

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 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 Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop and Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery | The Hon. JM Allan MP |
| Attorney-General and Minister for Emergency Services | The Hon. J Symes MLC |
| Minister for Training and Skills, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Agriculture | The Hon. GA Tierney MLC |
| Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Trade | The Hon. TH Pallas MP |
| Minister for Planning | The Hon. EA Blandthorn MP |
| Minister for Child Protection and Family Services and Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers | The Hon. CW Brooks MP |
| Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention and Minister for Racing | The Hon. AR Carbines MP |
| Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery and Minister for Business Precincts | The Hon. BA Carroll MP |
| Minister for Energy, Minister for Environment and Climate Action and Minister for Solar Homes | The Hon. L D’Ambrosio MP |
| Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Minister for Creative Industries | The Hon. S Dimopoulos MP |
| Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Suburban Development | The Hon. MM Horne MP |
| Minister for Education and Minister for Women | The Hon. NM Hutchins MP |
| Minister for Corrections, Minister for Youth Justice, Minister for Victim Support and Minister for Fishing and Boating | The Hon. S Kilkenny MP |
| Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy and Minister for Veterans .. | The Hon. SL Leane MLC |
| Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services and Minister for Housing | 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 Water, Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Equality | The Hon. H Shing MLC |
| Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport and Minister for Youth | The Hon. RL Spence MP |
| Minister for Workplace Safety and Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep | The Hon. I Stitt MLC |
| Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services | The Hon. M Thomas MP |
| Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Treaty and First Peoples ... | The Hon. G Williams MP |
| Cabinet Secretary | Mr SJ McGhie MP |

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

Speaker

The Hon. JM EDWARDS

Deputy Speaker

Ms N SULEYMAN

Acting Speakers

Mr Blackwood, Mr J Bull, Ms Connolly, Ms Couzens, Ms Crugnale, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr McGuire, Mr Morris, Ms Richards, Mr Richardson, 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. JM ALLAN

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 E KEALY

Leader of the House

Ms EA BLANDTHORN

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 | Richardson, 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 |
| Horne, 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 Addison, 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 Theophanous 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 Blandthorn, Mr Fregon, Ms McLeish, Ms Settle, Ms Sheed, Ms Staley, Ms Suleyman 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 Symes and Ms Tierney.

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, Mr Fregon, Ms Sandell, Ms Staley and Ms Suleyman.

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

Integrity and Oversight Committee

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

Council: Mr Grimley.

Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee

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

Council: Ms Crozier and Mr Erdogan.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Assembly: Ms Connolly, 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.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| ANNOUNCEMENTS | |
| Acknowledgement of country | 3641 |
| DEATH OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II AND ACCESSION OF KING CHARLES III | |
| Oath or affirmation of allegiance to King Charles III | 3641 |
| BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE | |
| Orders of the day | 3641 |
| PETITIONS | |
| Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre..... | 3641 |
| Mirboo North school gymnasium..... | 3641 |
| Myrtleford swimming pool | 3641 |
| Knox cat curfew..... | 3642 |
| Standing and sessional orders..... | 3642 |
| Cranbourne train line..... | 3642 |
| COMMITTEES | |
| Privileges Committee | 3643 |
| Report on the Complaint by the Member for Polwarth | 3643 |
| Privileges committees | 3643 |
| Review of the Ongoing Resolution on the Parliamentary Integrity Adviser..... | 3643 |
| Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee | 3643 |
| Alert Digest No. 13 | 3643 |
| DOCUMENTS | |
| Documents | 3643 |
| BILLS | |
| Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022 | 3645 |
| Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022..... | 3645 |
| State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022..... | 3645 |
| Council's agreement..... | 3645 |
| Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022..... | 3645 |
| Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022 | 3645 |
| Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022 | 3645 |
| Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022 | 3645 |
| Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022..... | 3645 |
| State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022..... | 3645 |
| Royal assent | 3645 |
| BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE | |
| Standing and sessional orders..... | 3645 |
| Program | 3646 |
| MEMBERS STATEMENTS | |
| Pyramid Hill streetscape project | 3650 |
| Loddon shire roads | 3650 |
| Werribee electorate achievements | 3651 |
| Brighton electorate achievements | 3651 |
| Essendon District Football League | 3651 |
| Maroondah Hospital..... | 3652 |
| Nancye Cain..... | 3652 |
| Rowville electorate roads..... | 3652 |
| Victorian Disability Advisory Council..... | 3653 |
| Government performance | 3653 |
| Government performance | 3654 |
| Leongatha Football Netball Club..... | 3654 |
| South Gippsland Dairy and Farming Expo..... | 3654 |
| AFL Grand Final | 3654 |
| Gordon TAFE | 3655 |
| Gambling harm | 3655 |
| Education funding | 3655 |
| Lions Australia 75th anniversary | 3656 |
| Beaumaris residential heritage | 3656 |
| Sandringham Primary School | 3656 |
| Bayswater electorate achievements | 3656 |
| Woodmans Hill Secondary College | 3657 |
| Sebastopol Football Netball Club | 3657 |

| | |
|--|------|
| Maroondah Hospital..... | 3657 |
| Electoral boundaries redivision..... | 3657 |
| Northcote electorate achievements..... | 3657 |
| Clarinda electorate achievements..... | 3658 |
| Government performance..... | 3658 |
| BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE | |
| Orders of the day..... | 3658 |
| BILLS | |
| Disability Amendment Bill 2022..... | 3659 |
| Second reading..... | 3659 |
| QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE AND MINISTERS STATEMENTS | |
| Health system..... | 3669 |
| Ministers statements: health system..... | 3670 |
| Health system..... | 3670 |
| Ministers statements: health system..... | 3671 |
| Health system..... | 3672 |
| Ministers statements: education funding..... | 3673 |
| Shepparton bus review..... | 3673 |
| Ministers statements: economy..... | 3674 |
| Health system..... | 3675 |
| Ministers statements: level crossing removals..... | 3675 |
| CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS | |
| Caulfield electorate..... | 3676 |
| Box Hill electorate..... | 3676 |
| Lowan electorate..... | 3676 |
| St Albans electorate..... | 3677 |
| Eildon electorate..... | 3677 |
| Burwood electorate..... | 3677 |
| Morwell electorate..... | 3677 |
| Footscray electorate..... | 3678 |
| Ferntree Gully electorate..... | 3678 |
| Narre Warren South electorate..... | 3678 |
| BILLS | |
| Disability Amendment Bill 2022..... | 3678 |
| Second reading..... | 3678 |
| MEMBERS | |
| Member for Ringwood..... | 3680 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3680 |
| Member for Narracan..... | 3682 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3682 |
| Member for Preston..... | 3685 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3685 |
| Member for Morwell..... | 3688 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3688 |
| Member for Kororoit..... | 3692 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3692 |
| Member for Narre Warren North..... | 3697 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3697 |
| Member for Mornington..... | 3701 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3701 |
| Member for Bellarine..... | 3704 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3704 |
| Member for Euroa..... | 3708 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3708 |
| Member for Albert Park..... | 3711 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3711 |
| Member for Altona..... | 3717 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3717 |
| Member for Broadmeadows..... | 3721 |
| Valedictory statement..... | 3721 |
| BILLS | |
| Disability Amendment Bill 2022..... | 3725 |
| Second reading..... | 3725 |
| ADJOURNMENT | |
| Glen Eira planning..... | 3729 |
| Pasifika youth research project..... | 3729 |

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| Roadside vegetation | 3730 |
| Creswick flood events | 3730 |
| South-West Coast electorate roads | 3731 |
| Emerging Stronger grants | 3732 |
| Commonwealth Games..... | 3732 |
| Early childhood education | 3732 |
| Sandringham electorate election commitments..... | 3733 |
| The Crossing | 3734 |
| Responses | 3734 |

Tuesday, 20 September 2022

The SPEAKER (Ms JM Edwards) took the chair at 12.03 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.

Death of Queen Elizabeth II and accession of King Charles III

OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE TO KING CHARLES III

The SPEAKER (12:04): As required by section 23 of the Constitution Act 1975, I ask the member for Ringwood to come to the table to take the oath.

Mr Halse took and subscribed the oath of allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III.

Business of the house

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The SPEAKER (12:06): General business, orders of the day 1 to 4, will be removed from the notice paper unless members wishing their matters to remain advise the Clerk in writing before 5.00 pm today.

Petitions

Following petitions presented to house by Clerk:

BENALLA INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE

This petition of the residents of Victoria notes the dilapidated state of Benalla's Indoor Recreation Centre and recognises the current condition is unsafe for the many groups who utilise the facility and calls for immediate funding for its redevelopment.

By Ms RYAN (Euroa) (453 signatures).

MIRBOO NORTH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the poor state of the gymnasium and stadium at Mirboo North schools, the town's only stadium.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the Andrews Labor Government to fund a new stadium and gym facility for Mirboo North.

By Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (297 and 15 signatures).

MYRTLEFORD SWIMMING POOL

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the poor state of the Swimming Pool in Myrtleford. The current pool was built in 1938 and is not up to the standard required for Myrtleford to maintain and host local swimming competitions, and as a result, is quickly falling behind other swimming clubs and facilities in their league.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the Andrews Government to fund the construction of a new Swimming Pool in Myrtleford.

By Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (283 signatures).

KNOX CAT CURFEW

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that Knox City Council has not adhered to the Local Government Act 2020 when making an Order to introduce a 24-hour cat curfew.

Knox City Councillors voted to introduce a 24-hour cat curfew without first consulting the community on the 24-hour Order. In 2020, the Council ran a trial dusk-to-dawn curfew for 12 months at the expense of ratepayers and have not published any results. The Councillors did not adhere to the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Order was introduced without evidence and statistics.

The Council imposes \$545 fines if a cat is not 'securely confined to the owner's premises at all times', failing to consider the financial and health impacts upon owners, including renters, the elderly, special needs children with therapy cats and those struggling with mental health and reduced incomes.

The Council did not follow its Community Engagement Policy and the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and have said that they will conceal the identity of complainants, placing the onus on cat owners to defend themselves from anonymous accusations. This Order has created community division, issues of inequality and animal abuse.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to conduct an inquiry into the Knox City Council's Order to introduce a 24-hour cat curfew, revoke the 24-hour cat curfew, conduct professional community consultations on the 24-hour curfew, introduce a retrial of the night curfew with results independently assessed and publicly reported, discontinue unverifiable online surveys and review the conduct of Knox City Council Councillors.

By Mr WELLS (Rowville) (200 signatures).

STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the lack of opportunities for non-government members in the house.

Currently Victoria's Legislative Assembly is the only lower house in Australia that does not provide meaningful opportunities for non-government members to move motions, progress private members bills or utilise a number of other procedures in the house.

Failing to provide meaningful opportunities for minority voices in the Legislative Assembly not only prevents the representation of large numbers of Victoria's population, but also denies a potential source of important legislation.

Non-government business is standard practice in any Westminster parliament. There is simply no reason that Victoria should remain an outlier.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly amends the Standing Orders such that non-government business be reinstated as an accessible and consistent mechanism in the house.

By Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (372 signatures).

CRANBOURNE TRAIN LINE

We the undersigned Citizens of Victoria draw to the attention of the House community support to extend the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Koo Wee Rup.

We, the undersigned concerned residents of the Victoria therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria call on the Victorian Government to fund the much-needed Cranbourne to Koo Wee Rup rail extension to help reduce local road congestion, improve access to education and recreation precincts and help more people live, work and raise a family in Melbourne's south-east.

By Mr R SMITH (Warrandyte) (158 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Euroa be considered next day on motion of Ms RYAN (Euroa).

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Warrandyte for member for Hastings be considered next day on motion of Mr R SMITH (Warrandyte).

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Ovens Valley be considered next day on motion of Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley).

Ordered that petitions lodged by member for Gippsland South be considered next day on motion of Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South).

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Shepparton be considered next day on motion of Ms SHEED (Shepparton).

Committees

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Report on the Complaint by the Member for Polwarth

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEES

Review of the Ongoing Resolution on the Parliamentary Integrity Adviser

Mr PAKULA (Keysborough) (12:08): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Privileges Committee on the complaint by the member for Polwarth, together with appendices, and a joint report from the privileges committees on the review of the ongoing resolution on the parliamentary integrity adviser, together with an appendix.

Ordered to be published.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 13

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (12:09): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, being *Alert Digest* No. 13 of 2022, on the following acts and bills:

Anti-corruption and Higher Parliamentary Standards (Strengthening Integrity) Bill 2022

Health Legislation Amendment (Conscientious Objection) Bill 2022

Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Act 2022

Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Act 2022

together with appendices.

Ordered to be published.

Documents

DOCUMENTS

Incorporated list as follows:

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

Audit Act 1994—Financial Audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office year ended 30 June 2022

Climate Change Act 2017—Victorian Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report 2020

Health Complaints Commissioner—Report 2021–22

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)—Annual Plan 2022–23

Members of Parliament (Standards) Act 1978—Register of Interests—Returns submitted by Members of the Legislative Assembly—Ordinary Returns 28 July 2022 (two volumes)—Ordered to be published

Ombudsman—Investigation into a former youth worker's unauthorised access to private information about children—Ordered to be published

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

Boroondara—C353 Part 2
Campaspe—C117
Colac Otway—C116
East Gippsland—C164
Golden Plains—C99
Greater Bendigo—C254
Greater Geelong—C437
Latrobe—C133
Manningham—C127
Mansfield—C51 Part 1
Melbourne—C387, C428
Moreland—C195, C224
South Gippsland—C125
Surf Coast—C140
Victorian Planning Provisions—VC225
Warrnambool—C210
Whitehorse—C231

Regional Development Victoria—Report 2021–22

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Domestic Animals Act 1994—SR 74
Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2019—SR 71
Forests Act 1958—SR 76
Livestock Management Act 2010—SR 70
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008—SRs 72, 73
Subordinate Legislation Act 1994—SR 75

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80
Documents under s 16B in relation to the *Public Holidays Act 1993*—Notice of additional public holiday

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001—Notice of request to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council for an assessment of early government-accepted Land Conservation Council recommendations under s 26C

Victorian Government Purchasing Board—Report 2021–22

Victorian Information Commissioner, Office of (OVIC)—Report 2021–22

Victorian Local Government Grants Commission—Allocation Report 2022–23.

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER STANDING ORDERS—Under standing orders the Clerk tabled the following documents:

Government response to the Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee's Inquiry into Commonwealth support for Victoria

Proclamations fixing operative dates:

Justice Legislation Amendment (Fines Reform and Other Matters) Act 2022—ss 32, 35, 36(2), 37A, 38, 39, 41, 42, 99, 102, 105 and 109—6 September 2022 (*Gazette S456, 6 September 2022*)
Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (Pandemic Management) Act 2021—Remaining provisions—30 August 2022 (*Gazette S438, 30 August 2022*)

Workplace Safety Legislation and Other Matters Amendment Act 2022—Part 5—1 September 2022 (Gazette S439, 30 August 2022).

Bills**JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES, HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES REGULATION
AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****STATE SPORT CENTRES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022***Council's agreement*

The SPEAKER (12:11): I have received messages from the Legislative Council agreeing to the following bills without amendment: the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and the State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

**ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND
OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (POLICE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND OTHER
MATTERS) BILL 2022****MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BILL 2022****RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES, HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES REGULATION
AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022****STATE SPORT CENTRES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022***Royal assent*

The SPEAKER (12:12): I inform the house that on 6 September 2022 the Governor gave royal assent to the Environment Legislation Amendment (Circular Economy and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Police and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Justice Legislation Amendment (Sexual Offences and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Bill 2022, the Residential Tenancies, Housing and Social Services Regulation Amendment (Administration and Other Matters) Bill 2022 and the State Sport Centres Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

Business of the house**STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS**

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:12): I move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the following arrangements to come into effect immediately and remain in place until the house adjourns on Wednesday, 21 September 2022:

- (1) At 2.50 pm each day, the Chair will interrupt business to allow retiring members to make valedictory statements for up to 15 minutes each.
- (2) Any business under discussion at the time of interruption that has not been completed will be resumed immediately after the valedictory statements and any member speaking at the time of the interruption may continue their speech.
- (3) If members are making valedictory statements at 4.00 pm on Wednesday, the Chair will interrupt for the grievance debate and any further valedictory statements will continue after the grievance debate.

Motion agreed to.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (12:13): I desire to move, by leave:

That so much of standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow general business, notice of motion 33, relating to the reintroduction of non-government business into this house, to be debated immediately.

Leave refused.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:14): 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 33, under the name of the member for Shepparton, relating to the reintroduction of non-government business, to be moved immediately.

Leave refused.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (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 33, in the name of the member for Shepparton, relating to the reintroduction of non-government business to this house, to be debated immediately.

Leave refused.

PROGRAM

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (12:14): 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 7.00 pm on Wednesday, 21 September 2022:

Disability Amendment Bill 2022

Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.

I am very pleased to be able to speak this morning in relation to the final government business program of this Parliament in what is our final sitting before the Parliament expires. We certainly look forward as a government to finishing this term on a strong note with these important bills that we have for discussion and, I note, consideration today. I have noted here that last sitting week my use of the word ‘consider’ seemed to cause some consternation in terms of what exactly ‘consideration’ means. My team have looked very carefully at this and tell me that it does indeed mean ‘to think carefully about something, typically before making a decision’ and ‘to look attentively at something’, so I do think that ‘consider’ and ‘consideration’ are the appropriate terms when we look at today’s government business program.

I do hope that those opposite take the time to consider the bills that we have before us. The Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022 seeks to discourage unauthorised entry to a racetrack area during the running of horseraces at Victorian racecourses. It is a particularly important bill in terms of the protection and safety of both people and animals. In recent years there have been several instances of spectators running onto the tracks at race meetings in Victoria as well as in other states and in New Zealand. In Victoria incidents have occurred at Cranbourne, Moonee Valley and Penshurst. While the frequency of these incidents is relatively low, the potential for serious consequences is very high, so this is a particularly important bill in terms of our paramount obligation to both the welfare of people at the racetrack and the welfare of the animals at the racetrack.

We also have the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. This bill ensures that disability legislation is contemporary and that it is fit for purpose. The bill will bring about critical reforms that will improve the delivery of disability services across our state and enhance safeguards for Victorians living with a disability. The bill is one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act 2006 review, which has been underway since 2018. It is a priority government reform aimed at ensuring our legislative frameworks are fit for purpose, that they are contemporary, that they are meaningful and that first and foremost they go to the protection of human dignity.

It is also not lost on all of us, I am sure, that this is the final sitting week for this term. I think it is important to note that we will have another opportunity, by leave, as the Manager of Opposition Business and I have discussed, to provide some thankyou's at the start of the adjournment debate tomorrow evening. But I just would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker for your contributions over the past few weeks and certainly in your previous roles over the past few years. Can I also acknowledge the Minister for Child Protection and Family Services for his service to this Parliament as Speaker as well. To our whip, who has worked tirelessly with me over the past four weeks while we have both been in these respective roles, I am very grateful to you and to your assistant for the work that you do. I acknowledge the clerks of the Parliament, including Andrew Young in the other place, who is obviously retiring. I know personally Andrew's commitment to the Parliament, and the wise counsel and advice that he provides to many of us will indeed be missed. His contribution to this place has been huge and I am sure will in some other ways continue. I put my appreciation of Andrew and his team in the other place on the record, and also of our own Clerk of this house, who will become the first female Clerk of the Parliaments, which is a massive achievement and one that should be duly recognised after so long in this place.

There are many other people that I am sure both the Manager of Opposition Business and I will have an opportunity to thank tomorrow evening. To all the parliamentary staff, the security staff, the hospitality staff and the cleaners, particularly during what has been a very difficult Parliament—the issues that this Parliament had to deal with, particularly in a security sense but also in terms of managing staffing and other matters across the last few years mean it has certainly been a difficult time. As always, to the clerks of the Parliament as well as the staff of the Parliament—from those working in here with us to those who help keep us secure—it has certainly been a big effort all round. Their efforts, their time and their contribution to the work that we all do here is very greatly appreciated. I know I look forward, like the Manager of Opposition Business, to providing a more fulsome thankyou tomorrow evening.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (12:20): I rise to speak on the government business program motion in the name of the Leader of the House. I can advise the house that on this occasion we will not be opposing this program. The Leader of the House has just noted that there are two bills on the government business program today, including the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022, which the Leader of the House described as a 'particularly important bill'. It prevents unauthorised entry of people that could compromise the safety of people and horses at racing meets. Then also there is the Disability Amendment Bill 2022, which the Leader of the House has described as part of the 'critical reforms' in the disability sector, and it is a key outcome of the review of the Disability Act 2006. She notes that this is a 'priority government reform'.

The reason I have quoted the Leader of the House on these remarks is because of course none of these bills, even though they will go to the guillotine tomorrow at 7 o'clock, will be passed by the Council in this term, and therefore if these bills are in fact as important as the Leader of the House has suggested, one would have thought the government would have brought them forward earlier so that they would have had an opportunity to go to the Council and then become law.

Of course the government could choose to sit the Council. I believe we would strongly support the Council sitting further into October, and it would give an opportunity for debate on these bills, which the Leader of the House has just suggested are important, using words like 'critical' and 'priority government reform'.

Mr Walsh interjected.

Ms STALEY: It would have, as the Leader of The Nationals has just reminded me, also provided an opportunity for the tabling of annual reports which the government is once again seeking to hide from Victorians.

