to unanswered questions—5885, 6174 and 6334. And, can you believe it, 5885 is almost a year—that was due on 7 July last year and we still do not have an answer. It is regarding visitors to facilities with people with disabilities.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. We will follow those matters up.

Constituency questions

EILDON ELECTORATE

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (14:41): (6386) My question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, will you ensure action is taken to repair the entrance road at Badger Weir picnic ground once and for all? I have had to raise this matter far too many times. Locals and visitors are sick and tired of suffering the discomfort of dodging, weaving and driving over unavoidable potholes. I raised this exact issue in November 2020 to be told:

... longer-term works due to commence by March 2021 ... works will include the installation of a new culvert to improve drainage, and re-sealing the road surface.

Clearly this did not happen, or the repairs did not last. I am yet to receive a response to my letter to the minister from April. I visited the park again last week and was gobsmacked to see, again, the terrible condition the entrance road is in, and it is only going to get worse during winter. This is an asset to the Yarra Valley and a popular destination, and it needs to be cared for and fixed.

CARRUM ELECTORATE

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (14:42): (6387) My question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, how can households in my electorate of Carrum save

money on their energy bills and reduce their energy costs? With the cost of living on the rise, many residents in my electorate are concerned with household expenses, including their gas and electricity bills, and are eager to hear all about the many reforms and initiatives the Andrews Labor government is doing to help them.

GIPPSLAND EAST ELECTORATE

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (14:43): (6388) My constituency question is to the Minister for Housing, and the information I seek is: what is being done to address the chronic shortfall in housing support officers? I have a single mother in my electorate who has a week left on her rental property. She has applied for over 30 rental properties and has been unsuccessful and has nowhere to go. The government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing website lists Community Housing Limited in Bairnsdale as the contact for homelessness support in the area. Following this advice, she approached Community Housing Limited; however, she has been advised there is an eight-week wait to be assigned a housing support officer. This is symptomatic of the wider issues of those facing homelessness in my area, and I want to know what the government is doing in the short term to address the shortfall in supports for those facing homelessness as we enter the colder winter months.

FRANKSTON ELECTORATE

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (14:44): (6389) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education. Overport Primary School is a magnificent school in my community and one of the last schools to get any sort of major funding from the Andrews Labor government. The principal and student leaders contacted my offices recently to arrange for me to visit and view the unstable and unsafe running track and badly deteriorating soccer grounds. The school is seeking funding with a view to having these items upgraded and, in the case of the running track, made safe for students to utilise. The school has applied unsuccessfully in previous years for funding for these items to be redeveloped, but I ask the minister to review the documentation and applications for funding and consider a visit to the school with a view to seeing what opportunities lie there for this running track and soccer field to be redeveloped.

ROWVILLE ELECTORATE

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (14:44): (6390) My question is to the Premier. Premier, what lessons were you suggesting patients learn when I asked about Adrian, a cancer patient from Rowville who endured huge delays at Monash Medical Centre after a stroke, and you replied:

This patient and others like him may well learn from what occurred to him.

It is heartless to say Adrian should learn from having a stroke or from waiting hours for medical care in a hospital bed. Adrian's family are not comforted by your lecture. No-one listened when they pleaded for Adrian to have an MRI. Adrian's oncologist at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre confirmed an MRI should have been run to check for cancer in his brain. It is callous to suggest Adrian and his family could have done more. When staff at Monash Medical Centre are so overwhelmed they cannot treat even 20 per cent of serious category 2 patients in the recommended time, it is time your government listened to patients like Adrian instead of blaming them.

ST ALBANS ELECTORATE

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (14:45): (6391) My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and my question is: what benefits will the 2022 power saving bonus and programs similar to the neighbourhood battery initiative have for local residents in St Albans? I know that households in my electorate are doing it really tough at the moment with the rising cost of living, whether it is through fuel prices, power bills, weekly groceries or rent and mortgages. The 2021 power saving bonus had a massive impact. It was very positive for the residents in my community. It helped to ease the pressure of power bills. My office has assisted thousands of

members in applying since the scheme was initiated, showing just how popular and widespread the uptake has been. Whether pensioners or concession holders, they have all benefited.

NARRACAN ELECTORATE

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (14:46): (6392) My constituency question is for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, and I ask: has the minister investigated why the decision has been taken to not duplicate the Gippsland rail line at the Bunyip River? The Gippsland rail line is currently undergoing a half-billion-dollar upgrade thanks to the more than \$477 million commitment from the former federal Liberal-National government, yet the media reports the Andrews Labor government has now confirmed it will not duplicate the river crossing as part of the works. Without the duplication the benefits of the wider upgrade will be seriously reduced, leaving a bottleneck in the system which will undermine the potential for greater frequency, speed and reliability on the Gippsland line. If the minister has not been made aware of this issue, why not? What undertakings will she give regarding the future plans for the duplication of the bridge over the Bunyip River?

RINGWOOD ELECTORATE

Mr HALSE (Ringwood) (14:47): (6393) My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, what is the government doing to address the ongoing and serious impacts of long COVID or post-COVID symptoms that are being experienced by thousands of Victorians, including many members of my own district? Just the other day I bumped into a local constituent at the Mabel cafe in my electorate who described to me the real challenges of having long COVID or post COVID for in excess of five months and being unable to secure the health and multidisciplinary services through the Eastern Health network, having been referred to the Royal Melbourne Hospital for medical care. So I am hoping that I can get a response from the minister on what we are doing to address this increasingly evident problem within our community.

FOREST HILL ELECTORATE

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (14:48): (6394) My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, how many nurses, midwives, doctors, physiotherapists, other medical staff, cleaners, orderlies and other staff have been sacked or resigned from the Victorian health system due to either not being vaccinated for COVID-19 or not disclosing their vaccine status? I continue to be contacted by residents who have lost their jobs in the health system as a result of the vaccine mandates. I have also heard from people who are still working in the health system and are dismayed at the current staff shortages and the consequent extra pressure being experienced by them. As we have heard today in question time, it is now obvious to all Victorians that the health system is failing, with almost daily reports of patients suffering as a result of the overload of the system and overworked staff. Staff within the health system continue to do an outstanding job under very challenging conditions. Sadly they have been let down by a government that refuses to adopt and reimplement the infection control systems that were in place in the Victorian health system prior to any COVID-19 vaccine being available. The government could address some of the current pressures in the health system by simply removing the vaccine mandates and reinstating the previous infection control measures.

BROADMEADOWS ELECTORATE

Mr McGUIRE (Broadmeadows) (14:49): (6395) My constituency question is to the Minister for Early Childhood. What details can the minister provide on the major upgrade of Lorne Street Kindergarten at Fawkner Primary School? I welcome the kindergarten receiving \$305 000 to upgrade their existing facilities and also want to applaud the extra investment of \$7.8 million to construct a new administrative building at Fawkner Primary School. These are critical investments because this is a co-located hub. It will particularly look after sessional programs for three- to four-year-olds, catering for a disadvantaged community and a high number of children with developmental delays and additional needs. These investments are crucial for Fawkner's growing multicultural community where lifelong learning for skills and jobs is vital. All of these initiatives are significant in helping to

connect the disconnected and many of our most vulnerable people to better opportunities in life, particularly in the early years when the investment is priceless.

Bills

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (NAZI SYMBOL PROHIBITION) BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr HAMER (Box Hill) (14:50): I would like to conclude my contribution in relation to the educational provisions of the legislation and to talk about some of the amazing work that our educators are doing to combat antisemitism. It is really important that the bill does recognise that the symbol of the Hakenkreuz can continue to be shown for an educational purpose just to demonstrate what that symbol actually meant and how it generated the hatred that it did.

Two particular institutions I want to single out. The Jewish Holocaust centre in Elsternwick for so many years have been educating not only school groups but many other members of the public through their artefacts and the testimonies of survivors who talk about the Holocaust and everything that happened. The other organisation is Courage to Care. It is an organisation that is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and has outreach to schools and students to talk about the importance of standing up against all forms of racism and antisemitism. That is exactly what this bill is about, and I am proud to support this bill.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:52): I am very proud today to rise to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. One of the key reasons behind this bill, of course, is banning the Nazi swastika and Nazi symbols in Victoria. For my region this has been somewhat of a hot topic. It has been discussed widely throughout the community because the Grampians, a beautiful part of the state, is within my electorate. I think it came as a surprise to most people in my electorate to see a group of young men brandishing a Nazi flag and doing a Nazi salute at the same time and to hear reports of them chanting. In the first instance it appeared that it was locals that were doing that. Very rapidly we found that it was not; it was actually some sort of coordinated meeting point, which unfortunately just happened to be in my electorate. That in its own right had an enormous impact on my community and created a lot of debate over whether that was welcome in our community or not. I can say unequivocally that that sort of celebration—if you would like to put it that way—utilising such negative symbolism, which is representative of horrific outcomes for the Jewish community, with 6 million Jews killed as part of the Holocaust, is not something that is welcome in our community.

We find so often in country Victoria that we are persecuted as being rednecks and in some ways that we are behind the eight ball or behind where people who live in metropolitan areas of the state are, but can I just put it unequivocally on the record that hate, no matter how it looks, and particularly symbolism which commemorates and looks to celebrate and perhaps in some instances bring back that horrible instance in our lifetime of the Holocaust, is not welcome in any corner of the electorate of Lowan. It is not welcome anywhere in country Victoria. It is not welcome anywhere in Victoria, Australia or around the world.

It is very, very welcome seeing this legislation come through Parliament, which of course comes on the back of an initial call and great work by my colleague the member for Caulfield and the former upper house member Mr O'Donohue, who did an enormous amount of work on a proposal that we brought through back in 2020, which was a proposal to ban the Nazi swastika and also Nazi symbolism in Victoria.

The Lowan electorate is very, very large. It is one-sixth of the state. Following the election it will be about one-fifth of the state. Just outside the boundary, though, to the north, the Lowan boundary between the Lowan electorate and the Mildura electorate actually follows the old rabbit-proof or dog-proof fence, and on one side is the beautiful community of Brim, which is home to the Brim art silos.

It is an absolutely wonderful community and always very, very welcoming, and I recommend everyone to go through and have a look at the silos and drop into McPherson's store while they are there for a coffee. Just 10 or 15 minutes up the road is the community of Beulah. It is on the other side of the netting fence, in the Mildura electorate, but it certainly still feels very much like part of my community. It is still within the Yarriambiack Shire Council, of which most is in my electorate, and I have very close contact with the councillors that cover that region and also the Beulah community itself.

It was a great surprise to hear of a Nazi flag being flown within this tiny rural community, which really keeps itself out of the news and is probably prouder of the work that they do in the community supporting one another. So to hear that and to see a Nazi flag being flown in a community where a Holocaust survivor was also living, and having that in view of the Holocaust survivor, was very confronting and caused an enormous amount of distress for those within the community and the broader Yarriambiack area, or the Southern Mallee.

I certainly commend the work of local police who took action to get that flag removed under the limitations that they had, but they did a great amount of work to make sure from a community perspective that particularly the Holocaust survivor was protected as quickly as possible from this exhibition of a flag which was deliberately designed to instil fear, to instil hatred and to bring back the memories of that Holocaust survivor and what they had gone through and what they had survived earlier in their life.

I also commend the work of the Yarriambiack Shire Council and particularly the councillors and the mayor, because they did a fantastic amount of work to try to protect the community of Beulah from in the future being seen as an icon, basically, where you could go and where the concept of Neo-Nazism or Nazism would be welcomed or celebrated in any way. I think that Yarriambiack Shire Council did a fantastic job in categorically stating that that is not welcome in that community—that they will not tolerate that level of hatred being shown in their community. They were willing to take a very public stand about that, and so they should be commended for that.

This bill, which I will not have an opportunity to go into in great detail, because I am limited in time, does contain provisions which will make the public display of Nazi symbols an offence. There have been some concerns from members of my community who have a collection of wartime memorabilia. They have been deeply concerned that this may mean that they have to dispose of that material or memorabilia. It is my understanding that this act will not prohibit them from owning that material but it will prohibit them from publicly exhibiting it in an area, particularly when it comes to how that may be interpreted in the community, and the example that I gave earlier around the flag being flown in Beulah is a perfect example of this.

This bill has been drafted so that museum displays or items in a local RSL which include the Nazi swastika will still be able to be displayed for educational purposes. There will still be the opportunity for our educators to be able to share the stories of the Holocaust, of the horrors that took place and also of the harm that it did to that particular group and the genocide that took place, with 6 million Jews killed through the Holocaust. It is important that while we do not celebrate what happened through the Neo-Nazi period, we need to teach our children what happened so that they know it is not tolerated—that we will remember the harms and we will remember the people who were killed during that period of time—in an effort to make sure that that dark period of our history is never, ever repeated.

There has been some talk recently through the media which we have seen. I think everyone has been following very closely the Russian war in Ukraine, and there are some concerns around an iteration of the Nazi swastika being utilised in the form of a Z on various tanks and clothing. We are seeing that more frequently proliferated throughout the community. While of course, and I will make this very clear, this legislation before us strictly defines Nazi symbols and Neo-Nazi symbolism and is not intended to keep on going and to be expanded to restrict freedom of speech, this is not so much about freedom of speech; it is really about prohibiting that horrific period where there was genocide. The Nazi symbol, the swastika, is a symbol of that genocide and in some ways still celebrates that that was

a good thing when we know it was horrifically not a good thing. It is something that is certainly a dark period of our past. It is something we must learn from, and it is something we must all make an effort to make sure does not occur again in the future.

In the last minute I have remaining I would like to make note that the Liberals and Nationals have committed to bringing this forward, to making this bill an act and bringing it into power as soon as we are elected should we be elected on the last Saturday in November this year. I note that the bill as it was initially presented to this Parliament had a 12-month lead time, which was explained to be for an educational round—the Nazi swastika being prohibited as opposed to a similar symbol utilised in other religions. We have since seen an amendment through this place that would bring it forward to six months, which is a good step forward. However, I think there is still a mechanism. We know that there is an immediate need to act now. We are still seeing attacks with the usage of the swastika in a negative way through Jewish communities right across the state. I therefore urge the government to take on board the Liberal-Nationals position— *(Time expired)*

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (15:02): I too rise and echo the sentiments of the previous speakers and contribute on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. I am extremely proud because this is a historic moment where we are making a contribution on this bill and we are united in our stand. On 3 March last year I tabled in this Parliament on behalf the Legal and Social Issues Committee the report of the inquiry into anti-vilification protections. That was a report that took about two years. During that time our inquiry received more than 70 submissions, and I would like to specifically thank and acknowledge the contributions of the committee members: the member for Caulfield, the member for Geelong, the member for Clarinda, the member for Brighton at the time and the member for Buninyong. We all worked very hard, united, to achieve, we believe, a fair and balanced report. The inquiry of course heard from many incredible organisations, multifaith groups and witnesses that gave evidence in this inquiry.

Some stories that we have heard to date—and I want to make note of the story that was shared by the member for Box Hill—what a proud moment for him and his family and to hear the story from the member for Box Hill. A number of contributions have been made from both sides of this chamber. During the inquiry we heard experiences of vilification and abuse and the rise of hate. One that I was really surprised by was that after New Zealand, the terrorist attack, there was a tripling of hate crimes towards the Muslim community. There has been a rise in hate crimes towards the Jewish community.

I really do believe that this report was a landmark piece of work, and I am very pleased to welcome the strong support that we received particularly among key stakeholders across Victoria and across Australia. In that report the Legal and Social Issues Committee found that there had been, as I said, a very strong increase in hate symbols, and we see it all too well, whether it is through the media or whether it is firsthand experiences in our local communities. It does not matter where you live—we have all been affected by the rise in hate crimes.

We have heard ways to tackle this, but our state needed a historic reform—a reform that meant that action will be taken. Today that action will be taken. This bill will create an offence in the Summary Offences Act 1966 which prohibits a person from intentionally displaying the Nazi hate symbol in a public place if the person knows or reasonably ought to know that the Nazi hate symbol is a symbol associated with Nazi ideology. This will mean that Nazi hate symbols or symbols that closely resemble these will be prohibited in Victoria.

Recently we have heard of other states that will follow Victoria's lead. As I said, this will set the standard, making it very, very clear that there is no place for hatred in our community. There is no place for Nazi hate symbols in our community—and not only because they impact the Victorian Jewish community. An attack on one community is an attack on all communities, and we should never forget that. This symbol has not only been used as a symbol of hate, fear and violence; it has been used on other communities as well. That is why we needed to take action. That is why we needed to have the appropriate consultations to hear evidence from those that have been affected. I am extremely

proud to see this government will be the first in Australia to take a stand and ban the public display of the Nazi symbol, the hate symbol that we all know too well, which does not belong not only in this state but in our nation.

This bill fulfils a Victorian government commitment and our collective commitment to implement recommendation 24 of the inquiry into anti-vilification protections: to ban the public display of Nazi hate symbols in this state. Our government is committed to protecting the rights of all Victorians to be free from racism, vilification and hatred and to ensuring everyone feels welcome and accepted in this state and of course in this country. Whether you were born here or whether you were born overseas, whether you are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist, no matter what your religion, faith or colour, you belong as one. Most importantly, we must prevent any form of harm caused by hate conduct and vilification in our society. It has lasting physical and psychological effects on the wellbeing of individuals, and there are the long-term effects of these sorts of displays. We have heard too well today the many stories—some stories too horrifying to actually talk about.

The display of these symbols associated with Nazi and Neo-Nazi ideology is harmful, dangerous and offensive to all members of our society. As I said, one attack on one community is an attack on all communities. That is why we need to protect the ever-sensitive tapestry that we are very proud of in Victoria, and that is our multicultural and diverse multifaith communities. We must protect and always stand up for what is right and make sure that we are all able to be in a free, democratic state and that our race or religion will not in any way allow us to be attacked for those elements.

But importantly—and I have had the opportunity to speak to Buddhist temples in my electorate and reassure them that there are exemptions—whether it is for Hinduism, Buddhism or other religions, the legislation before us makes sure that exemptions for those faiths continue. For faith purposes they are protected and they can continue to use the symbol. These are important recommendations to make sure that we are all protected. As I said, this is not just about one community. We are sending a very clear message that hatred and symbols will be prosecuted and will not be tolerated in Victoria. More than ever before, when we are seeing globally the rise of far-right extremist groups, these sorts of laws and protections are a must in our communities. We need this bill, and we need to make sure that there are proper and sensible anti-vilification protections in place not only for the good of the Victorian community but for society in general. In doing so we are protecting individuals and we are protecting communities but, more so, we are protecting and promoting social cohesion and the harmony and tapestry of what we are all proud of—that is, multicultural Victoria.

I have tabled many reports in my time as a member, but this was one that I am truly proud of, because we really had committee members working very hard, united in trying to put forward balanced and appropriate measures. I truly believe that this one part of the report, seeing this historic moment for Victoria, is a very good thing. It is important, it is historic and it will really make a difference in our community.

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:12): I rise to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. Victoria knows that the Nazi swastika represents racial supremacy and is in reality a symbol of mass genocide. The symbol incites hatred and has no place in modern society. This bill incorporates that position as a new community standard. It will be a law that incorporates that position as a new community standard, a standard based on our values as a state. It is a standard that the community has been calling for and one that should be brought into place immediately. This has been a difficult issue and a difficult process, and I am sure it is one that many considered deeply in the drafting of this bill, because freedom of speech is one of the pillars that sets aside our great democracy, but those freedoms should not come and cannot come at the expense or hurt of others.

As I said earlier, a symbol has the power to incite hate in the same way that a word can or an action can. That was impressed upon me so strongly several years ago, before the parliamentary committee referred to by the previous speaker had looked into the issue, before the government had considered the matter, before any of these issues were raised, when Irma Hanner looked into my eyes at the Jewish

Holocaust Centre and talked to me about this issue. At the outbreak of war Irma returned home to find that her mother had been taken by the Gestapo, and she waited there for two days before her aunt found her. She was later deported to a Czechoslovakian camp, and at the end of the war her mother had not survived. She looked into my eyes at the Holocaust centre and said to me that a symbol can incite hate in the same way that a word can. Those words are the ones that I have always used in referring to this issue, her words. We know, as I said earlier, that this bill is about values, and it sets in place a community standard. It sets in place a community standard that has so deeply affected the Jewish community. Antisemitism is a significant problem in the community, and it is a huge problem in Victoria. That is why this bill is so important in this state.

If I can refer to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry's most recent report on antisemitism, which covers the period of October 2020 to September 2021, they found that there were 447 antisemitic incidents logged in Australia over that period. Of that total, 272 were attacks—physical assault, verbal assault, harassment, vandalism, graffiti—and 175 were threats. In the 12 months previous to the period of that report the same bodies logged 331 incidents. That is a 35 per cent increase in one year—in one year. To break down the most recent figures, between 2020 and 2021 the four most significant categories were abuse and harassment, up 14 per cent; graffiti, a 152 per cent increase, and we know that those will be symbols; and stickers on posters the same, a 157 per cent increase. So we know the increase in antisemitism is actually in the use of a symbol. I would note, when I refer to the 447 incidents logged across Australia in one year, that between 2013 and 2020 the average was 280 per year—280 up to 447.

