

The provision of private housing has flourished in the past three years and will continue to do so under the Cain Government. Interest rates are much lower now than they were in 1982. This has been of great assistance to people living in the outer suburbs. Creative loan schemes have been introduced to provide access to home ownership for over 2000 low income families and intervention by the Urban Land Authority will help to control land prices.

Local building figures reflect the housing recovery. In the past year, the number of houses built in the City of Knox increased by 26.7 per cent. There was also an increase of 109 per cent in flat building and an increase of 41 per cent in the construction of new factories. Two new primary schools are being built and the progress of work on a new TAFE college, due to commence operation next year, is on schedule.

A deficit in transport services in the electorate of Wantirna was addressed by the Cain Government. The reorganization and co-ordination of bus services in the new Ringwood neighbourhood commenced in October 1984 and led to increased mobility for those sections of the community that could not readily move outside their homes, for instance, non-car drivers, young people and the elderly.

Train travellers, who had been disadvantaged in previous years, are better off under the Cain Government. The Government has completed the duplication of the railway line between Ringwood and Bayswater and got rid of the large hole in the ground that had inconvenienced Bayswater train travellers for years. The station car park has also been upgraded.

An important issue to be addressed during the next term of the Cain Government will be the combined effects of such organizations and materials as the group apprenticeship scheme, the new TAFE college in the outer-eastern suburbs, the participation and equity programs in schools, the recommendations of the Blackburn report on post-compulsory schooling and the co-operation with private industry. These key components of the Government's youth guarantee scheme will help deal with the serious disadvantage suffered by a high proportion of young people in the Wantirna electorate, and in Victoria generally.

Finally, I wish to mention the right of people to live their lives in safety. The Victorian Labor Government's policy of a nuclear-free State provides a model for Australia and for the rest of the world in bringing about disarmament and bans on all nuclear weapons

I shall encourage the declaration of the City of Knox as a nuclear-free zone as part of this program.

I look forward to energetically and effectively representing in Parliament the electorate of Wantirna during the second Cain Labor Government of the 1980s.

*The sitting was suspended at 6.25 p.m. until 8.4 p.m.*

**Mrs WILSON** (Dandenong North)—I am pleased to second the motion for the adoption of an Address-in-Reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor. In doing so, Mr Speaker, I offer you my sincere congratulations on being elected to the highest office in this House. I also take this opportunity of thanking the Parliamentary staff for the help and consideration they have given to new members such as me during our first few weeks in office.

I have the honour to represent the new electorate of Dandenong North in this Parliament and I am proud to be its first member. I thank the voters of the electorate I represent for the confidence they have shown in me and in the Cain Labor Government.

The people of the Dandenong North electorate have my firm commitment that I will be an accessible local member, available to share their problems and anxieties and, where possible, assist with a solution. I am fortunate to follow a wonderful tradition of good solid local representation in the Dandenong North area, commenced in the 1960s by the previous member for Dandenong, my good friend, Alan Lind, and carried on by his successor, the current Victorian Treasurer, Rob Jolly.

Like all new members of Parliament, I have received last minute advice on the content of my maiden speech, but perhaps the most succinct advice came from an old friend whose judgment I value greatly. He said, "Remember the three s's: Make it short, simple and, above all, sincere." To fulfill all three criteria, I shall speak briefly about the electorate I represent.

Dandenong North is made up of part of three local government areas: Dandenong, Waverley and Springvale. I have had the privilege of being a councillor of the City of Dandenong for the past eight years, and during that time I have learned that each of these councils is fortunate to be represented by twelve hard working, dedicated councillors who spend most of their spare time working, on a voluntary basis, for the welfare and good administration of their municipalities. They are involved in the affairs of their municipality and are rewarded only when they can assist the people they represent. I have discovered during my time on council that the role of local government can often be greatly underestimated, and it is my hope that the second Cain Labor Government will continue to recognize the significance and importance of local government.

Overall, the Dandenong North electorate is typical of average Australia or average Victoria, but differs from the surrounding electorates of Doveton, Dandenong and Springvale in that it provides few employment opportunities in the immediate area; it has little industrial or commercial development.

The electorate is not without its problems. As well as having a high proportion of young families, homeowners and home buyers it also has a large number of medium wage and salary earners, and one of the specific problems currently faced by these people is the move by some major trading banks to increase housing interest rates—albeit at a time when bank profits are higher than ever.