We will not be putting up very many speakers on these bills. There will not actually be very much time to debate them given that we have a large number of valedictory statements being given today and tomorrow. I would like to particularly mention that the members for Narracan, Mornington and Euroa will be giving valedictory statements from our side of the chamber. Having served with them over my time in this place—they have been here either as long or longer—I have enjoyed their company and all of their contributions. I am sure their valedictories will reflect the service they have given to their communities and the Parliament. For the sake of completeness, I should also note that the members for Hastings and Kew are also retiring at this coming election.

The final thing I just wanted to mention in this last government business program debate goes to the issue of the motion that the member for Shepparton attempts to move, I attempt to move and the Greens attempt to move every sitting week. Leave is always denied. I really do believe that when we come back after the election, whatever the make-up of this chamber is, we do need to look at our standing orders and our sessional orders, and we certainly need to do so in relation to opportunities for general business. We must, I believe, think about whether the MPI—the matter of public importance—and the grievance debate are still fit for purpose and whether they would be better replaced by an opportunity for non-government business or general business. I think there are also opportunities to put our current sitting arrangements—that is, going on the adjournment at 7.00 pm and then 5.00 pm on a Thursday—into the standing orders rather than having them constantly put through as sessional orders. So I would hope that in the new Parliament these things become a priority. I certainly will continue to push for these to be changes to our standing orders so that we can be a modern Parliament that fully represents the voices of all those that are elected to this Parliament.

Ms SETTLE (Buninyong) (12:25): I rise to speak on the government business program in this final week of the 59th Parliament of Victoria, and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge this moment with thanks and gratitude. As my first term in government comes to a close, I would like to personally thank the wonderful support staff in this place. As Government Whip, and on behalf of all of my colleagues, I would like to thank the clerks for their guidance and all of their support. Thank you to the Hansard team and the Speaker's staff. This has been an extraordinary term by anyone's measure, and each and every parliamentary staff member has shown great resilience and flexibility in helping to guide us through these unprecedented times.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the retirement of Andrew Young. As Clerk of the Parliaments Andrew has been the steady hand that has guided this place through both happy and turbulent times. As a member of a government which has made equal representation a reality, I am very pleased to congratulate Bridget Noonan on her pending appointment, which will see her become the first female Clerk of the Parliaments. Thank you to all of you who contribute to the smooth running of this place, including the catering staff, the cleaners and security staff, gardeners and reception staff.

I would also like to acknowledge the Opposition Whip for his collegiate approach to our duties. To all of those opposite, I thank you for the robust debates. I am proud of the agenda that this government has prosecuted throughout this term and continues to prosecute to this very day with important bills such as the Disability Amendment Bill 2022 and the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022.

Some of the more poignant moments of this week will belong to the valedictory speeches. Our retiring former ministers have left an extraordinary legacy and have shown so much support and encouragement to those that follow. Thank you to all retiring members for your contributions to our great state of Victoria. Today and every day I proudly support the government business program.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (12:27): I rise to make a few brief comments on the business program for the last sitting week of the 59th Parliament. Like most Victorians, I am looking forward to the end of the financial mismanagement.

With the passing of the Queen, this is not a usual week for us, but nonetheless it is an important opportunity to get different issues on the record for local MPs. We have the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022, and racing is a massive economic driver in Victoria. We also have the Disability Amendment Bill 2022 in relation to an extremely important sector in the Victorian community for families and communities, and of course we have the valedictories. I am well aware that the Nationals member for Euroa, who has been an absolute game changer, a ray of sunshine and a workhorse for her community, will be doing her valedictory this week. She has certainly highlighted the needs of her community while juggling young children with a parliamentary workload. We wish her well in whatever comes next. I would also like to acknowledge the former Nationals Whip, the member for Gippsland South, who counted the numbers very well, and we thank him for his fine work over the term of the Parliament until I took over. Certainly his skills as a minister in the 60th Parliament will be well received.

I would also like to thank the parliamentary staff who keep the wheels turning to keep this place going. We do appreciate the work that they do. With those brief comments, you know we are not opposing the business program.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (12:28): If the member for Euroa is the ray of sunshine, then I am pretty sure that the member for Ovens Valley is the cloudy day.

This government business program reflects the fact that this is the last sitting week of the 59th Parliament, and it is important that we take the opportunity to recognise the long and distinguished service of a great many members in this place. It is a very, very long list indeed, not one I am going to attempt to do from memory, but it is terrific that we are giving that opportunity to all of those retiring members. I will say to them in aggregate that we thank them for the service, whichever side of the aisle they come from. It has been my experience in this place over the life of this Parliament that the overwhelming majority of members, again from both sides of the aisle, are hardworking people who are trying to do good things for their communities. Some miss the mark a bit, but that is perhaps commentary for another day.

It is a great honour all of us have to serve in this place. Whether you have served for one term, as one of the valedictorians has, or you have served for five or six—I think it is—terms, we all know what sacrifices are required to be able to make that contribution to the life of this state. I want to thank all of them, and I am grateful that this government business program of course gives them all the room, the time and the space to be able to make their final comments as members of the 59th Parliament. In relation to the bills, they are important bills, despite the game-playing suggestions by the Manager of Opposition Business in her valedictory speech.

Mr McCurdy interjected.

Mr FOWLES: No, it is not. Make no mistake about that. No siree. It certainly is not. I think there are sweatier members than me in this place at the minute, do not worry about that. Without further ado, I think it is a very solid government business program. We look forward to getting those bills debated over the course of the week and spending some time in reflection as well.

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:31): I rise also to address the government business program for this week, the final sitting week of the 59th Parliament. In doing so, Speaker, I would like to thank you and your predecessor for your management of this chamber and for all you do out of hours and behind the scenes to keep this place moving and to represent it well. I would like to thank the newly elected Deputy Speaker as well. To the clerks, the attendants, those in Hansard and those in the broadcast team, often working early in the morning and late at night not just in this chamber but during committee hearings right across the state as well: thank you for all you do. Thank you to the catering staff; the security team; those who diligently and so very well clean this place, especially during these couple of years of the pandemic; those who keep the gardens looking just so wonderful; those who maintain this Parliament; and also the committee staff. I think it is important to acknowledge them. As

a first-term MP, it has been a great learning opportunity for me as well. I am grateful to the committee staff for helping me and guiding me through what has been my first term.

I acknowledge the former Liberal Whip in this place, the member for Benambra, for the work he did in that role before me. I acknowledge the former Manager of Opposition Business, the member for Rowville, and the current Manager of Opposition Business, my colleague the member for Ripon. I acknowledge the member for Buninyong, who so wonderfully gave me the kiss of death, so I thought I would return the favour. The member for Buninyong should consider popping this on a DL flyer and distributing it in her community. I am grateful for the work that I have undertaken with her to make sure this place runs as smoothly as it possibly can, frankly. I acknowledge her predecessor, the member for South Barwon, and the Deputy Government Whip, the member for Mount Waverley.

I also acknowledge my colleagues on this side, who will be delivering their valedictory speeches later today: the member for Euroa, the member for Narracan and the member for Mornington. The member for Hastings and the member for Kew will not be delivering valedictory speeches, but their time and their contributions in this place must also, in my view, be acknowledged and remembered. I also note the member for Broadmeadows, who is in the chamber, will be delivering a valedictory later on today. I acknowledge him and encourage him not to waste his 15-minute opportunity to get on the record everything that is true and good and right, and I am sure he will not. I acknowledge The Nationals whips—the member for Gippsland South, who I first worked with, and the member for Ovens Valley, who I work with now; the Greens whips—the member for Melbourne, who I worked with previously, and the member for Brunswick, who I work with now.

I think that it is important at this point, in the final sitting week of the 59th Parliament, to remember that we all come here with a duty, a responsibility—a happy responsibility—and a happy obligation to do our very best for the communities that we represent that send us here to do work on their behalf. I trust that for the remainder of this Parliament, for the next eight weeks, and into the next Parliament, for those who put their hand up for elected office that continues to guide them and inspire them, to motivate and sustain them. May that be our guiding principle for the remainder of this Parliament and into the next.

Motion agreed to.

Members statements

PYRAMID HILL STREETSCAPE PROJECT

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:35): The Pyramid Hill community is looking forward to their streetscape project, which will grow local business opportunities, attract new residents, improve livability and enhance the aesthetics of the town. The *Bendigo Advertiser* on 1 June this year reported that the \$800 000 project had been let to do the streetscape in Pyramid Hill. The Loddon shire, as I understand it, have committed over \$600 000 to that \$800 000 project. Unfortunately the people of Pyramid Hill are very frustrated that this project cannot get started until a government minister comes to make an announcement. Can I urge any one of the ministers on the other side of the chamber to please go to Pyramid Hill and please make your announcement so this project can get started and the people of Pyramid Hill can enjoy a new streetscape in that great community up there.

LODDON SHIRE ROADS

Mr WALSH: The other issue I want to raise is that over the weekend I had reason to travel down the Dingee to Raywood road, with its large potholes and big craters, particularly in the floodways on that road. Anyone who knows that road knows that in the water you actually cannot see the size of those potholes—they are literally craters there. It is dangerous, and there will be accidents there if someone does not do something about that particular road. I am told the member for Bendigo East was going to take it up with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety on that community's behalf. I would urge the member for Bendigo East to please emphasise to the minister for roads how dangerous the Dingee to Raywood road is with all the potholes that are on that particular road.

WERRIBEE ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr PALLAS (Werribee—Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade) (12:37): I rise to update the house on what the Andrews Labor government has delivered for the great electorate of Werribee during the current term. The Werribee Street, Cherry Street and Old Geelong Road level crossings in Werribee and Hoppers Crossing have all been removed in the past two years, and we have completed the \$1.8 billion western roads upgrade. Construction for the new Ison Road rail bridge is set to begin in 2023. A new \$45 million police complex opened in Werribee, and we are delivering the new \$272 million Wyndham law courts. We have invested nearly \$200 million in the Werribee Mercy Hospital for critical care expansion and emergency department upgrades. We are building the Education State in Werribee, with two new primary schools opened within the last four years alone. And we are not stopping there, with two more primary schools set to open in 2023 and one in 2024, as well as a new secondary school and a new special school opening in 2024. The sad truth is that under the Liberals the west was neglected. There was just a fraction of the investment in Werribee in their last four years in power. The Andrews Labor government has delivered. There is so much more that has been done, and I am very proud of it. It is clear that only a Labor government will provide the investment that the western suburbs need and deserve.

BRIGHTON ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:38): At the 2018 state election my community of Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton sent the strongest possible message. They made it clear that they would not be taken for granted and demanded a modern representative voice. It was a message that I heard. Over the last four years I have taken every opportunity without fear to raise local issues and be a strong voice. It is with great pride that the issues I have championed have repeatedly been raised with the Premier as the eyes of Victoria have watched. At a state level I have upheld my commitment to ensuring that the Liberal Party has a vision for the future and is a party that is representative of modern Victoria—and we are. In that purpose I have been guided by the lodestar that everyone should be supported in being who they are and all they can be. But there is more to do, which is why I have put my hand up again to represent my community—the community my family and I call home. We need to fix our broken health system, care for our natural environment, preserve the character of our community and make sure that we get our fair share of services, because we do not from Labor. As a parliamentarian I want to ensure we have a future where everyone has the chance to get ahead, be treated with respect and have a government that does not only care about numbers but cares about people too. That is my commitment to our community.

ESSENDON DISTRICT FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie—Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Business Precincts) (12:40): It is a great honour to stand in the chamber and congratulate the Airport West Football Club and all footy clubs that have been part of the Essendon District Football League this season and have participated over two wonderful grand final weekends at Windy Hill. I am wearing my Airport West Football Club tie today as the number one ticketholder and someone who played junior footy there. It was on Father's Day of all days that with my family I got to watch Airport West win not one but two premierships cups at Windy Hill. It was a great, great day. I want to congratulate president Pauline McShanag, Reuben William for being best on ground, Trent Rogers and all the team.

I also want to talk about other clubs that participated. Keilor Park also took home two flags. They have been a wonderful rags-to-riches story. To senior coach Paul Guicas, president Shannon Rogers and all the supporters at Keilor Park, you should equally be proud. The Essendon District Football League is made up of some wonderful clubs. Strathmore defeated Aberfeldie in time-on, and Adam Iacobucci claimed the Reg Rose Medal. Congratulations to Strathmore on that important win. The Keilor Football Club, a proud club in the north-west, also stood tall, claiming the premier division reserves

premiership. It is wonderful. I congratulate the women, the men, the juniors, the seniors, the umpires and the volunteers that make up the Essendon District Football League, and here's to season 2023.

MAROONDAH HOSPITAL

Ms VALLENCE (Evelyn) (12:41): Fixing our health system after eight years of underinvestment and neglect by the Andrews government is the number one priority for the Victorian Liberals. On Saturday it was tremendous to help announce our commitment to redevelop the Maroondah Hospital, which is the closest major public hospital for residents in my local community. From Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Mount Evelyn and right through the Yarra Valley we have relied on the wonderful nurses, doctors and healthcare workforce at Maroondah, but the staff and facilities are stretched. Maroondah Hospital has been completely ignored by the Andrews government. There is regular ambulance ramping and surgery delays. It is shocking that under Labor patients at Maroondah are forced to use portable toilets and be seen in a tent because of emergency department overflows.

Let us not forget that at the 2018 election the Premier promised a new flagship emergency department for Maroondah Hospital but four years later has delivered absolutely nothing—yet another broken promise from Labor for our community. I am so determined to see Maroondah Hospital upgraded, and our plan, in consultation with Eastern Health, could deliver expanded training facilities for more trainee nurses and doctors, a new emergency department, a new ICU, more beds, more car parks, more facilities for mental health services and stage 2 of the comprehensive cancer centre. Residents across the outer east deserve a modern, fit-for-purpose hospital to benefit patients and staff, and only a Guy Liberal government will deliver it.

NANCYE CAIN

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (12:43): I rise to give thanks for the life of Nancye Cain, who passed away this month aged 90, the adored wife for 64 years of former Victorian Premier, the Honourable John Cain. For most of their lives the Cains lived and raised their family in the Ivanhoe electorate, and Nancye's passing is keenly felt by many members of the local community and community organisations. She was widely respected across the state. She warmly introduced me to many constituents over the years, for which I am very thankful. In John Cain's autobiography, *John Cain's Years: Power, Parties and Politics*, he wrote:

I said many times during my years as premier that the only job in Australian politics tougher than the prime minister's was to be Labor premier in Victoria. At times I despaired. My spirit and commitment were only maintained through the toughest times by my wife, Nancye. She had no love whatever for politics. She put up with it for me. Anything worthwhile I was able to do was due in large measure to her support and constant loyalty. In addition she put aside many of her interests to do those public things (and more) that the spouse of a premier is expected to do.

Nancye Cain was loved, admired and respected for her selflessness, and the Australian Labor Party owes her many grateful thanks. On behalf of the Parliament, the people of Victoria and my Ivanhoe constituency, we offer our condolences to Nancye's children, Joanne, John and James, and the extended Cain family.

ROWVILLE ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (12:44): This members statement condemns the state Labor government for failing to start construction on three major upgrades in Rowville and Lysterfield. The federal coalition government provided the full funding to duplicate these arterial roads in the May 2019 budget, with \$50 million for Napoleon Road, \$110 million for Wellington Road and \$80 million to extend Dorset Road out to Lysterfield Road. VicRoads have sat on this funding for 3½ years. Not a single one of these projects is shovel ready. Rowville and Lysterfield residents have waited years for these upgrades while state Labor strips money from roads budgets and maintenance. All three of these roads are crumbling, with potholes large enough to damage the wheel rim of a car. The risk to young inexperienced drivers or motorcyclists is horrifying. If Napoleon Road had been rebuilt and duplicated

in the last 3½ years, it would not be in such a bad state that the entire 2-kilometre section now has to be resurfaced. Major upgrades to the Wellington Road and Lysterfield Road duplications would fix many of the safety issues concerning residents. Labor has undermined basic services in our suburbs like roads and hospitals. Victorian lives are being put at risk. With federal government funds ready and waiting, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety has no excuse for delaying these vital upgrades any further.

VICTORIAN DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora—Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers) (12:46): I rise to acknowledge and thank the outgoing members of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, who recently concluded their term. The challenges faced in the disabled community have been immense in the last few years, and Victoria has been fortunate to have a disability advisory council who more than met that challenge. The wisdom, patience, insight and experience they brought while working alongside the Victorian government during the pandemic meant outcomes for Victorians with disability have been materially better. From disability liaison officers in hospitals to free RATs and access to COVID testing and vaccines appropriate to the needs of people with disability, they embodied the mantra of ‘Nothing about us without us’ when it was truly needed.

The work of the council goes beyond the pandemic, from helping embed universal design principles in our infrastructure to playing a central role in developing *Inclusive Victoria*, our state disability plan. The plan’s central pillars will embed inclusion and the social model of disability in our community, a living testament to their work. The nation-leading disability inclusion bill now open for consultation is an example of this. I would like to thank Amanda Lawrie-Jones, Caitlin Syer, Gabrielle Hall and Martin Heng, who are continuing as council members; outgoing members Jax Jacki Brown, Karen Fankhauser, Colin Hiscoe and Brent Phillips; and in particular the leadership of Dr George Taleporos, who has been an important source of wisdom to me and my predecessors in the role.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (12:47): In less than three months time Victorians will start voting in the 2022 state election. It will be an opportunity for voters to get rid of the most corrupt, secretive, incompetent, unaccountable and financially irresponsible government in Victoria’s history. Victoria was the most locked down place in the world, had some of the harshest COVID restrictions and yet had terrible results. Who can forget the dictatorial restrictions thrust upon all Victorians with no consideration, compassion or common sense? The damage from this government’s abusive behaviour towards its citizens is still being felt throughout our state and sadly will be for a long time still. Whether it is schoolchildren struggling with their schooling and day-to-day activities, business owners who have lost everything, older people who live in a permanent state of fear, people who have missed essential medical procedures with life-shortening consequences, countless workers who have been sacked from their jobs for making a medical choice or people whose lives have been turned upside down in countless other ways, this government stands condemned for its dictatorial attitude and the damage it has caused to our society.

On top of all that, the government’s gross mismanagement of both the health and the ambulance systems has resulted in the death of an unknown number of Victorians. Then there is the gross financial incompetence of this government, with Victorian state debt set to reach almost \$170 billion, more than the combined debt of New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. This is an appalling financial legacy to leave to future generations. On every measure this is the worst government in Victoria’s history, and I hope for the sake of all Victorians that it is voted out this November. Sadly, the Premier never takes responsibility or acknowledges the damage he has done, and he never apologises to Victorians.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (12:49): In our last sitting week for the year I would like to highlight the many things our government is doing in my community and has achieved for my community. This year has brought challenges along our road to recovery, but that has not stopped us. In fact we are the best performing economy in all of Australia and we have the lowest unemployment rate in nearly 50 years. Our health system, just like other states and nations, is under pressure. Despite the statements the Liberals have made, we are taking the necessary steps to provide the best and most successful health care and health facilities for every Victorian, including in my community at Monash hospital and the heart hospital. We have made the biggest investments in our history to recruit more nurses, doctors and staff; to build more hospitals; to establish primary care centres; to purchase new ambulances; to employ more paramedics; and to upgrade more emergency departments. As I said, the Victorian Heart Hospital in my patch is the first dedicated and specialist heart hospital in all of Australia, and this is something that I am especially proud of.

Last year I visited the new Monash emergency department in Clayton, offering more beds, more procedure rooms and a dedicated children's emergency area.

There will be free kinder permanently by 2023 and over 60 free TAFE courses, many of which are available at Holmesglen TAFE in my community. Major school upgrades in my local area continue. Mental health practitioners continue in every secondary school, and every single special school in Victoria has been upgraded or has at least been funded for an upgrade. There will be a guaranteed five days of sick pay for workers in casual and insecure work in my community because no-one should have to choose between a day's pay and their health. That and a lot more in my community— *(Time expired)*

LEONGATHA FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (12:50): Congratulations to Leongatha Football Netball Club's senior team on their premiership win over Sale in the Gippsland league on Saturday. The Parrots were declared both premiers and champions, having gone through an epic 2022 season undefeated. Parrots captain Tom Marriott was named best afield for the AFL Victoria Medal after also winning the Trood Award and Rodda Medal earlier in the week, capping off a stellar season for the midfield bull. Cade Maskell was a deserving winner of the Stan Aitken Medal after constantly repelling Sale attacks in defence. It was a double win for the Parrots, with their reserves also defeating Sale in the big one, while their A-grade netballers went down to undefeated Morwell. The Magpies were far from disgraced. Led by coach Jack Johnstone they pushed the undefeated Parrots all day and drew within six points midway through the last term in driving rain. They will be back next year for sure. Congratulations to both clubs and the league on a successful return after two seasons without finals.

SOUTH GIPPSLAND DAIRY AND FARMING EXPO

Mr D O'BRIEN: Congratulations to the Strzelecki Lions Club for another successful South Gippsland dairy expo recently in Korumburra. The dairy sector is critically important to Gippsland and I believe remains the largest single employer in my electorate of Gippsland South. The expo showcased the incredible technical complexity of the industry; the science, technology and research that goes into animal health, productivity, fodder and pasture management; and the importance of soils and environmental management in this great industry. May it go from strength to strength.

AFL GRAND FINAL

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (12:52): Grand final fever is here. Geelong is buzzing with excitement that the Cats are playing in the grand final next weekend. Go Cats. Congratulations also to St Mary's Football and Netball Club, who took out the grand final in Geelong—very excited for them.