I mentioned just previously about the issue in Victoria, and it is an issue in Victoria. When you look at the incidents that have occurred across Australia, the 447 incidents in the last year, October 2020 to September 2021, 46 per cent of them occurred in this state. Just under half occurred in the state of Victoria. That shows that we do have an antisemitism problem in Victoria, sadly. There is a need for this bill. The increases that are occurring are in graffiti, stickers and posters, which are symbols.

This bill is needed. This incorporation of a new community standard is needed. When the coalition announced early in 2020 that it called on the government to move this amendment, we did so—the member for Caulfield and former member Ed O'Donohue—at the Holocaust centre. We sat with Holocaust survivor Joe de Haan, who had tears in his eyes as we talked to him about what we were proposing to call for, and he said, when told about this policy proposal: 'It means a lot to me, because this symbol of Nazi Germany should have been wiped off the face of the earth years ago. I cannot understand how a person can put this flag in his garden, symbolising the horror and destruction to so many millions. It's about time this flag is going to be banned forever'. No truer words could be said.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (15:21): I rise to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, and I note the amendment. This is an important piece of legislation that will help combat racism, vilification and far-right extremism in our community. The bill creates a criminal offence prohibiting a person from intentionally displaying a Nazi symbol in a public place or in public view. Victorians have seen several recent examples of the Hakenkreuz being displayed in public, sometimes in tandem with violence and harassment. In my electorate there have been a number of examples of the Hakenkreuz being graffitied on signs, fences and pathways. It is not and will never be acceptable. It is not and will never be a valid expression of free speech. The harm of this symbol clearly massively outweighs any benefit to free speech. It is especially important for this Parliament to act on this issue, because outside of Israel Melbourne has the largest concentration of Holocaust survivors in the world. We must continue to educate Victorians about the significance of the Holocaust, not just through the government's curriculum changes but also in conversation with our community. And a critical part of that education is hearing from survivors.

My focus today is on the story of a great woman, Halina Strnad. Halina is a Holocaust survivor, a constituent, a neighbour, a human rights activist and a dear friend. And she is also here with us today—an outcome that can only be described as a miracle upon a miracle, for the horrors and deprivations of her childhood have not stopped her living a life of passion and purpose. She sits here a magnificent

95 years of age. Halina Strnad was born Halina Wagowska, and she spent five years and nine months in captivity under the Third Reich—five years and nine months. She has told her story many times, including in her stunning book entitled *The Testimony* as well as through many, many interviews with Holocaust researchers. She has been an active prosecution witness, including testifying in the 2020 trial in Hamburg of Bruno Dey, an SS guard at the Stutthof death camp where Halina was a prisoner. Poignantly, Halina often described the sentiment of her and her fellow prisoners during the Holocaust in these terms: ‘If we survive, we must testify until we die’. Today I share some of her testimony with this chamber for two reasons: firstly, to put on the parliamentary record just some of the horrors of the Holocaust that was survived by our fellow Victorians; and secondly, to acknowledge the danger and deep pain associated with the Hakenkreuz and other Nazi symbols. I would like to warn those listening or watching or reading that some of the material following is graphic and distressing. Time constraints also mean of course that it is merely a snapshot of her incredible story.

Halina was born in Poland and raised in Poznań. Halina’s parents loved her and each other and were peaceful people. Both of Halina’s parents were agnostic and, while of Jewish origin, their appearance and names were not Semitic. On 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland, and a few days later Halina and her family were having breakfast when a German soldier burst into their home and demanded to know if they were Jews. Halina was 12 years old. What followed was a series of events that are real and yet unimaginable. The soldier demanded their valuables: Halina father’s wallet, her mother’s silver chain and pendant with a photo inside, their wedding rings. He went through the cupboards looking for more. Neighbours who had put up the Nazi flag in their windows to show allegiance were called in by the soldier to help with removing the family’s possessions. Halina watched them remove everything of value from their home. They filled two trucks. Halina and her family were left in an unrecognisable home with almost all of their possessions taken or broken.

Eventually the Jews living in Poznań were ordered to leave their home city. Halina and her family travelled to Nazi-occupied Łódź in central Poland. At first Halina and her family could move around the city freely, but they had to wear a yellow Star of David to identify them as Jews. In Łódź, to survive, Halina had to pretend to be older than she was. Deception did not come easily. Her parents, having spent her childhood emphasising the importance of being honest, now had to teach her how to convincingly lie as a matter of life and death. They knew that Halina had to be seen as useful or she might be disappeared, as had happened to her younger cousins. Fortunately Halina was tall and had long hair that she could wear in plaits that made her seem older. They stayed with a family member until they were eventually moved into a single room in the ghetto, which was sealed off in 1940. Halina survived for 3½ years in the Łódź ghetto. Living conditions were horrendous, especially over winter. The Germans established factories in the ghetto, where Halina and her family were forced to work. There were regular public hangings, punishment for escape attempts or sabotage. The residents, or rather the prisoners, were made to watch as a deterrent. The first time Halina was made to witness a mass execution it was the public hanging of six young men. Death was all around her. The threat of execution was constant. There was no room to misstep. Many thousands of Jews perished in Łódź.

In 1944 the Nazis decided to destroy Łódź, which was by then the last remaining ghetto in German-occupied Poland. Residents were deported to various death camps, and Halina and her family were eventually deported to the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. The journey there was slow and painful on a freight train overcrowded with other inmates. At one point a soldier looked in their carriage and found a young baby. He ripped it from its mother’s arms and swung the baby by its legs, smashing its skull on the floor. Halina watched as blood and brains oozed from the baby’s skull.

In Auschwitz the horror continued. At the gates Halina and her mother were separated from her father. He waved goodbye to them, and that was last time Halina ever saw him. They were then processed with the other arrivals. Heads were shaved, any remaining jewellery was taken and those with gold teeth had them immediately removed with pliers. The weak were separated out and killed. Halina and her mother were deemed useful enough to live. Along with other inmates she was made to assist with the work of the gas chambers and the crematoria. Hundreds of bodies would be carted each day from

the gas chambers. Halina's horrendous task was to load the bodies from the carts into the ovens. Efficiency was an obsession in the concentration camp. Soldiers would beat them for moving too slowly. There was no time to dwell on things like the occasional weak pulse Halina might feel on a body being loaded into the oven.

In late 1944 Halina and her mother were moved again, this time to Stutthof. At Stutthof the SS guards would call Halina and the other inmates 'Untermenschen', meaning 'subhumans'. Halina was beaten, kicked and spat on. During one of these beatings her skull was fractured. She describes discovering a fellow inmate who had given birth to a stillborn fetus. Halina and other inmates did what they could, breaking a window and using the glass to cut the umbilical cord. Two doctors in the group tended to the woman; however, she died from blood loss. Halina was given the job of disposing of the dead baby. She took it to the toilets and using a plank of wood pushed it down under the excrement. Later the bloated fetus floated to the top of the toilet, an image that appeared in Halina's nightmares for years to come.

While at Stutthof, Halina was not made to work. Apart from the early morning roll call and the clearing of dead bodies, there was not much to do. There were no beds; Halina and her mother slept on some straw on the ground. It was filthy. The toilet was merely an open hole with slippery edges watched over by sadistic guards. Halina befriended a woman who she describes as remarkable—Freida, a university professor from Budapest. Older than Halina, she became a mentor, but Halina also mentored her and protected her. It was Freida who kept repeating, when the prisoners dared to speculate about a postwar world, that if they survived, they should testify and bear witness for the rest of their lives.

Death was all around Halina, a normalised daily part of life. Many inmates were overwhelmed by their circumstances and committed suicide by using the electric fence. One day Halina set out looking for Freida and could not find her, until eventually she found Freida's body hanging on the wire. She had electrocuted herself. The day before she had said to Halina, 'In a world that allows Stutthof to happen, I do not want to be'. Halina regretted not foreseeing Freida's intention. Typhoid passed through Stutthof, and Halina and her mother were both struck. Halina survived, but her mother passed away in her arms. Everyone Halina loved had now been taken from her by the Nazis. In the last days of the war Halina was taken on a death march from Stutthof. She and two other inmates managed to escape and hid for two weeks. They were fortunate enough to be aided by civilian Germans and survived. Three years later she made the journey to Melbourne and now resides in my electorate.

Halina survived the most unimaginable horrors during the Holocaust. The Hakenkreuz was there every step of the way. It was the symbol worn and displayed. It was the backdrop to the genocide of 6 million Jews. It was the sign of strength of the Third Reich. It was and is a symbol of hate, a symbol used to intimidate and vilify, a symbol that has no place in a tolerant, peaceful and multicultural society. So that is why I invited Halina to be with us here while we debate this important piece of legislation. I pay tribute to her now as she watches from the gallery, and I pay tribute to her evidence given yet again next week in yet another war crime trial. If I can conclude, and with indulgence, with her words, 'If we survive, we must testify until we die'.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (15:31): I am delighted to rise and make a brief contribution to the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. As we have heard from other speakers particularly on this side of the house—the members for Malvern, Lowan, Caulfield and Brighton, who have spoken extensively on this bill—it will be an offence to display a swastika publicly, except where it can still be shown in certain circumstances, and I will go through those in due course.

I am pleased that the Andrews government has finally followed the lead of the coalition, who started down this track some years ago and took steps to outlaw the public use of the swastika. Back in February 2020 we announced that we would amend the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001, which would go towards then banning the public display of the Nazi swastika and other symbols that incite hate. As a society we used to rely on common sense and trust that people would not push the

boundaries, but clearly over time and certainly over the last eight years there have been challenges, and fear and anger have grown within our communities. It is important that we stop this hatred and incitement of hatred. As I say, under this Victorian government we just need to take these steps forward, because if we do not, individuals will go down certain paths and take it way too far. I think it is time that we all take a step back and a deep breath and work together rather than accepting some of the things we see and the incitement of hate.

There has been some anger and hostility around the Nazi swastika, and it certainly must stop. We would not tolerate these actions against our Indigenous cousins and friends, our Asian community, our African community, so why should we tolerate it against the Jewish community? It goes without saying that we need to stop this, and this bill takes a significant step forward. There will always be people who push the boundaries, but this is a terrific start. In September 2021 the government followed our lead and announced that it would legislate a ban on the public display of a Nazi symbol, and here we are in June 2022—better late than never—and we are actually making some ground now.

I just want to touch on some of the main provisions. Clause 3 inserts a new division 4C, which refers to the historical use of swastikas in Buddhism, Hindu and other religions. It was the Nazis under the Third Reich in Germany who misappropriated its use; hence we are where we are today. To this end it is only the public display of the Nazi swastika that is being banned, not any of the other symbols. A public display offence will occur when a Nazi symbol, after this legislation is introduced, is displayed publicly, if that person knows or ought to know reasonably that the symbol is associated with Nazi ideology and if the display occurs in a public place, and the penalty is 120 units, which is significant—\$21 800 or imprisonment for 12 months. I certainly hope that these sorts of fines go forward in terms of what we have seen with farm trespass and biosecurity. I would like to see those fines continue and for it to be seen how significant some of these other things in our community are. I think it is a significant fine—\$21 000—if you continue to break the law and display the swastika publicly.

There are some exemptions, and they are for good reason—for example, if a person can prove that the display of a swastika is to engage reasonably and in good faith for academic development or artistic use or religious or scientific purposes. There is a short list of other occasions where a person would not contravene the legislation. For example, if a person has a tattoo of a swastika, that does not contravene the legislation. This legislation will empower a police officer to give direction to remove a Nazi symbol where appropriate, and I think that is the other component of this legislation. As in all circumstances, in all legislation, there can be some anomalies. If a person were to wear a swastika in a private home, for example—either theirs or someone else's home—that would be fine, but they cannot travel on public transport from one place to the other while displaying those emblems. So again, there will be a few grey areas people will not understand, but I think this legislation goes a long way towards supporting the Jewish community and stamping out this hatred.

Most people will start to understand what the rules are, and some will push the boundaries, as always. But we know the type of behaviour that we are trying to snuff out in this legislation, and let us hope that this is reflected throughout the detail in the bill. As I said earlier, we would not allow a culture of threatening behaviour against our Indigenous people or against French, Spanish, American or whatever—any other nationality, any other colour or any other religious group. So it is important that Jewish community also have that respect, and it is certainly time. It is well past time that this legislation was introduced, and I am very pleased to stand here and support this legislation.

I know I speak on behalf of the Ovens Valley community when I say that Neo-Nazi and Nazi groups are not welcome, with their threats of violence where that occurs by allowing swastikas or other contraband. As I said earlier, managing the application of this may have some challenges, and we will work through those as we go. But hopefully we will get well-rounded outcomes, which is what this legislation is endeavouring to achieve. The coalition believe that every Victorian deserves to go about their daily lives free of persecution, and this ban will go a long way to keep our communities hate free. I certainly support the removal of swastikas from public display, and with those brief comments I commend the bill to the house.

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarnet) (15:38): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to make a contribution and follow colleagues in this house who have spoken so passionately and made contributions with some very personal, moving stories, which is why I say it is with pleasure that I rise to speak in favour of the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, because we really are making history here today by doing something that perhaps should have been done many, many years ago. It is something that is an Australian first, and again Victoria is leading the way.

I would like to start by acknowledging the Victorian and indeed Australian Jewish communities and the survivors particularly of the Holocaust. It is absolutely incredible to have had a 95-year-old beautiful woman here in the gallery today as the guest of the member for Burwood and for him to have been able to share her incredible story of survival, however tragic that story of survival is. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Legal and Social Issues Committee, whose work on the inquiry into anti-vilification protections resulted in the contents of this bill being brought before us here today. Once again, I really feel we are showing that Victoria is the national leader, and I have no doubt that when we pass this bill not only will we be the first jurisdiction in this country to ban the public display of Nazi imagery, but we will not be the last state to do that—I am sure many states will follow in our footsteps.

There is really no other way of putting it: Nazi imagery are symbols of hate, of bigotry and indeed of ignorance. They remind us of what can only be described as one of the darkest times of our history and reflect the absolute horrors that the 20th century did record. We talked here in this place today about 6 million Jews having been killed in what was, in terms of the time that we have recorded history, a very short period of time in which so many people were murdered. I remember hearing last year and reading about how Neo-Nazis had camped in and marched through our beautiful Grampians communities on Australia Day, frightening locals. It speaks to really just how emboldened far-right fringe groups have become over the past couple of years. The stories that we have heard here in this place today really should remind us, and I am sure they do, that we must absolutely remain vigilant at all times and fight back against the use of these types of horrific images that frighten communities but also inflict further pain and further tragedy on people who have already spent a large period of their lives very much affected by the horrors of the Holocaust.

In January 2020 we saw a Nazi flag being displayed at a person's home. In May 2020 the Hakenkreuz was graffitied at Cranbourne Golf Club, which I believe was founded and is frequented by the Jewish community. What a truly horrific thing to do. We saw the Nazi swastika defacing a number of campaign posters during the recent federal election, including even those of the former member for Kooyong. I was talking to staff about this when we were talking about the importance of this bill coming through the house. I remember four years ago talking to constituents on a really cold morning at Hoppers Crossing train station. I was a pretty fresh candidate hitting the pavement on my first campaign. I remember being approached by a man who was really disappointed in our government, and he was really keen to talk to me about that. His disappointment stemmed from our government having made the decision to remove Sky News—remember that?—from airing in the city loop. I remember this decision being widely ridiculed by the papers. But why did we do it? Because Sky thought it was appropriate to conduct an interview with a well-known Neo-Nazi. Let us be clear: this was someone who advocated for a picture of Hitler to be hung in every primary school. Such a large news network thought that someone like that was appropriate to interview—about immigration, no less. I think our government made it very clear even back then that there are consequences for those who, intentionally or not, platform Nazis and Neo-Nazis and attempt to bring that kind of hateful and extreme rhetoric into mainstream Victoria—and standing against that kind of hateful rhetoric is something that our government continues to do.

Last month our Premier committed to adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of 'antisemitism', which builds upon our commitment to expanding education about the Holocaust in secondary schools, because the evil of Nazism is something that must be safeguarded against. As we know, more and more, education really is the key to ensuring that such extremism does not grow further.

After we announced that we will be banning the display of this type of Nazi imagery and symbolism I was contacted by some constituents from my local community, from the local Indian community in fact, who really wanted to know what this bill meant for them. As many here would know, before the Nazis adopted the swastika the swastika was more commonly recognised as a religious symbol used primarily by Dharmic faiths like Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, and it is a symbol that is still used by these faiths today. I know the member for Cranbourne and I talk about being out in our local communities and seeing this symbol above the front doors in some parts of our Hindu communities. I want to take this opportunity to assure my community that the purpose of this bill specifically targets Nazi imagery, so it therefore bans displays of the Nazi swastika, identified as the Hakenkreuz. It does not ban the display of the swastika in religious and cultural contexts as it might appear in Dharmic faiths. In fact such depictions do not even fall close to being within the scope of this bill. In fact the bill supports a community campaign to go ahead and educate and raise awareness of the origins of the religious and cultural swastika and its importance to Indian communities like mine and to differentiate it from the Nazi swastika. To ensure this is understood the legislation will come into force a year from now to facilitate this education, so it will be a 12-month education campaign.

To be clear, this bill does contain a few exceptions to allow the public display of Nazi imagery. The first is for a genuine academic, artistic, religious or scientific purpose. Not only does this allow for our local Indian communities to display the swastika within the appropriate cultural context, but it would also naturally allow for depictions in film, which would, for example, prevent a cinema that shows World War II films from falling afoul in displaying symbols to the public. Another exemption is for a genuine cultural or educational purpose, which would allow for things like schools educating students about Nazi Germany, whether that be through textbooks, presentations or films. We have also got another exception in that the bill does not apply where the Nazi symbol is displayed publicly by a tattoo or similar process such as branding, because we know that making that an offence would not only be difficult to enforce but also open up human rights issues that are very messy to work through.

This is a really important bill. It is a historic moment for us here in Victoria. Victorians should feel proud that Victoria is leading the way in banning this Nazi swastika, this symbol of absolute hatred and the atrocities that have been undertaken. It is incredibly offensive that it is used constantly, consistently and increasingly here in Victoria. We are making it very clear as part of this bill: the Nazi swastika, the Hakenkreuz, has no place in a modern Victoria. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (15:48): I rise today to speak on behalf of the Greens to the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, which the Greens wholeheartedly support. This bill will make it a criminal offence to knowingly display the Nazi symbol, the Hakenkreuz, as associated with Nazi ideology, in public. It is an important bill, an important bill to show the community that hate and antisemitism have absolutely no place in Victoria, and comes in response to a recommendation from the parliamentary inquiry into anti-vilification protections in Victoria. The bill defines the Hakenkreuz as ‘a symbol of a cross with the arms bent at right angles in a clockwise direction’. It does not limit the display to the Nazi flag but includes other displays of this symbol, such as on clothing or graffiti. It uses the Hakenkreuz term to distinguish between this symbol of hate and the swastika of the Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and other faiths, which comes from the ancient Sanskrit swastika and means good fortune or wellbeing. This is a really important inclusion, as other members have indicated, to ensure that that symbol can continue to be used for cultural and religious reasons by people of these faiths without fear of persecution.

The penalty for knowingly displaying the hateful Nazi symbol in public is 120 penalty units or 12 months imprisonment, or both. On top of that requirement that this charge is directed at the intentional and public display of the symbol, there is also the requirement that the person must know that the symbol is associated with Nazi ideology. There are exceptions to ensure that the image can be displayed in good faith by academics, in opposition to Nazism, for reporting purposes, by law enforcement, within the justice system for prosecution and evidence and in some other circumstances.

This bill is of great importance to the Jewish community, and I want to acknowledge certainly the large and vibrant Jewish community within the Prahran electorate. A significant number of those are Holocaust survivors. Certainly in my time as the member for Prahran I have really enjoyed being involved in community events, whether it is at local synagogues or at Jewish social service organisations or other organisations, hosting interns from the Jewish student union or meeting with Holocaust survivors who live in and around the Prahran electorate. I know this bill will mean so much to those individuals and those groups and the wider Jewish community.

Over recent years we have seen an increase in the display of this hateful symbol across Melbourne and Victoria. It is just completely unacceptable. That is why we so strongly support this bill—to really draw a line in the sand and to outlaw the public display of this hateful symbol. This symbol of hate and antisemitism has been used by fascists and Neo-Nazis in Victoria to vandalise Jewish buildings or buildings that have Jewish organisations in them and posters. It has been used more broadly to direct hatred and intolerance towards wider groups: the LGBTIQ+ communities, First Nations people, migrants, people from other religions and beyond. We had that disgraceful situation where the Nazi flag was being flown in a residential area on private property and nothing could be done about it. Certainly it has no place here in Victoria.