Many of my constituents over the past two or three years have benefited greatly from the policies of both the Federal and the State Labor Governments in the housing area. Young home buyers have benefited from the Federal Government's first homeowners' scheme and others have been assisted by the substantial allocations made for public housing by both Governments. The reduction of inflation and home interest rates has greatly assisted all home buyers. I believe we should be staging the strongest possible resistance to any increases in housing interest rates to allow recent gains to be consolidated and to continue.

Mr Speaker, it is my hope that, as a newly elected member, I will have the opportunity of working closely with unemployed people in the electorate that I represent. Enormous publicity has been given to the problems of the young unemployed—and rightly so—but there must be grave concern also for the plight of older members of our society who find themselves without employment. In many cases their ability to find a job is more limited and less likely. It is heartening to be part of a Government that over the past three years has tackled unemployment head on and has succeeded in making Victoria the State with the lowest level of unemployment in Australia. I know that this will continue with the introduction of the youth guarantee scheme outlined by the Premier during the election campaign and through other positive measures in the Government's economic strategy.

A large number of elderly people live in Dandenong North. Members of the Labor Party who know me well will be aware that one of my areas of greatest interest is the care of the elderly in the community.

Old age can be a tranquil, rewarding time of life or it can be a frightening, lonely, traumatic nightmare. Very few of us—whether we be 40, 50 or 60 years of age—ever really prepare ourselves for growing old, for being less active and less productive after many years of toil and, subsequently, very few of us can imagine what it feels like to be old, not able to do the things we used to enjoy doing, sometimes forgetful and confused.

I believe that as a society we have a less compassionate or practical approach to our elderly than do our European and Asian migrant families. In their family structure, an elderly parent is greatly honoured and respected. It is accepted that it is the family's

responsibility to care for the elderly members of that family. Nursing homes and hospitals are the last resort, whereas to many of our families, unfortunately, they are the first resort—the easy way out. The sad part is that these values will be passed on from generation to generation and will become accepted practice.

I am pleased that the Cain Government has made an excellent start in addressing the problems of a rapidly ageing population by a number of positive measures, aimed at helping elderly people to remain longer in their own homes, and I am certain that in the next four years much more will be done in this important area. We owe it to every one of our senior citizens to ensure that they have the opportunity to spend their retirement years with dignity and peace of mind in a compassionate environment.

No description of Dandenong North would be complete without a word about the local hospital and school. The Dandenong and District Hospital serves areas from Berwick to Springvale and, in some cases, further afield. This hospital is desperately short of beds. Many of the acute surgical beds are taken up by elderly people who are in need of nursing home care. Further beds are taken up by road accident cases. It is not surprising, therefore, that much of the elective surgery has to be cancelled each week and hundreds of people have to be told to come back at a later stage. The bed ratio in the Dandenong area is 1.7 per 1000 head of population, whereas in most other parts of Victoria it is much higher.

There is no doubt that planning for increased capacity at the Dandenong and District Hospital should have occurred in the late 1970s. This is just one of the many areas where no forward planning was done by our predecessors.

In its first three years of office, the Government has been severely restricted by many examples of bad forward planning, or no planning at all, by the previous Administration, and it has been difficult to make up ground more quickly because of the enormous sums of money involved.

Despite all this, the Cain Government has taken positive measures and although the Board of the Dandenong and District Hospital is not completely convinced, it is generally believed that the relocation of the Queen Victoria Medical Centre to Clayton will offer some relief, as will the Government's all-out assault on waiting lists for elective surgery.

In the past few weeks since being elected to Parliament, I have taken the opportunity of visiting a number of schools in the electorate I represent. As a person who has had a long association with school councils, both at the primary and secondary level, I was impressed with the expressions of goodwill from the staff, principals and parents whom I met. It was a remarkable difference from the discontent and confrontation that was so apparent three or four years ago. The satisfactory state of Victoria's education system is just one example of the Government's fine record in the field of industrial relations.

Mr Speaker, I conclude my remarks by publicly expressing my thanks to my husband Eric, my son Craig, and my mother, for their splendid support during the election campaign. I also acknowledge the hard work and enthusiasm of my local campaign team. None of this would have been possible without the combined efforts of all these people and I shall endeavour to justify their faith in me as their local member. I look forward to working with all members of this House over the next four years, in the hope and expectation that our collective efforts will benefit the people of Victoria. I thank honourable members for their courtesy and consideration.

On the motion of Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until later this day.

## ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Mr STIRLING (Williamstown)—I propose that William Francis Joseph Fogarty be Chairman of Committees. I make that proposal in the sense that Mr Fogarty has served this Parliament for four terms. Prior to entering this place he served the City of Footscray