GORDON TAFE

Ms COUZENS: Recently I joined the Minister for Training and Skills to officially open the new culinary school at the Gordon TAFE. I want to congratulate the CEO, Joe Ormeno, and his team for achieving this fantastic outcome for Geelong. The opening, held in the Davidson Restaurant, was filled with industry representatives, key Geelong stakeholders and past and present students. The feedback from industry and students was full of excitement and praise for the state-of-the-art culinary school. The Gordon currently trains 512 students in the school of culinary arts and tourism. The project will invigorate the Geelong city campus and train an additional 579 students, including 275 new apprentices and trainees, over the next four years. The state-of-the-art culinary training facility incorporates high-calibre innovation and quality facilities for students, staff, industry and the community and opportunities long term. The appointed builder, Kane Constructions, commenced in 2020, with 779 workers having input into the project. The Gordon culinary school project— (*Time expired*)

GAMBLING HARM

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (12:53): Today I rise to talk about the necessity of gambling harm reform, which is desperately required to stop the disruption that is destroying many individuals, families and communities. Financial ruin, relationship breakdowns, isolation, lies, deceit, criminal behaviour and suicide are far too common when poor mental health and depression entwine with gambling afflictions and where many good people from good families are impacted. The system is broken to a point where people are dying, and this needs to change. Statistics in this case do not lie, with the coroner stating that approximately 20 persons per year in Victoria are dying unnecessarily and directly from gambling harm. But we all know this figure is extraordinarily conservative, and the reality is that the real figure is far, far beyond the 20 that the coroner can account for.

Billions and billions of dollars are being lost each and every year by Victorians, but little is being done to reduce gambling harm by governments, other than tokenistic or ineffective programs and gimmicks. Whether I am an MP or not I will not stop this fight until effective and impactful legislation, regulations and oversight are put in place. I am not calling for gambling to be banned. But I am calling for the harm and deaths to stop, and this can be done by simple and effective reforms. It is a national shame and disgrace that people are dying because of gambling, but they are. We can do more and we can do better. In one of my last sentences in this Parliament I will say this: the only sure bet is that if we do nothing then nothing will change—people will continue to die, and that tragic outcome is on all of us.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr McGHIE (Melton) (12:55): As the last opportunity for a members statement for this term, I have been reflecting on the massive investments, particularly in education, in the Melton electorate. Exford Primary School received a massive \$25.3 million for upgrades. This was in addition to an earlier commitment of \$6 million and further funding to finally connect the school to a water and sewerage supply. I have been at the opening of the new primary school in Eynesbury and the new Strathulloh Primary School near Cobblebank, and in time for the next school year we will open another new primary school in Thornhill Park. Funding has been included for land at Cobblebank for a secondary school, and there is funding for acquiring land in the Weir Views area for the new Toolern Waters primary school, \$10.68 million to upgrade and modernise existing facilities at Darley Primary School, and a massive \$31.77 million to rebuild Staughton College in Melton South. Also we have provided in excess of \$9 million for Melton Specialist School. We have invested in funding for a new campus for Catholic Regional College and a new Catholic primary school opening in Weir Views. I opened the new gym and hall at St Anthony's in Melton South. Melton Christian College is well underway in building their new Toolern Vale campus with the help of the Andrews Labor government. I have been warmly welcomed at Al Iman College, opening new facilities there too. I have seen new upgrades like the new gym at Melton West Primary and the new shared use facility at Kurunjang Primary School, and I am looking forward to kicking a footy at the massive new build of the oval at

Melton Secondary College and seeing the lights go up and shining on the great students. We have also provided early learning centres right across the electorate and also a business case for TAFE. To cap that all off, we have also put in over \$900 million to build a brand new 274-bed hospital.

LIONS AUSTRALIA 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:56): I congratulate Lions Australia on its 75th anniversary in Australia. In Victoria there are more than 6000 Lions—and I am proud to be one of them—across 323 clubs. In the last financial year alone Lions in Victoria have contributed 261 649 volunteer hours and have raised more than \$3.6 million. Since the first Lions club was formed in Lismore, New South Wales, in September 1947, Lions Australia has grown to be Australia's largest service club organisation. For 75 years Lions Australia has served with uncommon kindness, putting the needs of our neighbours, our communities and our country first. Congratulations.

BEAUMARIS RESIDENTIAL HERITAGE

Mr ROWSWELL: I was disheartened to learn that the Minister for Planning has declined my invitation to meet with Beaumaris home owners affected by Bayside council's adoption of the postwar modern residential heritage study. To those in the community who have contacted me about this matter, I join in your frustration at the dismissive response from the Labor government and some Bayside councillors during this most stressful and difficult time. I will continue to stand with you and support you with a sensible approach that supports both heritage and the rights of property owners fairly.

SANDRINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr ROWSWELL: At around 4.20 am on Saturday, 1 February 2020, large parts of Sandringham Primary School were gutted by fire. Two and a half years on, last Thursday, I joined the school community for their new school opening. On the morning of the fire I contacted the then Minister for Education and received an immediate assurance that the school would be rebuilt. The following day I joined our community to establish a temporary school at Sandringham College and Sandringham East Primary School. The journey to the official opening is a story of determination, persistence and triumph, with Sandy's primary students at the forefront of every decision.

BAYSWATER ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (12:58): In my first speech to Parliament I said the following:

... I can assure you that not once nor will I ever take for granted the gravity of this position you have bestowed upon me. You have placed in me your trust to be your voice inside and outside this building, and I will not let you down.

The great privilege I have been given to be the Labor member for Bayswater is why I have not wasted a moment and have worked hard each and every day to deliver for Knox, because our community deserve nothing less. Together we have delivered record funding for local schools, our hospitals and our transport network and have created good local jobs.

Here are just a few examples of what we have achieved together: over \$70 million to deliver major upgrades for local schools like Wantirna College, Templeton Primary, Bayswater Primary, Fairhills High and many more; a \$112 million expansion to the Angliss Hospital; more nurses and more paramedics; delivering the North East Link and building the Metro Tunnel and the Suburban Rail Loop to get you home sooner; free kinder, starting next year; delivering the green heart of Knox with new wetlands at Lewis Park and lots of open space; fixing the McMahons Road intersection; revitalising the Boronia CBD; helping to deliver a new regional netball facility and creating Australia's home of basketball in Knox; a new SES building and building a new station for The Basin CFA; a new pavilion at JW Manson Reserve in Wantirna; and backing in grassroots sports locally. Locally, if re-elected, we will also deliver \$11.07 million to upgrade Bayswater South Primary School, and we will invest around \$1 billion to rebuild Maroondah Hospital.

I thank the local community for every opportunity to deliver for Knox and to be your voice. A Labor government values our community, and I love our community. There is so much more to do, and only a Labor government will get it done.

WOODMANS HILL SECONDARY COLLEGE

Ms SETTLE (Buninyong) (12:59): I had the absolute pleasure of visiting one of the fine schools in my region last week, the wonderful Woodmans Hill. I met with the principal, Stephan Fields, and year 7 coordinator, Heather McClure, to discuss ways to make the transition for year 7 students easier. Stephan and Heather highlighted the challenges for young people as they move from primary school to high school. These last few years have really highlighted the need for a moderated transition that acknowledges the very different structure of secondary school.

Two wonderful year 7 students, Lily and Hudson, took me on a tour of the school. It was fascinating to hear their thoughts on how the school can be improved. Woodmans Hill offers a truly first-class education to East Ballarat, Golden Point, Brown Hill and beyond. My heartfelt thanks to all the staff at the school for their commitment and dedication to providing the very best education to our children. Though I know many of you will continue to design and develop great teaching programs over the next few weeks, try and have a break. A happy school holidays and a thankyou, for all that they do, to the wonderful staff and students of Woodmans Hill.

SEBASTOPOL FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB

Ms SETTLE: In the short moment I have left I would just like to say ‘Up the Burra!’ to all of those at Sebastopol Football Netball Club. It is not the result that we wanted, but you did us all proud. Congratulations to my friend in Melton.

MAROONDAH HOSPITAL

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (13:01): On Sunday I had the honour of standing with the Premier as we announced that a re-elected Andrews Labor government will redevelop and expand the Maroondah Hospital at Ringwood. This investment of between \$850 million and \$1.05 billion will deliver a new emergency department, operating theatres, day procedure facilities and specialist care spaces. It will also feature an expanded medical imaging unit and two six-storey inpatient towers, housing more than 200 extra beds. As a local, I know that this investment will mean so much to our community. The new ED will have an extra 14 treatment spaces so that more patients can be seen faster. But it is not just about capacity. The new ED will deliver more modern and comfortable spaces for patients and staff. As a father of four, I know that a trip to the ED can be scary for kids and stressful for their families, and that is why the new ED will have dedicated waiting and treatment areas for families. There will also be a new mental health hub to provide dedicated support and treatment to people experiencing psychological distress, with quieter, more secluded spaces. Construction on the new hospital is expected to start in 2025, and around 2500 jobs will be created during construction alone.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES REDIVISION

Mr FOWLES: This will be my final members statement as the member for Burwood. The electorate has once again been written off the map by the redistribution undertaken by the Victorian Electoral Commission. I say ‘again’ because it was abolished previously in 1967 before it was re-established in 1976. On 26 November the constituents of Burwood will be deciding who will represent them in the electorates of Ashwood, Box Hill and Hawthorn.

NORTHCOTE ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (13:02): As we close the last sitting week of the year and this term of government, I want to reflect on the last four years. In 2018 I was honoured to be elected to serve the community I was born and raised in, Northcote. Elected on the promise of action, not words, I have spent every day working with residents, business and our schools and community groups to listen and deliver on the issues we care about. It has been a tumultuous few years, among the most

challenging in a generation. Through it all I have been so grateful to the people of Northcote, who have risen with courage and determination. Together we have achieved so much. We have delivered upgrades and improvements at every local school, modernised our transport networks, opened new public health services and built critical social housing. We have backed important projects like the Alphington link, removed four level crossings, upgraded sportsgrounds and built 18 new netball courts. Over \$5 million has gone to supporting our multicultural, First Nations, seniors and community organisations. Local traders have been funded to bring back the wonderful High Street festival to generate jobs and re-energise our creative and live music industries, and we have propelled landmark reforms like free kinder, sick pay for casuals and a new mental health system.

When I was elected I committed to pushing for rapid climate action. Victoria is now leading the nation to transition to renewable energy, and I have been proud to work to secure gas-free housing and waste reform and protect our waterways. Real action comes through vision, values and hard work, not empty promises. Northcote, I am so proud of how far we have come. There is still more to do to make our suburbs stronger, fairer and more sustainable, and Labor has the momentum to do it.

CLARINDA ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr TAK (Clarinda) (13:04): The last four years have passed very quickly, but we have achieved a lot in the Clarinda district. We have invested in schools, kinder and TAFE. We have completed Huntingdale Primary School, stage 2; Clarinda Primary, stage 1; and Westall Primary, stage 1. We have also got stage 1 projects on the go at Westall Secondary, South Oakleigh College and Oakleigh South Primary as well as Westall Primary, stage 2. And there is so much more. For our youngest learners we have upgraded Washington Drive kinder in Oakleigh South and upgraded Sundowner and Farm Road kinders in Clarinda and Cheltenham. Kinder upgrades in Cheltenham North and Dingley Village are also underway. We have invested in the health infrastructure and services the community need. We have completed the Monash Medical Centre emergency redevelopment and have so many important and exciting projects underway, like the Monash heart hospital and Kingston Centre aged care facility rebuilds, the Monash mobile stroke unit and the Monash ED mental health and alcohol and other drugs hub.

In local sport, the Dales Park and Le Page Park pavilions are complete, with lighting delivered at 10 playing reserves, and the new South Oakleigh Bowling Club green looks amazing. There are the Mordialloc Freeway and Springvale Boulevard upgrades, parks upgrades and so much more.

Thank you to Peter, Joel, Nancy, Declan, Angie, Salazar and Rachiel from the Clarinda electorate office for their fantastic work, and thank you to the whole Clarinda community.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (13:05): In the about 9 seconds we have left in members statements on Tuesday, all I really want to say is only an Andrews Labor government will continue to do what matters.

Business of the house

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (13:06): I move:

That the consideration of order of the day, government business, 1 be postponed until later this day.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022*Second reading***Debate resumed on motion of Mr BROOKS:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (13:06): It is a pleasure to rise and provide a few comments on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. In starting out, I acknowledge that the purpose of the bill is to amend the Disability Act 2006, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 and to make some consequential amendments to other acts. We will not be opposing this legislation; in fact we will be supporting it.

One of the overriding questions when we are talking about safety elements for the disability sector and important outcomes for the disability sector is why now? Why has this bill, which was introduced some weeks ago, only arrived in the Parliament now for debate? The second-reading speech talks about these reforms being important reforms for the disability sector, but here we are dragging our feet, debating it on the second-last day of our sittings for the year with not only no hope of this legislation progressing to the Legislative Council but absolutely no hope of it getting royal assent. This bill is just going to fall by the wayside. I do not know if it is because the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers did not pull much weight in relation to getting this through. He is pretty adamant in his second-reading speech that this is important legislation, but he does not seem to have been able to convince the powers that be of that, but here we are now.

This is one of the reasons why on these bills this week, which are both meant to be important bills, there will be relatively limited speaking lists. This bill is going to go nowhere. It is going to have to be revisited by whoever forms government in November and by the next Parliament because it is simply not going to get through. That element of this legislation is relatively disappointing, I must say. We do have some reforms, which I will get to in a short period of time, but they will go nowhere in relation to assisting and improving certain elements for those in the disability sector.

The bill aligns state services better with the NDIS, and it does remove some discrepancies with the NDIS. It improves practices around supervised treatment orders. It upgrades information-sharing opportunities, and that will obviously assist in overseeing the safeguards for workers and clients. It disbands the Disability Services Board and expands the role of the community visitor program, and that is quite a positive move which I will make a few comments on later. It improves tenancy safeguards for people with disability. It clarifies the role of the department secretary to only be responsible for state services. I understand why that has been required with the transition to the NDIS, and we do not have any problems with that. It will allow the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria to accept NDIS clearance in lieu of a criminal history check, and I will get on to this duplication of criteria and clearances a little bit later. It also removes the barriers to residents of group homes provided by disability service providers receiving rights under the Residential Tenancies Act. That is a matter of equality across the board, and that is also something that we do not have any issues with.

I want to talk for a few moments on the issue around disability worker registration. This requires some further commentary. It is an area that has proved challenging for the sector for a range of reasons, but there are a couple of major ones. The first is the administrative burden on providers. It is a common piece of feedback wherever I go. No matter which corner of the state I go to, I have disability service providers continually talking to me about the administrative burden of registering employees and getting clearance for employees. Now, I do not think any member of Parliament in this chamber would suggest that we can compromise the safety checks and balances that are put in place. The recipient of every service certainly needs those oversights. They need to have faith that whoever is caring for them, looking after them and fulfilling a role to do with their health and wellbeing has ticked every box in relation to being a fit and proper person, but it does also throw up the fact that it is a very common

theme. Whenever I have these discussions it is very common to hear that at the state level in Victoria we have a duplication of certain elements of the registration that other jurisdictions around this country do not have, and it is very administratively burdensome for these service providers. This administrative burden in turn impacts the cost-effectiveness of the service provider, and then that in turn impacts on the level of service and the amount of services that can be offered to potential clients in those respective communities. It can also impact on the workforce in areas of thin markets—and I represent an electorate that has many rural and remote areas that are quite thin markets.

One area I want to talk about I guess from more of an NDIS perspective is the caps on travel in rural areas and the need for those caps on travel to be expanded under the NDIS. One such example that I have—and I am sure that other country MPs would have others; I am sure the member for Ripon would have some examples, but I will relay one from my electorate—is where we have a family in Orbost at present that needs to access services that are offered by a service provider in Bairnsdale. It is an hour away from their primary place of residence, however. The family has to take into consideration for their child the cost of this travel, and they have an NDIS package that has the travel capped. Now, there needs to be a greater appreciation at the federal level of the distances that need to be travelled to access appropriate services.

I believe that there is one relatively quick fix that could be administered that is not going to cost more money in relation to provision of packages, and that is to allow flexibility for those people living in rural and regional areas who receive NDIS packages. They might have one element of their package that is not fully spent, and for rural and regional recipients, if we can top up the travel budget with some unspent funds out of another area of their NDIS package, that will be a short-term measure that will provide great assistance in meeting some of these additional travel costs without having to top up their travel budget with additional funds. It will just provide a level of flexibility for those rural and regional people who are exhausting their travel budgets because of their geographical location. It does not have to be a measure that is applied right across the board, just for those in rural and regional areas where they are having those travel cost challenges. This is a matter that I will again be taking up with the federal minister now that we have a new government in that jurisdiction, because I think that there is still not an appreciation of some of those geographical challenges that we face.

I want to get back now briefly to some of the amendments in this bill. We know that it will amend the Disability Act 2006 to improve the rights of people living in residential services and those subject to compulsory treatment and restrictive practices, which is an area of great contention. This includes ensuring that treatment plans are appropriately explained and provided in an accessible format and will include specific legislative obligations. One would question why that is not already in place now. In 2019 a disability bill came into the chamber that was going to address all the issues and concerns in restrictive practices, and it was also going to align our state-level measures with those that exist at the federal level. That bill sailed through. Now we are standing here again, with a bill that will not go through and receive royal assent, but we are told that further amendments are required to remove uncertainty in the act and ensure that there is consistency and accountability in that area. I thought we did this last time, but it seems the minister at the time never got it quite right, so we find ourselves back here making some more changes.

This bill will update outdated information-sharing practices to provide better safeguards. That is an element of this we support. It is an element where everything should already be in place after this amount of time at the state level, but again we find ourselves in the situation where not every i has been dotted and t has been crossed and we find ourselves back here with further change needed.

This bill will clarify functions and responsibilities of the Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. I understand this and support this. With a number of the elements of disability care being handed over to the NDIS, this change will make sure that our state secretary is only responsible for the services that Victoria is involved in.

The final change is to allow for the dissolution of the Disability Services Board and expand the properties that community visitors can visit. As the majority of disability services have transitioned over to the NDIS, on this point I agree with the minister that the role of the disability services commissioner and board has been significantly reduced and there are those oversights existing at the federal level, so that board is no longer required. In relation to the community visitors—and I must add while we are talking about them that the community visitors play a very important role in our community in providing oversights in the disability sector—the legislative change here will allow the minister the flexibility to open up more areas for community visitors to visit. That will expand the level of oversight that they have in the disability sector, and that is an element of the bill we also support. Properties approved by the senior practitioner to provide suitable treatment will be subject to the community visitors program, which is a good move. It is a move we support, and again I just put on record the great role that our community visitors play in providing oversight in the sector.

I want to get onto the Residential Tenancies Act just for a couple of short moments. The bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 in relation to supported disability accommodation enrolled homes. The bill removes barriers to residents of group homes, which are provided by various disability service providers across the state, receiving rights under the Residential Tenancies Act. When we finally get this through, hopefully in the next term of government, disability accommodation clients will have rights under the Residential Tenancies Act, and it is absolutely appropriate that they do. It will ensure that those residents in group homes meet the definitions of the act and that they have those applicable residential rights and protections being afforded to them as should be the case—although I will add that changes to the Residential Tenancies Act were the subject of previous amendments that came into this chamber I think two years ago. Because the government did not get it quite right at that particular time, we find ourselves again having to make changes to the Residential Tenancies Act in areas that were overlooked or where there was a level of oversight and they were not addressed last time around. In the second-reading speech the government says that this was:

... due to unanticipated impediments for persons to access specialist disability accommodation provided under the NDIS.

It does not say what those unanticipated impediments were, and it sounds a little bit like a bureaucratic stuff-up to me. But anyway, we are on the right pathway, hopefully, second time around, to have these elements fixed, and hopefully we do not have to come back and revisit the Residential Tenancies Act a third time.

The bill amends the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 in relation to registration requirements. I made some comments earlier in relation to the need to be able to remove duplication in our registration requirements for workers without impacting the safety elements that go with them, and these amendments will allow the disability worker registration board to accept NDIS clearance in lieu of a criminal history check when disability workers voluntarily seek to register. This is a step that does remove a bit of red tape, which is good. It certainly does remove a bit of red tape, and we commend this change as being a proactive one. But I still do think that we have certain areas of legislation where there is duplication that we can look at further. The screening checks for NDIS-registered disability workers are currently duplicative, as the second-reading speech says, and these amendments do assist in alleviating that. As I said, this bill makes that small step in removing some duplication, but I do seriously believe that we can adopt some of the approaches of other jurisdictions in Australia that are operating very, very effectively and very, very safely without the level of duplication that we do have here in Victoria.

The bill strengthens the information-sharing provisions between the board and the NDIS workers, and that is something that we support. We certainly should be removing any impediments to sharing information appropriately. That will result in a whole range of things. It will allow for workers to be registered far more quickly if we remove that impediment to sharing information. That in turn will allow our service providers to employ people more quickly and provide improved services to the communities in which they are operating and the communities they represent. It will also greatly assist

in thin markets if we can get people on the ground quicker. Most importantly, the client at the end does not have to have that impediment of, having identified an appropriate worker, having to wait an extended amount of time for the checks and balances to come through. If we can alleviate some of that by removing some of these information-sharing impediments, that is certainly a positive move. The amendments and subsequent streamlining should allow this to occur, but again I just say there is more that we can do in this area.