I want to echo many members' calls to continue to educate people about that most awful and horrific of events in human history, the Holocaust, and continue also to hear from survivors themselves—'Never forget, never again'. Like many young people, during my travels in my 20s I visited Auschwitz in Poland. Not only does that experience really bring the horrors of the Holocaust into stark reality, it also brings to the fore the hate and the hurt of Holocaust denial.

The banning of the Nazi symbol is an important step in addressing the rise of white supremacy and the far right here in Victoria. The rise of white supremacy and the far right is one of the biggest and most disturbing challenges we face as a state, in particular when it comes to social harmony. We have seen Neo-Nazis openly congregating in the Grampians. We have seen attempts to recruit people into ultranationalist far-right movements during the pandemic. Toxic racism and threats against individuals and against communities are increasing. There is much work to be done to build a truly anti-racist and anti-fascist Victoria. We must address structural racism, dismantle white supremacy and reckon with our past. We should be a state, and a country even, that does all it can to outlaw and take a stand against racial vilification. We should be a state and we should be a country that welcomes people and provides safety to those who are fleeing persecution.

I am so pleased that the Victorian Parliament is conducting an inquiry into far-right extremism, an inquiry the Greens helped establish. They are doing really important work to identify these movements, their reach and their recruitment methods and to better understand the threats that they pose to Victoria, especially to Victoria's multicultural communities, along with how to counter these movements and protect those most affected.

I note the Minister for Crime Prevention mentioned in her second-reading speech that this legislation will be part of a broader package of reforms to strengthen anti-vilification protections in Victoria, and I welcome these too. History has shown us just how dangerous these hateful ideologies can be. We need to protect our community and counter them. I commend this bill to the house.

Ms SETTLE (Buninyong) (15:55): I am proud to rise to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. As the member for Tarneit said, this is truly a historic moment when we have support throughout the house to become one of the first places to make this legislation. It makes me very, very proud, and it speaks to the fact that in Victoria we will not tolerate this sort of vilification of people based on anything, be it their race, their gender—we will not accept it.

This bill is very important and introduces a new summary offence to prohibit the intentional public display of the Hakenkreuz symbol. We know that this is a symbol of hate and causes real, significant

harm to many Victorians—obviously particularly to our Jewish community. It is also used in anger against many other people in our community like Torres Strait Islanders and LGBTQI+ and Aboriginal people, but of course that pain and that true symbolism that comes from that symbol is felt most deeply by the Jewish community. This type of harm is just completely unacceptable in our society, and I am very proud that we stand to make a historic change.

The bill fulfils a Victorian government commitment to implementation of recommendation 24 of the 2021 report of the Legal and Social Issues Committee's inquiry into anti-vilification protections in Victoria, and that recommendation was to ban this public display. I served on the committee, and I would like to acknowledge my committee members, in particular our chair, the member for St Albans, but of course also the member for Caulfield, who is in the room with us today, because I saw the commitment of the member for Caulfield throughout our inquiry. So I would like to acknowledge him as well as the rest of the committee members. That includes the members for Clarinda, Geelong and Brighton. They all worked very hard on this inquiry report because it is such an important piece.

I guess more importantly I want to thank the individuals who shared their experiences of vilification and abuse. There were 62 submissions, with a further 11 submissions that came in late due to COVID, and we had seven days of public hearings. I really want to thank all of those people who gave evidence to this inquiry. We heard their stories, and we could hear the awful damage that vilification can have on a person. Anti-racism, anti-hate, anti-Islamophobia and human rights initiatives, policies and programs must be at the centre and be informed by the experiences and perspectives of communities who are being targeted by or are on the receiving end of the human rights breaches. We heard evidence from the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, the Australian Jewish Association, the Islamic Council of Victoria, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the LGBTIQ Legal Service, Thorne Harbour Health, the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and many others.

Today we are one step closer to addressing a gap that exists between the legislation of 20 years ago and the demands of today, and there were 30 recommendations put forward. I will just touch on a couple of the other recommendations. Obviously this bill is very specifically about the banning of the symbolism, but I think that some of those other recommendations speak to the same quest to really rid our state of that level of vilification.

Among the findings of the committee we found that there is a lack of awareness and understanding in the community of Victoria's anti-vilification laws. There is a frustration about the lack of accessibility, and there is a frustration about how ineffective these laws are. The current Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 does not properly address the rising problem of hate crime in Victoria, especially for First Nations people, multicultural and multifaitth groups, women, the LGBTIQ community and people living with a disability. There were 36 recommendations which will strengthen Victoria's anti-vilification laws. The rise of online vilification was something that was particularly troubling to all of us during the inquiry, and there are recommendations about trying to educate on and address that. But the bill before the house will acquit one of the report's key recommendations, which was the banning of the public display of the Hakenkreuz symbol.

During the inquiry we heard from Ms Jessie Holmes, who was the chief executive officer of Yarriambiack council, and she talked about the experience they had in Beulah in January 2020. She described Beulah as a very small part of their shire, a very small town, very close knit—400 people. A couple who had recently moved there erected the offensive flag, the Hakenkreuz flag. It was up for about a fortnight, but of course then it just blew up in the media and it was a very traumatic experience for the whole of the town and indeed everyone who was confronted by it. I will just read a little bit from her testimony to the inquiry, because it really highlights that they were so desperate to do something and the tools just were not there for them. In her words:

When we were notified, I guess our first thing was that we contacted the local police to find out what could be done about the situation. The local police were obviously aware of the situation as well, and they were

trying to seek ways to have the flag removed as well as us trying to figure out how we could potentially remove the flag.

She went on to describe, once it had hit the news and really got big engagement across the state, the sorts of emails and contact that they at the council were receiving. People were just angry and frustrated that it had not been taken down and felt that perhaps Yarriambiack council were in some way to blame, which of course they were not. They were desperately trying to seek legal advice as to how they could remove it. It was interesting, because I think I remember from the inquiry they did find a sort of local-laws way that they could get around it, but in fact it was actually the local police officer, a police officer by the name of Shane, and Ms Holmes described him as an absolute hero. They went and spent a couple of hours talking to the people who had this flag up, and Shane just patiently talked and went through it all and the flag came down. So I would like to acknowledge that police officer for all of his work in that situation.

What that really highlighted for me during the inquiry was the universal agreement that this was wrong but the fact that there were no tools that council could utilise. So I am very happy that this bill will give teeth, if you like, to make sure that that offensive flag is not flown again in public. Once in effect, anyone who intentionally displays the Nazi symbol in public faces penalties of almost \$22 000. The government intends to move an amendment to include an earlier default commencement date so it can get on and do this very quickly.

As I started out saying, I would really like to acknowledge my committee members on this—there was a lot of work done by everyone—but also the secretariat, who worked very hard to look after and support the people that were coming to present to us. I would like to acknowledge our Attorney-General and our Minister for Multicultural Affairs, who is at the table at the moment, and acknowledge their hard work in making this fact. We in the inquiry could see that that needed addressing and put forward some recommendations, and I am very proud that this government has acted so, so quickly on those recommendations. Something that is so hurtful needs to be acted upon, and I am very glad that the ministers responsible were so quick to act. Again my heartfelt thanks go to all of the people who presented at the inquiry. It is their experiences and hearing from people in public about the vilification that they have suffered that really, really put fire in the belly to make change.

This government will not accept vilification of any kind in our society. We are all equal, and this government has gone a long way to make sure that that message is heard loud and clear. This bill of course is another such way that we can really send that message that Victoria is a welcoming place. We are proud of our multicultural roots and community and we are proud of all in our community, so I commend this bill to the house in the strongest terms.

Ms HENNESSY (Altona) (16:05): I am really honoured to have an opportunity to make a contribution to this bill, which I wholeheartedly support.

It is hard to believe that those who are inflamed with virulent bigotry and who are using the swastika as a rallying cry to celebrate the legacy of the Third Reich have the law on the side. These violent final solutionists, who seek to destroy the touchstone of our democracy and our way of life, would exterminate each one of you if they had the means to do so. We do not need a Christchurch in our city to realise the fierce urgency of this moment. And so a good place to start is to ban once and for all the public display of the Nazi swastika. You and your colleagues have the opportunity to right a wrong, to shout down the Neo-Nazis and to affirm the ideals and principles that we all cherish.

That was evidence given to the Legal and Social Issues Committee by Dr Dvir Abramovich, who is the chairman of the Anti Defamation Commission. I think it is a very compelling contribution as to why this bill is needed and why it is indeed justified, and I think it really does underline the urgency with which people have been seeking this change. I am incredibly impressed with the work that the Legal and Social Issues Committee did in respect of racial vilification, and I will welcome those reforms when they make their way to this Parliament. But I think in that very short extract of the evidence that Dr Abramovich gave to the committee, calling upon us as a Parliament to act, he was indeed calling upon us to ensure that we are all appealing to our better selves. As the member for

Buninyong just outlined in her really fantastic contribution, the rise of antisemitism, the display of new and far-right extremist activity and the impact that that has had on all members of the community but in particular on members of the Victorian Jewish community is something that means that we have an obligation to act. I think the work of the Legal and Social Issues Committee and the evidence that they heard made a very, very compelling case for us to indeed introduce this bill into this Parliament.

I do just want to briefly reflect upon some of the stories that we have heard in the course of the last few years, particularly where we have seen instances of hateful ideology being given expression to and many well-motivated people and institutions who did not have the tools to take action. This is on the one hand a very practical and pragmatic bill in attempting to address those issues, but it is also a bill that is very important in terms of rejecting racism and the symbolism of all those who seek to destroy people on the basis of their race and cultural identity. This bill cannot come soon enough, in my view. Where we have seen those sorts of circumstances—the sorts of delays that we have heard about in Beulah; in the most recent federal election, the disgusting defacement and defilement of candidates' corflutes; in those that have been seeking to organise protests—where police or members of the community have become aware of those, they have not in the past had the ability to act in a pre-emptive fashion for those who might be attempting to organise activities that would essentially be about promoting this kind of ideology, but the police have not also had the ability, the authority or in fact the obligation to respond to these sorts of incidents.

Unfortunately it is not only in respect of the subject matter that this bill discusses that that has been the case but in respect of many acts of vilification, not just racial vilification, and that is why the Legal and Social Issues Committee have made a series of recommendations about how we bring greater teeth to both the law and what we do in response when there are breaches of the law, and of course online environments are an example of where that is incredibly challenging.

I also want to thank and acknowledge the symbolism that sits behind the work that people in this Parliament have done. Racism continues to persist in this country, and we sometimes find it really confronting to accept that. We sometimes like to speak ill of the messenger. We like to characterise them as proselytisers of woke ideology or people that want a black armband view of history. We have to remember that as leaders, as people that get to influence the public debate and the public discussion, we need at all times to be able to hold a very honest mirror to what is occurring in our community and in our society. We need to not let those who come to us to talk about their experiences of racism, usually on the back of such horrific intergenerational trauma that their communities have lived through, be rejected on the basis that we find it too confronting or we cannot think of the right policy tools or we do not think we can build a political consensus about trying to find a better regulatory response.

One of the things that is so terrific about Victoria is that Victoria is one of those places where such leaders exist—and they exist on both sides of the house in this Parliament, they exist out in the community. I think the consensus that has been built around this bill is a fine display of what we can achieve when we focus on righting wrongs rather than playing the politics on an issue, and I hope to see that kind of collaboration and that kind of consensus replicated in the future when we are talking about other issues—the introduction that I understand may occur this week in respect of the establishment of a treaty authority, many of the issues that go to unfinished business in the history of this country. When we actually stand for rejecting racism, when we go to how we actually be our better selves and put in place the sorts of educational and regulatory tools that come down as tough as nails on exhibitions of racism, then we will continue to be a better place.

I want to acknowledge the fantastic work that was done by the Legal and Social Issues Committee under the chair, the member for St Albans. I want to acknowledge the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Attorney-General, who have done such a terrific job. I also want to acknowledge the member for Caulfield, who has been a tireless advocate on behalf of his community on this issue, and I think both his contribution and the contribution by the member for Box Hill today again are just a reminder that the power of personal stories can be such an incredibly informative and educational tool when we are dealing with some of the challenging issues to regulate. But just because issues are

difficult to regulate does not mean we should not act, and I am firmly in the corner of ‘Don’t let perfection stop us’. It is always difficult to confront issues when you are banning something. This bill has sought to thread the eye of the needle with great consideration to the impact on the Hindu, the Buddhist and the Jain communities. I hear the call that we want to get this put in place as quickly as possible. Education is important, and I support the activities that have been undertaken both by our state and also the federal government around trying to ensure that we are better educating people around the history of the Holocaust. But it is important, particularly when we want to have a good, effective and strong response, when this law is broken, that people can rely on a consistent response, and unfortunately that does take time. I support the sentiment behind some of the comments from the opposition on that issue, and the amendment seeks to try and make sure that we get it done as quickly as possible but we get it done very, very effectively.

Viktor Frankl is one of my childhood idols, and anyone who read *Man’s Search for Meaning* as part of their own spiritual reflection and development I think could do well to go back to it. Viktor Frankl was a person that described racism in terms of two races, decent men and indecent men, and said that we need to try to back the decent people in. This bill tries to do that, and I wish it a speedy passage through the house.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (16:15): I am pleased to rise to contribute to the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. As a member of the Legal and Social Issues Committee, which undertook the inquiry into anti-vilification protections, I am really proud of recommendation 24. We have heard in this place today the support for this bill and of course the member for Altona’s great contribution we have just heard—and I agree with her sentiments around racism—but also significant contributions from the member for Box Hill and the member for Caulfield.

RECOMMENDATION 24: That the Victorian Government establish a criminal offence that prohibits the display of symbols of Nazi ideology—

including the Nazi hate symbol—

with considered exceptions to the prohibition.

I am pleased that we have taken the significant steps to ban this symbol of hate and all it represents. The inquiry, which was chaired by the member St Albans, took around 62 submissions, with a further 11 submissions based on the COVID experience, and held seven days of public hearings. The committee heard from many giving evidence about the public display of offensive symbols, in particular the Nazi hate symbol, which is outlined in chapter 7 of our report. An example of the evidence given by the Anti-Defamation Commission, for example, strongly supported a specific ban on the Nazi symbol, and their evidence went as follows:

It is hard to believe that those who are inflamed with virulent bigotry and who are using the swastika as a rallying cry to celebrate the legacy of the Third Reich have the law on the side. These violent final solutionists, who seek to destroy the touchstone of our democracy and our way of life, would exterminate each ... of you if they had the means to do so. We do not need a Christchurch in our city to realise the fierce urgency of this moment. And so a good place to start is to ban once and for all the public display of the Nazi ...

symbol.

You and your colleagues have the opportunity to right a wrong, to shout down the Neo-Nazis and to affirm the ideals and principles that we all cherish.

And there were many, many more people that gave evidence of a similar nature.

This bill is a first in this country, and it is so important when we know of the increase of far-right groups using this hateful symbol. We need to be dealing with it as soon as possible. This government is committed to protecting the rights of all Victorians to be free from racism, vilification and hatred and to ensuring everyone feels welcome and accepted in our communities. We know that the harm caused by hate conduct and vilification can be profound and it can affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals and often prevent them from feeling comfortable participating in their communities. Holocaust survivors and their families should never have to experience the

hateful behaviour of those few in our community that continue to do that. Victoria has seen a number of recent incidents where the public display of Nazi hate symbols has been used to intimidate and convey a message of hate and intolerance. We are all horrified by these stories. The display of symbols associated with Nazi and Neo-Nazi ideology is harmful and offensive to all members of our society and particularly to the Jewish community.

Nazi symbols are also used to communicate hatred and cause harm to a wide range of other groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disabilities and other racial and religious groups. Throughout the inquiry we heard from all those groups, and they all gave us evidence around the issues that they have experienced. This type of harm is completely unacceptable in our society, which is proudly democratic, diverse, multicultural and multifaith. The vast majority of Victorians show the greatest respect and believe that the display of the Nazi hate symbol is totally unacceptable, and they all support this bill, including in my electorate of Geelong.

In the Geelong region there have been occasions when the Nazi hate symbol has been publicly displayed. That created an outpouring of concern and in some cases fear of this hateful symbol and those responsible. The community very clearly found it offensive and appalling. We also saw the behaviour of a group who were exposed for executing a Nazi salute on Australia Day, whose response to the media was very disturbingly, 'It was all just a bit of fun'. The Geelong community were sickened by this behaviour and that comment. It was also concerning to see the Nazi hate symbol used during protests against the global pandemic lockdowns; again, our community was appalled at that behaviour.

I am really proud that we have introduced education on the Holocaust in schools. Education plays such an important role in preventing this sort of shocking behaviour from occurring in our communities. I think the education piece sits in a really important place to ensure that we are not hearing people say, 'It was all just a bit of fun', when they truly understand what it is and how hateful it is what they are doing.

This bill introduces a new summary offence to prohibit the intentional public display of a Nazi hate symbol. This is a symbol of hate and causes significant harm to Victorians, particularly to the Jewish community. This landmark reform sends a clear message that the public display of the Nazi symbol has no place in Victoria and certainly has no place in my community of Geelong. The bill will create an offence in the Summary Offences Act 1966 which prohibits a person from intentionally displaying a Nazi symbol in a public place if the person knows or reasonably ought to know that the Nazi symbol is a symbol associated with Nazi ideology.

The bill seeks to ensure that the swastika's significance to the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities is not captured. This is set out in the preamble, legislative examples and specific exemptions for genuine religious or cultural use. There are also exceptions for academic, artistic, scientific, educational, publishing a report, opposition to fascism or Nazism, administration of justice or law enforcement purposes. Once in effect, anyone who intentionally displays a Nazi symbol in public faces penalties of up to \$22 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both. I know in my community, while I was working on the inquiry with the committee, it was very clear that there are very few people in our community that use this hate symbol. I am sure my community is the same as many others across this state: they see it as abhorrent, and they do not agree with its use in any shape or form.

As a hate symbol, we see them plastered around our community at different times. Certainly during the lockdown period there were those protesters that took it upon themselves to use that, and it caused great fear and distress in some parts of my community. People did not know whether those people were going to harm them or others in the community, because they were quite fiercely claiming to uphold their right to be able to either fly a flag or have that symbol on the front of their house or have those stickers around the community. I know for my community it was quite dramatic, so I can only imagine what it must have been like for Holocaust survivors and their families who have a stronger connection to what has occurred in our history. This is a really important bill for my community.

I know there is an amendment before the house to change it to six months rather than 12 months. We need time to bring people up to speed. There has been a huge amount of consultation on this bill to ensure that we are capturing everybody's views on how it impacts on them, particularly for those communities for which it has been a symbol of peace and love and those sorts of things. It is the Nazi symbol that is what is so disgusting in our community, and we need to ensure that we have laws to stamp it out.

As I say, I am really pleased that we have all come together in this chamber to support this bill and the significance of it. We know how important it is. It is one of the first in this country, and we should be very proud as Victorians to know that we are, in the process of passing this bill, ensuring that there are penalties in place. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh) (16:25): It is a real pleasure to speak on such a substantive and important bill. We speak often of those murdered by the Nazis, and of course in the largest numbers and with the greatest hate they targeted the Jewish community. But we should also remember that their ideology was also used to justify the murder of over 6 million others—Poles, Romany, Serbs, Greeks, Jehovah's Witnesses, disabled people, queer people—and indeed millions more through their indiscriminate war, a war in which many Australians died. So we must first accept that this legislation is important for us all; it confronts a hatred that threatens us all. Further, for every death there were another three people who ended up in labour camps, freezing, tortured and starving. Some of them were experimented on without anaesthesia. When these experiments did not result in death, prisoners were left with trauma, disfigurement or permanent disability. This is the legacy of these symbols. This is what they celebrate. The undead, the ones who would have to live with what was done to them—some of them came here.

We heard today the story of Halina so powerfully put by the member for Burwood while Halina was in the gallery. Anyone who heard that contribution must be in disbelief about the horrors. Even though we have heard about them and read about them, to hear them described in such vivid fashion while the survivor was watching was just extraordinarily moving. And that is the story of one survivor. There are millions of these stories. If only we had the opportunity to hear the stories of the 6 million who died. We only hear the stories of the survivors, as powerful as they are, but there were 6 million souls who will never be able to tell their story.

Through their incredible resilience the survivors built a life and made an incredible contribution to this state, and regularly—as in hundreds of times a year—they and their community are subjected to antisemitic abuse. Most cruelly, outside their synagogues, schools and aged care homes, Nazi groups paste Nazi symbols with threatening messages—messages that once again call for their genocide and disfigurement. Among others, some of their stickers read 'Legalise the execution of Jews', with an image of a Nazi officer shooting a kneeling antisemitic caricature of a Jewish person in the head. Outside of aged care homes—and in some of those aged care homes survivors reside—cowardly acts are intended to intimidate and terrorise Holocaust survivors, to intimidate the elderly. But we are not intimidated. We are standing with these survivors proudly. We will defend these survivors, and with this legislation we will prosecute those who seek to divide us, those who desecrate the memory of our World War II veterans and the freedoms they fought for.