In finishing up I just want to say that all these changes in here are quite positive changes, and that is the reason we have adopted our position on the bill. It fixes some mistakes and oversights that should have already been addressed, and the second-reading speech almost says that to a degree, if you read between the lines. But this bill overall will provide for the betterment of the disability sector, and that is why we are not opposing it in this house.

Mr J BULL (Sunbury) (13:23): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to debate on this important piece of legislation, the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. Whether it is in education, health, transport, the environment, community services or disability services, this Andrews Labor government is about doing what matters and is about supporting Victorians right across the state. As we have heard thus far, there is nothing more important than supporting those within our community that do have a disability, and we know that this bill is about further supporting those within the community who have disabilities, their families and those who support them right across the state.

Before I get to some of the changes contained within this piece of legislation, this bill, I do want to give a special acknowledgement—a shout-out, if you like—to those within our community that work within disability services and families as well. We know that there are many, many organisations within local communities, within local electorates, that do some outstanding work, and I just want to put that on the record this morning.

One such organisation is Distinctive Options within my local community. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to visit a few weeks ago to be on the Distinctive Options radio show and to have what I think was a really important conversation, a very important discussion, with locals within my community that participate in and work with those at Distinctive Options. They have done a lot of work for a long period of time. They are based over the road from my office, and I just want to take the opportunity, whilst I have the opportunity, to acknowledge their work and the terrific contribution that they make to our local community.

We know that in March this year the government announced the legislative amendments that would be made to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and to strengthen the quality and safeguards in services for people with a disability. The Disability Amendment Bill acquits this commitment. We know that this bill is one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act 2006 review, which has been underway since 2018. I will get to some further remarks on the review later on in my contribution. It is a priority government reform, and it is aimed at ensuring our legislative frameworks are fit for purpose, are contemporary and do create meaningful change for people with a disability. The second key piece to be delivered is the release of the exposure draft of a new disability inclusion bill for public consultation. The exposure draft of the bill will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion.

The Disability Amendment Bill 2022, as we have heard, amends the Disability Act 2006, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 to bring about those critical amendments that will increase rights and protections, improve services and bring about better service coordination, and clarify functions and responsibilities to reduce duplication.

Deputy Speaker, I am sure you and many members of this house work with those in our community who do have a disability, various service providers and organisations and volunteers and the like. What is really important is to be part of making contributions and making a system whereby red tape is reduced but the highest quality of service and standards are provided by this government in partnership

with both the federal government and local government, the not-for-profit sector and those right across the community who do such incredibly important work.

There are key amendments within this piece of legislation. One of those is around clarifying residential rights and duties for people subject to civil and criminal orders in disability residential services and parameters for service providers in delivering residential and treatment services and also ensuring residential rights and protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation that does not meet the current definition within the Residential Tenancies Act.

We know that improved service is something that is raised often with us as members of the government and indeed members of the Parliament. The bill aligns legislation and removes duplication to ensure the accountability and consistency of the approval requirements for the use of restrictive practices for both the national disability insurance scheme and the state-funded disability service providers—and of course that is an important relationship, an important dynamic—by addressing those gaps and clarifying the criteria and the processes for compulsory treatment and placement in residential treatment facilities to support client and operational safety and strengthening clinical oversight of admission and extensions of admissions.

The bill allows the minister to declare additional categories of disability accommodation so that community visitors can inquire into the quality and standard of support provided to residents. I mentioned earlier the better service coordination, and we know that service coordination within this space for those with a disability is incredibly important to the individual, to the family and to the wider community, and it is really pleasing to see these steps that are also contained within this piece of legislation. The bill clarifies the functions and the responsibilities of the Secretary of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to ensure that the secretary is only responsible for services that the secretary funds. It also clarifies the secretary's function in relation to acquiring, holding or disposing of land and granting land. There is a piece of work around reducing duplication by allowing NDIS worker screening clearance in lieu of a criminal history check for the voluntary registration of disability workers.

What we know is that consultation is critically important both within this space and within all of the initiatives and pieces of legislation that come before the house. We are making sure that we are working with those who work with people with disabilities and that first and foremost we are listening to those with disabilities as we continue to develop a whole series of frameworks and continue to support those within our community who of course are rightfully entitled to each and every opportunity, whether that be in education, whether that be in health or whether it be in employment. Making sure that we are taking these steps and providing this support is critical.

What we know is that this government will continue to value fairness, will continue to value equality, make important reforms and have important discussions and will continue to bring pieces of legislation before the house that go to fairness, that go to equality and that go to making sure that no matter where you live in this great state of Victoria you are provided with the very best opportunities to be your best. We know that this bill builds on a whole series of reforms, whether it be the more than \$9 billion in early childhood education, whether it be the development of the Education State, of supporting our schools, of building new schools and modernising existing schools or whether it be through the Big Build, making sure that we are investing in key transport projects and infrastructure right across the state that ensure people can get where they need to go to at each and every opportunity. It is a really important piece of legislation.

What this bill does is ensure that we continue to focus on those critical values of fairness, making sure that those within our community who face some serious challenges are supported and taken care of and that the service standards are the highest they can possibly be. We know of course that in 2013 it was indeed a federal Labor government that initiated the delivery of the NDIS so that people living with a disability could have the opportunity for choice and control of their lives. We know that what is really important is that this Andrews Labor government continues to invest in and be an integral

part of the rollout of the NDIS, understanding and knowing that there is a \$2.5 billion contribution. There is \$40 million for a transition support package to support people with a disability, carers and service providers to navigate through this transition. There is also \$26 million to transform the disability workforce in Victoria as part of the transition to the NDIS.

This piece of legislation, the Disability Amendment Bill 2022, continues to do what this government is focused on each and every day. We have the opportunity to be on the Treasury benches to make sure that we are giving every single Victorian the very best chance and the very best opportunity to be their best, to be supported by their family and by their friends, and to go on and get employment opportunities, whatever that employment may be. I am very proud to commend the bill to the house.

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (13:33): It is a pleasure to rise to speak on this bill before us, the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. Can I say at the outset this is an issue that is very close to my heart. It is a passion that we have been driving through my constituency of Caulfield for a number of years now. I acknowledge the work of our Shadow Minister for Disability, Seniors and Carers at the table, the member for Gippsland East, for his work in the disability sector.

Unfortunately it is a shame that we have got this bill before us in the last sitting week of Parliament, when it will not have the opportunity to actually pass. A lot of the issues that we are talking about here are in terms of residential care housing and ensuring that those with a disability are properly acknowledged and supported through the housing process. There are a number of providers through my electorate, both private and community providers, who do a great job, but again they are left short because we do not have a lot of this capacity which we are talking about today in terms of the support mechanisms to provide those with a disability with access to the proper laws and channels in terms of advocacy and process. It is a real shame and, I have got to say, very unfortunate that we are talking on this bill which will not pass until the next Parliament.

Only last week I was with an organisation called Tikkun Olam Makers. TOM is a group that works in the specific area of providing solutions to those with a disability to live everyday lives and do things that we take for granted. Mandy McCracken, the MC for their event, was talking about a charity that she is setting up, which is a support mechanism for parents. She spoke about her issue of losing both legs and arms and wanting to be able to ride a bike. They organised a whole group of engineers and students, who paired up with her, along with mentors, and that was her introduction to TOM. She came back and MCed the event just a couple of nights ago.

One of the local charities in my area, Access, does a whole range of things, including cooking great biscuits. For anyone that is looking for treats for gifts, Access do a fantastic job of that. One of the issues I saw as a 'need knower' at TOM last week was that some of the kids that work at Access, when mixing a bowl, because of their disability, cannot hold the bowl and the bowl moves around on the table, so they are not able to mix the dough and what have you to make the cookies. Some engineering students and the group that was partnered with them worked on using a magnet to be able to attach the bowl to a table so the bowl could be mixed without having to have a second hand to hold it. These are just basic things that we take for granted every day. I want to especially put on record my thanks to Debbie Dadon. Debbie Dadon runs a philanthropic organisation supporting so many different things right throughout the state and right throughout Australia through the Dadon family and the Besen family. Many will be very aware of the Besen family. She championed and brought TOM to Australia, and she has been working for a number of years with them. I just want to thank her for the great work that she has been doing at TOM.

There are a number of organisations that raise with me issues around the NDIS. Flying Fox and Dean Cohen provide these fantastic camps through regional Victoria. He has also got a number of houses to give families respite, and he has got a couple of houses already set up through philanthropic money and fundraising activities. Dean does a fantastic job. Those camps are sensational. You only have to go out and spend some time with some of the kids to see that. The great thing that Dean does is he gets a lot of university students that act as mentors and support carers during these camps. He has taken

literally hundreds of university students through his camps and given them some really good life skills—better than what you will find at any university anywhere. It is fantastic, what he does, in not only changing the lives of those kids with a disability but also ensuring that those carers are given real skills that they can take into the future. All of this is about recognising the ability in the disability and focusing on ensuring that these kids and those with a disability can lead normal lives.

I also want to put on record my thanks for the work of All Things Equal. We launched an election commitment only a week ago. All Things Equal is a cafe. It is a social enterprise in Carlisle Street, Balaclava. They provide a fantastic workplace and training for those with a disability. It is a fantastic cafe. Our election commitment is about taking All Things Equal on the road with a food truck, being able to take those kids out and about and into the community, whether it is to footy clubs, sporting clubs, fetes or festivals. I spoke to some of these kids—to Zac and a whole range of others that were there—and I asked them, ‘Where would you take the truck?’. I had great responses from these kids that got on the back of a truck that we took there to show them what this could be like. I want to thank Phillip Kingston and Gary Peer, who provided their food trucks so the kids could get a bit of firsthand experience of what this would be like. The kids were saying, ‘We’d take it to the beach; we’d take it to a festival’. One of the kids even said, ‘We’d take it to the pub’. I said that is a great idea. After people have had a few drinks, they can make them a coffee on the way out.

These are great kids and these are great programs, and a big shout-out to All Things Equal for the work that they do. Jewish Care do a fantastic job, particularly in housing, NDIS programs and disability support services. I worked with Jewish Care in setting up the Jewish social inclusion network. I chaired that for a number of years, bringing the organisations that I am talking about together so we could share and collaborate with one another. It is a great model. We have got a lot of organisations that are actually sharing and doing some of this fantastic work together, and I would thoroughly recommend it. We have got to get collaboration; we have got to get support.

There is another thing that the NDIS does not recognise at the moment, and it is why we need to be talking about these things in Parliament and changing laws. Some of these smaller organisations are not getting the support. They are not recognised as providers, yet they change people’s lives. It is not just about the big providers, but some of the small community providers should be recognised and be able to provide services through the NDIS. I would recognise that as an important initiative.

Finally, a few weeks back we actually had a session, again in Caulfield, where we brought a lot of parents and community organisations together to talk about some of the gaps. We heard from a whole lot of parents. It was a very emotional time hearing what kids are going through and what parents are going through and what could be done to fill those gaps. Some of the parents gave heartbreaking examples of their kids falling through the cracks and not being able to get NDIS funding and getting a kind of stock standard approach in terms of what they were receiving—nowhere near the support needed for many of those kids. We had the opportunity to go around and write on a board what would be needed to help many of those kids—changes to make a difference—and to just read what some of the parents were writing on the wall: ‘I just want my kid to be accepted’, ‘I just want to be able to come home and be able to see a smile on our kid’s face’. The fact is many of these parents have gone school shopping because their kids have been booted out of many schools—which still do not have the services, which still do not have the carers, which still do not have even the basic support. There are still so many schools in my electorate that do not even have disability access. You cannot even get into some of the schools. It was just beyond belief that I would go to Caulfield South Primary School—

Ms Green interjected.

Mr SOUTHWICK: The fact that the member for Yan Yean would interject over something as sensitive as disability is a joke. You are a disgrace.

At Caulfield South Primary School some of the parents spoke to me about their funding requirements. Particularly one of the parents, who lives with a disability, said to me he quite often cannot get to the

school. Because he cannot get up the stairs and cannot get into the school, he spends very little time at the school where his kids go. They are basic things that need to be fixed, from just hearing some of those parents who were able to raise those issues. Again, I understand that some of these schools are very old and it is hard, but it is no excuse. We have got to fix that. We have got to make all buildings accessible. We have got to be able to open the door and change things to ensure all people are treated equally. We are doing some fantastic work—not we, but our community is doing fantastic work, and I am very proud to be part of a community that champions disability and ensures that we put the ‘ability’ back in disability and that everybody is treated equally.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (13:43): I take great pride in joining the debate on this bill before the house. I want to say at the outset how delighted I was when the member for Bundoora was appointed to this important portfolio. He has been a champion for people with disability in the whole time that he has been in this place. Together we share some services, as he is one of my neighbouring MPs, and I know the passion that he has had, for example, for the Diamond Valley Special Developmental School, which the member for Eltham and I were really pleased to visit only a few weeks ago to turn the sod with the students there. Anthony Rosenthal, who is the principal there, and his predecessor, Brendan White, are two of the most amazing professionals that I have ever worked with in disability.

The member for Bundoora succeeded Sherryl Garbutt, the previous member for Bundoora, who was the minister that undertook a review and enacted the Disability Act in 2006, which for the first time provided a whole-of-government and community response to the rights of people with disability. I note that Cheryl Garbutt had a great passion for the services Kalparrin and Araluen, which operate through my electorate and those of the member for Eltham, the member for Ivanhoe and the member for Bundoora.

I particularly want to single out Ross Coverdale and the amazing staff at Araluen. They have a number of service centres throughout the north-eastern suburbs. I have had the privilege of working closely with them, with their board, with their staff and with the parents of participants. Particularly I just love the facility in Diamond Creek, which has an art studio. It has a music studio, Tiger Studio, named in honour of the late Tiger Barden, who established a football competition for kids with disabilities in his work through the Lower Plenty Football Club. The late Tiger Barden was an amazing champion for his own son but also for every other young person with a disability. I have had the privilege of working closely with Araluen in their attempts to get intergenerational housing for the participants of Araluen so that they can live in dignity and live with their ageing parents and do not necessarily have to go into an aged care facility. They can live in dignity, and then when their older parents pass on they actually have a property that they know, where they are loved and where they are supported. It was a deep shame that the Shire of Nillumbik reneged on the plan to build this village in Hurstbridge, but I am really hoping that that dream can be realised in Yarrambat.

One of the things that I hope to continue after I have left this place after 20 years is my passion in working for people with disability. I am really pleased to have been elected to a voluntary position on the board of Disabled Wintersport Australia (DWA). I have had the privilege of being a volunteer guide for that organisation, a snow sports guide, for about six or seven years now. They are just a magnificent organisation that helps people with disability realise their dreams on the snow. It could be that they go on and compete in the Paralympics or other competitive things, but otherwise they might just have a holiday, and that one time where they experience the exhilaration of being on snow, the freedom of being on snow and being supported with guides, might actually give them the confidence, if they have an acquired disability, to return to the workforce. It is an amazing organisation.

They have a desire to establish more disabled-friendly accommodation at all ski resorts in Australia. I think this will then mean that Disabled Wintersport will be able to expand their services into the green season—into hiking and reclining cycling. One of the winter sports that I am passionate about but that can also be done over the summer is ski biathlon. I am really glad that we have put funding into the ski biathlon course at Mount Hotham, and that will be a really great thing for those athletes and potential athletes.

Another thing I would love to see is all-abilities accommodation. The YMCA currently operates on behalf of DWA at Bogong Village accessible accommodation, where camps are run from and where people can stay or use it as a day facility when they are skiing. But it is actually still below the snow line, so I am really hoping we can establish accommodation above the snow line so it can mean that more people with disability and guides can have accommodation where they can stay on mountain. While the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events is at the table I think there is great potential if some of this accommodation were able to be delivered before our regional Commonwealth Games, because there will be many para-athletes who will want to undertake training here in Victoria before the competition starts, but also there will be lead-up events. I am absolutely certain that the four villages will be accessible for all athletes, but there will be a need for other accommodation, so that is something that I really hope to work on post this life.

The bill clarifies the residential rights and duties for people subject to civil and criminal orders in disability residential services and parameters for service providers in delivering residential and treatment services. It also ensures residential rights protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation that does not meet the current definitions in the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. The bill aligns and removes duplication and ensures accountability and consistency of approval requirements for the use of restrictive practices for both NDIS and state-funded disability service providers. It also addresses gaps and clarifies the criteria and processes for compulsory treatment and placement in residential treatment facilities to support client and operational safety and to strengthen clinical oversight of admission and extensions of admissions. The bill allows the minister to declare additional categories of disability accommodation so that community visitors can inquire into the quality and standard of support provided to residents.

I want to take the opportunity to call out the Health and Community Services Union, a union that I have been very close to for a long time, previously under the leadership of Lloyd Williams as secretary and now my dear friend Paul—we did year 12 together—and Deb Gunn, the president, who is a constituent of mine who does amazing work as a volunteer in the CFA and in the RSL sub-branch in Doreen.

I also want to pay tribute to another dear friend who is the principal of The Lakes school in South Morang, which is collocated with Merriang Special Development School. It has been breaking down barriers for a very long time. I know that Kerrie and the Heenan family have lived their values in that she has raised a daughter with a disability herself, so there could have been no-one more compassionate to be principal of a mainstream school and the founding principal of The Lakes school. I want to thank Kerrie and her staff for their work for such a long time and her advocacy for people with disability alongside the fantastic Health and Community Services Union. They were in the Parliament raising issues with members just in the last sitting week around mental health, and they are always working and looking at ways that we can better support workforce but also services for people with disability and mental health issues. This is a government that has had disability at the centre of its focus—and the previous governments, the Bracks and Brumby governments, as well. I commend all those that have worked on this bill and wish the bill speedy passage. I commend it to the house.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (13:53): It is a real pleasure and honour to rise and speak on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022 and to follow the member for Yan Yean. I will start my contribution also by shouting out to the legends of the Health and Community Services Union, whose members do a great deal of work in supporting people with disabilities in our community, and all the disability support workforce, who do an extraordinary job in helping some of the most vulnerable in our community. It is also a time to reflect on the many volunteer carers that we have in our community. Over 700 000 Victorians provide care or support for someone that they love, nurture and care for, and a lot of that comes down to supporting some of the 1.1 million Victorians who live with disability. It is an extraordinary contribution that people make in the love and support of a family member, friend or someone close to them. It truly is a Victorian hallmark, supporting one another and caring for one another. This bill brings in important safeguards to support people with disability in the residential protections

that are put forward in this amendment for disability accommodation, particularly strengthening the quality and safeguards in services for people with disability.

I know the member for Caulfield made some reflections on this bill coming before the chamber and its timing. We did not just rock up in the last few weeks, put the bill in and discuss it. This government has a substantial track record of supporting people living with disability. That is what we do. We front up in every single element and support Victorians with disability, such as with the *Inclusive Victoria* report that was released just recently by the former Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, the member for Ivanhoe. One key reflection was on a more inclusive and supportive Victoria.

This bill, the Disability Amendment Bill, is the second stage of reforms. The first stage was in 2019 as we got underway with the national disability insurance scheme, and I want to place on record my relief on behalf of my community that the federal Minister for the NDIS, Bill Shorten, the member for Maribyrnong, has taken over that role. We saw the NDIS in a terrible state. We saw at one stage the federal coalition government try to make their budget savings on the back of people living with disability and the impact that that had on their care and their support in that community. That is the callous nature of cutting from the most vulnerable in our community, and my community certainly do not forget when they tried to make the savings on the back of the most vulnerable, not taking tax cuts off those that are making record profits in communities. No, it was about going after the most vulnerable, and that is how they tried to—

Mr M O'Brien interjected.

Mr RICHARDSON: The member for Malvern might make a contribution. He is over there. He is a bit lippy, with the member for Bulleen in all sorts. But you did not see the member for Bulleen coming out and saying to the member for Kooyong, 'Any danger of not cutting?'. No, the member for Malvern did not come out and challenge them. He might have been Leader of the Opposition at the time. They were the grand old days. Weren't they great times when the Liberal primary vote was in 34 per cent territory, not 26 or 27? He was still Mr 16 per cent in popularity, but he is more popular than the member for Bulleen at the moment, isn't he? I am sure he is hoping that the member for Kew will keep nudging and keep undermining the member for Bulleen. Maybe he will apologise on behalf of his Liberal colleagues for the damaging cuts that were made to the NDIS during that time, but do not hold your breath, because it is Liberal first on that side and Victorians second. We saw that throughout their reign, throughout their representation when the former Prime Minister was dudding Victoria. Disability support was taking a back step, and where were they?

Mr M O'Brien interjected.

Mr RICHARDSON: Maybe the member for Malvern will get up and bother to make a speech on this. Maybe he will actually bother to make a speech.

The member for Caulfield, in his contribution, suggested that we have not made a significant investment in disability inclusion, particularly in schools. There are 36 000 buildings that the Victorian government looks after and manages each and every day to make them more accessible. We have got the disability inclusion package that has been put forward. We have also got the Inclusive Schools Fund, round 8, \$200 000 of investment in school after school that is making buildings and play spaces more accessible—eight rounds of funding and investment. We created that package, and we have delivered hundreds of projects in disability inclusion access.

Mr J Bull: In every special school.

Mr RICHARDSON: As the member for Sunbury rightly points out, every single specialist school in Victoria in every SES setting, 83 in total, are being upgraded—major upgrades. When I came to be a member of Parliament in 2014, those opposite could not find a specialist school or SES. Every single one of their buildings was in disrepair. In four years there was not one substantial investment in our disability schools, and then what happened? There was an Andrews Labor government elected and it

delivered more investment and more support. For the member for Caulfield to suggest that the Inclusive Schools Fund has not delivered all that support, the maintenance funding program that we put forward directly targets, directly supports—

Mr Newbury: Labor seats.

Mr RICHARDSON: better accessibility. If the member for Brighton bothered to look at some of his school lists, he would see the substantial investment that has been made in maintenance funding and greater accessibility. I have come and opened some in his area. Maybe I will have to take him on a tour and go through once again.

This goes as well to our investment in disability inclusion and support. The disability inclusion package, for the one in five kids that need additional support in our schools, is a \$1.6 billion investment that is being rolled out. That is about being more inclusive and more supportive of our community. We will not be lectured to by those opposite about disability inclusion and support when they federally slashed and burned and cut budgets and propped up their budgets on the back of not supporting people with a disability in the NDIS. It was Victoria that had to come to the aid of, invest in and increase funding for the NDIS, and this bill is another stage, stage 2, in the substantial reforms that we are putting forward to support people with disability.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Minister for Health. Steph is just 13 years old and was scheduled for spinal surgery on 6 September, but on the day of this expected surgery it was cancelled. Her family was told this was because there were no ICU beds available to monitor her post-surgery recovery. Steph has a new surgery date of 11 October, 217 days from the date she first went on the 90-day waitlist. Due to the delay, she is now experiencing painful breathing because her curved spine is putting pressure on her lungs. Thirteen-year-old Steph is having trouble sleeping, and her neck is at a 45-degree angle, causing migraines and nausea. Will the minister finally acknowledge that Victoria's health crisis is causing harm to thousands of Victorians, including children like 13-year-old Steph?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:02): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Can I take this opportunity to acknowledge what a challenging time this must be for Steph and her family. Obviously any delay in health care is distressing and upsetting, but I want to make this point: throughout Victoria our waitlists are being actively managed by the healthcare services, and each and every day our clinicians are making decisions in order to make sure that Victorians get access to the best care as quickly as possible. Of course if the member wants me to follow up on this case, I am more than happy to do so, so I extend that offer to the member—

Mr R Smith: On a point of order, Speaker, I have already written to the minister, and I have not had a reply yet, so we have already passed on the details.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Ms THOMAS: As I said, if the member wants me to follow up, then he will write to me. I am certainly not aware of having received any correspondence, but I am happy to look into that. I want to make this point: during the unprecedented pressure that our healthcare system has experienced and that our healthcare workforce has been under, we have worked hard every step of the way in partnership with our healthcare workers in order to implement a range of strategies to drive down the waitlist for planned surgery. Two of those initiatives include the purchase of private hospitals to turn

them into public surgical centres at Frankston and Blackburn. Both of these initiatives have been opposed by those on the other side of the place.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:04): Steph’s mum, Kylie, is a single parent who has enough challenges in her life without seeing her 13-year-old daughter living in constant pain. No parent should have to watch that. No child should have to live like that. What does the minister have to say to Kylie and her family as to why this life-changing surgery has been delayed so long that 13-year-old Steph now risks permanent damage because she has not been able to get the surgery she needs when she needs it?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:05): I think I have already made it clear that I acknowledge how distressing this may well be for Steph and her family, and indeed I make this point again: this is not a challenge that is being experienced uniquely here in Victoria; it is being experienced right around our nation and indeed across the world. Once again I wish Steph and her family all the best, and she can be assured that our hardworking clinicians will be making the assessment on a day-to-day basis about when they can deliver the surgery that Steph needs.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:05): I am very pleased to update the house on a recent visit to Wonthaggi with the outstanding and hardworking member for Bass, where we were able to stand in the almost complete—very nearly complete—stage 1 redevelopment of the Wonthaggi Hospital to thank nurses and ambos and doctors, the whole team, for their amazing work and to announce that we will, if re-elected, build stage 2 of that hospital as well. There is only one thing better than going to an almost completed stage 1, and that is announcing that you will get on and deliver stage 2 as well. The member for Bass knows very well that her community needs better facilities so they can provide more care to a growing community.

It was not just in Wonthaggi that we made that announcement. We also indicated that in an Australian first, in partnership with our paramedic workforce, we will deliver for the first time ever paramedic practitioners to go and treat people in their homes, not necessarily transport them, and keep them out of emergency departments, keep them out of hospitals, filling a vital gap in our healthcare system—a bridge, if you like, between primary care and acute care. It is wholeheartedly welcomed by the Victorian Ambulance Union, the secretary of which has not even spoken to some—never met them or spoken to them. In stark contrast we have a partnership with our paramedics. We do not go to war with them. We have a partnership with our paramedics. It might be one of the reasons why we have recruited—

Members interjecting.

Mr ANDREWS: Stop interjecting and listen up—2200 additional ambos, additional paramedics, over these last eight years.

But it is not just about regional health, it is also about suburban health. There is a massive, massive program of works: a brand new hospital for Melbourne’s east and a brand new name in honour of Queen Elizabeth II; today a massive expansion of the emergency department at the Austin; and essentially an even bigger redevelopment, a new ED and towers, at the Northern Hospital. So on all points of the compass Labor is delivering.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (14:07): My question is again to the Minister for Health. East Gippsland resident Cheryle Rickhuss requires two hip replacements. Her left hip has a category 2 classification, and her right hip is classified as category 3. At a recent consultation her surgeon warned that her surgery will likely be delayed at least 24 months due to the overwhelmed elective surgery waiting list. With a very limited range of pain-free movement and further degradation of her hips over

this lengthy postponement, why is Cheryle being forced to endure two more years of pain because of Victoria's broken health system?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:08): I thank the member for his question, and I recognise the discomfort that is being experienced by Cheryle. Again, these are decisions that are made by clinicians, not politicians, and I think that is something that those on the other side often struggle to come to grips with. Cheryle is receiving care. She is taking advice from her general practitioner—indeed it may well be a specialist. Once again I make the point that our waitlists are actively managed by the health service in conjunction with the patient and indeed with the patient's general practitioner.

I will make another point. Our government moved to make the data on wait times in our health service publicly available, unlike those on the other side, who always sought to hide health data wherever possible. I was really pleased to see that in the last quarter 41 468 patients were treated and that the waitlist had indeed stabilised. But that is not to pretend that there is not more to do, because our health system has seen unprecedented demand, like health systems right around the nation and indeed across the world.

But our government has a plan. We have a \$1.5 billion catch-up plan, which is designed in conjunction with our healthcare workers. Not only have we purchased an additional 15 000 surgeries every single year, but we are doing everything to make sure that we are upskilling the workforce in order to help us grow the number of surgeries that can be delivered in our state by up to 240 000 by 2024. Only our government has a plan to address the waitlists.

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (14:10): Health department recommendations for category 2 procedures state they should be performed within 90 days, not two years. But Bairnsdale is one of a number of country hospitals whose waiting lists are not included in the statewide number of almost 90 000. How many other Victorians like Cheryle, who is waiting in pain for surgery, are not counted on the government's official waiting list figures because their hospital waiting list figures are not included in that data?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:11): Once again I make the point that our government provides the most transparent health data information, which makes sure that the Victorian community can see how our healthcare system is performing. This is in stark contrast to those on the other side, and it is interesting to me that the member for Gippsland East would get up and ask this question when we think about the 12 rural hospitals closed by the Liberals. They are about cuts and closures. They put patients—

Mr T Bull: On a point of order, Speaker, I would ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question, which related to how many people who are on waiting lists in hospitals that are not counted in official figures there are in Victoria. It is not an opportunity to take cheap shots. Answer the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! A point of order is not an opportunity to repeat the question, but I do ask the minister to come back to answering the question.

Ms THOMAS: I will make this point: our government has a \$1.5 billion COVID catch-up plan in place to drive down elective surgeries for people in rural areas and metropolitan Melbourne. No-one will be left behind. We govern for all Victorians.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:13): I rise to update the house on the Andrews Labor government's positive plans for our health system and hospitals. Victorians have a choice come November between a Labor government that is doing what matters and the Liberal alternative of cuts and closures. Today I joined the Premier to announce that a re-elected Labor government will deliver a \$1 billion hospital plan for the north. This will see the

upgrading of two of Victoria's busiest emergency departments, at the Austin and indeed at the Northern Hospital, as well as a new inpatient tower at the Northern Hospital. We know that Melbourne's northern suburbs are growing, and that is why Labor will grow the capacity of these hospitals to support an extra 85 000 patients.

While those opposite have no plan to staff our health system, we will continue to grow our healthcare workforce because we understand that world-class health care is about so much more than bricks and mortar. In addition to the more than \$12 billion we have already invested in health infrastructure, we have recruited an additional 22 000 healthcare workers and we have plans to grow, to recruit and to train a further 24 000. Of course we are making it free to study nursing in our universities. What is more, only a Labor government can be trusted to continue to protect nurse-to-patient ratios. Those opposite broke their promises to the nurses of Victoria to keep mandated minimum nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios. They went to war with our nurses and our paramedics. Victorians know that if the Liberals were given the chance, they would do exactly the same again, They have repeatedly attacked the Austin Hospital; indeed they were planning to sell it off and, what is more, to starve that hospital— (*Time expired*)

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (14:15): My question is to the Minister for Health. Seventy-two-year-old Estelle Shaw of Wangaratta was referred to the Alfred hospital in 2019 to have spacers put in her neck to stop pressure on her spine, which gives her next to no feeling in her hands. Ms Shaw was finally given a face-to-face meeting in January 2021 and was told she is now a category 2 patient. She was scheduled to have surgery within 90 days. Ms Shaw has had injections, blood tests and MRIs in preparation for her operation, yet three years later after her initial referral she still has not had the surgery she needs. Is a three-year wait by a 72-year-old woman in Wangaratta for category 2 surgery another example of what the Premier calls a world-class health system for regional Victorians?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:16): Again, I express my concern for Estelle, and indeed if the member wishes to share details with me, I am very happy to follow up. I will not be commenting on individual cases right now, but I will take this opportunity to make a point: what we have seen from those opposite is a flip-flop on whether or not they are indeed going to deliver for the people of Victoria. There was a commitment of \$8 billion to the people of regional Victoria from the member for Murray Plains. A couple of days later the Leader of the Opposition was on his feet saying, 'No, it would not be delivered. There was no guarantee'. So what we have seen is we are already cutting funding to regional health services before they have even had the chance to start, just as they did when last they were in government.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Deputy Premier! Leader of the Opposition! I ask you to come to order.

Ms THOMAS: Once again, I extend my offer to the member: if he wishes me to follow up the case of Estelle, then I am happy to do so. But I will make this point once again: it is rather embarrassing that a member of the National Party would be on their feet talking to us about rural and regional health care.

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (14:18): A category 2 surgery with a wait time of 90 days has for Estelle Shaw blown out to 1026 days, which is 11 times longer than the standard 90 days and nearly three years of waiting. Sadly she is not alone. Can the minister guarantee that with her catch-up plan Ms Shaw will have her surgery this year so that she can finally get some quality of life back again?

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Health, and I ask that the Minister for Health be heard in silence.

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:19): Thank you, Speaker. Once again, I extend my invitation to the member. If he wishes to or indeed if Estelle wishes her details to be shared with me to enable me to follow up and enquire what is happening, I am more than happy to do so.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms HUTCHINS (Sydenham—Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (14:19): I rise to update the house on this government's commitment to supporting Victorian students, both in primary and secondary school. Last week I was with the member for Essendon at Strathmore Secondary College to announce the extension of the tutor learning initiative for 2023—\$253 million worth of investment to continue this fantastic program, which has currently provided services to around 2000 participating schools. Almost over 100 000 students in government schools have received one-on-one support that they need to continue to thrive in our school system.

It was also great to meet with the students at Yuille Park Community College with the member for Wendouree to talk about the important life skills they have learned through the Respectful Relationships program. Schools across Victoria have been teaching a broad curriculum that is in line with the Australian curriculum, one that includes everything we need to know, including reading, writing, numeracy and history—both medieval and Australian. We have room for cyber safety as well. One school I know that is delivering on these programs is the beautiful little school called Regency Park Primary, which I visited with the member for Bayswater. I saw all these programs in action there. This means that students educated by our great teachers will learn everything they need to know to excel in life. I want to assure the house that our government will not strip back the curriculum. We will not close schools. We will not cut funding to the education system. This government is doing what matters because we trust our teachers, unlike those opposite, and we believe in our students' future.

SHEPPARTON BUS REVIEW

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (14:21): My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Minister, I have been asking for a bus review for the Shepparton district for a very long time. It has been 14 years since a review was last carried out, and it is well overdue. Since then Shepparton and its region have grown significantly, with many new housing estates right throughout the region not connected to bus routes. Some services, such as Kialla to Shepparton, have no services at all on the weekend. There is only one bus route that services the railway station, and with the rising cost of petrol in regional areas, public transport is ever more important. If re-elected in November, will the government commit to undertaking an extensive bus review for the Shepparton district?

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie—Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Business Precincts) (14:22): I thank the independent member for Shepparton for her question. It is probably really to me in my capacity as the Minister for Public Transport. The independent member is 100 per cent correct that public transport, rising living costs and the importance of bus services are critically important. I know her background in Shepparton as a family lawyer, as a grassroots campaigner, and with the investment we are making in the V/Line services and the Shepparton line upgrade, it is really important that we continue to make sure that the buses meet the trains and, as she alluded to as well, in building the Education State we make sure that the school students in her community get the bus services they need and deserve.

In relation to her specific question about a bus service review, we are the first government in a very long time to release a full-scale bus plan which includes regional Victoria as well as metropolitan Melbourne. We are also very committed, as part of that bus plan, to do as many service reviews as we possibly can. I know the member next to her, the member for Mildura, has one underway at this very significant time right now. But we are very keen to do what we can. We know that a lot of bus timetables have never been looked at since Sunday trading came in, and we know that that is something we need to do. That is why, with the support of the Treasurer, just the last budget had \$109 million in it, and we have now got half a million—

Members interjecting.

Mr CARROLL: I thank the member for her question. I am very keen to work with her on how we can make the improvements she needs for buses. We do know that they return \$5 for every dollar invested in the local community, and they are a very important measure, particularly when it does come to cost of living, and I will continue to work with her on the matter.

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (14:24): Minister, with new VLocity trains due to arrive by the end of the year, our tracks upgraded and increased services about to commence early in the new year, will the government commit to not just a bus review but to actually delivering, in a new government, the bus services that our whole region will need so that it also supports our smaller towns throughout the Shepparton district?

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie—Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Business Precincts) (14:24): I thank the independent member for her supplementary. Again, she is very, very on point about the importance of inter-regional connectivity and the role of the buses and the upgrade that is happening to the Shepparton line. We have a lot of good experience from our Regional Rail Revival on this side of the house. The Ballarat line is a classic example of a \$500 million upgrade. And then as part of that we worked very hard to make sure all the buses connected for the school students and the locals that live in the suburbs and met all of those new stations that were built as part of the Ballarat upgrade.

As part of the Shepperton line upgrade, the new VLocitys that we are very proud to be putting on that line as part of our \$8 billion rolling stock agenda—the biggest rolling stock agenda that this state has ever seen—are made here. The buses are also made here in Dandenong, and that is what we will continue to do. I will continue to work with the independent member and make sure that the needs of her community are met from a public transport perspective.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: ECONOMY

Mr PALLAS (Werribee—Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade) (14:26): It gives me great pleasure to update the house on the stellar performance of the Victorian economy over the last eight years. My enthusiasm about how our economy is going is substantial, but it is only eclipsed by the Assistant Treasurer's, who of course shares my excitement about the unemployment rate of 3.7 per cent, a whole 3 per cent lower than what we inherited in November 2014. Regional unemployment is even lower at 2.9 per cent, the lowest in almost 50 years. It is easily the lowest in the nation and half of what the rate was when the government was first elected.

The latest CommSec *State of the States* indicates that Victoria is back in its rightful position as the number one performing economy in the nation, which is a substantial difference from where it was in October 2014, just before the Baillieu-Napthine government was dispatched by the electorate, when we came in fourth out of eight states and territories. Since we took over from those opposite we have created 600 000 jobs in this state. In fact one in six jobs in the Victorian economy today did not exist back in 2014. The participation rate in our labour market is more than two whole percentage points higher than it was when those opposite were last in power, and there are now more women in paid employment in jobs in Victoria than ever in the state's history.

Economic competence matters because it is the difference between people being in work or not and between businesses having the confidence to hire or being cautious and holding back. This government's investment, whether it be our investment in health and education or hospital and rail, has installed confidence right across the Victorian economy. We are doing what matters and providing the essential services Victorians rely on and deserve. Contrast that with the approach of those opposite; their only economic plan is to cut.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Health. Maureen from West Wodonga has multiple spinal conditions and totally relies on her husband to assist her with personal care and undertake routine household tasks. She lives with chronic debilitating pain and has poor mobility. She was listed on 3 September 2021 as being a category 2 patient. Earlier this year she came from Wodonga to Melbourne to have extensive medical tests in preparation for surgery, but now that her surgery has been delayed for a year she has had to repeat all of these extensive medical tests. After the second time of extensive medical preparation and repeated cancellation of her operation, can the minister guarantee that Maureen will finally get the surgery that she so desperately needs?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:29): I thank the member for Ripon for her question. Indeed as members in this place know, I know Wodonga well and I know that Maureen will be receiving the very best health care from Albury Wodonga Health and that the clinicians who are responsible for making each and every one of these decisions will be doing their best to address her healthcare needs. I need to make this point again; I seem to need to make it every time I get on my feet. Let us be very clear: this year has been the hardest in our healthcare system—a fact that seems to be completely ignored by those on the other side. At points during this year we saw up to 2000 healthcare workers on any given day furloughed with COVID, a fact that those on the other side, who have tried to pretend that COVID does not even exist, have conveniently ignored—the very same people, I might say, who stood on the steps of Parliament with the conspiracy theorists. I mean, it is really disgraceful.

Once again I note a question from the member for Ripon. The member for Ripon will well remember that it was a Liberal government that closed the hospital in Clunes in her electorate. Where was the voice of those Liberals there and then when healthcare services in rural and regional Victoria were being closed? Once again, if the member would like to share the details, and if her constituent would like to share details with me, I will follow that up for her.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:31): How many other Victorians have had multiple rounds of preoperative testing, putting strain on already overstretched resources, only to be told that due to long delays with elective surgery they would need to have these tests repeated?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:31): Our government has in place a \$1.5 billion COVID catch-up plan for planned surgeries, and our ambition is that we will increase the number of planned surgeries that are delivered every year to 225 000 by 2025—sorry, 240 000 by 2025, so indeed we will continue to implement our plan. We will upskill our workforce because it is clinicians who will deliver the surgery. We will make sure that we have the doctors and nurses in place. This year has been very, very challenging in our healthcare service—as it has been right around the nation and indeed around the world—but we will not be lectured by those on the other side. When they had the opportunity they went to war with our workforce and closed more hospitals than they opened.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: LEVEL CROSSING REMOVALS

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (14:32): I am so pleased today to inform the house that the Andrews Labor government is removing another eight dangerous and congested level crossings on the Upfield line, making Brunswick boom gate free. As this house knows, it is only the Andrews Labor government that says it will remove level crossings and then delivers on it.

I know the house appreciates history. Let us go back and have a bit of a history lesson. In 2014 the Andrews Labor government promised to remove 50 dangerous and congested level crossings by 2022. We are now at 66 that have been removed and are on track to remove 85 by 2025. But not only that, where we have had the opportunity to do more, we have grabbed it. That is why, along with those 66 level

crossing removals, there are 37 brand new stations, there are 50 kilometres of cycling and walking paths and there are 20 MCGs of open space that have been created in communities across Melbourne.

We know that history is important—and accurate history is important—in this house. The members for Pascoe Vale and Broadmeadows know that it is the Andrews Labor government that will remove in total 13 level crossings on the Upfield line. The members for Bentleigh, Mordialloc, Carrum and Frankston know that when those opposite had the chance to remove level crossings on the Frankston line, they removed none—zero. We have removed 16, and there are another four to go.

The members for Oakleigh, Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South, Dandenong, Cranbourne, Pakenham and Bass know that when we say we will remove every level crossing on the Pakenham and Cranbourne line, we will do it. We will keep on with this program of removing dangerous and congested level crossings. We do not make up history; we make it. We are getting on and making lines level crossing free, and we are doing what matters for communities across the state.

Mr Rowswell: On a point of order, Speaker, I have a number of questions that have not been responded to by ministers. Those numbers are 6331, 6114, 4602 and 5753. Question 5753 was to the Attorney-General and asked about the impact of Victorian Labor's underfunding of IBAC and other integrity agencies. That was asked in March last year, and it still has not been responded to. If you could follow up on my behalf, I would be grateful.

The SPEAKER: I will ensure that those matters are followed up.

Constituency questions

CAULFIELD ELECTORATE

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (14:36): (6526) My question is to the Premier. Caulfield residents have raised fundamental concerns about the government's record on integrity and trust. IBAC have been underfunded, hearings are conducted behind closed doors and Labor government ministers even shut down proceedings as soon as questions on corruption get too tough. Premier, will you adopt the Liberal plan to properly fund integrity agencies, restore trust in government and make sure Victoria has an IBAC with teeth?