We lost thousands of Australians in World War II—thousands of men and women fighting against the very perpetrators of crimes that were described by colleagues on both sides of the house in relation to this bill. It is why we will pass this important piece of legislation. It is why we have committed to teaching Holocaust education at all government secondary schools, partnering with the Gandel Foundation, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum and Courage to Care—excellent organisations. It is why this government is adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of 'antisemitism'. It is why this government continues to deliver protections and support for diversity in all its forms. We will not be intimidated. We will act, and we will continue our action to tackle rising antisemitism and reject that hateful, violent ideology.

With this legislation the Victorian Parliament on both sides of the chamber says to the Jewish community, the Jehovah community, the Serb community, the Polish, the Romani, the Russian, the Ukrainian, the Greek and the Sudanese communities, the disabled community, the queer community and our World War II veterans and their families: we are with you. You are welcome here, and we will not just protect you, we will invest in you. You will continue to thrive, and you will continue to grow and be part of what makes Victoria great. There is no sense that anyone can live their best life when they are surrounded by intimidation and hate, when they or their family are reminded of the horrors that they have survived or the stories they have heard of those they love that survived and those that did not. You cannot live your best life. You cannot live a fulfilled life with those that seek to bring us to a world of hate.

As a member of a local community that has a proud Jewish community component to it, particularly around Carnegie, I have doorknocked thousands of homes, and many hundreds I doorknocked had the mezuzah on the door frame. I just feel an enormous sense of pride that I represent a community, and I have heard some stories from survivors amongst those who answered the door, who with all the horrors that they have been through—or even if they have not been through them themselves, from the stories I have heard about their parents and their grandparents—have enough compassion, enough optimism and enough thirst for life that they have created a new one thousands of miles away based on hope and aspiration. Some of us cannot get out of bed in the morning for far, far less. This community has suffered in a way that very, very few in history have, and to be able to build a new life and contribute to this society economically, academically, in the arts, in community life and in sporting life is just really a point of celebration for me as their local member but also the whole of Victoria.

I say to the Jewish community in the electorate of Oakleigh: you will always have my support. I will fight to ensure that you can live a life free of violence, free of intimidation and free of humiliation. The rise in antisemitic incidents and trends is absolutely unacceptable. Not only have the Premier and other senior people in our government, including the minister at the table, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, made comments to that regard, they have provided leadership through legislative reform and through financial contributions to communities to create safe spaces.

The bill creates an offence, as we have heard, in the Summary Offences Act 1966 which prohibits a person from intentionally displaying a Nazi symbol in a public place or in sight of a person in a public place if the person knows or reasonably ought to know that the Nazi symbol is a symbol associated with Nazi ideology. The bill prohibits only the display of the Hakenkreuz, more widely known as a swastika, or a symbol that so nearly resembles that symbol that it is likely to be confused or mistaken for it. The bill includes a range of exceptions to the offence where the display was engaged in reasonably and in good faith—for a genuine academic, artistic, religious or scientific purpose; for a genuine cultural or educational purpose; in making or publishing a fair and accurate report of any event or matter of public interest; or in opposition to fascism, Nazism, Neo-Nazism or any other related ideology. The bill also includes exceptions for the display of a Nazi symbol by means of tattooing or other like processes and for law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The offence is accompanied by powers for Victoria Police to direct a person to remove a Nazi symbol from public display and to apply to the Magistrates Court for a warrant to enter a premises to search and seize Nazi symbols. These are important, important interventions that will reduce and relieve suffering in those communities—and for all of us actually, because this affects all of us—who are directly impacted by the evils of what this symbol and this symbolism portrays.

In finishing, protection of one community from evil is protection of all of us from evil, because it is in our common human interest that our diversity and our humanity, whether that be religious, cultural, sexual orientation or gender, be protected and respected, and if we do not stand up for one community, we do not stand up for any community. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (16:35): It is truly a great and singular honour to rise and make a contribution on a profound piece of legislation, the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol

Prohibition) Bill 2022. It is a bill that will prohibit the intentional public display of a Nazi symbol, specifically the Hakenkreuz, more commonly known as the Nazi swastika.

Many, many years ago I was a young 19-year-old who was elected to the Glen Eira City Council. The City of Glen Eira has the highest concentration of Holocaust survivors in I think all of Australia. At 19, when I first had to confront this issue of Nazi graffiti on public facilities, I just thought, ‘Well, this is vandalism that is in very, very poor taste’, but I then thought about it and thought, ‘No, this is so much worse than that’. There was one day where I actually received a phone call from a Holocaust survivor who was clearly distressed after going for his daily walk to his local park and just seeing the Hakenkreuz, which was a symbol from a dark period in his life, the darkest period of his life—the darkest period in human history—in full public display at a local park in a safe and free society. It was then, at the age of 19, that I realised that we have a significant problem on our hands, and I think more broadly it is a problem that even ASIO has acknowledged—that is, the rise of the extreme far right in this country. It was in February 2020 that the ASIO director-general, Mike Burgess, warned that:

In suburbs around Australia, small cells regularly meet to salute Nazi flags, inspect weapons, train in combat and share their hateful ideology.

And that was before the pandemic. It is fair to say that things have gotten worse during the pandemic, and things have gotten worse during the pandemic because people—very odious people, might I add—who would normally occupy the fringes of society have decided to invade the centre as though they are mainstream. But they are far from mainstream. So while this is I guess a small bill—it makes a simple change, one that, might I add, also safeguards the legitimate use of the swastika for certain religions for whom the swastika is not a symbol of hate—it is nonetheless profound.

You do not have to be Jewish to be totally, deeply offended by the Hakenkreuz and by the Holocaust, the darkest chapter in human history, and that was something that I certainly discovered a few years ago. A few years ago at the Jewish museum there was a fantastic exhibition titled *The Jews of Greece*. It was one that I was very much interested in due to my Greek heritage. I went, and it was fantastic. In fact I went twice. Throughout the exhibition there was a lot of information about the very vibrant Greek-Jewish community. In northern Greece, for instance, in Thessaloniki, which is Greece’s second largest city, at one point prior to the Holocaust 40 per cent of that city was Jewish, and I think 95 per cent of them sadly perished in the Holocaust.

But there was one part of the exhibition that literally stopped me in my tracks. There was a television screen as part of the exhibition, and it showed Holocaust survivors from Greece giving their testimony. There was one old lady who was giving her testimony as a Holocaust survivor. She described the last time she saw her mother. She was hiding in a cupboard at home when the Nazis came and took her mother away. I looked at this woman’s face, and she looked just like my grandmother. She was roughly the same age as my grandmother. She spoke a similar village dialect of Greek to my grandmother, and suddenly I think the Holocaust took on a different meaning for me. It really did make me want to learn more about the Greek-Jewish community, and I found out about somebody by the name of Archbishop Damaskinos, who was the archbishop of Greece during the Holocaust. He was truly a hero. In fact Yad Vashem has recognised him as righteous among the nations. He as the archbishop issued more than 27 000 fake baptismal certificates to Greek Jews, and he is credited with saving thousands of lives. But he was a hero for a whole host of reasons. He wrote a letter when he could foresee the deportation of the Greek Jews. I have a copy of the letter right here, and I am going to quote some extracts from this letter:

In our national consciousness, all the children of Mother Greece are an inseparable unity: they are equal members of the national body irrespective of religion or dogmatic differences.

Our Holy Religion does not recognize superior or inferior qualities based on race or religion, as it is stated: “There is neither Jew nor Greek” ... and thus condemns any attempt to discriminate or create racial or religious differences.

...

Let no one forget that all actions done during these difficult times, even those actions that lie beyond our will and power, will be assessed some day by the nation and will be subjected to historical investigation. In that time of judgement, the responsibility of the leaders will weigh heavily upon the conscience of the nation if today the leaders fail to protest boldly in the name of the nation against such unjust measures as the deportation of the Greek Jews, which are an insult to our national unity and honor.

The archbishop took that letter and he marched into the office of SS General Jurgen Stroop, who oversaw the mass murder of thousands of Jews at Warsaw. He handed it to him, and the Nazi then threatened to shoot him, to which the archbishop replied, 'I'd prefer to be hung instead'.

Those of us here today are not being called upon to show that same level of bravery, that same level of leadership, that the archbishop demonstrated. Nonetheless, what we are doing today and this week in this Parliament is very profound—very profound indeed—because we are drawing a line in the sand to say that Neo-Nazism in this state is unacceptable. It has no place in this society, and we will stand by our Holocaust survivors, by our Jewish community, by minorities in Victoria—indeed all of us. We will protect all of us from these hate-filled ideologies.

In the last 2 minutes remaining I do want to pay tribute to Margot Pampel. Margot Pampel was a Holocaust survivor from my electorate who passed away in 2020. She would have been 100 this year. She was the grandmother of a very close and old friend of mine, Sebastian Zwalf. She was born in Jena, Germany, in 1922, and when she was a little girl her mother perished at the hands of the Nazis, so she was left on her own to survive. I think it is for Margot and for every Holocaust survivor, for their descendants and for the 6.5 million people systematically exterminated by the evil Nazis that we pass this important, profound legislation in this house this week. I commend the bill to the house, and I wish it a speedy passage.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (16:44): I rise to speak on this important piece of legislation, the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. In speaking initially to the bill, its purpose is set out in clause 1, and that is to amend the principal act, the Summary Offences Act 1966, to make the public display of Nazi symbols an offence.

The commencement date has had some discussion in relation to it. The proposal by the government is that there be some time allowed to allow for the education of police, courts and communities who use symbols somewhat similar to the Nazi symbol. I think it is always important when speaking about bills to relate them in some way to your own community, and I try to do that. In particular I would like to talk about the fact that Shepparton has had a Jewish community. Only in recent years there has been a memorial service held in Shepparton to commemorate the synagogue and hall that used to be on the outskirts of Shepparton, facilities that were used by the Jewish community that arrived in Shepparton between 1913 and 1966—so from a very early time in the last century through to pre Second World War, post Second World War. Eventually they moved on to Melbourne, where most of those families and communities joined communities here, but nevertheless the facilities were an important symbol of the time they spent there after leaving countries where generally they had been the subject of persecution.

It is interesting to note that at that memorial service was Uncle 'Boydie' Turner, an Aboriginal man who is the grandson of William Cooper. William Cooper, a Yorta Yorta Aboriginal man, prepared a letter to the consul general of the German embassy in Melbourne and travelled to Melbourne with that letter and with other Aboriginal people and handed his letter to the German embassy decrying the persecution of the Jews. William Cooper is now commemorated with a statue in Queens Gardens in Shepparton for his outstanding advocacy, not just for his own community but on behalf of another community that was persecuted. I think it is something that Shepparton is very proud to reflect on, because it was a very brave act at a different time in history and perhaps it is hard for many of us really to understand.

A really important person of the Jewish community that Shepparton also hosted for a period of years was Richard Pratt, and of course we still have a Visy factory in Shepparton. His philanthropy to

Shepparton has always been greatly valued because of his years of association with Shepparton, and that generosity is reflected in our hospital and other facilities in Shepparton. You know, there are just important connections with the Jewish community. No doubt there are still Jewish people in Shepparton. The community did eventually largely relocate to Melbourne, but their connections have never been forgotten, and I think that memorial that the families from those earlier times built to commemorate the fact that there was a synagogue there is really quite remarkable.

When talking on an issue like this too, I cannot help but bring it back to my family. In my case a very close family member has chosen to join the Jewish community. They have, for love, for family, for religion, for culture, chosen to marry into the Jewish community, and that has been a really profound experience for my family and for my extended family to begin to understand the history of that community, the culture of that community, a community that lives in the member for Caulfield's electorate with young children and participates actively in that community. I have learned so much—and so has all our family—even further about the Jewish community, about the persecution, about the Holocaust. I mean, none of us have been immune from coming to understand what happened during that period of the great terror in Germany under the reign of Hitler. For me in my early years it was from reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the documentaries, the films. The horror portrayed of the things that happened to individuals, families and communities during that time is so hard to comprehend, but we have to comprehend it and we have to be reminded of it. And when I see people in our community displaying symbols such as they do that remind us so clearly that of that hatred, of that capacity for human beings to behave in ways that are so inhumane, that are so cruel and that are really so wicked, then I feel proud to be part of a Parliament where everyone has come together, everyone is on the same page in relation to this piece of legislation. It is a step towards saying that we will not tolerate certain behaviours in our community. We will not tolerate the hate speech and the hate symbols that people might choose to put before us and them thinking that that is their right. The rights of so many people were taken away as a result of that behaviour in Germany and, dare I say, in so many other countries.

We have many communities in Australia who have fled persecution to find a place to feel safe, to live with their families and not have a symbol such as that or others of that ilk put before them to create that fear. I know that because I now have a family in my extended family which is part of the Jewish community. I feel a level of anxiety for them all the time. My husband feels anxiety. We have this feeling over and above all the anxieties you have for all your children and all your family members always—you never get away from it. But for this family, knowing the history of that community and the things that have been done over history but in particular by the Nazis, I just know that we at times take a deep breath and just hope that they will be safe—that in their time and in their lifetimes they will never experience what so many families in Germany experienced. So for me it has become an even more live issue. It is not just about books and documentaries and talking to people who are outside my scope of community or family. Now it has taken on a reality that is much greater, and I am very grateful for that in a way, to have had the opportunity to come to understand how that community have suffered, how they so want to be able to just live their lives in a peaceful and safe manner.

I think by doing this here, by presenting this bill, by debating this bill and by passing this important piece of legislation, we are all coming together to say, 'No. We won't have this. We won't have this in Australia; we won't have this in Victoria. We will stand up for what is decent human behaviour'. I think the legislation is important and the principle it supports is important, and I support the legislation.

Mr J BULL (Sunbury) (16:54): I am pleased to have the opportunity this evening to contribute to debate on this bill, the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, and the amendment that has been circulated. As other members have spoken about this afternoon, this is a very important and significant bill—a bill that stands against hate, stands against violence and stands against evil acts committed against innocent people.

Every single Victorian should have the opportunity to know and to understand the pure evil that was committed by the Nazi regime. They should know and understand the atrocities that were experienced

in World War II—the atrocities that were committed by the Nazi regime, which killed millions, with hundreds of millions injured or displaced, the destruction of towns, of cities, right through Europe and of course the destruction of nations.

This government and all members of this place—we have just heard a wonderful contribution from the member for Shepparton—I think today have respectfully debated this piece of legislation in the context of knowing and understanding and making sure that we are educating, we are teaching and we are reminding those within our community about what the Nazi regime were able to do, those atrocities that were committed, how they took power and how they propagated evil. The things that they did should never, ever, ever be forgotten.

Like many in this house, I have had the opportunity to travel through Germany and to a concentration camp, and despite that opportunity to travel being many years ago, I will never forget the feeling of being within the concentration camp—I know that other members have spoken about many of their personal experiences both within their community and overseas—and just seeing the size, just seeing the scale of what was at a systematic level committed and the atrocities that were delivered upon people from the Jewish community within the late 1930s and of course the 1940s as World War II raged throughout Europe. This is a part of a history that should never, ever be forgotten.

I know that other members have spoken about this this afternoon, and I want to again put on the record that ability for our community to work, whether it be with the RSL or whether it be with those people that are of an age bracket where—and I cannot recall who the member was who spoke about it; it might have been the Minister for Multicultural Affairs—these acts have been committed in the lifetime of some people that are within our community today. We should never, ever, ever be forgetting what has occurred, and we should always as a government, as a community and as a society be working together to make sure that we are protecting every single person within our community from these harmful words, these harmful actions—and what is delivered within this legislation is a significant and important step around that. I do also want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work that has been done in bringing this piece of legislation, this important bill, to the house. We should make sure that we continue as a government and as a Parliament to always work together across the aisle to ensure that we are protecting those within our community who deserve and need that protection.

It goes without saying of course that those who fail to learn from history will repeat it. We will not allow the horrors of the Nazi ideology to repeat and run rife within this magnificent, multicultural community that is Victoria. It is because of this that we are prioritising the recommendation stemming from the inquiry into anti-vilification protections to establish a criminal offence for knowingly and intentionally displaying the Nazi hate symbol in public displays, including at locations deemed to be public places such as railway stations, markets, churches and licensed premises. Also contained within the legislation is a definition around a broad catch-all provision, which captures any other place not mentioned in the act that can be regarded as a public place such as a government school.

What this bill does is send a strong and clear message that intentionally displaying the Nazi hate symbol will not be tolerated in this state. The vilification of our Jewish community will not be tolerated. Intimidation towards a fellow Victorian will not be tolerated. Those that do that will face imprisonment for such an act. Messaging will be delivered via a community education campaign to promote awareness about the differences between the religious swastika and the Hakenkreuz, which we know of course is something that is really important to many within our community, many within our multicultural community. I know that other members have spoken about this at length. If I do have time, I will go back to some of that work that is contained within the legislation, but I think it has been reasonably well covered in the debate today. As enforcers of the law Victoria Police will also be providing an educational and communications campaign package to police members, supported by amendments to the Victoria Police manual, to guide police members on what may or may not constitute an offence under the bill.

But we do know what is important. We know the history of the swastika is not associated with Nazi and Neo-Nazi ideology but is of course—and this being somewhat of an irony—one of purity, of love, of peace and of good fortune. That is why there has been broad consultation with the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities as well. It was a critical part of bringing this piece of legislation to the house. We know that ensuring that this consultation, this important work working with our many multicultural communities across the state, has been an important lead-up and an important piece of consultation that has made sure that we are striking that balance between understanding the history—the use of the Nazi hate symbol as opposed the use of the symbol for peaceful purposes, for religious purposes and for those opportunities that we know exist within the community—and ensuring that this legislation does exactly what we need it to do.

I will go back to where I started around the history and the atrocities that were committed not so long ago. We know of course that governments have not just an opportunity but a responsibility to lead, an opportunity and a responsibility to make sure that wherever the opportunity we are always working with local communities, whether it be within a school setting, whether it be within the workplace or whether it be out and about in local communities, at sporting events or on public transport, to make sure that we are always sending a message that using a symbol such as the Nazi hate symbol to target those within our community of a particular religion or of a particular faith is simply disgraceful. This bill calls that out. This bill enshrines in legislation an opportunity to make sure that the government and—certainly through what I believe from listening to all of the contributions this afternoon through debate—members right across the chamber are united in our defence of and our protection of those within our community who might be unfairly targeted.

This is a piece of legislation that I am sure many of us would not think that we would need to be bringing through the house. In fact it is a piece of legislation that we should not need to be here debating, because for anyone within our community to think that the use of that hate symbol to unfairly target and go after people in our community that might be vulnerable because of a historic event, arguably the biggest historic event that has happened in the course of history, is frankly disgraceful. Every single member needs to call it out. Every single member needs to have the opportunity to come into this place to call out those who want to go after others, who want to target others, so that they feel the full force of the law when they do these things, because frankly it is disgraceful and it is wrong. It is for these reasons that I support the legislation before the house, and I do indeed wish the piece of legislation a speedy passage through both houses. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (17:04): Like so many people here in this house today I stand to support the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, which will prohibit the intentional display of the Hakenkreuz, also known as the Nazi swastika, in a public place knowing that it supports Nazi ideology. I also support the government's amendment to bring forward the implementation of this legislation by six months. I wish to acknowledge Holocaust survivors and their families and thank them for their strength and advocacy and for continuing to share their lived experience to ensure that an atrocity like the Holocaust can never happen again.

As a former history teacher, I have had the opportunity and privilege of teaching units about the lessons of World War II to year 10 students. This curriculum, which is taught in schools across the state, covers the rise of Hitler and antisemitism during the 1930s, the hateful ideology of the Nazis and the systematic murder and extermination of 6 million Jews. No matter how many times I have taught on the rise of fascism, the despicable actions of the Third Reich and the structural prejudice and discrimination against the Jewish people that led to violence and ultimately genocide, it remains hard to comprehend that this could have happened in the 20th century. I shared with my students the accounts of the vicious and violent attacks of Crystal Night, the brutal oppression of the Warsaw ghetto and many other ghettos across Eastern Europe, the horrors of the massacres of the Nazi's mobile killing units in the Soviet Union and the inhumane acts that took place in the extermination camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the other killing centres across Europe, and I continue to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the evil. Just as we cannot allow Holocaust denial, nor can we allow the promotion or celebration of the

systematic genocidal killing of approximately 6 million Jews in Europe by Nazi Germany. I would also like to acknowledge the millions of others who were targeted and killed by the Nazi regime during this time, including people with disability, LGBTIQ+ people, Roma communities and opponents of the regime. I am committed to supporting anti-vilification measures that will prevent hate, fear and violence in Victoria and to supporting programs and events that educate our young people and future generations about racism, vilification and the prevention of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

This is landmark legislation that reflects the values of our government and the people of Victoria. This reform is a part of our government's broader commitment to protect Victorians by strengthening our anti-vilification laws. I welcome that this historic legislation is receiving bipartisan support. I want to thank the Attorney-General for her leadership on developing and introducing this legislation, and her office and the department. I am pleased to follow the contributions from the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Shadow Attorney-General, who is in the house right now. I wish to recognise the powerful contribution from the member for Box Hill, reflecting on his family's personal experience, as well as thank the member for Caulfield for sharing his personal story. Once again Victoria is leading the nation, as the first jurisdiction to introduce legislation to ban public displays of the Nazi swastika. I welcome the news that the parliaments of New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania also plan to introduce similar legislation.