BOX HILL ELECTORATE

Mr HAMER (Box Hill) (14:36): (6527) My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Early last month a pedestrian was struck by a car while crossing Springfield Road in Blackburn North. She was hit by a car turning right from Williams Road which failed to give way to her. Sadly, the pedestrian passed away last week from injuries sustained as a result of the crash. Local residents familiar with the site are concerned that drivers turning right from Williams Road into Springfield Road are not seeing or expecting to see pedestrians on the crossing and see only the green light at the intersection. In particular for drivers approaching the intersection along Williams Road the intersection is at the top of an incline, and there is concern that many drivers approaching a green signal at the intersection may be accelerating to make it through the intersection. Can the minister ask the Department of Transport to review the safety of pedestrians crossing at the intersection of Springfield Road and Williams Road to see what safety improvements can be made as part of a future works program? I look forward to the minister's response.

LOWAN ELECTORATE

Ms KEALY (Lowan) (14:37): (6528) My constituency question is for the Minister for Education, and the information I seek is when a replacement portable building will be provided to Minyip Primary School to replace the administration building irreparably damaged during a Victorian School Building Authority-managed restumping project. It is absolutely astounding that the VSBA signed off on this building project. It was completed over the summer school holidays, and now we have got a building that is 40 centimetres higher than it was previously. The school had to build their own set of steps so that they could enter the building, and the damage internally now is horrific. There are cracks in almost

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Tuesday, 20 September 2022

Legislative Assembly

3677

every wall, a section of ceiling is falling in and an internal window is about to pop inwards. It simply is not safe to be used and, even worse, kids can get under the building and easily access live cabling. I therefore ask the minister: when will a replacement portable building be provided to Minyip Primary School so that the administration block can be made safe to support the students and the staff?

ST ALBANS ELECTORATE

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (14:38): (6529) My constituency question is to the Minister for Mental Health, and my question is: what mental health services and supports are available for my electorate of St Albans? Mental health is critical for my community. I have been pleased to see strong local investment where it really matters. Recently I joined the minister to open a brand new women's prevention and recovery centre, and there are already cranes in the sky for the further 52 new mental health beds at Sunshine Hospital in St Albans. I know that the Andrews Labor government will work continuously to make sure that our mental health system is built brick by brick so that Victorians can get the care and the support they need when they need it most. I look forward to the minister's response on this matter.

EILDON ELECTORATE

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (14:39): (6530) My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Will the minister provide an update on the outcome of the Department of Transport's investigation to improve pedestrian safety at Maroondah Highway, Wilson Street and Badger Creek Road in Healesville? This is a very busy intersection. There is a park on one corner and cafes on another. We have families and small children darting across the road in between traffic to access the park.

The Department of Transport have previously suggested pedestrians walk 250 metres west to Green Street or 400 metres east to Don Road to cross the road. This is really difficult for people with children and prams; it adds quite a distance for them. Concerned community members were understandably unsatisfied with the suggestions made or the investigations conducted by the department already. I am aware that the speed has dropped to 40 kilometres an hour, but this does not help the pedestrians safely cross the highway.

BURWOOD ELECTORATE

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (14:40): (6531) My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Health, and I ask: how will my community benefit from the Andrews Labor government's recent announcement that studying nursing and midwifery will be free from next year? The Andrews government has announced a \$270 million nursing and midwifery package providing free degrees, training and upskilling for nurses and midwives. It is not just future students who will benefit; former nurses and midwives will be able to update their qualifications for free to re-enter the workforce, and currently enrolled nurses will be able to become registered nurses for free. It is anticipated that the package will support the recruitment and training of thousands of nurses and midwives in the health system. These nurses and midwives will play a critical role alongside current healthcare workers as our health system continues to respond to unprecedented current demand and the significant investments we have made to increase capacity for the future. I look forward to the minister's response.

MORWELL ELECTORATE

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (14:41): (6532) My question is directed to the Minister for Public Transport. Minister, what is the latest information with regard to the replacement of Melbourne's Comeng trains, and will CRRC be engaged to participate in this replacement work? CRRC operates out of Morwell and has approximately 30 employees who are a key part of the supply chain within the current high-capacity metro trains project. However, the manufacturing phase of the HCMT project is quickly coming to an end, and without replacement work CRRC and its Morwell workers face an uncertain future. That is why I am raising today the necessity for the government to provide clear guidance and advice on making sure CRRC has the opportunity to participate in the Comeng replacement works. There has to be a smooth transition for the company and its employees from

completing works on the HCMT project and then having the availability of further work with regard to the replacement train work. Anything less puts at risk 30 jobs in Morwell. I therefore implore the minister and the government to facilitate this transition.

FOOTSCRAY ELECTORATE

Ms HALL (Footscray) (14:42): (6533) My question is to the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery. My community in Melbourne's inner west love their sports, and clubs like the Footscray Lacrosse Club are making huge strides in promoting the inclusion of women and CALD communities. As Victoria prepares to host what I am sure will be the best Commonwealth Games ever, I ask that the minister considers how my community of Melbourne's inner west can get involved with the 2026 Commonwealth Games. The Footscray Lacrosse Club have had a clean sweep of wins in their grand finals over the last few weeks. Congratulations to all of those involved. The Footscray Lacrosse Club has also produced some of Australia's best and brightest lacrosse players. As recently as July this year the Australian women's lacrosse team had six members from Footscray. I look forward to the minister's response.

FERNTREE GULLY ELECTORATE

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (14:43): (6534) My question is for the Minister for Housing. I have been contacted by a resident who lives in public housing in Ferntree Gully. Six years ago a tree fell on the roof of their house and damaged the home. Despite repeatedly asking the Ringwood office of housing to repair it, nothing was done. Consequently black mould started growing in the laundry, which spread, causing his young daughter to develop respiratory issues. Despite repeated requests for assistance, it finally seemed that the respiratory issues motivated the office to take the matter more seriously, and he and his daughter were moved to temporary accommodation. The office of housing admitted that they should have acted sooner. Although having just received an application to transfer to another property, my constituent now finds himself being offered a smaller house than his original home. So, Minister, my constituent would like to know: what will you be doing to address his concerns, and will you apologise to him and his daughter for what they have put up with?

NARRE WARREN SOUTH ELECTORATE

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (14:44): (6535) My constituency question is for the Minister for Government Services and concerns the new Service Victoria Savings Finder. Minister, how will the new Savings Finder app assist my constituents in Narre Warren South to cut their cost of living? It was really great to hear that the Service Victoria app will now be the home of the Savings Finder, which will be a one-stop shop for more than 60 government discounts, rebates and savings. Many in my electorate of Narre Warren South can indeed struggle to meet their daily expenses, and any state government assistance to help them pay their bills, such as the power saving bonus, is of course welcome. I would appreciate any further information that the minister can provide on the Service Victoria Savings Finder and how this will benefit my electorate. I look forward to sharing the minister's response with my community.

Bills

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (14:45): It is good to be back on deck and continuing my contribution on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. At that stage I was talking about how important inclusive education is in our education system. Those opposite had talked about the notion of this government not doing anything, and I had to remind them of the Inclusive Schools Fund, which has had now eight rounds, \$200 000 for each project, to make indoor and outdoor learning spaces more accessible into the future. It is all about our government's, the Andrews Labor government's,

investment in inclusion to support students with disabilities into the future. It goes with the disability inclusion package that was announced a couple of years ago by the former Deputy Premier, the member for Monbulk. ‘As transformational as three-year-old kinder’ is how the department described it to me in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Schools. For the one in five kids who need additional support, that tier 2 funding is another example of how we are really supporting inclusion.

What I love about this bill is that the second key piece, to be delivered before caretaker, before we go into the break, is the release of an exposure draft of a new disability inclusion bill for public consultation, and importantly the exposure draft of the bill will include a provision for a commissioner for disability inclusion. That is a really important hallmark because, speaking in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Mental Health and Social Inclusion, we want to make sure that every Victorian, no matter their circumstances, no matter their postcode, feels like they belong, that they are connected and that they have a place in our wonderful state, and that is never more important than for people living with disability, the 1.1 million Victorians who need that support and care each and every day—that they are supported, that they truly feel included across a range of different areas. Just to set that context up, the *Inclusive Victoria* plan that was updated recently, the 2022–26 strategy, is really an important element of that. So in culture, in practice and in everything that we do we make sure that we are providing support for inclusive access and practices across the board.

This bill really builds on the Andrews Labor government’s legacy in that space, and contrary to the suggestions before that this has just turned up in the last few weeks, the delivery of this bill is part of an agenda that has been going on for years. This is stage 2 of that. If we have the great honour of coming back after 26 November and continuing that, we will build on that legacy and support. I am really excited to think of a partnership with the federal government going forward. Rather than looking to de-scale the national disability insurance scheme, we continue to support, we open up transparency and we get a better deal for Victorians who access the national disability insurance scheme. That is what it is about. It is about making sure that all Victorians are supported in that time of need.

This bill builds on all the foundations that have been set, with the NDIS, in education, in accessible transport—I know the Minister for Public Transport has done a huge amount of work in making public transport more accessible—and in everything that we do. But importantly, the final point I want to make is that it is led by communities. Just like the *Inclusive Victoria* plan had a huge amount of stakeholder engagement, submissions, hearings and community consultation, we make sure that we are always led by people living with disability and that we understand their experiences in informing our decision-making and policies into the future. So this is stage 2 of a great amount of work, and if we come back after 26 November, it will pass through and we will get on with delivering for people with disability.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (14:49): It is my unenviable task to fill in the 35 seconds before the valedictory speeches begin. I am very much looking forward to hearing from the current member for Ringwood in his valedictory. But in the meantime I am called upon to make a contribution on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022, and I simply cannot wait to find out what I am going to say.

Mr Walsh: Read the talking points.

Mr FOWLES: Yes, I am getting there, do not worry. This bill forms part of stage 2 of the Disability Act 2006 review, and it is going to introduce critical amendments to enhance services, safeguards and protections—

Business interrupted under resolution of house today.

Members**MEMBER FOR RINGWOOD***Valedictory statement*

The SPEAKER: Order! It is now my pleasure to call members to make valedictory statements. I am looking forward to hearing the reflections of our colleagues as they end their parliamentary careers, as I am sure all members in the chamber are too. In order to ensure everyone's statements start on time I ask members to restrict their congratulations in the chamber. I ask members who wish to congratulate each other with a handshake or a hug to do so outside the chamber. I will, however, relax the prohibition against clapping at the end of speeches. One of my roles as Speaker is to help make the most of the chamber's limited time and to ensure members and their guests who may be visiting to share these moments are treated with respect and not kept waiting.

Mr HALSE (Ringwood) (14:51): Can I conclude where I began in this place, by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land upon which we are meeting, which we as Victorians call home, and I pay my deep respects to First Peoples, to elders past, present and emerging. As I did in my first speech, I note that the land that we call home is an ancient land, a place of deep knowledge, history, strength, memory, initiation, renewal and living culture. I note that this land was never ceded, and I stand in solidarity with First Peoples as we work towards truth, justice and treaty.

It has been a tremendous honour to have been the elected representative for the district of Ringwood since 2018. Our community in the east is a special place. During the most difficult and trying of times our community has demonstrated great strength, compassion, resilience and solidarity. Acts of kindness are everywhere to be found across the district: neighbours supporting neighbours, sporting clubs and community groups supporting those most vulnerable, local cafes and businesses providing free meals to those who are struggling, and our churches opening their doors to provide shelter and emergency accommodation to those in need. This is the east that I know. This is the east that I love. To the wonderful people of Ringwood, I say thank you.

My central aim for Ringwood has been to be a small cog in the larger process to secure the intergenerational investments that our community needs and deserves. As I stand here today I can report to this Parliament with absolute certainty that this is exactly what the Andrews Labor government has delivered. Every public high school in the district of Ringwood has received a multimillion-dollar upgrade. We are getting rid of two dangerous and congested level crossings in Ringwood and Ringwood East and building a new train station at Ringwood East. We have delivered record investment in our local community sporting clubs to provide an inclusive and accessible environment for all to enjoy. Just days ago this intergenerational vision materialised in a billion-dollar commitment to rebuild our local hospital in Ringwood East. These projects are changing the lives of people in my community for the better. I thank the cabinet, my colleagues and the Premier for supporting these projects.

It has also been a privilege to highlight the issues of mental health and health care, homelessness and housing economics, secure work and industrial rights, equality, youth justice and the environment within parliamentary and policy debates. I will provide some brief thoughts on three of these areas. I came into this place as a proud member of the labour movement, a democratic socialist movement that campaigns for fairness, justice and equality. I am a member of the trade union movement not out of any sense of nostalgia or because I particularly like trade unions but out of a belief and understanding that, in the absence of popular organising and collectivism, government action can only do so much to shift the balance of power away from capital and towards labour—towards everyday Victorians. As the most noted economist of the 21st century commented:

... capitalism automatically generates arbitrary and unsustainable inequalities that radically undermine the meritocratic values on which democratic societies are based.

We must continue to support not only Victorian workers, as this government has done through initiatives like the sick pay guarantee for casuals and our wage theft laws, but the ability of workers to have their voices democratically and collectively heard in workplaces across our state.

This parliamentary term has been marked by the pains, ruptures and loss generated by the COVID-19 global pandemic. It has been an unprecedented time. In my first speech I invited those listening to stop for a moment and put themselves in the shoes of an aged care worker employed on an insecure work contract. I made this comment with no foresight or real understanding of the potential threat of what was to come and how it would fundamentally impact our society. So much has been expected of so many over these last few years, but no group has done it harder than our health and community services workers. There was no option for them to stay at home, to stay out of harm's way. This amazing group of people never stopped working. They never stopped caring. To our aged care workers, to our nurses, to our hospital and allied health staff, to our mental health and disability support workers, to our paramedics, we owe you a great debt, one which we will never be able to pay in full. You will always have my solidarity.

In all areas of public policy there is one overarching interest that will shape our collective future, and that is how we manage our changing environment. The great British natural historian and biologist David Attenborough puts our predicament succinctly:

We humans, alone on earth, are powerful enough to create worlds, and then to destroy them.

...

The natural world is fading. The evidence is all around. It has happened during my lifetime. I have seen it with my own eyes. It will lead to our destruction.

Yet there is still time to switch off the reactor.

... if we act now, we can ... put it right.

That is why I am so proud that the Andrews Labor government is leading the nation in actions to address and mitigate global warming, rapidly decarbonising our economy in a push to 50 per cent renewables by 2030, and it is my belief that we will beat that legislative target.

Now, to say thanks to a few people. I am cognisant that I rise in this place after serving only one term. I want to acknowledge and thank all the retiring members and those members who are not contesting the upcoming state election. Thank you for the enormity of the work that you have performed. Many in this place have spent decades advocating for their communities, decades serving the Labor movement. You have served your local communities and your portfolios. You have made our state a fairer, stronger, more equal and more prosperous place to call home. A special thanks to my comrades in the so-dubbed 'Eastern Bloc' and stronghold of the Labor Party. To the member for Bayswater, to my good friend the member for Box Hill, to the member for Mount Waverley, to the member for Burwood, to Ms Terpstra in the other place and to Minister Leane in the other place: thank you for the work that we have done alongside each other and with each other over these previous four years.

In one of my other roles, I have been a member of the Integrity and Oversight Committee. I would like to thank those members of that committee for the work that we have done collectively on some very serious and important issues. I would particularly like to highlight the leadership of Ms Shing in the other place.

To conclude, I would like to thank my dedicated electorate office staff. As a politician often you are the person who is seen. It is your face in the news. It is your face on the social media streams. Behind all of that is the hardworking staff, and I have had tremendous staff. I would like to thank all of them for the support they have given me and the people of the district of Ringwood. A special mention goes out to my loyal friend and office manager, Sharon Young. Thank you for all that you have done.

To my family and to my mother, Dr Elli McGavin: thank you for your unwavering support, love and care of our family. To my in-laws, Gina and Graham: thank you for helping my family over the last few years as we have introduced a little one to our growing family. To my father, my sister, my brother-

in-law and my other in-laws: thank you for your unwavering support of me over the last few years. Finally, to my wife, Rachel: thank you for your unwavering support of me, your loyalty, your friendship, your solidarity. It has meant the world to me. You are the best human being that I know. You are the fiercest human being that I know. I know a few fierce human beings in this place, but you are the fiercest human being I know, and you have a great passion and heart for others. I am so proud of what you are, an emergency department nurse and an official with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. The way that you have been so generous to me has been extraordinary. Finally, to my beautiful young son, Edward ‘Teddy’ Alexander, who is here in the chamber: you will never know the overwhelming joy that you have brought to my heart, and in the most challenging times a cuddle and a smile and a giggle from you have meant the world to me. I look forward in the coming years for you to sit down with me on the patio and question what I did in this place and what we did as a government and to give us a bit of stick and to enquire about what this period—this unusual and unprecedented period—was.

I will leave my contribution there. I thank everyone in this place for their support, for their solidarity. I wish every member of Parliament the very best on a personal level with your families, with your health and mental health. I must admit this is a strange vocation to adopt. It is a strange vocation, and I respect people who stump up and want to continue in this place. It is a difficult profession, but I wish you all the very best. Of course I wish my colleagues in the Labor Party the very best in the upcoming election, and with that I will take my leave. Thank you.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR NARRACAN

Valedictory statement

Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (15:05): Speaker, can I thank you, the clerks and all members of this house for the opportunity to make a final contribution and for coordinating the time so that members of my family and friends could be with us.

As a mark of respect and appreciation for the working relationship and friendship that I have with the traditional owners of the land on which my electorate is located, I thank the Kurnai elders—in particular Cheryl, Pauline and Sandra Mullet—and all current and former elders. There is no doubt that when people are elected to this Parliament their overriding ambition is to do the best they can for their electorate. They truly want to improve the social, economic and environmental fabric of their community in honour of the legacy of those who have come before us.

In my early world most occupations involved extremely physical and demanding work. The men and women worked hard and sometimes played hard. Les Christian from Nayook was a second father to our family. Working with Dad in the bush, he taught us so much about sustainable harvesting, making sure there would be another crop to harvest for future generations. He worked damn hard, as did everyone who worked in the bush in those days before mechanisation made things so much easier for us when it was our turn. In everything he did there was always consideration of the future, not just the present. With every system of harvesting he deployed, every road he constructed, care for the bush was his primary concern, and the time he spent passing on his knowledge has been to the benefit of so many, including the bush he loved. Les passed away two years ago at the amazing age of 96. He will always be missed.

My parents, Norm and Jean, also worked very hard. They were a perfect team, raising 11 children on one income, and it goes without saying that Mum’s home duties never ended. We were always dressed well and well fed, although there was always plenty of competition for the spare toast at breakfast. We were also given every opportunity to get a good Catholic education. But the example they set for all of us—their work ethic, integrity and support for each other—was exceptional. I hope I have lived those values of respect for others and love of family and community and maintained my faith as they

would have expected, although I know and they know there have been times when I have failed. But as true Christians they were always prepared to forgive.

My wife, Fritha, has been so patient and tolerant for the last 16 years. There is no doubt the role of an MP has an impact on your family. To Fritha, thank you. Very soon it will be my turn to repay your loyalty and love.

To my children and their partners—Mark and Katie, Lee and Paul, Glen and Michelle, Tony and Prue, Nicky and Matt, and Adam and Michelle—and my 15 grandchildren, I am so lucky to have you and so proud of you all.

To Fritha's children and partners—Louisa and Hayden, Ben and Catherine, Lizzie and Chris—and Fritha's six grandchildren, thank you for your friendship and support and the respect you have always afforded me.

To the mother of our children, Lyn, I could not have wished for a better person to be the mother of our children. Thank you for all you have done over many years.

My four brothers and six sisters are very special to me, because without them, their families and their friends I would never have become the member for Narracan. There is no doubt the size of one's family has a profound input into one's electoral success. To my sisters, Diane, Kerry, Lynette, Anne Maree, Bernadette and Paula, and my brothers, Chris, Michael, David and Peter, thank you for your unquestionable support and love, especially Peter for his influence from heaven.

To my wonderful nieces and nephews, a campaign team of 34, thank you for your eagerness to man the polling booths and provide a very effective community endorsement of our brand. Three of my very special nieces are here this afternoon, Sienna, Ava and Harper.

One of the most remarkable things about being a member of Parliament is the broad range of people you meet and the problems they bring to you. From constituents experiencing the toughest life can throw at them to those with the joy and expectation as new citizens on Australia Day, there is always a reminder of how lucky we are to have the opportunity to live in Australia. Every person's story is unique and important and deserves respect. It has been such a rich experience to get to know and work with people from so many different walks of life.

One of the best things I have been involved in during my entire parliamentary career has been Kokoda. The George Collins Kokoda Award, established in 2007 with the help of my valued friend Bernie Rowell, has enabled us to take 36 year 11 students to trek Kokoda so far. To the sponsors, I thank you all for your support over this 12-year period.

One of the toughest things I have had to deal with was the aftermath of Black Saturday. The impact on the communities of Labertouche, Drouin West and Jindivick was devastating, and the threat the fire posed to neighbouring communities was frightening to so many. The resilience of these communities really shone through, and the generosity of our community was once again second to none. Similarly, in 2019 the communities of Tynong North, Bunyip North and Tonimbuk found themselves under direct attack from fire, and the threat to neighbouring communities caused enormous concern. However, once again the resilience of our people and their support for one another really came to the fore, especially the amazing work of Tony Fitzgerald, the chair of the bushfire recovery committee. During both of these disasters the work of our emergency services and first responders was incredible. The CFA, SES, CWA, Red Cross, police and shire personnel were, as always, selfless and committed.