We are a proudly multicultural and multifaith state that recognises and respects cultural diversity. In my community of Ballarat we celebrate diversity. We come from 69 different nations, we speak 42 different languages and we practise 21 different faiths in peace and harmony. Disappointingly, not everyone in Victoria embraces and celebrates our diversity. A very small, small number of individuals reject it, rather promoting racism, antisemitism and division. In recent years we have seen examples of the Nazi swastika being displayed by far-right extremists to intimidate and to promote hate. This behaviour is intolerable, and this legislation will prevent such acts.

Importantly, this legislation recognises and respects the swastika, which has been a symbol of divinity, good luck and prosperity and celebrated for thousands of years by the followers of Buddhism, Hinduism and the Jain faiths. I know this has been discussed by a number of speakers, and it is very good to see that we are wanting to work with our Buddhist, Hindu and Jain Victorians to ensure that they will continue to use their symbols to celebrate their faith and their culture.

We are a proud multicultural and multifaith state, and it is because of this that we want to support our Jewish community as well as everyone in our community from hate speech and hate displays. But what we need to know is that there will be exemptions to ensure that museums, cultural institutions and places of learning will continue to be able to display the Nazi swastika for educational purposes. It is so important that we continue to educate our community on this, and therefore we are making sure that that is an important part of this bill as well.

I want to talk briefly about the consultation that has gone on, because I think it is very important that we do so. What I want to make sure is recorded in my speech is that we have really wanted to include people in this process. The opening statement of the legislation provides essential context to the proposed legislation, acknowledging the swastika's historic and ongoing use, and was co-designed with leaders from the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities, and throughout the drafting of this bill as a whole extensive consultation has occurred with faith leaders, the Victorian police, legal stakeholders, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission as well as other impacted stakeholders. Targeted consultation has also been conducted as well as in-depth meetings held by the department with the core consultative group, and I really would like to acknowledge and thank the Buddhist Council of Victoria, the Hindu Council of Australia, the Melbourne Shwetambar Jain Sangh and the Jewish Community Council of Victoria for their involvement and for their feedback, which has led to a number of improvements to the proposed legislation.

This consultative process and this bill are demonstrative of the Victorian government's record of strengthening anti-vilification protections. It also fulfils our government's commitment to

implementing recommendation 24 of the inquiry into anti-vilification protections in Victoria and the 2021 report from the Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee which recommends a ban on the display of Nazi symbols, and I would really like to acknowledge the leadership of the chair, the member for St Albans, who did such an excellent job, as well as all the committee members from both sides of the house in that inquiry. We often overlook committee work in this place, and it does not get a lot of glory. But the work that our committees do can be so significant and so important, and I would really like to thank and recognise the great work of the Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee for the contribution that they have made to changing Victoria for the better and leading our nation through their great work.

With just a short time to go I will just summarise by saying that while seeking to accelerate the bill's introduction the Andrews government has also ensured that there will be sufficient time to prepare those involved and the broader community for its implementation. This includes providing training and guidance to the Victorian police on exemptions and enforcements, and it also includes developing and implementing an education campaign to strengthen community awareness of the swastika's importance to the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain faith communities and the religious and cultural connections that they have. This is significant legislation, and it is essential that it is implemented both efficiently and effectively. The horrors of the Holocaust must never be forgotten, and the acts of Hitler and the Nazi regime must never be glorified. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr BRAYNE (Nepean) (17:14): I also rise today to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, joining many other members who have spoken on this bill. It was particularly powerful to hear from my dear friend the member for Box Hill, whose contribution is so important given his family's history, and the member for Caulfield also gave a really powerful contribution.

The Victorian government is committed to ensuring and protecting the rights of all Victorians to be free from racism, vilification and hatred. The best way to protect the rights of all Victorians is to ensure everyone feels welcome and accepted. Victoria is home to one of the most multicultural societies in the world, and it is from this diversity that we get our strength. We are a harmonious state and we are a harmonious country, but we must be consistently vigilant around people who seek to destroy this. It is the promise of our state that we welcome people of all backgrounds with open arms and give them the chance of a better life. For years people around the world have made Victoria and Australia their home. They have brought with them their hopes and dreams, their religions and cultures and their own personal stories. I know that everyone here today represents communities that are made up of people from many backgrounds.

We all understand how diversity brings us together and enriches our communities. However, we do know that many people in Australia still suffer from the scourge of racism, vilification and hatred, and despite the progress we have made towards reducing racial discrimination in Victoria, we know that there is still more to do. We know that the harm caused by hate conduct and vilification can be profound and long lasting. It can affect people's physical and psychological wellbeing and prevent them from feeling safe and welcomed in our communities.

Unfortunately we have seen a number of recent incidents where the public display of Nazi symbols has been used to intimidate our culturally diverse communities and spread a message of hate and intolerance. It was so incredibly disappointing to see this take place last year. When this ban was first announced a Nazi symbol was painted near the local shops in Rye. This was so disgusting, and I know that my community were shocked and appalled by this gross act. That is not who we are on the Mornington Peninsula. It is why it is so important that this ban goes ahead and that we make it clear, whether it is in Rye or anywhere else in Victoria, that we will not tolerate racism and discrimination.

As we all know, displaying symbols associated with Nazi and Neo-Nazi ideology is harmful and offensive to all members of our society. However, it is particularly harmful and offensive to our Jewish community, many of whom still carry the generational weight of the Holocaust on their backs. Many

have friends and family who endured the heinous crimes committed by the Nazis. Some who survived the horrors of this period are still telling their story today. For our Jewish community the Nazi symbol is more than just a symbol; it is a reminder of the danger that hate and discrimination pose to our society. I know that every Victorian stands with the Jewish community, who have for too long been subject to shameful discrimination.

The Nazi symbol has been used as a symbol of hate to cause many groups harm and to send a message that they are not welcome. Let us be clear: this type of harm is completely unacceptable in our society, which is proudly multicultural and multifaith. And more than anything, everyone, no matter their background, is welcome here. No racist and discriminatory people or symbols will ever change that. That is why it is so important that we stamp out the unjust use of the Nazi symbol to send a message to anyone who would try to do harm to fellow Victorians that it is them and their harmful views that are not welcome here. As I said, it is our diversity that gives us strength, and the racism, vilification and hatred communicated by Nazi symbols and Nazi ideology have no place in Victoria.

That is why this government is proud to deliver this bill, which will make Victoria the first Australian state or territory to ban the public display of the Nazi symbol. This follows the government's announcement in 2020 that all government secondary school students in years 9 and 10 will be taught about the Holocaust to tackle rising antisemitism, racism and prejudice in our schools and broader society but also to educate and give a deeper understanding of one of the most horrific periods in history. In year 9 I took a class called 'History: the Holocaust', a non-compulsory subject which left me feeling horrified throughout the term as it was being taught. Having no understanding of this period prior to the class, I remember feeling absolutely shocked. How could this have happened? My teacher, Mr Vaughan, gave a hugely detailed and complete analysis of the steps leading up to the Holocaust, the period itself and the deep pain and suffering that continues to this day. My class were also taken up to Elsternwick to visit the Holocaust museum, a rich resource in Melbourne for education on the Holocaust, a visit I still remember today. I read on its website just before that currently the museum is undergoing renovation and will be reopening this year. Visiting this institute when reopened is critical for students who are studying and seeking to gain a greater and more personal understanding of this horrific time. Seeing the faces, clothing and shoes of those whose lives were lost just does not leave you. That is why teaching about the Holocaust to our year 9 and 10 students forms such a strong component of keeping the memory alive of those whose lives were lost, and I consider myself fortunate to have been given such a comprehensive education about it in year 9.

With such an education, no other conclusion can be reached than that the public display of the Nazi symbol has no place in Victoria. However, this bill also recognises the significance of the swastika for the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and other faith communities. This symbol has historical and cultural significance for these communities, with the symbol conveying peace and good fortune rather than hate and fear. Despite the importance of this symbol to many in our multifaith communities, there are some Victorians who, through no fault of their own, are not aware of this distinction. As such, the ban will be supported by a community education campaign to raise awareness of the origins of the religious and cultural symbol, its importance to the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities and its distinction from the Nazi hate symbol, because while it is important that we stamp out the racism, vilification and hatred associated with the Nazi symbol, it is also important that we protect the cultural and historical significance of the swastika for our multifaith communities.

This government is committed to reducing racism and discrimination in Victoria. That is why this government has got to work on developing Victoria's anti-racism strategy and established the Anti-Racism Taskforce. That is why this government is listening to the recommendations of the Legal and Social Issues Committee's inquiry into anti-vilification protections in Victoria, which found that vilification is still common for many Victorians. As such, this bill fulfils this government's commitment to implementing recommendation 24 of this committee's report, which includes the banning of Nazi symbols in public places.

This bill also forms part of the government's broader commitment to introducing reforms that will strengthen anti-vilification protections in Victoria. This bill will create an offence in the Summary Offences Act 1966 which prohibits a person from intentionally displaying a Nazi symbol in a public place if the person knows or reasonably ought to know that the Nazi symbol is a symbol associated with Nazi ideology. Once it is in effect, anyone who intentionally displays the Nazi symbol in public faces penalties of up to almost \$22 000, 12 months imprisonment or both.

This bill does ensure that the swastika can continue to be used in appropriate circumstances. This includes genuine religious or cultural use, in particular the use of the swastika by Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities. This exception also includes the use of the swastika for academic, educational, artistic or scientific purposes when published in a report, when used in opposition to fascism or Nazism or when used for law enforcement and the administration of justice.

As I said, protecting the religious and cultural use of the swastika remains a priority of this bill. That is why exceptions to the offence will be supported by a community education campaign to raise awareness of the religious and cultural swastika—because it is important that we recognise that despite its bastardisation by the Nazis the swastika is still an important symbol for many in our multifaith communities. This bill was drafted with significant input from faith groups about the swastika's widespread use, including on places of worship, clothing, art, architecture and cars and in shopfronts. That is why the opening statement of this bill details the use of the swastika in the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities. This provides vital context as to how this offence will be applied and makes clear the swastika should never fall within the scope of the offence.

Make no mistake, banning public displays of the Nazi symbol is another important step towards reducing racism and discrimination in Victoria, because people should not be able to spread hate and fear towards our culturally diverse communities and get away with it. That is not what Victoria stands for nor what Victoria will allow going forward. By banning the public display of the Nazi symbol, this government is fulfilling its commitment to the Victorian people—that all Victorians have the right to be free from racism, vilification and hatred.

An amendment to this bill will be made to ensure that the bill will be operational for six months after its introduction, as opposed to the previously designated 12 months. This is a good move. I am proud to support this bill. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr TAK (Clarinda) (17:24): I am very proud to rise today to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022, a historic bill, one that creates a criminal offence to prohibit the display of Nazi symbols in Victoria. I am very humbled also to join the member for Nepean and the member for Box Hill, who made a very powerful and insightful contribution on this bill. As we heard, this is a national first. Victoria will become the first Australian state or territory to ban the public display of the Nazi symbol in recognition of its role in inciting antisemitism and hate. The Nazi symbol has no place in Victoria when it is being used as a symbol of hate.

Victoria is a multicultural success story, and I am proud to be here as one of those stories. The Clarinda electorate is a shining example of this, with more than half of our residents born overseas or with a parent born overseas. We encompass people from all walks of life. People from all over the world have chosen to make their home in the south-east of Melbourne. We are extremely lucky, because with them come their experience, their heritage and their cultures. It brings new ideas and also new opportunities, and we are so much richer for this. We have all worked so hard to build an inclusive, cohesive community, one that celebrates diversity, fosters integration and promotes harmony. Our values are always on show: freedom, fairness, equality and respect. These values are proudly on display each and every day on the streets of the south-east and across Victoria, and a Nazi symbol used to incite hate or division could not be any further from this value. So I am extremely proud to see this bill here today.

Specifically the bill creates an offence in the Summary Offences Act 1966 which prohibits a person from intentionally displaying a Nazi symbol in a public place or in sight of a person in a public place if the person knows or reasonably ought to know that the Nazi symbol is a symbol associated with Nazi ideology. Also included are symbols that so nearly resemble the Hakenkreuz that the symbol is likely to be confused or mistaken for it. The offence comes with a strong penalty—which previous contributors from both sides have already mentioned—which sends a very strong message. Anyone who intentionally displays a Nazi symbol in public could face a penalty of up to almost \$22 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both. This is a strong message that Nazi symbols and Neo-Nazi ideology have no place in Victoria.

The bill includes a range of exceptions to the offence where the display was engaged in reasonably and in good faith for a genuine academic, artistic, religious or scientific purpose; for a genuine cultural or educational purpose; in making or publishing a fair and accurate report of any event or matter of public interest; or in opposition to Nazism, Neo-Nazism or other related ideologies.

Just on this point, the bill makes reference to the religious origins of the symbol. In fact it includes an opening statement co-designed with leaders of the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Jewish communities which provides vital context to the application of the offence. The statement goes on to mention that the distorted version of the symbol is also known as the Hakenkreuz, meaning a twisted or hooked cross in German. The symbol became a symbol of the Third Reich, under which heinous crimes were perpetrated against humanity, particularly the Jewish people.

As mentioned before, it was very humbling to hear the fine contributions from our good friend the member for Box Hill and also the member for Caulfield. So it is a very powerful statement and one that deserves repeating: it is an ideology fundamentally incompatible with Victoria's multicultural, multifaith, multiethnic and democratic society. We have many proud religious organisations in Clarinda, and I am glad to see extensive consultation was undertaken with these groups. These consultations occurred from November 2021 to March 2022. Seven in-depth meetings were held with faith leaders from the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Jewish communities, which sought feedback on key aspects of the offence. Further, a discussion paper was distributed to 150 stakeholders, and feedback was received through written submissions and meetings. Stakeholders included Victoria Police, Victoria Legal Aid, the Law Institute of Victoria, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, the Victorian Multicultural Commission, Aboriginal communities and the Department of Education and Training.

So this is an extensive process, and in fact these changes are part of the broader process under the Legal and Social Issues Committee's inquiry into anti-vilification protections in Victoria. Acting Speaker Suleyman, it is good to see you in the chair in this chamber as the chair of the Legal and Social Issues Committee, and I am also very proud to be part of that committee. I thank you and all the members and all the secretariat and staff for their work on another important inquiry. The committee was tasked to investigate how Victoria's anti-vilification laws are working. We received 62 written submissions and 11 supplementary submissions and held seven days of public hearings. Subsequently the report was released in early March this year with 36 recommendations, which included a ban on Nazi symbols. Specifically, recommendation 24 provides:

... the Victorian Government establish a criminal offence that prohibits the display of symbols of Nazi ideology ... with considered exceptions to the prohibition.

There are a range of submissions and considerations highlighted in chapter 7 of the committee report regarding the public display offence. One of those considerations is that the offence be accompanied by powers for Victoria Police to direct a person to remove a Nazi symbol from public display, as well as the requirement for the written consent of Director of Public Prosecutions before the commencement of a prosecution of a child for the offence. Both of those elements have been included in this bill. There is also a provision for police to apply to the Magistrates Court for a warrant to enter a premises to search for and seize a Nazi symbol.

Lastly, the government has agreed to monitor the use of hate symbols in response to recommendation 25 of the anti-vilification inquiry and may consider the inclusion of additional symbols, such as the SS symbol, at a later stage. This is very positive, as these symbols too are a representation of hate, genocide and trauma for many people in Victoria and around the world. I commend the Attorney-General and the Andrews Labor government for taking this step—a national first—and for leading the way towards a more inclusive, fairer and more equal Australia. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms HALL (Footscray) (17:33): I am very proud today to rise and speak in support of this bill, and what a significant and important step we are taking today. As a society we have an obligation to be upstanders, not bystanders, to educate and to respond to hateful ideology. To learn the lessons of history and all of its horror, we have to look it in the eye and call it out, and of course the Holocaust—this awful crime against humanity, this pure evil, this atrocity—must never be forgotten. We must continue to act to ensure the seeds of hatred cannot be watered. We are a proudly diverse multicultural and multifaith society. Our diversity in Victoria is our strength. I would like to acknowledge the work of your committee, Acting Speaker Suleyman, the Legal and Social Issues Committee, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Attorney-General and the contributions from the member for Box Hill and the member for Caulfield in this debate.

As a university student I studied the Holocaust and Jewish history at Monash University, and I had the opportunity to learn and study at the Holocaust museum in Elsternwick. Sadly, many of our Holocaust survivors are no longer with us, and at the time of my studies, 20 years ago, I know many children of survivors and students of the Holocaust were undertaking important work to carry the torch in terms of education and awareness from their parents, who had given so much. I would like to acknowledge our community of Holocaust survivors and the work of our Holocaust museum here in Melbourne and in particular their work to document survivor histories. I encourage everyone to look at the vast collection of resources they have on their website.

During my research at university I had the opportunity to meet with a number of survivors and hear their stories, and one in particular, that of a woman called Kitty, has stayed with me. She spoke to me about her arrival at Auschwitz when she was 16 years old, going through those terrible gates, in a line waiting to go through the gates, and she told me that she could not work out whether it was night or day and that it felt like there was a quite pretty sunset over Auschwitz. She made that comment to someone else in the line who said to her, 'No, you're going to go through these gates and that's where we come out'. It was the change in the sky from the gas chambers. She encouraged me to continue my studies and to continue my research and to learn more.

At the time I had become fascinated about the Jewish heritage in my mother's family, and so I did continue to learn. I travelled to Auschwitz in Poland, and I also visited Oskar Schindler's factory in Kraków nearby. I will always be grateful to the security guard who let me go into the factory and go into Oskar Schindler's office and have a look around. In Munich I went to Dachau, and in Prague I visited the Pinkas Synagogue—I went there on a number of occasions—where the drawings of children from the Terezin ghetto tell a harrowing story of the hope, fright and fear of Jewish children, who were encouraged by people in the ghetto to draw their feelings. That collection in the synagogue is an absolutely shocking thing to see but a very important thing to see as well. I also visited the Anne Frank House, like so many thousands of other people every year, and tried to imagine her fear and her hopes as a young woman hiding in that house in Amsterdam.

So in making a contribution to this bill I think about the upstanders. Just last week in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs I had the honour of visiting the Ark Centre and seeing the Courage to Care program, now in its 30th anniversary year. I had the great honour of meeting with a Holocaust survivor, Ken, who is of course all the more significant to me because he is the father of the member for Box Hill. Ken was there speaking with school students about his experience, and raising awareness and understanding is a core element of the work that the Ark Centre do.

Over the past few years we have seen a number of high-profile and sickening Neo-Nazi incidents in our state. This includes the flying of the Nazi flag and Neo-Nazi meetings in the Grampians. These behaviours are offensive and unacceptable to public decency in any modern society. The Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 contains criminal offences for serious racial and religious vilification, but the anti-vilification inquiry heard from many stakeholders that these offences are currently too complex and set too high a bar for successful investigation and prosecution of vilification incidents. As such, only the most serious incidents could be found to be in breach of the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act.

This bill responds to a gap in the law and the findings of the committee inquiry. One important feature of the bill is that it refers to Nazi symbols, specifically the Hakenkreuz. That is because the swastika has a long and continued importance to Buddhist, Hindu and Jain communities in particular, and I am pleased to note that leaders from each of these groups, in addition to Jewish representatives, co-designed the preamble to this bill, which acknowledges and contextualises the difference between the Hakenkreuz and the swastika. Faith communities with legitimate and non-hateful associations with the swastika will not be penalised or included in these amendments, and to ensure this was the case targeted consultation was undertaken with 150 stakeholders between December 2021 and February 2022.

This bill is a sensible and measured response, as a starting point, to ban a globally recognised hate symbol. I am also pleased that the Andrews Labor government will be monitoring the use of hate symbols in response to recommendation 25 of the anti-vilification inquiry and may consider the inclusion of other symbols, such as the SS symbol, at a later stage. Hateful ideologies and symbols have no place in a society that values inclusion and equality, as Victoria does. This is the paradox of tolerance: a society with unfettered tolerance will eventually be exploited by the intolerant. As the recent high-profile Hakenkreuz displays, vandalism and Neo-Nazi gatherings have shown, this is not some abstract or unrealistic concern.

This bill also includes symbols that so closely resemble a prohibited symbol that those symbols are likely to be confused with or mistaken for that symbol. This will ensure that groups and individuals cannot make minor aesthetic alterations to avoid prosecution, particularly when their intention is to promote Nazi ideology. Current legislation sets a high and complex bar for successful investigation and prosecution of vilification incidents. Keeping a clear and consistent definition of public places is essential to the enforcement of this bill.