During the coalition's last term in government, in 2010–14, I was very fortunate to work with Terry Mulder as Parliamentary Secretary for Transport. Thanks to Terry and Premier Ted Baillieu the Warragul railway station car park and underpass were constructed and the Sand Road interchange was also commenced. The new technology wing at Neerim District Secondary College was also delivered

with the support of the then Minister for Education, Martin Dixon. I am so lucky to have these three men as good friends, and this would not have happened without my time in Parliament.

To the Leader of The Nationals, I have really enjoyed working with you over the past 16 years. Thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of our timber industry. Your efforts to have me defect to the Nats came very close to succeeding on more than one occasion, but joining a party that used green as their flagship colour was just a step too far!

Indeed, the friendship, advice and support I have received from the member for Rowville, the member for Eildon, the member for Ripon, the member for Sandringham, John Vogels, the member for Malvern, the member for Forest Hill, the member for Gippsland East, Louise Asher, the member for Mornington, Georgie Crozier, Gordon Rich-Phillips and the member for Benambra have been very special and will always be appreciated.

My comrade the member for Morwell has had an enormous battle in recent years, but with amazing tenacity and persistence he has learned to manage his mental health. Despite his own battles he has still found time to help so many others having a similar battle—very, very proud of you, brother.

On the other side of the house—yes, I am going there—there is the member for Lara, chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, who was made to look real good by his deputy chair over the past 3½ years! To the member for Northcote, how can I not like you, Kat? You dislike the Greens almost as much as I do. To the member for Ivanhoe, Carbs—a great Kokoda trekking buddy. To the member for Bundoora—a very kind Speaker. And to the member for Keysborough, chair of the Privileges Committee—an invaluable parliamentary associate. Also to a member for Eastern Victoria, Harriet Shing in the other place: out in the electorate Harriet has been a pleasure to work with, and in this place I am referred to, by her, as her parliamentary boyfriend—that really worries me. A special mention to the member for Bayswater, Jacko. Jacko was severely traumatised by a suggestion in one of my earlier contributions this term that most of the new Labor members were still in nappies—a reference to their age not their continence status. I am very pleased to announce to the house today that the member for Bayswater has been toilet trained.

Michael O'Connor and Jane Calvert have worked so hard and often in difficult circumstances to support the timber industry, and I thank them for always putting their members before politics.

I know the politics that is such a big part of this place can overshadow the potential for friendships across party lines, but I would like to see that change and to see respect restored in this house, indeed for the Speaker and each other.

I want to thank the Liberal Party for the support and faith they have shown in me, in particular the branch members in Narracan. We have been a great team, winning four elections. I could not have done it without you.

In particular I want to mention John Delzoppo, a former Speaker and member for Narracan; Barry Donellan, Mark Dunsmuir, Mary Aldred, Andrew Ronalds, Bill Westhead, David Balfour, Heather McCarthy, Duncan Smith, Leigh Bates, Glynn and Liz Fankhauser, Don Handley and Ray and Sue Howe. My federal colleague Russell Broadbent, as a mentor, assisting with federal issues and a constant companion at events around the electorate, I cannot thank him enough.

My electorate office staff have been so dedicated, resilient and committed. Jenny has been with me from the start in 2006; Matt for 15 years; Faren, 10 years; and Bec has been doing Fridays for a couple of years. They have been so loyal and have always had my back. Kaye has been working in my office since 2012, but in fact Kaye and I have been working on local, federal and state campaigns since 1996 when we supported Russell Broadbent's campaign in his win over Barry Cunningham. Her attention to detail and work ethic is unrivalled. To Faren, Jenny, Matt, Bec and Kaye, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To the people of Narracan, all of you, thank you for always being respectful and friendly. Thank you for giving me this great opportunity to finish my working life as your representative in the Victorian Parliament. We live in the best part of the best country in the world. We live in freedom, with unfettered ability to live as we choose, practise religion, respectfully speak our minds and raise and educate our children so that they can be the best they can be. We must continue to fight to protect our precious values and lifestyle that so many have fought for and for which too many have made the ultimate sacrifice. We must encourage good people to become champions in their communities and bring that experience to Parliament. Values of tolerance, respect and forgiveness underpin our way of life—we must fight to ensure this is not destroyed. As I leave Parliament, I wish the Liberal candidate for Narracan, Wayne Farnham, every success. He is working very hard and being received by people extremely well. He is giving himself every chance to be the next member for Narracan.

Thanks to Bridget Noonan and her team for their advice and support; Hansard for always ensuring our contributions make us look good; the attendants for looking after our school groups and members' welfare; and the security team, including the PSOs, for always looking after our safety.

In closing, can I thank my family and friends in the gallery today. Thanks for making the effort to be here. Thanks for the love, support and friendship that have helped me so much, especially over the past 16 years. To our grandchildren, here today and at home, you have been my inspiration and my encouragement.

This is my last chance to stick up for the Victorian native timber industry in this place. To every person involved from stump to market and their families, I salute you all. To David Lindenmayer, you are still a fraud using false, manipulated scientific research to support the decimation of the native forest industry. You are destroying the lives and livelihoods of hardworking timber families and country communities. You are a disgrace. To Sarah Rees, as a director of MyEnvironment you continue to bludge on the Victorian taxpayer by not paying your bills in your desperation to destroy a sustainable industry and replace our homegrown and locally manufactured product with the same product from unsustainable sources. You too are a fraud.

Finally, I wish every member of this and future Parliaments well. May their efforts in this place be always focused on good outcomes for their communities and Victoria as a whole.

Members applauded.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the next member I would like to acknowledge in the gallery the former member for Clarinda, Mr Hong Lim.

MEMBER FOR PRESTON

Valedictory statement

Mr SCOTT (Preston) (15:19): First, let me thank my family: my wife, Shaojie, and my son, Lucas, who have sacrificed so much for my public life, and my parents, Don and Amanda, who live their deep commitment to public service. To my current staff—Stephen, Christina, Lisa and Rukiye—and all of my former staffers over 16 years in my electorate office and in my ministerial offices, and I apologise for not naming all of you for the fear of missing one, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I also wish to thank the local Labor Party branch members. To all my true friends, with whom I was able to share my true self, free of the mask we show the world for protection, your friendships are all dear to me. You all gave me a priceless gift: your love, your passion and your trust. I hope I was worthy.

Those seeking immortality, power and glory in Parliament are on a fool's errand. Time washes away our names, leaving us as footnotes in unread histories. We will not join Shakespeare, Newton or Curie in echoing through human history, yet our roles are profoundly important. The decisions made in this place affect millions of lives. I hope I have made a contribution befitting the trust of the good people of Preston. I have never sought power or influence as an end in itself. These are merely tools of social reform through the implementation of ideas. John Maynard Keynes had it right when he said:

... the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else.

Politicians are generally not great philosophers or masters of fate. Politicians are largely the tools of the ideas of others, and it is the struggle of ideas and values that really matters. On this journey of ideas I have had the great honour of working with fantastic staff. I expected much from my staff, and their collective ambition for social change was great. I am deeply grateful for their dedication, intellect and talent. Their thoughtful, intellectual conversations and moral clarity changed my thinking and actions much for the better. Without them nothing would have been possible in my career.

Public office is a precious gift and should not be wasted. With their help we have been able to give profoundly disabled transport accident victims the dignity of their own home through the Residential Independence Pty Ltd housing project; introduce rollover protection for quad bikes, saving many lives; help create wage justice for Victorian government translators and interpreters; and introduce the greener government buildings program, which continues to reduce electricity usage and greenhouse emissions, all the while saving money. We rolled out the first grant program specifically assisting LGBTI migrants and developed and implemented the *Victorian and Proud of It* campaign, a template for strengthening multiculturalism which measurably moved the dial to increase support for a diverse society. We created community support groups, a world-leading model of reducing the risk of violent extremism through community-led engagement, and oversaw the early implementation of the first programs in our state targeting the growing threat of far-right extremism. My electorate office staff were able to change Preston profoundly, including the reopening of Preston High School, the refurbishment of essentially all of our local schools and of course the construction of grade separations, fundamentally changing the community in which I live and love.

I have used the phrase ‘journey of ideas’ deliberately. One of the central elements of every culture and the subject of many of the world’s great stories is the hero’s journey. They all follow a similar pattern: the hero leaves the ordinary world and faces challenges, overcoming some great obstacle or enemy, and then returns and undergoes a metamorphosis in the realisation of how this adventure has changed them. I think many in politics, including myself, live out a literal version of the hero’s journey in the external world. This literal view almost entirely misses the point. The challenge we face—the great obstacle, enemy or dragon, if you like—is within us. This dragon cannot be slain in the external world. These are stories of personal transformation, not personal conquest in the external world. There is a very old question on the purpose of life: is it to be happy or to have meaning? It is a question we all must resolve ourselves. We must all slay our own dragon.

As I leave this stage the challenges facing democratic societies loom large in my mind. Increasingly, Western societies are divided into insiders and outsiders, winners and losers, those who benefit from the great shifts of globalisation and those who do not. Right now this inequality is being turbocharged by low interest rates and the furious pace of technological change. These may be disruptive forces, but they are not disrupting inequality. It is those who are already on the inside who are the winners from globalisation and technological change. Better educated, they have access to power that knowledge provides. They own assets and have access to intergenerational wealth that leaves them even wealthier when historically low interest rates drive up asset prices. For these people inflation and the cost of living are manageable problems. For them change is an opportunity, not a threat. They are not bad people. More often than not these insiders are socially progressive and environmentally conscious and demonstrate genuine care for their communities. But for outsiders change is too often a threat. They are often less educated and have less power over their own lives. They have fewer assets, and the prospect of owning them at some point often becomes a distant dream.

Jobs for the less educated are disappearing. Future job prospects are less secure, uncertain and more precarious. These people die earlier, and not just by a little. Life expectancy is the starkest illustration of inequality. The difference in life expectancy by postcode in Victoria is up to 30 years. Gaps of more than 20 years are not uncommon, and this is an Australia-wide phenomenon. This government is rightly proud of its record of taking on long-ignored challenges like family violence and grade

separations. The challenge of inequality requires fresh determination—for those left behind by globalisation, those victims of this great technological and data revolution. Differences of 20 and 30 years in life expectancy should not separate the richest and poorest, not while we claim adherence to a fair go. Labor must rise to this challenge.

If we do not address inequality I believe the traditional system of politics in which we reside will die. We cannot expect those who have been left behind, those who are outsiders, to support the status quo. In a world where social media algorithms reinforce groupthink and drive people quickly to extremes, this change is coming faster than most people think. A fractured society will produce a fractured political system. A fractured political system fuels populism, which blames migrants, the poor and other minorities, trading in fear, trading in hate. This is the bitter harvest that we risk sowing if we ignore this inequality. Addressing it is not beyond our capacity.

The Victorian government spends around \$100 billion a year. What is required is will—will and humility to learn from others. Governments should set ambitious goals. Reducing the life expectancy gap would be a good place to start. The needs of individual disadvantaged Victorians should shape interventions—individual tailored solutions measured over time and modified based on the outcomes after regular review. The goal should be employment for all. We need the will and the humility to learn from communities and from world's best practice.

I see hope—hope in the application of scientific knowledge for common good. Enormous opportunities exist for a better world. The pandemic has been a disaster. It has killed approximately 20 million people across the world, yet during this time science has unlocked a profound understanding of the transmission of airborne diseases. The more airborne viral particles that are breathed in, the more likely a person is to be infected. The fewer viral particles breathed in, the less likely a person is to be infected. This simple understanding can and should forever alter our relationship with airborne disease. Just as sanitation freed us from waterborne disease in the 19th century, using tools we already have, we can radically reduce the risk of airborne diseases without reducing our freedoms—ventilation, open windows, increasing airflow inside buildings, filtration including HEPA filters and disinfection where UV light kills bacteria and active viruses. A number of studies have shown radical reductions in infection risk. A peer-reviewed Hong Kong restaurant study of upper-room UVC showed a reduction in risk of secondary infection of over 90 per cent. This magnitude of risk reduction promises a fundamental change in our relationship to airborne disease. The cost of reducing this risk would be less than the cost of sanitation. We contain pandemics and free ourselves from the regular cycle of endemic infection. The cost of airborne disease for this state is high. The solutions are cheap. We need imagination, and we need bravery. We need well-designed programs. It will pay for itself many times over. The current difficulties can be replaced for a better age for humankind. We did it before with waterborne diseases. We can do it again with airborne diseases.

Power reveals much about your character. One of my deepest regrets is all the times that I was thoughtless and did not show enough care for those who cared for me. Power held and the moral importance of the work create a sense of entitlement that can leave the needs of others in second place. Love and friendships are gifts that should never come second, regardless of the stakes in a political life.

I will end with what I am sure is in my greatest contribution, a private one, not a political triumph, which would come as not a surprise to many who know me. Unlike most politicians, I have some background in science. I enjoy reading scientific papers; I enjoy understanding them. In early 2020 I was visiting China with my family. On 23 January, my birthday, Wuhan locked down. I had a ringside seat while the world's largest government took action unseen for a century. I watched a city of 20 million people stop. It was breathtaking and shocking. The world had changed forever. As a science tragic I consumed countless epidemiological papers. It became obvious to me that unless we acted to prevent infection spreading, tens of thousands of Australians would rapidly die. At this point there were no vaccines or treatments. I reasoned that death on this scale would be unacceptable to a civilised society. Until we stopped the entry and transmission of the virus, we would lock down.

By late January I had concluded the borders should close. I was convinced very early that we would lock down and the borders would close and that then we would copy East Asian practices in testing, case tracing and masking, and the sooner we did these things, the better. In February and early March 2020 I spent time trying to warn my colleagues and engage in what I thought would happen and how we should respond. It is fair to say that not all of my colleagues were immediately receptive. Indeed many thought my China experiences had addled my brain. It seemed that the radical changes the virus was spreading through the world would somehow not reach us. The disaster unfolding across the world seemed far away, and our common genetic make-up seemed a foreign idea. During this period South Korea and Taiwan succeeded in controlling the outbreak, but that barely registered here. Only when north Italy was struck did the pandemic seem real.

Yet I am convinced that my warnings did help speed up the response in Victoria, and considering the stakes, this was by far my greatest achievement. During this time I think the logic of the situation was actually fairly evident. Why then were I and others unable to convince more quickly? In my view there is a heuristic relating to the future. If history has taught us anything, it is that the future will be radically different from the present. Yet when we face genuine crises, politicians often cannot see that reality will be radically changed in a short period of time, even when those radical changes are eminently predictable.

The world we now face may be less predictable than it was in early 2020. War is destroying the international rule's order. Rampant inflation and a COVID-zero slowdown in China present dramatic economic challenges. Democratic societies have been undermined by authoritarian strongmen from both within and without. The world is not predictable, but we must try. We must be open to the uncomfortable answers that this must present. The future will be different—if history is any guide, radically different.

My final advice for this Parliament is to face the future, looking into the abyss, honestly without the comforting fantasy that things will not be different. The present will not survive contact with events. If we do not try with unwavering honesty to understand what may come, we will always be unprepared. The stakes will be high. The more we face the very real possibility of significant change clearly and rationally, the more we can protect the interests of the community.

In relation to my own future, my ambitions are still large, but not for myself. Instead I intend a journey deeper into ideas, to change the flow of events through those ideas and to dwell in a space where those ideas interact with action. I hope this part of my life will be undertaken with humility born of reflection on my failures as much as my successes. My role in the hero's journey in public life will be changed from the hero of my own narrative to the helper of others. I will leave the heroic conquering to those who still desire that path. I certainly do not.

It has been a deep honour to serve. Farewell and thanks to all who have helped me on this journey. I owe you a debt that can truly never be repaid. I will try for the rest of my life to do justice to that contribution. I wish all of you well—those who do not share my values not quite as well as those who do. May you go well, may you respect your families and those who care for you. Touch the world through the ideas you believe in. This is an important place, even if we all will be forgotten.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR MORWELL

Valedictory statement

Mr NORTHE (Morwell) (15:34): It is a thrill to rise this afternoon to give my valedictory speech in this special chamber and in this special place. It is approaching 16 years since I was first elected as the member for Morwell, and subsequently the privilege and honour that I have had to represent my community right here in the Parliament of Victoria have been profound. I actually recently took the opportunity to go back and read my inaugural speech—a very good one at that, it was. Upon reflection,

there have certainly been some changes in some spaces yet probably little change in other spaces, and I will address that in my contribution. Of course today brings with it a tinge of sadness, but it allows us to show gratitude and give thanks to those who support us in our roles as members of Parliament.

It is simply impossible to individualise, but I do want to thank and acknowledge the people who work in this place and across the road, who provide just outstanding and incredible support to us as MPs: the clerks, the clerks office, the Serjeant-at-Arms office, the procedures office, the tour and customer service unit, our attendants, the buildings and grounds people, catering, property services, security, people operations, work health and safety, the Hansard team, the IT team, the library team—I am told that I am their best customer and have been consistently over the years, those who are part of the parliamentary internship program I must congratulate as well, the election coordination team, finance and risk, payroll and, as a number of members have referred to, parliamentary committees, where as members of Parliament we get the great opportunity to mingle and do really productive work and come up with fantastic recommendations and solutions across the political spectrum. I have been privileged and thrilled to be part of some of those committees, where we have seen changes in legislation that have made a real difference to people's lives. My gratitude and thanks to all people in this place and across the road for their support.

My thanks to fellow MPs right across the political spectrum, to the National Party and their members for preselecting me to contest the seat of Morwell back in 2006 and all the MPs that I have got to know right across the field, being part of the coalition—so Liberal Party colleagues, Labor Party colleagues and now my independent friends and even the Greens, who sometimes are good friends of mine when I need them to be. I must say I have great admiration also for premiers past and present, and thank you, Premier, for being in here today. I think that is really special. It is not to say we always agree with what our Premiers do or what our ministers do, but from me to all of you who have been and are ministers and shadow ministers, I have great respect. It is not an easy job. It is a tough job, but I admire and respect what you do. To your ministerial staff as well—I should not forget them, particularly the last couple of years have been very tough for ministerial staff—I appreciate the work and effort you do in what is sometimes a thankless job.

I will never forget some of the MPs who unfortunately left us in tragic circumstances. Jane Garrett and Fiona Richardson were just beautiful people—beautiful hearts and beautiful ladies. They will never be forgotten, from my perspective. From a local perspective, comrade Gary—where has he gone? Is he with his family? No, he is there. Geez, I have got a big crowd, haven't I, compared to you. To Gary: you are just fabulous to work with. Harriet is here and Melina is here. Danny and the MPs before him in Gippsland South and Bully in Gippsland East, it has been a pleasure to work with you guys in our community. Even though, again, we might have differences every now and again on certain things, there is a level of respect that I really cherish.

This place is a serious place but, by gee, there have been some humorous things over the years—and probably not as humorous as they used to be, given that the 10.00 pm adjournment is no longer with us. Thanks, Jacinta, for getting that back to 7.00 pm. But I do have to recount a couple of stories. For my sins I was forced to share an office with the member for Gippsland East. He is a very good—the best—practical joker I have ever seen. At this particular time you could never leave your computer open in front of Mr Bull. On a couple of occasions it is fair to say that my Facebook page said that I had a colonoscopy I did not even know I had. On another occasion apparently I liked nothing more than to stand nude in front of the mirror singing into the hairbrush and dancing to Jagger. I did not even know that either. So those things do happen.

They were fun times. We had great times up in the High Country, as we described it then, with the then member for Rodney, Paul Weller, who was a character as we all know, and the member for Ovens Valley and a few of the other guys—Billy Sykes. They were good days and good times. Going back to that 2006 speech, there were a number of different programs and initiatives that I was campaigning for, and it is great to see some of those have been delivered, such as the Gippsland Performing Arts Centre and the Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre. We have had multiple redevelopments of Latrobe

Regional Hospital and a number of local school upgrades, including one that is under construction at the moment, Latrobe Special Developmental School, which is dear to my heart. I know Melina and Harriet have fought hard for that as well. There have been some great outcomes and achievements with respect to that.

In my inaugural speech I also spoke about the importance of Australian Paper, and 16 years later I re-emphasise the fact of how important that particular employer is to my community. I even referenced Monash University Churchill, which is now Federation University, so things do change, particularly in the tertiary education and university space. I talked about the importance of the energy industry in my community, and the Greens would have been mortified reading my speech back then because I dared suggest that we not only provide a retrofit for the Hazelwood power station but also build a brand new coal-fired power station in the Latrobe Valley. Whilst I understand and concede that that is a fantasy in the current environment, some of the issues around energy security and supply are still real today. I spoke about unemployment being a burden in the Latrobe Valley, and in many respects it still is today, but hopefully we can overcome those particular things.

In my inaugural speech I was already lauding the efforts of emergency services responders in fire events because two or three weeks after I was first elected the Toongabbie-Cowwarr area saw 11 homes lost in a fire and immediately I was able to see the special capabilities of our CFA volunteers. The Toongabbie and Cowwarr CFAs in that particular regard were brilliant and saved so many homes. It was really just the catalyst for more to come unfortunately because, as the member for Narracan said, we had the Black Saturday bushfires, which decimated a lot of my community. We had the January 2009 fires in Boolarra and Yinnar, which affected that community. We had the mine fire in 2014, we have had storms and floods and a whole range of other emergency events. My hope in leaving this place is that whoever takes over will have a much better run in terms of emergency events. But I do want to shout out to the CFA, SES, Victoria Police, FRV, Ambulance Victoria and all those who respond to emergencies. They have been absolutely brilliant, and we should not forget those who engage in the services after the traumatic events, whether it is the Red Cross, the local council, the department of health and human services or the community groups who get involved.