I have many notes and could have made a longer contribution, but I am very pleased, particularly given my work with the Anti-Racism Taskforce, that today we are making this important step as a Parliament and that it has bipartisan support. I wish it a speedy passage.

Ms THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (17:43): I would like to begin my contribution today with a story. It is a true story, a story about my father-in-law. His name was Joel Margolis, and he was born in 1920 in Białystok, Poland. Joel was 19 years old when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. He was living in Warsaw with his mother, Anja, father, Myrim, and younger brother, George. They were Jewish. The fear of German aggression had been steadily growing over the preceding years as Joel finished his final years of high school and was preparing to enter university, but on 1 September 1939 those fears became a reality. Things changed very quickly in the days and weeks that followed. The Polish military were unprepared for the speed and force of the German advance. On the first day of the invasion the German air force bombed civilian targets, a deliberate attempt to terrorise and frighten the Polish people buttressed by a relentless propaganda campaign to convince Germans that Jewish people were less than human.

In the terrifying frenzy of that first week Joel and his family scrambled for survival. Warsaw had undergone heavy bombardment since the first hours of the war, and the German forces were closing in fast. They knew they had to get out. They had managed to meet some Russians in Warsaw who had a truck. The problem was that no-one had any fuel; it had all been sequestered by the Polish army for the war effort. This is where Joel's now famous ingenuity came in. The family owned a tannery where

Joel worked part time making leather products. Joel's early interest in science meant he knew which solvents from the tannery to mix together to make just enough fuel for the truck. They piled in—Joel, his father and mother, his brother, his uncle Munya and aunty Nadja, their baby, Joan, and the Russians—and they drove north.

My husband tells me about some chilling close calls along the way, like when a Russian battalion stopped the car and interrogated them but ultimately let them pass, or when his father overheard the Russians deliberating on whether they should just abandon the family—or worse—to save themselves. Eventually through luck or fate or circumstance they made it across to Lithuania and Latvia, ultimately taking a plane to Sweden, going onto the UK and finally boarding a ship, the *SS Orontes*, to Australia. When Joel arrived in Fremantle he kissed the ground in thanks for having left troubled Europe behind. The family settled in Melbourne, where they set up a tannery and began making boots for our soldiers.

Joel read physiology and medical textbooks in his spare time and, after going in for an interview, was accepted on the spot to study medicine at Melbourne University. Joel Margolis went on to become an exceptional researcher in medical science, developing key methods to improve the efficacy of blood transfusions for haemophiliacs, which dramatically improved the prognosis for these patients. His methods are now used around the world. He published over 60 medical and scientific papers and founded one of the country's first biotech companies. Joel's love of science and pursuit of knowledge never left him. He knew six languages and was an extraordinary musician, and even when a stroke in his final years left him unable to speak, he could still be found consuming books on quantum physics. Sadly, I did not get a chance to meet this gentle, thoughtful, humble and inquisitive man who escaped the Nazis and made such a remarkable contribution to modern science and medicine. He died less than a year before I met my husband, and for those doing the maths, Joel was 63 and his wife, Margo, was 39 when my husband was born—so it is safe to say that Joel also had some charm. Looking at pictures of my father-in-law I can see a clear resemblance to my own daughters, and I know that his story will always be a part of theirs.

For every story like Joel's there are so many who were not given the chance to live and love and contribute as he did. We have heard some of them today. The Holocaust saw the Nazis and their collaborators systematically murder around 6 million Jews across Europe, around two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population. Many of Joel's uncles, aunts and cousins did not make it, and we only know fragments of their stories. Generations later, regardless of whether we have personal stories or not, the weight of that atrocity has never left us. It bears down on humanity as a constant reminder of the harm that humans are capable of inflicting on one another—genocide, the end product of hate that is so deep that it cannot even see another as human. When we see the Nazi symbol brandished in revelry at this hatred and these crimes, it is not just an innocuous symbol, it is an attack on our very democracy and our freedom.

Frighteningly and disturbingly, we have seen a rise in right-wing extremism in this country. We cannot pretend that it is not happening. Antisemitism, violent extremism, terrorism—these are real threats which ASIO has identified. In recent years this has become more and more organised. Far-right groups have latched onto the pandemic to propel their hateful message and to actively recruit, often targeting vulnerable, disaffected and disenfranchised members of our community. For our Jewish community this is very close to home, and other speakers have outlined some of the horrifying incidents which have occurred right here in Victoria. Increasingly we are also seeing Nazi symbols used to communicate hatred and cause harm to other groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the LGBTIQ community as well as other racial and religious groups. This type of intimidation is completely unacceptable in our society, which is proudly democratic, diverse, multicultural and multifaith. We hold our cultural diversity close to our hearts, and the use of this symbol to erode that is offensive to every single one of us.

This is not a debate about free speech. The bill contains exemptions for the use of the swastika symbol under a range of appropriate settings. We know this symbol is deeply significant to the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain communities, where it signifies peace, prosperity and blessings. These communities

should not have to pay for the past when a sacred sign was twisted to become a representation of hate and bigotry. That is why this bill makes it very clear, particularly in the preamble, that there are specific exemptions for genuine religious or cultural uses of the swastika, and I am pleased to see in this bill a commitment to a community education campaign around that. There are also appropriate exemptions for academic, artistic, scientific and other uses, but the public display of the Nazi symbol to maliciously intimidate our community is not something we can abide.

As I said, this is not about free speech. The Nazi symbol does not propose a different point of view or a different policy position. It is not one side of a debate. The Nazi symbol is an end to all debate. It extinguishes debate. It says, 'You are less than human, and you have no right to exist'. No argument around freedom or agency can stack up against the harm caused by this hateful symbol. Freedom does not mean freedom to oppress, it does not mean freedom to vilify, it does not mean freedom to terrorise. The Nazi symbol and the extremist elements who wield it are corrosive to our democracy, and it has no place in Victoria.

This is an important bill and one which I wholeheartedly support. It is a first for Australia, and we should be proud that here in Victoria we are taking a stand to legislate this ban. Once in effect, anyone who intentionally displays the Nazi symbol in public for malicious reasons faces penalties of up to almost \$22 000, 12 months imprisonment or both. It is a historic moment, a moment in which our government sends a clear message to those who seek to divide, intimidate and harm our peaceful way of life. With this bill we condemn this behaviour and we say, 'You don't get to show off your hatred. You don't get to make others fearful. You don't get to glorify violence and tyranny and genocide, not in this state, not ever'. Let us ban this symbol. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (17:52): It is a bit bittersweet in the context of some of the history behind this, but it is a great honour to rise and a privilege to speak in support of the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. Like I said, it is bittersweet to be able to speak in support of this bill, this bipartisan legislation. However, it is indeed, in the context of history for our Australian Jewish community and the Jewish community the world over, sad that many decades after the atrocities during World War II the issue we are proceeding to debate today clearly has not gone away in terms of the hatred shown towards our Jewish community through the use of this symbol. It is sad that we are here having to do this today, but it is absolutely necessary. It is a powerful statement. It is a statement of solidarity with our Jewish community. It is a statement that our community's expectations and our expectations here as legislators are that this will not be tolerated. So in that context it is a pleasure that I rise to make a contribution on this bill.

It is great to see the level of bipartisanship across this place and across the other place on this critical piece of legislation, and I acknowledge a number of contributions. We heard from the member for Box Hill an extremely powerful contribution. I note that recently on social media he noted that it was a privilege to speak in support of this bill to prohibit the public display of the Hakenkreuz. It was great, whilst I was not in the chamber at the time, to listen to it. Obviously the member for Box Hill talked about how he spoke for his family, for the survivors and of course for 95-year-old Halina here from Box Hill South and her continued fight for justice. But the thing that really took me aback was the 6 million Jews and many others who have never been able to speak, and that for me is extremely powerful and came through in the member for Box Hill's contribution to this Parliament, so I want to thank the member for Box Hill. The member for Northcote spoke so powerfully preceding me. Some of the arguments that have been made by some people—I do not understand it.

I think, member for Northcote, you articulated it well. It has absolutely got nothing to do with free speech. I cannot do justice to how you articulated that, but it is absolutely rubbish, that argument put forward by—and I am grateful for this—a very, very, very select minority. It is not about free speech, and the member for Northcote and others who have shared that sentiment today could not be more right. To the member for Burwood and all members in this place who have made very decent contributions, I thank you all for your contributions on this important legislation, given the context.

This bill creates an offence in the Summary Offences Act 1966 which prohibits a person from intentionally displaying a Nazi symbol in a public space or in sight of a person in a public place if the person knows or reasonably ought to know that the Nazi symbol is associated with Nazi ideology. The bill prohibits only the display of the Hakenkreuz, more widely known as the swastika. Of course it is important to reference it as a Nazi symbol, the Nazi swastika, or a symbol that so nearly resembles the Hakenkreuz that the symbol is likely to be confused or mistaken for it.

This bill, as others have detailed, includes a range of exceptions for the offence where the display is engaged in reasonably and in good faith for a genuine academic, artistic, religious or scientific purpose; for a genuine cultural or educational purpose; in making or publishing a fair and accurate report of any event or matter of public interest; or in opposition to fascism, Nazism, Neo-Nazism or other related ideologies. I know that was important work that the bipartisan committee did on some of the exceptions, and that was something that came up in my community when they were first discussing this.

We know the bill also includes exceptions for the display of the Nazi symbol by means of tattooing or other like processes and for law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The offence is importantly accompanied by powers for Victoria Police to direct a person to remove a Nazi symbol from public display and the ability to apply to the Magistrates Court for a warrant to enter a premises to search and seize a Nazi symbol. Of course it is important to create the offence, but it is equally important to make sure we empower our law enforcement to be able to remove these symbols from public display. Here we are introducing this new summary offence for the public display of the Nazi symbol. The Hakenkreuz as we know is a symbol of hate and causes significant harm to Victorians and particularly to the Jewish community. This landmark reform, the first in the nation, sends a very clear message that the public display of the Nazi symbol has absolutely no place in Victoria.

Again, as I started my contribution, it is 2022, many, many years after the atrocities of World War II and the loss of some 6 million Jewish people during that conflict. I think it is pretty fair to say that an overwhelmingly significant majority of Victorians know that this symbol is disgusting and only serves the purpose of a select few hateful and spiteful people in the community who seek to use this symbol to somehow glorify Nazism and glorify the atrocities that were committed. I am indeed proud that on the opposing side of that are the overwhelming majority of Victorians that stand with the Jewish community, that stand with the community more broadly. In the face of hatred and vile rubbish, in this place we are setting clear expectations that this will absolutely not be tolerated.

This bill as we know will acquit the government's commitment to banning the display of this Nazi symbol as recommended by the Legal and Social Issues Committee's inquiry into anti-vilification protections. I absolutely commend the work of that bipartisan committee, and I want to note that on record. We know in effect that anyone who does intentionally display the Nazi symbol in public will face significant penalties of up to almost \$22 000 or 12 months imprisonment or both.

It is also important to note the amendments which the Minister for Crime Prevention has circulated. The bill was to commence, by default, one year after royal assent. Sadly with the recent increases in the public display of Nazi symbols in our community—indeed the day after the bill was introduced—it is indeed even more important that we hasten this work to protect our Jewish community and stop idiots from plastering these disgusting symbols on fences, light poles, bus stops and even a Jewish community centre in Caulfield. This causes great distress to the Jewish community and to the entire community, and this amendment is appropriate and makes very clear that this behaviour is unacceptable—and it is of course the conduct that this bill is intended to prevent.

We are very proud as a government, as I know all members in this place are, to be responsible for this bill, which will make Victoria the first Australian state or territory to ban the public display of a Nazi symbol, and it is important in doing so that we recognise the role of Nazi symbols in inciting antisemitism and hate. The bill specifically prohibits the public display of the Hakenkreuz, commonly referred to as the Nazi swastika. Importantly this bill also distinguishes and acknowledges the swastika, which has great cultural and religious significance for our Hindu, Buddhist and Jain

communities. I know from some of my interactions with communities, particularly south-east Asian communities, that they have been very pleased to see this important consultation with their communities as well.

This bill also forms part of the government's broader commitment to introduce a suite of reforms to strengthen anti-vilification protections in Victoria. We want to make sure that we protect the rights of all Victorians to be free from racism, vilification and hatred and to ensure everyone feels welcome and accepted, and we know indeed the harm caused by hate conduct and vilification can be profound. It can affect the physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals and often prevents them from feeling comfortable and participating in their communities. I will simply say: imagine being confronted with this rubbish given the history, the atrocities committed on the Jewish people. I am very proud that we are here today banning this symbol. We are criminalising it and making sure there is a clear message that it is not tolerated.

Ms RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (18:02): I consider it an extraordinary honour to speak today on this bill, the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. This bill prohibits and introduces a summary offence for the intentional public display of the Nazi symbol, specifically the Hakenkreuz. I pay credit to the extraordinary contributions we have been honoured to hear from both sides of the chamber today. Like most people I would like to pay credit to the member for Box Hill for bringing us all to the place we need to be, which is to centre ourselves around people who have experienced the most horrendous atrocities and the survivors who are—some of whom we have had here today—living amongst us and the families of survivors. I would also like to pay credit to the extraordinary contribution of the member for Northcote and also thank the member for Caulfield, the member for Brighton and others for making our contributions here today a real reflection of the best of us and what happens when we join together to call out hate.

This bill is an affirmation that this symbol of hate has no place in Victoria, but it also recognises the great harm that is caused to Victorians, especially those in the Jewish community, when this awful, atrocious symbol is used as a way of intimidating or just being a participant in hate. As has been beautifully articulated across this chamber, it is absolutely imperative for the Shoah and the horror and the atrocities of the Shoah to be embedded in our consciousness, our understanding and our curriculum. I have had two students in today from St Peter's College in Cranbourne, and I was asking them for their reflections on what they saw today. In fact this debate shows what can happen when the Parliament joins together to call out hate and to acknowledge the effect it has on people, and so I do want to also pay credit to Vasu and Lucksy for inspiring me with their deep understanding of the Holocaust and the Shoah. They demonstrated to me the future and the opportunity for us to see in our young people that there is a deep understanding, an acknowledgement, of that incredibly important part of our collective history and why, when we act together, we can give people hope that they can go about their lives without having to experience the sort of hate that that awful symbol demonstrates.

Like many people who have travelled to Europe, I was struck by a monument that lives amongst the European cities. There are 70 000 stumbling blocks—the German word is 'Stolpersteine'—and they are a chilling reminder of past atrocities. Over 70 000 of these stumbling blocks are placed at the front of homes where Holocaust survivors last lived freely. And once you have seen one, you will see many of them. They are a really important reminder of the lives people lived and the way that people experienced joy. I have got a quote here from a person who saw a home—a young person who was deported at age four from a house—and he pointed to a house and said, 'That was our house'. That idea of a remembrance of the homes where people lived freely and the people who lived in them has generated a groundswell of these important monuments. You would literally stumble across them everywhere in Europe. They are a 10-centimetre square embedded underfoot, and they are a really important reminder wherever we go—inside the cobblestones—of the joy that people had before being taken away by the horror of those who ascribed to the Nazi philosophy.

The swastika, by contrast, is of great cultural and religious significance to the Hindu community, the Buddhist community and the Jain community and should be known for its meaning of peace, good

fortune and hope—in fact as the opposite of that horrendous object of hate that has been used by people who do ascribe to the far-right Nazi philosophies. The use of a swastika by the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist communities is exemplified by the preamble of this bill, and the approach acknowledges and distinguishes between a swastika as a symbol important to these communities and the Hakenkreuz as a symbol of hate.

I would like to acknowledge particularly some of the communities in Cranbourne and some of the schools in Cranbourne who have worked so hard in acknowledging the Holocaust. I would like to celebrate and pay credit to Alkira Secondary College and the close working relationship they have with Mount Scopus. It is a partnership between a school in Cranbourne and a school in Burwood, and as part of that partnership, each year they have a really important and reverential memorial service in which they invite Holocaust survivors or descendants of Holocaust survivors to talk about the importance of the Shoah and to talk about the importance of understanding what that type of racial vilification can lead to. And to hear the young students I had here today and the students of Alkira and the depth of their understanding of the consequences of the Holocaust is something that gives me great hope for the future and something that is absolutely captured very clearly in this chamber here and across the Parliament and in the work that the government is undertaking.

The member for Tarneit did acknowledge the Cranbourne golf course and an awful incident at the Cranbourne golf course a couple of years ago where there was some antisemitic graffiti. I choose to also particularly acknowledge the way that the community came together after hearing about and learning of this horrendous graffiti. This was particularly important because the Cranbourne golf course is a club that was set up in response to the historic antisemitic behaviour of some of the golf clubs, so it is a golf course that has been important to the Jewish community. When other faith leaders in Cranbourne—and specifically we had a Christian leader, a Muslim leader, a member of the Sikh faith and others—came together and made a statement of solidarity, that elevated the faith communities and their joint commitment to calling out Nazis and calling out any antisemitic behaviour, condemning it in the strongest possible way and doing it at speed immediately. It was a moment where I felt the optimism, again, of a community who can come together and call out the pain and suffering the use of that symbol does generate.

Like many here, I have visited the Holocaust museum, and I keep with me in my office a photo of the survivor that we met that day to remind us all the time of that important mantra to never forget. I feel grateful to have had a survivor here with us today as well, as so powerfully acknowledged by the member for Burwood. This is a really important bill. The consultation has been fulsome. The Hindu Council of Australia have come out with really strong statements as well, recognising and supporting this legislation—they support it in the context of their own use of a symbol of peace, and they recognise that that symbol of peace is not captured in this legislation. I commend this bill. I thank the many contributors, and I wish it a speedy passage.

Ms WARD (Eltham) (18:12): Like the member for Cranbourne, I also rise in support of this bill, and what a great contribution it was by her. I am so grateful to follow on from so many of my Labor colleagues, who have stood in this place in support of this bill. I do not want Nazis in my state. I do not want them in my country. In fact I do not want them anywhere in the world. Their hate, their anger, their violence, their prejudice, their ignorance, their evil does not deserve to be heard. It needs to be banished. It needs to be reviled. Used in this way it is a symbol we should never have to see. What the Nazis did across Europe is a horror beyond nightmares. To think that humans can be so evil, can cause so much harm to others, is something we must never forget, and the dominant symbol of the violent Nazi fascists must never be given the opportunity to be displayed to demonstrate hate, violence, division and death.

We cannot allow this symbol to spread, to be in our community attempting to gain power. We have seen with a number of the protests against health protection measures during COVID-19 that there has been a rise in the use of Nazi symbols. Dr Dvir Abramovich, the chair of the Anti-Defamation Commission, says that white supremacists are dreaming of an impending race war and Neo-Nazis are

using the protests to spread their ideology. Dr Abramovich added the more often the imagery is used, the more normalised it becomes, and that was the goal used by white supremacists to build support in Australian society. We do not want this symbol, when used for hate, to be normalised.

Here is a Melbourne story from less than two months ago. A family who had survived the Holocaust are on a helicopter ride. They are having a great time. They look down as a sports field comes into view. What they see is a Hakenkreuz burned into the grass. This is not a lark. This is not graffiti. It is not kids mucking around. It is a symbol of hate, it is a symbol of oppression and it is a symbol of violence. It is a symbol of death. When told of this hatred branded into the grass, Yarra Valley council said that actions such as these were becoming more frequent in the area—and again, this was less than two months ago. I have had contact from members of my own community concerned at seeing the Hakenkreuz scrawled in public areas. We know what it means. It is an attempt to intimidate, a cowardly way to try and gain power from fear and from hate. Only cowards use this symbol in this way, and we will not cower before them. We will not cower before it as its proponents want; instead we stand up to it and we stamp it out.

We know the horror of the Holocaust. Such evil is so hard to imagine, to fathom, but we do. We do because of the bravery of those who have told their stories, those who have wanted to make sure that such horrors would never, could never, happen again. This is why we want to make it a criminal act to display this symbol of hate, this symbol of violence, this symbol of death. In Germany this symbol of suppression, fear and violence was banned after World War II.

A few years ago I had the privilege of visiting Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The enormity of the actions of the Nazis is overwhelming—the names, the endless list of names, of people violently destroyed because of their identity; the photos, the suitcases, the clothing; the relics of those who are gone, who went through shocking horrors; the violence, the starvation, the cruelty, the misery, the rapes. We have to stand up to hatred and we have to stand up to cruelty. This government has been consistent in so doing, and this is what we do with this amendment.

I ask: what is white pride? What on earth is it? What does it mean? Why does pride mean the violent denigration of others? To use this symbol to make yourself feel proud of who you are is unfathomable to me. I do not understand why people cannot be proud of themselves unless they cause hurt and create violence against other people. The member for Shepparton in her important contribution to this debate spoke of feeling anxious for Jewish members of her extended family. We cannot live like this. People cannot be afraid to exist or their loved ones to be afraid for them because of their identity. We must stand up to hate and we must stand up to violence.

I also thank my friend the member for Box Hill for telling his story in support of this amendment. As a proud Melburnian—my family arrived here in the late 1840s—it moves me to know that outside of Israel we have the largest per capita concentration of Holocaust survivors in the world. Holocaust survivors call our city their home, including the family of the member for Box Hill, and it must remain their home. They deserve for their home to be safe, and we must do all that we can to make sure that it is indeed safe. No-one should be confronted with this symbol of horror, of cowardice, in their daily life. They know what it means. It is purely there to intimidate and to instil fear and to remind people of what the Nazis did—the horror and trauma they inflicted upon millions upon millions of people. Not in a respectful way, not in a way to commemorate, its purpose is to celebrate this pain, this evil. We need to stand in the shoes of others and understand their pain to legislate, to criminalise the display of this symbol when its only message is hate and violence.

In my past I had an American-Israeli boyfriend who told me the story of his dad who was Polish. With his family he had been on a train to be transported to a death camp. At one point of the journey the train stopped, and his mother was able to pull open the door and shove him out. He ran and somehow found his way to France. His family perished. No-one can escape this institutional trauma. Children and grandchildren—they all wear the psychological scars of what happened at the hands of the Nazis.

While the former member for Kooyong is a different colour from me—he is blue and I am red—I am appalled that the Hakenkreuz symbol found its way onto some of his signage during the recent federal campaign. While we all get moustaches, blacked-out teeth or glasses, to put this symbol on any political sign, let alone that of a Jewish candidate, is disgusting and outrageous. We have to put a stop to it. We cannot confuse the Hakenkreuz symbol of hate with the swastika of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains—‘swastika’ being an ancient Sanskrit word meaning ‘wellbeing’. Pre World War II it became such a positive symbol it was used by businesses such as Coca-Cola and indeed the US military during World War I. I thank those religious communities who have worked with the government on this legislation, helping to ensure that the use of the swastika as a symbol for love can continue, but that when it comes to hate, it has no place in this state.

I am so glad that this government has stood up, has allowed the voices of those who have been hurt by this terribly evil symbol of the Hakenkreuz to be taken away, to be criminalised, when it is used in this way—for sowing hate, sowing violence and sowing division. It does need to be criminalised. It needs to be stopped, and they need to be held to account. These cowards who use this symbol—these cowards who scrawl this symbol in the darkness of night, hidden away so that they can try and impart messages of fear and of hate—need to be held to account. For them to have to stand up in the community and be held accountable for their action of hatred is very important, and I am glad that this government, the government that I represent, has stepped up to make sure that this is indeed the case—that these people will be held to account for the hatred that they try to sow, for the racism that they try to sow, for the divisiveness that they try to sow and for the evil that they try to sow. It needs to be exposed, it needs to be held up to scrutiny. They need to be found accountable, and they need to be found wanting. I am very glad and very proud to support this legislation.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (18:21): I rise to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022 and follow a long line of contributors who have spoken so passionately and eloquently about this important legislation, what it means across communities and what it says for us as a triumphant democracy in an uncertain world. The contributions of the member for Caulfield, the member for Box Hill and the member for Burwood were truly extraordinary and the best parts of our parliamentary multi-partisanship and how we work together on pieces of legislation. To the Legal and Social Issues Committee, led by the member for St Albans: outstanding work. This is a testament to the Parliament and the work that can be done by committees across all parties.

It is an interesting time to reflect, to think of such atrocities that were inflicted in living memory, some of the darkest times of humanity and more than 6 million people that perished in Jewish communities across the world, with horrific consequences. And to think in a modern democracy like Australia that we need legislation like this is troubling. It is concerning where we find extremism, symbols of hatred, particularly Nazi symbols of hatred and the malice that they are attached to. I remember the early days of working for the federal member for Isaacs, Mark Dreyfus, who had family perish in the Holocaust, and at the time I was working for him, in 2012, we had a Nazi symbol flag flown at a household in Carrum. This was probably one of the strangest interactions and probably where I learned quite a bit about this as a symbol of hatred. At that time Mark Dreyfus was on the record as saying:

These symbols offend the thousands of Australian men and women who served during World War II and Australia’s Jewish community. These are symbols of the most evil regime of the 20th century. The flag maker should find other ways to attract attention ...

The member for Caulfield was quoted as well at that time, a decade ago, saying that people should vote with their feet and not purchase these products from this business—that it was a blatant disregard for the enormous community of Holocaust survivors.

It is amazing that, a decade on, now we have the mechanisms to deal with such behaviours, and while that was probably attention seeking at that time, anyone attached to that image, whether that is wilful or ignorant or provocative, is endorsing a symbol of great hatred. When we see that kind of action now, as it is flown and used as a mechanism for fear particularly towards Jewish Australians, we need to call it out, and we need strong legislative action. We see people nowadays who just recently were

commemorating some of the architects of that horror and recognising them. We need to stamp that out in our community. It is nothing to do with freedom of speech, it is hate speech. It is provocation, and it is an absolute atrocity to Holocaust survivors across our communities.

I had an incredible opportunity to join with the Parkdale Secondary College community a few years ago and a Holocaust survivor by the name of Edith Gluck, who has been recognised before in the *Guardian* and who was so wonderful, humble and kind to the students at Parkdale Secondary College. It is really important that we educate our generations about such atrocities and hatred and the inhumanity that occurred only in living memory for many people still in our community and only a couple of branches of generations before—that where we dehumanise and devalue people it can have horrendous consequences in the darkest parts of our communities. So to join with Edith at that time was a truly humbling experience. To light a candle with Edith and then to hear her reflections and hear her story of how she lost family and how she somehow survived, met another Holocaust survivor and went on to find a life in the 1950s in Australia was extraordinary and left an incredible mark on our community and that event.

I just thought, how do you sum up in words the message that she delivered to students at that time? Her words were quite simple. In five words she said: be kind to one another. And I thought, for all that grief and all that trauma—that generational trauma—to have that as a contribution to leave with our communities was really telling. It was an example of the resilience of so many in the Jewish community—those that suffered the generational suffering that has occurred—and the need to always reflect and remember. If anyone is on Twitter and wants to really reflect on that, I would highly recommend they follow the Auschwitz memorial Twitter page. It is a daily reminder of the stories of those that perished. Each and every day families, communities and individuals display their photos and who they were. We never forget and we always remember the families and the generations that never got to fulfil their ambitions or hopes and dreams through the most horrific dehumanisation of people in the modern world. We always have to be vigilant.

There is symbolism as well in this bill about making sure that Nazi symbols of hate—the intention around malice and the intention around fear—and those atrocities are always denounced and that free democracies and inclusive communities and multicultural societies like Victoria and Australia always challenge that whenever it rears its ugly head. That is this opportunity right now with this bill. It is an important reminder of the work that has been done to get to this point and what we strive to live up to across the world as an example of a modern and inclusive and harmonious democracy with over 6.5 million people born somewhere else. That is the truest example of a multicultural and inclusive society—that we make sure that we are respectful and kind to one another.

I know there is some commentary around this symbol as it is intended in other communities, particularly in other faith communities, but I think the key element to that is intent. It is quite easy to disaggregate the use of this particular symbol in its own place as opposed to malicious intent, fear and aggression. I think that is quite an easy delineation to make. We see it being weaponised in communities at the moment to spread fear and aggression.

Really, it is humbling to be in the Parliament to make sure that this is a historic moment where we denounce hate and we denounce symbols of atrocities and of previous wars as well and that that symbol will forever be buried and cast aside for generations to come. But we must always be vigilant as a nation, as a society as well, about the elements of that dehumanisation of people at that time and how quickly it spread across Europe and how it had the most horrific consequences—over 6 million people perished in the Jewish community, but in the world war, over 76 million people perished—and the toll that it had and the hatred that spread. So thank you to all the members that have contributed. On behalf of my local community, I thank the minister. I thank members for the multipartisanship that has been shown and the moving and thoughtful contributions that have been made, and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional Development) (18:30):
I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

AGRICULTURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendment considered:

Clause 189, omit this clause.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional Development) (18:31):
I move:

That the amendment be agreed to.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to this government amendment to the Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, relating to the Veterinary Practice Act 1997, and take this opportunity to urge all members of this place to support the amendment. The Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill makes amendments to 11 acts within the agriculture portfolio to improve efficiency, operation, administration and enforcement. The Andrews Labor government, as the house well knows, has a strong record of supporting Victoria's farmers, and this bill is designed to support our state's \$17.8 billion agriculture sector and the tens of thousands of Victorians that it employs.

The bill includes changes to the Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria which reflect the importance of having an open and transparent selection process for government boards and for good board governance. The bill initially included a proposal to remove the requirement for the vet board president and deputy president to be registered practitioners. I was pleased to be able to discuss this matter further with Dr Hugh Millar, the president of the Victorian division of the Australian Veterinary Association, and I thank him for his time and his advocacy on this matter. The government recognises the need for further engagement with veterinary practitioners and the Australian Veterinary Association on this issue. As such the government will not be pursuing this change, which this amendment removes from the bill.

I would like to take a moment to again acknowledge the outstanding work of our vets right across Victoria. It has been a difficult year, indeed a difficult few years, for veterinarians right across Victoria. Off the back of the 2019–20 bushfires we have faced biosecurity outbreaks and then gone straight into a pandemic, and the pandemic has led to a huge surge in pet ownership and subsequently the demand on vets right across Victoria. The Australian Veterinary Association played a key role in Victoria's response to the avian influenza outbreak in 2020, and of course this is just one way in which our vets demonstrate their importance to our agriculture sector. Right now we are working with vets and veterinary scientists right across the state again on the Japanese encephalitis outbreak that we have seen in piggeries in Victoria. So with a growing number of biosecurity threats on Australia's doorstep the importance of vets in helping to protect livestock and the industry will only grow.

All of this of course has coincided with a shortage of vets. This is something when I am out and about right across rural and regional Victoria that people speak to me about. It is uppermost in vets' minds because they are putting in incredible hours to service the needs of their clients, be they farmers or pet owners or others. It really is a great challenge and one that I am looking forward to working with our newly elected federal Labor government on to implement some changes which will help us address it. And we have also got a shortage of vet nurses. What we have seen as a consequence of these shortages has been burnout in the sector, and this is something we need to address. The toll of the work that our vets undertake also unfortunately impacts their mental health, and this is something I have also heard

a lot about from vets and something that we are very concerned about. Their work is absolutely stressful in nature, and as some vets have told me, it is more often the owners of the animals who create that stress for them than the actual animals or them performing their role as vets.

So it is absolutely important that we support veterinary scientists, and that is exactly what this government is doing. In recognition of the staff shortages and the capacity constraints faced by the veterinary industry our government has recently added the certificate IV in veterinary nursing to the free TAFE list in 2022. This is a great initiative. We know how successful free TAFE has been, and it plays a really critical role in responding to skills shortages that we are experiencing. I would encourage any young person out there, particularly those that have a love of animals or farming or are already within the agriculture sector, to think about the opportunities that a career in either vet nursing or indeed as a vet could provide. Through this investment of course more Victorians will be encouraged to participate in education and training and broaden their employment opportunities, of which there are many right now, so it really is a great opportunity.

But we need to recognise that there is a limit to our local capacity to train increased numbers of veterinarians—it is very hard for me to say that, so I will just call them vets—a process which, as people will well know, takes six years. So our government also welcomes the addition of vets to the priority migration skilled occupation list. Once again I will reiterate how significant it is for our agriculture sector and for all the pet owners out there that we bring in skilled migrants and that we do all that we can to train our own in this fantastic career. While these are not short-term solutions, they will begin to ease the significant strains that are being faced by veterinary professionals. All Victorians can be grateful for the outstanding work done by those in the veterinary profession—by vets, vet nurses and their colleagues—often in very challenging circumstances.

We are also grateful for the work of the veterinary practitioners registration board in regulating the profession. The vet board has also experienced a significant increase in demand, and this bill responds with improvements to administrative provisions, including ensuring that the board is able to conduct hearings and meetings online using modern technology—a need that we all know has been highlighted by COVID-19. I very much look forward to continuing the excellent relationship that I have with the vet board and indeed with vets right across rural and regional Victoria.

It is really important that we continue to support this industry, that we encourage more people to think about careers that are available to them in veterinary science and that we again focus on the increasing role that vets will play as we face some of these very challenging biosecurity threats. We only need to look to Indonesia to see that lumpy skin disease and foot-and-mouth are now in Indonesia. This is a real and present danger to our agriculture sector and to our livestock. I might note that, just like Japanese encephalitis, lumpy skin disease is transmitted by mosquitoes; they are the vectors, and of course climate change is what is driving the increase in the number of mosquitoes and consequently mosquito-borne viruses.

I will finish by welcoming the real focus that we will now see from the federal government, from the federal agriculture minister, on addressing climate change. Our farmers experience the real impacts of climate change every single day. They want to see government take action on it. It is about the welfare of their industry and of their livestock, and indeed it poses an existential threat to agriculture in this country. That is why we need a government that will partner with us to take this action, unlike the previous federal government, which was not interested in pursuing any work in this area.

But I am perhaps straying from the amendment, and I do want to again—

Members interjecting.

Ms THOMAS: No. It is not, actually. It is a very narrow debate. I talked about vets and the importance of vets, and on that note I commend the amendment to the house.

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (18:41): I join the debate on the Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which has come back from the upper house. I think there was a lot of misinformation in the community about this bill, and we all received a lot of emails about the idea that somehow under this legislation people were going to have their vegetables seized out of their gardens and were not going to be able to keep their carrots, that they were not going to be able to share meat after people went and hunted game meat. I think tragically, or very unfortunately, one of the upper house members created some of that furore in Victoria by actually directly misquoting what the minister's answer was, in the upper house, to a question.

Mr Quilty from the other place actually put an article in the *Alexandra Eildon Marysville Standard* where he talked about the fact that 'This bill prevents hunters from sharing meat harvested from game animals'. Mr Quilty said:

... hunters could be charged for shooting a pest animal ... and feeding it to the next-door neighbour's cat.

But if you actually look at what was said in the house, Mr Quilty asked Minister Tierney, after thanking her for a very comprehensive response:

Does the bill prevent anyone from slaughtering their own animals or game animals for their own consumption?

Minister Tierney said:

The answer is no.

Mr Quilty asked:

How about slaughtering their own animals or game animals or feral animals for dog food for their own dogs?

Ms Tierney said:

They would be able to do it.

So it is unfortunate that Mr Quilty chose to create a lot of angst within the hunting community, and I thank the minister's office for putting out a fact sheet that corrected some of this. Field and Game Australia and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia both put out articles to their members correcting the record, because what was put out there is just plainly wrong, but it caused a lot of angst for quite a few people and generated a lot of email traffic obviously to us as members of Parliament. So I think it is important that we get information out to constituents and the wider public, but it is also important that we are being factual when we actually do those things.

On the issue of clause 189, which has been omitted from this legislation: that clause meant that the veterinary board could have a non-vet chair, effectively. So between houses I think the minister made some comments about the government recognising they needed to talk to the veterinary industry more. I think that is probably very much the case, because my understanding in talking to Dr Hugh Wirth, who is now chair of the veterinary—

Ms Thomas: Hugh Millar.

Mr WALSH: Sorry, Hugh Millar. Yes, Hugh Wirth was RSPCA. Very, very different—and late. Hugh Miller is from the veterinary association. The government actually did not talk to the veterinary association about this particular amendment in the bill before it came to the Parliament. I think there is probably a recognition from the minister that they do need to talk more widely with the veterinary association.

In the veterinary association if someone makes a complaint about a vet, the vet is asked to appear before the veterinary association to have those complaints heard and dealt with. The argument that Dr Millar put to me, which I think is very valid, is that in all other states there is a vet, except for South Australia where it is actually chaired by a lawyer, and there are real challenges in how it works in South Australia having a non-vet as the chair. If there is a complaint against a vet for how they have handled someone's cat, dog, horse, whatever, they come and appear before the veterinary board. If

you have got a vet as the chair, the vet understands what the normal practices of veterinary practice are, and the person appearing has some comfort that they are being interviewed by someone that actually understands the veterinary practices that happen. Having a non-vet, or a lawyer particularly, as chair means they would feel less comfortable to be there, because it would turn into a court of law rather than resolving an issue around veterinary practices.

Between houses I think there has been a very big campaign by the veterinary association to a whole range of the parties in this place, particularly in the upper house, to have that particular clause amended. I think there was a queue to amend that clause in the upper house, in the other place, but obviously government amendments take precedence over everyone else's amendments, and I think, as the minister said, they recognised that they need to talk more before they do something like this in the future. I think all the vets in Victoria, but particularly the veterinary association and their chair, Dr Hugh Millar, will sleep easier at night knowing that this clause now has been taken out of the legislation.

I share what the minister was saying about the pressure and the stress that the veterinary sector has been under over the last few years. They have been at the forefront of quite a few natural disasters in Victoria, with the fires, with the floods. If you go back to the fires in the Western District a number of years ago, no-one liked seeing animals that were burnt and suffering. I think all of us that have seen that at some time realise how horrific that is, and the vets are at the forefront of that. I think through lockdown they suffered the same as the rest of us with how they tried to operate their businesses and do the things that were necessary to make sure that their clients and their client's animals were in the best care possible.

We most definitely do support the omission of clause 189 from this piece of legislation. I would have preferred to be here debating it with Melina Bath in the other place having moved it, rather than the government amendment, but we get to the same point in the end, so we wish it a speedy passage.

Ms SETTLE (Buninyong) (18:48): I welcome the opportunity to speak to this amendment to the Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 relating to the Veterinary Practice Act 1997. The Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill makes amendments to 11 acts within the agriculture portfolio to improve efficiency, operation, administration and enforcement. Victoria remains the largest agricultural exporter in Australia, with a massive 27 per cent of national food and fibre exports. That is about \$14 billion in exports. We have over 21 000 farm businesses across the state supporting 75 000 jobs in the agricultural sector, predominantly located in rural and regional Victoria, and I am very proud to have quite a bit of agriculture going on in my electorate.

This bill is incredibly important. It shows really this government's continued commitment to backing farmers and primary industry with our transformative 10-year agricultural strategy, which will strengthen, grow and protect the sector so it continues to be an absolute cornerstone of our economy. I thank the minister at the table, the Minister for Agriculture, for her commitment to this sector. As many in this house know, I come from a farming family, and it is very important to me that this government does focus on all that we need. This bill is very important for our vets, our veterinary practitioners. The minister made mention of the avian outbreak that occurred during COVID. Twenty per cent of all eggs are produced in my electorate, and that was a pretty devastating time for us all, so it was great to have vets on hand. I am glad that this bill continues to support vets and particularly our agricultural sector.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (18:50): I rise to speak on the Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and am pleased to see the bill come back from the upper house with some amendments that were put forward—

A member: One.

Ms BRITNELL: One amendment that was put forward in the upper house, which makes significant improvements to the bill. The one in particular is the removal of clause 189, and this is an

important change, because in the world of agriculture, farming and pet ownership vets play an important role. The veterinary surgeons that I have always worked with in my involvement in agriculture are incredibly skilled. During the consultation process, which the government should undertake when bringing in changes to acts that affect different industries—such as the vets, as they were affected—it was disappointing to hear that the vets actually had not been consulted. As a consequence of that, the change that was going to go through meant that the vets in the vets association would not actually have had to have a veterinary qualification or experience as a vet to be in the role of chair or deputy chair.

The reason it is so significant is that being a practising vet takes a great deal of knowledge. To get a qualification you need to understand the anatomy and physiology of many different animals, and your understanding of the disease processes and different practices depends on your skill set and your experience as to how you approach something. An animal, like a human, is not a machine, and there are different sorts of treatment and theories and whatever. So if a complaint comes against a vet, I would think it would be imperative that a vet actually be listening to that complaint so they can apply their experience and knowledge. I think someone from outside of the industry, such as a lawyer—which we see the example of in South Australia, which the vets in Victoria tell us is not working well—would make it very difficult for the vets to have some comfort in knowing that the case against them was being heard with a level of credibility and an understanding of the procedures that vets do with their animals.

I think it is, as the minister has also highlighted, an important opportunity for us to say thank you to the vets of Victoria. They do do an extraordinary job, not always in the best conditions—as we see from today's weather. Many a time they will be out at 4.30 in the morning working with the farmers, as they did in my case, whether they are preg testing a cow or cows, helping a cow deliver a calf, diagnosing something and fixing the animals or being out in the calf pens with you giving you advice on how to raise the animals in a way that is conducive to the best care you can give. So there are fantastic vets like, in my experience, Dr David Beggs, who also works with the University of Melbourne training vets; Dr Chris Hibbert, very closely working with many farmers in our electorate doing terrific work not only in the animal space but also in the business space, helping farmers get the best outcomes; and Dr Sam O'Keefe. There is Michael Wraight. There are so many vets who have contributed so much.

You know, the reason I raise attention to the vets at this opportunity is they do help us in our agricultural sector to get the best outcomes and ensure we give the best care to our animals, and it is at times of fire and floods, which we have seen over the last number of years, when the vets are at the forefront. As has been highlighted by the member for Murray Plains, it is a really terrible time when your animals are in a situation where they have been affected by either fire, floods or even disease, and having those vets' advice is a very important element in making sure you get the best advice and help, because you do really care about your animals, and it is really distressing when something goes wrong. It is like with your children, often; you get up in the middle of the night and you make sure the care is given. You check on an animal that is in labour before you go to bed, and if she has not delivered before you go to bed you are often up at 2 in the morning checking and up first thing in the morning as well to check whether the calves are fine before you head off to milk, in my case. That was my experience.

Just today, given that agriculture in my electorate is such a huge economic contributor, it was really pleasing to get a press release from the local food and fibre group—which is a group of industry people, farmers from all across the fibre and food sectors, be it dairy, be it beef, be it sheep, be it fishing or forestry who are involved in that—because it is such a big economic contributor. That group has been coming together for some time, trying to make sure that the best planning can take place so that industry thrives. And to see today the announcement from the member for Polwarth and me, the member for South-West Coast, that South-West Victoria have the top producing agricultural area of our nation is something I think we can both be very proud of. The statistics came out today from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and they have revealed that the Glenelg Hopkins and Corangamite regions—

A member interjected.

Ms BRITNELL: Well, it is here in the figures supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and I quote from the chair, Georgina Gubbins, that:

... this incredible achievement should come as no surprise—
the member for Murray Plains—

to the industry and state.

Because we do know, the member for Polwarth, that our two regions do produce a high quality and high standard and contribute an enormous amount to the economy. The entire agricultural industry in South-West Victoria in fact accounts for over 21 per cent of all jobs and drives 60 per cent of the region's economy and contributes to over \$3 billion of annual gross regional product.

Natalie Collard, who is a friend of mine, heads up, as the CEO, Food & Fibre Great South Coast. I worked with her in Australian Dairy Farmers Federation times. She is very proud to be able to tell of these figures and says that with a bit more contribution by the government supporting them we could see a real improvement in productivity and outcomes. So just a small investment to help that group along, Minister, would be much appreciated.

Mr Walsh interjected.

Ms BRITNELL: Never miss a moment! But I would like to state that this clause that we are discussing today that has come back from the upper house and has been removed—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McGuire): I remind the member it is a very narrow debate. So I am very happy to hear of the success of the region, but I think we need to get close to the adjournment.

Ms BRITNELL: I am pleased to see that clause 189 will be removed from the bill, and I commend the bill and the amendment that is put forward.

Motion agreed to.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr McGuire): A message will now be sent to the Legislative Council informing them of the house's decision.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (NAZI SYMBOL PROHIBITION) BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Ms HUTCHINS:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ms KILKENNY (Carrum) (18:58): Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. I want to firstly acknowledge the speakers in this place for the really articulate and empathic contributions that we have heard today on a really difficult and challenging topic. But I especially want to acknowledge those community members, particularly those from our Jewish community, and say to them I am just so deeply sorry for the hurt and the pain and the fear that the acts of just a few have inflicted on you. I just hope that with this bill, with today's debate, we are able to bring some level of comfort to you.

As we know, this is a bill to make the public display of the Nazi symbol a criminal offence here in Victoria, and we are doing this because sadly we have seen recently increases in the use of the Nazi symbol in Victoria. We have seen an increase in fact across Australia and across the world. It is quite frankly distressing, just disgraceful, that we are even having to have this debate to debate a bill like this in the first place, and it is concerning that acts of violence—

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

GOLDEN PLAINS WIND FARM

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (19:00): (6396) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Planning, and the action I seek from the minister is for him to accept the invitation that was given to him by the Woods family of Wingeel Road in Barunah Park in my electorate and explain to them and to their community why he has overridden his own environment effects statement from 2018 to allow the Golden Plains wind farm to be built without any conditions and in contravention of his own planning panel report which recommended—and he agreed with this recommendation—that 47 turbines should have been removed.

Minister, your decision last sitting week to let the Southern Hemisphere's largest wind farm go ahead as of right by incorporating its very existence into the Golden Plains planning scheme will have enormous consequences for regional and rural communities right across Victoria. By that planning decision last sitting week you have said that no matter what a planning panel says, no matter how much taxpayers money is spent on investigations, no matter what a court says—no matter what the Supreme Court says, no matter what the Court of Appeal says—no matter how it affects existing neighbours, no matter how it will affect wildlife, like the famous western Victorian brolgas, you are happy to override all this in order to support a big multinational developer to build one of the largest industrial complexes in regional Victoria.

The Golden Plains wind farm is an important part of this state's move to renewable energy, but no matter how important a project is, it cannot override the fundamental rights and obligations of a government and it cannot override without any compensation the way people and communities live. The Woods family, for example, have had an accredited airfield on their property for 40 years. It is used extensively by local agricultural sprayers; it is used by the local community. This airfield will be rendered unusable and unsafe, and that puts not only the Woods family in a predicament, it puts other farming enterprises in a predicament and it fundamentally takes away a right that was there before without compensation and with nothing that these good, hardworking people can do to avoid it.

But it is not only those practical elements that are at risk, Minister; also your own environmental effects report found that the broлга habitats of western Victoria would be severely affected if 47 turbines were not removed from this project. In one fell swoop under the pressure of developers and in the dying days of your role as planning minister you have overlooked those recommendations that you yourself put to the project through this action. I really encourage you to take up the offer from the Woods family, come down and explain to them why you have done so.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind members to make their remarks through the Chair and that the use of 'you' and 'your' is a reflection on the Chair.

DONNYBROOK ROAD, DONNYBROOK

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (19:03): (6397) My adjournment matter tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is that the Department of Transport be tasked to investigate the safety concerns along Donnybrook Road that are currently being experienced by local residents in my electorate. I recently had the privilege of inspecting the site at the new school that is under construction, notionally called the Hayes Hill primary school, with the new principal, David Williams, who I know very well from his time at the Laurimar Primary School. I met up with a number of the workers around that site and the local families, and it is indicative of how much this community is growing. A number of constituents have raised concerns with my office over the state of the road, such as the lack of lighting and the frequently changing traffic conditions due to the

residential housing growth of individual estates. I would like the Department of Transport to investigate how we can improve road safety along Donnybrook Road for residents of the north.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (19:04): (6398) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the action I seek is for the minister to come to my electorate, particularly the area south of Sale, and explain to my constituents what it is that she intends to do as part of these new renewable energy zones. The reason I seek this is that the minister announced the renewable energy zones in the 2020–21 budget, so in November 2020, yet there are many, many constituents in my electorate who have no idea what they actually mean and we have not seen the minister even attempt to come to my electorate and explain it.

Why is this important? At the moment we have AusNet Services proposing a new 500-kilovolt transmission line to the Giffard area, south of Sale in my electorate, which will hook up with Hazelwood, and that is causing significant consternation. Partly that is because people do not necessarily know what it actually entails. We know of a proposed 500-megawatt solar farm in the Giffard area, which is fantastic—if it happens. There are some offshore wind proposals. There are some onshore wind proposals—again that are not publicly known. But the offshore wind proposals are very exciting. The Star of the South is the furthest advanced and is certainly a very exciting project. We have got Flotation Energy's Seadragon project and the Greater Gippsland offshore wind project, and I understand there are another two, at least, off the Ninety Mile Beach which are proposed. Now, if all these offshore wind farms and solar farms go ahead, that will be fantastic for my area, and I think broadly speaking my community will welcome them. But what is happening at the moment is we have AusNet proposing this transmission line. They have literally knocked on the doors of 48 landholders between Giffard and the Hazelwood switching yard, and those people, naturally, are not terribly excited and are not keen to facilitate AusNet's proposed transmission line.

I think it really is incumbent on the government, having announced these renewable energy zones and having supported financially three of the offshore wind farms proposed, for the minister to actually come to my electorate and talk to my community. I am not opposing the renewable energy zones. I think there are some really exciting developments for us in offshore wind, in solar and in hydrogen potentially as well. I am not so excited about onshore wind—that is a different story—but the minister should be coming and talking to people about what the implications are, how we can get involved in the benefits and also how the government is going to manage the negative impacts, which could include these new transmission lines that are proposed. I think it is a dereliction of duty what the minister and the government have done so far in announcing these proposals and then walking away and not actually engaging the community. I ask her to come to my electorate, talk to my community and help us understand what is proposed.

BROADMEADOWS ELECTORATE EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) (19:07): (6399) My adjournment request is to the Minister for Education. The action I seek is an update on how the state government is supporting students with additional needs in Broadmeadows. The government's Australian-first \$1.6 billion disability inclusion reform has started rolling out in classrooms across Victoria, putting the needs of individual students at the heart of our response and shifting the focus towards what a child can achieve rather than what they cannot. I want to acknowledge this landmark initiative in collaboration with Australian of the Year Dylan Alcott and applaud what he has done through his inspiring leadership and through his success, and I look forward to his tenure as Australian of the Year. This initiative is done with the Get Skilled Access program, and the design and delivery are about abilities awareness in schools to promote how students and staff can be part of this landmark program.

The Andrews government continues to build a more inclusive state for young Victorians with additional needs. Recent local investments include more than \$17 million for the Broadmeadows Special Developmental School in the 2022–23 state budget and \$10 million for the Jacana School for

Autism in the 2020–21 state budget. I want to acknowledge that investment and its significance in changing lives. The Andrews government will also deliver \$60 million for the new Broadmeadows Health and Community Centre of Excellence. This is the first stage in revitalising Kangan Institute's campus in Broadmeadows. The centre of excellence will deliver courses in high-priority industries, including disability, nursing, allied health and healthcare education services to help drive economic recovery and social development post COVID-19. This investment is vital for securing local jobs for local people where they are needed most and contributes to the whole proposition of lifelong learning to give the best opportunities in life and to allow as many people as we can to deny that miser fate.

COVID-19

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (19:10): (6400) I raise a matter of importance for the attention of the Minister for Health. The action I seek is for the minister to provide me with a list of the practising medical professionals that are not employed by the Victorian state government, the Australian federal government or an academic organisation who are providing advice to the Victorian government regarding its management of the COVID-19 situation here in Victoria.

I raise this matter as I was contacted recently by a medical professional who I spoke to last week. This person then met with me at length to detail their concerns with the way the COVID-19 situation has been handled here in Victoria. They advised me that since COVID-19 was first detected in Victoria more than two years ago they had treated more than 8000 patients with COVID, which is a staggering number of patients. They also advised me that all of their huge number of COVID patients had lived, and none had been hospitalised. Less than half of these patients were vaccinated for COVID-19, with the remainder being unvaccinated. The median age of their COVID patients was 58 years and included a patient over 100 years old, with no patients with COVID younger than 18 years old being treated at all due to the negligible risk, unless they had other illnesses. This medical expert is receiving between 40 and 50 new referrals from medical practitioners per day from all around Australia. They are highly sought after and are providing a much-needed service to assist Victorians with COVID to ensure they avoid severe illnesses and hospitalisation.

My concern and the concern of many Victorians is that the Victorian government is not seeking out and listening to the opinions of extremely experienced experts who are working at the coalface treating COVID-19 patients and ensuring they avoid hospitalisation and poor health outcomes, including long COVID. Rather it appears the government is continuing to listen to and take advice from the same people it has been listening to over the past two years.

Minister, given, firstly, the ongoing number of COVID cases here in Victoria amongst both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, secondly, the obvious strain on the hospital system due to various reasons and, thirdly, the fact that there is a general reluctance of medical professionals to actually treat COVID-19 until a patient is requiring hospitalisation, a lot could be learned by you and your medical advisers as to how to successfully treat COVID patients to ensure they recover quickly and do not need to be hospitalised. This medical professional is willing to share their learnings and experience to assist the Victorian government to finally manage and control the COVID-19 situation here in Victoria.

MELTON ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (19:12): (6401) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education. The Melton community is one of the fastest growing communities in the nation, with Melton's population expected to hit the size of Canberra's by 2036–37. This exponential growth that Melton is experiencing is also manifested in our schools. This year's budget looks to addressing this growth with a massive investment in our schools.

The community in Cobblebank are overjoyed—not only has the new Strathtulloh Primary School opened this year for students, they now have learned that land will be acquired in the Cobblebank area for a new secondary school. This will relieve the pressure on our existing secondary schools as well as reduce traffic congestion, as students can access education closer to where they live. This will also

be the case for the new Toolern Waters primary school. Once again this budget delivers, with the announcement that land will be acquired in the Weir Views area for a new primary school. Also announced was that the Brookfield primary school will receive a share of \$527.23 million for new school construction to deliver a new primary school, opening in 2024, for 575 students, including 50 places for students with disability. The inclusion of this new school as one of the 100 new schools brought forward in this budget is simply fantastic.

This investment in new schools is welcome in Melton, but of course this was not all that was delivered in Melton this year. Staughton College students in Melton South welcomed the Minister for Education as he toured the newly built improvements like the new gymnasium. They were excited to learn that a massive \$31.77 million was allocated to upgrade and modernise the school, including replacing existing temporary facilities and adding an additional 400 spaces in permanent facilities to meet growing demand. This is a huge investment, and principal David Lord thought we had put the decimal point in the wrong place when we broke the news to him. The students at Darley Primary School were equally excited with the minister's announcement of \$10.68 million for their upgrades and modernisation.

With all this exciting news of investment in our growing communities, many constituents are excited. Minister, the action I seek is: what are the next steps for these important investments being delivered to the Melton electorate?

MILDURA ELECTORATE DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES

Ms CUPPER (Mildura) (19:15): (6402) My question is for the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to provide a briefing on Mildura's major public healthcare projects, including but not necessarily limited to the master plan for the Mildura Base Public Hospital and the recently announced residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation and detox facility. We are very excited about the recent announcement of a residential drug and alcohol rehab and detox service in Mildura. For many years our community fought for this service, and there is no doubting the need for it. As I have said, Mildura has roughly twice the number of residents who are addicted to drugs and alcohol as Bendigo, despite having half the population. A local Indigenous elder recalled one Christmas-New Year period when she had to attend 10 funerals, all drug and alcohol related.

When the Mildura base hospital was brought back to public management I commented that it was not just a triumph for public health care but a triumph for democracy too. It showed that advocacy can work, and it showed that when a community stands up and makes a strong case, it is possible the government will listen. I can say the same for the drug and alcohol facility: when the announcement was made not only did it give families hope that help was on the way for their vulnerable loved ones but it also helped to restore their faith in the democratic process. I can say that the reaction to the funding announcement was spectacular. It was certainly the biggest response we have had to any state government funding announcement since the Premier committed to reclaiming Mildura base hospital in 2019.

I think one of the reasons that the people are so plugged into this issue of drug and alcohol rehab and so relieved that a facility is on the way is that, just like with cancer and many other health conditions, people in our community know that drug and alcohol addiction does not discriminate. They know that it could happen to anyone, and if there was ever an assumption that drug and alcohol addiction was something that just happened to other families, the assumption was well and truly put to bed by the sheer weight of evidence. Addiction can happen to people of any class, gender, postcode or educational background.

Although we have heard stories about other regions struggling to unite over services like this, from the very beginning the fight for a residential drug and alcohol rehab service in the Mallee has been one of consistent, unwavering, universal support. The upshot of this high level of community interest and engagement is that not a day goes by when I am or a member of my team is not asked about the progress of the hospital master plan or the process for the design and the implementation of our drug and alcohol rehab facility. The community is very keen to be involved and has an enormous amount

of specialised local knowledge to contribute, and we would appreciate a briefing at the minister's earliest convenience.

ENERGY POLICY

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (19:17): (6403) I direct my adjournment to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. The action I seek is for her to provide me with an update on how the Victorian government is continuing to support Victorians who are paying more for power than they should. When we came to government we promised to make energy fairer and more affordable for Victorians, and we have delivered.

The \$1.3 billion Solar Homes program continues to help Victorians take control of their energy bills by installing a power station on their roof. There have been over 200 000 installations on Victorian homes of rebated solar panels, solar batteries and solar hot-water systems since August 2018, with over 1800 installed in my electorate of Wendouree alone. Solar Homes is leading to significant reductions in energy bills for families who need it the most, with around 57 per cent of solar rebates going to households with incomes of less than \$100 000 and around 7 per cent going to those earning less than \$20 000 a year. The recent announcement that the \$250 power saving bonus will be extended to all Victorians from 1 July is proof that this government takes cost of living relief seriously. It has been so wonderful to meet the many people who have attended my office to seek help with their energy bills through the \$250 power saving bonus, with 11 000 of my constituents accessing the program to date.

One of the best outcomes for energy consumers has been the Victorian Energy Compare website. This website is the only free and independent online energy price comparison service in Victoria, with data showing that seven out of 10 users can save money by switching energy offers, with typical savings of \$330 on energy bills in the first year alone. I thank the minister for her ongoing commitment to lower energy prices for households and businesses, and I look forward to an update on further measures that will continue to support households across my community of Ballarat in addressing the cost of living.

BRIGHTON POLICE STATION

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (19:20): (6404) My adjournment is to the Premier, and the action I seek is for the Labor government to commit to opening a new Brighton police station. Everyone has a right to feel safe and be safe in their homes, yet we know that many people in my community have not been. My community is fortunate that Bayside has one of the lower crime rates in the state. Concerningly, though, the crime rates are not low across all types of crime, especially in the case of aggravated burglary. We know that because of data provided by the Crime Statistics Agency. The data shows a 10-year high in aggravated burglaries, with 105 offences recorded in 2021. The figure is four times that of 2014—it was 26 in that year—and even though 2022 data is not yet available, Victoria Police has confirmed that incidents have increased this year. The local area commander recently said the area had:

... seen a number of serious incidents recently ...

and that there:

... has been an increase in offences ...

On the ground in my community we also know there has been an increase because we have seen a number of violent incidents. Two weeks ago Brighton was victim to three home invasions and a police shooting, with many more crimes over recent weeks. Over the long weekend in March there was a home invasion in Bay Street. In that instance the home owner had recently gone through a particularly difficult personal issue, and the crime must have had a compounding effect. For background, there have also been similar incidents in Chelsea and Cochrane streets, Downes Avenue and Elwood, Kinane, Martin, Sussex and Yuille streets in recent months. These issues have been raised in the house repeatedly, most recently in March, April and May.

My community deserves more than being ignored when it has called for action, and frankly when a Brighton woman put her voice to the fear of many, Ms Judd deserved a lot more than being sneered at and victim blamed. Every woman deserves to be heard when they speak out, irrespective of what postcode they live in. It is clear that the Bracks Labor government's closure of the Brighton police station was a mistake. As a community we welcome Victoria Police launching Operation Ibis, which aims to target aggravated burglary in my community, but this fix needs a permanent solution. I call on the Premier and the Labor government to commit to a new Brighton police station.

GARDINERS CREEK (KOOYONGKOOT) MASTER PLAN

Mr KENNEDY (Hawthorn) (19:22): (6405) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Water. The action I seek is for the minister to visit Gardiners Creek in my electorate of Hawthorn to fully appreciate the local issues in relation to the recent investment in the master plan for this vital waterway. In this year's budget the Andrews government funded the KooyongKoot master plan, which will establish a coordinating committee to oversee improvements to the health and amenity of Gardiners Creek. This committee will be in partnership with the Wurundjeri-Woiwurrung traditional owners. This is a vital project, as this creek is of incredible importance to the Hawthorn community. It is lined with bike tracks, and a walk down it will show you a waterway lined with parks, sporting grounds and vital green space that our entire community enjoys.

I thank my colleague the member for Burwood, currently gracing this chamber with his presence, for his work on this important project, but most of all I would like to thank Graham Ross and the KooyongKoot Alliance. The alliance is made up of 17 groups, like the Friends of Gardiners Creek Valley, who have been re-establishing indigenous flora and habitat in the area since 1992. I thank all these groups that care so deeply for Gardiners Creek for their tireless and often unappreciated advocacy for this vital catchment. If any of my other fellow members here have the chance, I would encourage them to take a walk down the creek during this busy period. I would even be happy to accompany you.

Members interjecting.

Mr KENNEDY: Yes, well, there you go. It simply exhibits some of the best things that Hawthorn has to offer. This investment also signifies our government's commitment to our waterways. Indeed our landmark *Water for Victoria* policy has seen us undertake 69 actions to meet the challenges of climate change and population growth. These range from restoring waterways to supporting farmers' resilience with new infrastructure and skills. Like with our KooyongKoot master plan, we are putting communities at the centre of our water policy, and rightfully so, as we have witnessed the ongoing commitment to the environment by groups such as the KooyongKoot Alliance. Thank you for your good work, and I look forward to the minister's visit.

RESPONSES

Ms HORNE (Williamstown—Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Fishing and Boating) (19:25): The member for Polwarth raised a matter for the Minister for Planning; the member for Yan Yean raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety; the member for Gippsland South as well as the member for Wendouree raised matters for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change; the member for Broadmeadows and the member for Melton raised matters for the Minister for Education; the member for Forest Hill and the independent member for Mildura raised matters for the Minister for Health; the member for Brighton raised a matter for the Premier; and the member for Hawthorn raised a matter for the Minister for Water. I will refer them accordingly.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The house now stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 7.26 pm.