One of the things I must say that, on becoming a member of Parliament, I really found surprising was the level of volunteerism in your community. You really get to see firsthand just how much volunteerism exists in your community. Again, without naming names, the service clubs—Lions, Rotary, Apex—the men's sheds, the Country Women's Association, the sport and recreation clubs, the Guides and the Scouts, the U3A, the art groups, the performing arts groups, the car clubs, neighbourhood houses, community associations, friends of nature environmental groups, RSLs, veterans and Legacy groups—the list goes on and on and on. Where would we be without the efforts of those volunteers? One of the things that I will take away from this are the friendships and relationships that I have established over those times with those sorts of organisations and people. I will certainly cherish those forever.

One of the hardest things about not standing as a candidate is saying goodbye to those particular groups. I was doing a radio interview on Saturday and I was asked what I would miss and what I would not miss. I said, 'The answer to both is people'—if that makes sense—because it is fair to say I probably will not miss some people, but definitely the thing I will miss the most is purely and simply the good people who give so much of themselves to others and to their community.

Of course I will miss my staff, Kirstie and Jo, who have been with me for five years now, and I have been blessed to have some incredibly intelligent, empathetic, supportive and loyal people work in my electorate office. That commenced right back in 2006 with Katherine and Nicole. I have had Julia and Taylor—who has unfortunately passed away due to breast cancer, which is just awful—and Trish, Kirstie, Jo, Helen, Grada, Bridget and Michelle. Katherine and Nicole were present when we endured those horrific fires. You are dealing with people who are emotional and distressed—they are in grief—and there is an expectation that their MP and their staff can assist, so you need a special type of person to be working in those environments.

The same can be said for Kirstie and Jo. We have had to deal with, along with all our other electorate office staff, the prolonged COVID pandemic, where MPs' officers really became the sources of information, assistance and answers for people dealing with a different type of trauma, but nonetheless it is trauma. I cannot speak highly enough of both these ladies, and their professionalism and empathy shine through. I do hope whoever my successor is will give regard to their qualities, capabilities and political independence when they consider the employment of their own electorate officers because Kirstie and Jo are simply two incredibly passionate, community-minded employees who are highly regarded by not only our constituents but the government departments and agencies that we work with, other electorate officers and our internal and external stakeholders.

Quickly going back to my inaugural speech of 16 years ago, I was actually applauding the government at the time for establishing for the first time a minister for mental health. I was talking about some of the local challenges. I will not quote what I was going to quote, but I talked about some of those local services needing to be enhanced. I would say that mental health is one of those things where I would argue in some respects there has been little, if any, improvement on the ground. I am very conscious of the fact that there has been a royal commission held on that and that implementation is occurring at the moment, which is good, but we still need a lot of investment into that to the point where, as the former Deputy Premier said, local people can access local mental health services and care in their local community when they need it. I think that is fabulous. It is a great aspiration to have, and that is where we should be, but we have still got a way to go to achieve that outcome.

From my own perspective, I guess, little did I know 16 years ago that mental ill health might also beset me. Unfortunately I did live for a long time with an undiagnosed mental health condition, during which time I unintentionally hurt many people. That is a big cross to bear, but it is important those people close to me know how dearly sorry I am for any pain that I caused. But when you are living with a person with poor mental health or undiagnosed mental ill health and they are displaying out-of-character and uncharacteristic behaviours, it is damn hard to understand, let alone deal with it. That is what my family network went through and many other families go through as well. Your family, like any other MP's family, rides the bumps of political life—the good, the bad and everything else in between. Jenny, Tim, Matt and Tom, I thank you for still being there for me, because there was a block of time within those 16 years where I was incredibly unwell and vacant, and that was very challenging, extraordinarily tough, on all of you, to say the least. My son Matt and his wife, Emily, have blessed us with a gorgeous granddaughter, Ella, and she is currently the apple of Poppy Angry's eye.

Since my diagnosis and treatment I have been able to slowly gain some self-esteem and confidence, and I know my next chapter has to and will involve, at least in part, working in the suicide prevention, mental health and gambling policy reform space. There are just too many gaps in the system where individuals, families and communities are being exposed to harm, and in fact people are dying. This is a travesty, and I want to help drive positive change. Just like in 2006, when I applauded the government for, for the first time, appointing a minister for mental health, I want to be able to applaud the next elected state government for having the first minister for gambling safety or for establishing an independent office or commission for gambling safety. We cannot have the situation where the issues around gambling harm sit with the minister for gaming—there is too much conflict. If you want to, then let gaming sit in the gaming portfolio, but let us start to focus on specific gambling harm reforms and the plethora of recommendations that have been suggested by a number of advocacy groups, including the Alliance for Gambling Reform, Suicide Prevention Australia and Financial Counselling Australia, that could realistically be adopted and implemented immediately if there was a will.

At the very least let us pull all this apart by way of an immediate and comprehensive parliamentary inquiry as soon as the new government is elected. Unfortunately I know firsthand the harm associated with alcohol and gambling harm when you are also contending with a mental illness, in my case an undiagnosed mental illness. Gambling harm supplemented by poor mental health must be treated as a public health issue; at the moment it is not from a prevention perspective, nor is it from a support

perspective and it is certainly not from a justice or social justice perspective, where people are simply treated in a punitive manner, not in a therapeutic way, and this needs to change.

In the vestibule of this beautiful building there is a quote laid out on the floor, via the King James Bible, Proverbs 11:14, that says:

Where no counsel is the people fall but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Those are powerful words. My interpretation is that society will fail unless we have governance and governments in place, and I firmly believe that to be true. But when applied to the gambling sector and particularly online gambling and gambling harm there is simply little or no counsel, and therefore people are falling. This includes the vulnerable and the unwell, and they are falling in large numbers and often with dire consequences. Billions and billions of dollars are being lost every year, and if you think that is not hurting people, then you are living under a rock. I will not rest until we see positive change in this space, until we see a reduction in the enormous harm and hurt that many individuals and families are experiencing, so hopefully I will continue to see many of you post the election as I continue on this advocacy journey.

In closing, I really just want to say thank you to all those people who helped me along the way and through this journey, people who helped at my four election campaigns and particularly those who stood at prepoll and on polling booths for hours on end. I cannot thank you enough for the time, effort and faith you gave me during those times. It means a lot. There is a cross-section of my network here today: Wes; Michelle; my son Tom; Gary Blackwood, who has just been—I do not know how to describe him—a god to me; my friend Gus, who has stuck with me for a number of years, which means so much also. All of these are dear friends and family who truly know who I am, and their collective support has been incredible and so important to me. I wish my successor well. You will have the opportunity to meet some extraordinary people, and if you look after them, they will look after you. Do the absolute best you can and you will earn the respect of the good people in our community. I wish all candidates the very best for the 2022 election, and thank you for the opportunity to say a few words today after being able to stand in this place and represent my community over the past 16 years.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR KOROROIT

Valedictory statement

Ms KAIROUZ (Kororoit) (15:53): When I first rose to my feet in this place a little over 14 years ago I did so with my family proudly watching me deliver my inaugural speech. Today they are watching me give my final speech from home, but one person is absent: my dear sister, Paula. I have had not the opportunity to tribute Paula in this place, so I ask for indulgence to take this opportunity to say a few words. The thought of delivering my valedictory speech without the presence of my soulmate and best friend by my side fills me with sorrow, especially considering how proud she was of me on the day of my speech. Many of you know that Paula suddenly and unexpectedly passed away on 12 July 2021. Paula left us with a huge void in our lives, a void that can never be filled but a void we must learn to live with.

Learning to do this has been extremely difficult. Paula was a successful lawyer. She was larger than life and lived her life to the fullest after it almost ended in her 20s. Paula beat cancer and lived, and I do not mean lived to breathe; I mean she lived life to the fullest. She loved life, and life loved her back. Paula had a sharp intellect and a wicked sense of humour. She was kind-hearted, beautiful, vivacious and mischievous. Paula was healthy and strong. She died suddenly without any warning and without saying goodbye. But what gives me solace is that Paula knew she was loved, and we knew that she loved us too.

All the excitement I had in my life was because of Paula. Any trouble I ended up in was when I was with Paula. The funniest and the best moments were with my sister; the saddest and the darkest moments are now because of Paula's passing. I miss how she would put on a show for me when lighting and puffing on her favourite Montecristo or Cohiba cigars and sipping on a negroni to get me jealous just because I refused to smoke a cigar in public. I miss the little things with Paula, things that may sound trivial when verbalised but were important to me. I miss her instructing me what direction to avoid or to look at by simply telling me the time. I miss our chats, our laughs, our arguments, her hugs and her voice. I am a person of faith; however, sometimes—in fact many times—I found myself questioning my faith during my grieving process. What I will never question, however, is that Paula will remain in me and in my heart, and her memory and her spirit will live through me every single moment.

As much as I would like to keep this speech positive and concentrate on my achievements as a member of Parliament, unfortunately this is going to be the last opportunity that I have to canvass important matters that have been in the public domain for more than two years now, so I ask you to be a little patient with me and give me an extra few moments. I speak of course of a sensationalist commercial television program that was proven to be a fabrication but which has led to much disruption. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. I coincidentally shared an office floor with someone who was at the centre of factional politics at a leadership level in the Labor Party. I employed former staff of a mentally ill person who had decided to blow the Labor Party and the Andrews government up by recording us unlawfully and recording ministers not only of his own party but within his own grouping. I speak about Anthony Byrne.

I was not second in charge of any faction, no faction had control over two-thirds of the Labor Party's membership and I did not engage in industrial-scale branch stacking for the past few decades. I was a minister doing my job. I was collateral damage in a power play for control over the Labor Party. Yes, I was very much factionally savvy in this place, and I was always prepared to offer my time and my experience to new MPs in the right faction and particularly within my group. I was not a factional player in the party organisation, let alone second in charge of an influential subfaction, which would have required the time and the experience of juggling alliances and competing interests, which would have required deep relationships with key people in the factional leadership in the party organisation. I did not have those relationships. I was too busy doing what mattered to me, and that was doing my job as a minister.

However, like every MP in a safe seat, I was very protective of my patch, as every MP has the right to be. That was the extent of my factional involvement. Ironically, after my preselection, which involved various competing clans in the Labor Party in the western suburbs, I set myself the objective of managing the well-known, volatile inter-clan rivalry in the western suburbs so I would not be sucked into the fray. I was largely successful in that endeavour, as evidenced by the fact that during my term as a member of Parliament branch-stacking wars between Labor Party groupings in my patch of the west did not resurface.

From 2014 I had been around the cabinet table, first as a cabinet secretary then as a minister, where I remained until the fabrications of the *60 Minutes* program. I have a big problem with the way IBAC and the Ombudsman conducted themselves, and I will talk about that in a minute. What the hearings did show is that none of the accusations shown on the *60 Minutes* program were factual. That is a remarkably bad strike rate, especially when you consider the full coercive powers and resources of the state—I do not mean the government, I mean the state—were deployed to prove the *60 Minutes* narrative.

I offer a piece of advice to everyone in this house. I say to you: always make sure that you never lose sight of your family and loved ones as you go about the tireless and sometimes thankless task of trying to improve the lives of Victorians. Politics should be a noble pursuit. But let me tell you firsthand that politics also attracts the worst of the worst characters in our society who are in it for the wrong reasons.

Anthony Byrne and Alexandra Stalder are two people I knew through my relationship with my former union. I was not close to them. I would not have had more than a handful of conversations with them in the past decade. I did not have a problem with them, and they should not have had a problem with me since we did not interact enough to cause each other ill feelings. I employed two former Byrne staffers who were factional activists in his office and who wanted to branch out into policy work at a ministerial level. It turns out that they were planted in my office by Byrne as spies to tear me down, which included recording my conversations. Their recordings were not significant enough to be published because there was nothing to record. Why? I do not know, but I will offer you this because I think it affects all of us here and all of those who will serve here in the future: the decision by some in my party, who are not in this place—the party which I loved and served faithfully for more than half of my life—to support, celebrate and then exploit the actions of two disturbed individuals will have a lasting impact on Australian politics. Anyone could do it but nobody did because the consequences to all future engagements in political life would be so devastating. Once the sugar hit of the headlines had passed, those celebrating the demise of their rivals would have understood that from now on they too were not safe. From now on no-one is safe. Every person in politics these days is armed with broadcast-quality video and audio recording devices, and any one of us can be recorded at any time using the same kind of illegal tactics.

I do not think I have met anyone in public life who could survive the broadcast of their most intimate private conversations with their most trusted colleagues, with all the indiscretions, rude words, excessive candour and frankness which are often involved in those. A politics where the Surveillance Devices Act 1999 does not apply because a cowboy journalist can claim it is in the public interest to broadcast any of our private conversations is toxic and doomed. It is a politics without trust, where its practitioners need to whisper in corridors, use encrypted apps and hide in the shadows like gangsters. It is a politics unworthy of this grandest of grand buildings.

When history repeats, and sadly it will, I hope serious consideration is given to giving prison terms to those who pretend to be your friend and secretly record and broadcast private conversations as a political weapon against rivals. I believe it is just a matter of time. There is a Lebanese saying which may be unparliamentary, so I will paraphrase: 'A thief thinks everyone is a thief'. I have no doubt that the people who set up the illegal recording thought that they would find systemic improper activity involving money. We know who they are, and we know what they got up to themselves. A thief thinks everyone is a thief. The *60 Minutes* program was promoted as the biggest political scandal in Australia's history, and two integrity bodies were allocated to forensically investigate their fabrication. In the end they found nothing. The only breach in the law was the leak of the draft report.

It would be logical to conclude that I am satisfied. I am not. IBAC and the Ombudsman should never have dragged the inquiry on for so long. The reason IBAC and the Ombudsman held public examinations was that they deemed electorate officers performing factional tasks as serious corrupt conduct. The Ombudsman knew from day one that even if staffers were used for factional purposes, that would not have been deemed corrupt conduct requiring a public examination. The Ombudsman knew from day one that the allegations pertaining to staffers were allegations of breaches of the code of conduct: in other words they were matters for the Parliament and not the integrity bodies. Yet the Ombudsman allowed the investigation to go on for two years and predictably after two years referred these matters to the Parliament. It was disingenuous, it was an abuse of power and it was a waste of taxpayer money. It was also a denial of natural justice to leak the report before I had the opportunity to reply to the allegations in the report. Furthermore, IBAC investigated the internal affairs of a private organisation, which is well beyond their jurisdiction. They are not funded to do that.

The IBAC and the Ombudsman's investigation shows that when you do the right thing, no matter how malicious those with extreme powers are, intent on bringing you down, you are safe. I am fortunate that I come from a very proud family. My upbringing would never allow me to gain financial advantage through wrongdoing, nor would I ever be part of allowing taxpayer funds to be misused. I never went cap in hand asking for a cent. I did not receive gifts and benefits. I did not misuse my

entitlements or seek favours for donations, and I did not waste my budget and make false promises. I did not fundraise and then divert money away from my party, and I did not siphon off community grants. I have paid my taxes, and I have put my hand in my pocket. A thief thinks everyone is a thief.

I served on Darebin council for over 10 years as a councillor and twice as mayor and was elected as junior vice-president of the greatest party of all, the Australian Labor Party. In June 2008 I was elected to represent the district of Kororoit. Being the first female in Victoria of Lebanese descent to be elected as mayor and to Parliament, I hoped that young women in my community were inspired to join political parties and get involved. I hope they continue to be.

After Labor's defeat in 2010 I became Opposition Whip. I like to think that I played an important role in the election of the Andrews Labor government. Being whip during that time was one of the most important positions in opposition, because the numbers were so close. The Baillieu-Napthine government had 45 members; the Labor opposition had 43—a difference of one vote. Then Liberal MP Geoff Shaw turned independent and delivered the Labor opposition 44 votes on many, many good days—but that was not easy. It was stressful, but it was enjoyable. There was no room for leave, complacency or error—and I apologise to those that bore the brunt of my robust administration as whip. My dealings with the former member for Frankston were black and white. He did not like the cleverly worded, misleading commitments and statements that too many politicians engage in, and I had the advantage of being direct.

I look back now with so much warmth, and I smile and remember the chaos, the stunts and the traps. When it was on it was on. We would do almost anything to disrupt this place. We walked out en masse on the government on several occasions. The government walked out en masse on the government, and the Speaker walked out en masse from the speaker and would often throw out members during question time like it was happy hour. And just like a Tuesday menu special I would get thrown out almost every Tuesday. I am grateful that I played a leading role and contributed to, yes, some of the shenanigans but more importantly to the election of the Andrews Labor government. I am grateful that I worked with the best in the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the member for Monbulk, who never deviated from the strategy of winning government and who ran rings around the parliamentary leadership of the Liberal Party. They led a disciplined and united team. Thank you. I thank you for the leadership, the laughs and the adventures, and I wish you well for the future.

When the Andrews government came to office in 2014 I was given the responsibility of being the Cabinet Secretary, the best job in government. I was intimately involved with the government's agenda, and I learned the tricks of the trade, the most important being respecting processes, because good process protects government and leads to good outcomes in government decision-making. I subsequently led the consumer affairs, gaming and liquor regulation, local government and suburban development portfolios. My team and I developed some groundbreaking reforms in delivering the strongest reforms and protections to renters in the country and striking the right balance between the government, the gaming industry, responsible gambling advocates and problem gamblers. We recognised the value of the growing liquor industry, particularly to employment in the entertainment and tourism industries. I thoroughly enjoyed working with communities, businesses, NGOs and academics across the state to make sure our suburbs were vibrant, livable and revitalised places in the suburban development portfolio. I went back to my grassroots experience in the local government portfolio in rewriting the Local Government Act 2018. I am grateful and humbled to have held those positions. I am acutely aware that I am one of the few to get to hold those important positions, and I thank my colleagues for entrusting me with those roles.

Reflecting on what it has meant for me to be a member of this majestic chamber, I realised that all I ever wanted to do was to improve the lives of those I swore an oath to represent and protect. My motivation and my inspiration in my role as a member of Parliament has been to be the voice of my community, particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds and those from migrant communities that have not lived in Australia for long and who are often afraid and not trusting of government. I learned a lot from the community I represented. I knew what they wanted because I

lived local, shopped local and ate local. I moved into Caroline Springs within two months of winning the by-election. Because I lived in the community I understood what the community's needs and concerns were. I do not believe you get the same level of connection with your electorate if you do not live in the community. This is something that Labor must do better on. The reason I immediately moved into the area is that I felt that I would be disrespecting my constituents if I did not. My message to all sections of the Labor Party is: listen to those communities, do not take them for granted and do not leave them behind, because they will leave you behind.

I am proud to be part of a team that delivered policy reforms that directly benefited communities in the west and billions of dollars of much-needed infrastructure. I am extremely proud of the delivery of the Caroline Springs train station, the Deer Park train station, the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, numerous new schools and school upgrades, level crossing removals in Deer Park, Derrimut and St Albans, the millions of dollars that were spent on bitumen to improve our roads and of course the smaller but no less important projects that went a long way.

Today I step away from my parliamentary career and public life knowing that I never deviated from my beliefs, even though they were perceived to be archaic or unpopular. I always supported the underdog, even though it was not in my personal interest to do so. I was probably resented, perhaps respected, but I was always true to myself. They say if you want a friend in politics, get a dog—I did, Henry is his name—but I have been one of the fortunate ones to keep the same friends I had before entering this place, and I have made a couple of other lifelong friends along the way. I thank the people that I thanked in my inaugural speech, even though some are no longer with us today and others I do not see anymore. I thank the people that I cried with, laughed with and even argued with. I can never thank the people of Kororoit enough for showing their faith in me in the 2008 Kororoit by-election followed by three decisive election victories. It has been the greatest honour of my life serving you.

I thank the members of the Labor Party—the branch members, that is—and the countless volunteers who supported me and supported many other Labor candidates to deliver some wonderful victories. I could not have beaten my opponents and grown the margin of my seat from strength to strength if it had not been for their loyalty and support. To the good people of the Labor caucus, thank you for the numerous calls and messages and care and support that you gave me during the last couple of years. You are a fabulous group of people. I enjoyed working with you, and I will always barrack for you.

To the members who are sitting on the opposite benches of the political divide, thank you very much for the respect and the courtesy that you have always extended to me. I wish you well. To the clerks, the parliamentary attendants, the Hansard team, the catering team and other parliamentary officers, particularly Barry Cull, who has been responsible for my electorate office while I have been on leave, and Micky Rootes from the Premier's office, who has always kept my electorate office up to date, thank you.

I thank my drivers, particularly Rob Brens, who always treated me like one of his daughters.

I thank my hardworking and honest ministerial staff, particularly Michael de Bruyn, Dr Elie Khalil and Adele Elasmir, all of whom I have known since before I entered this place.

I thank my loyal and hardworking electorate office staff, Kirsten Psaila, Chris Kelly, Tony Peng, Diana Biewer, Dinesh Chauhan and Bobi Acevski. Everything that was achieved in the portfolios and in the electorate is because of your commitment, your professionalism and your work ethic. I am very sorry for the way you were treated by those working from their ivory towers for simply doing your job. All your volunteerism, or free work, in assisting me in my public duties, which you considered to be helping your own community, has been so publicly questioned by those who sit in judgement of you and who are used to monetising every single word they utter. This is something that the mercenaries with the guns for hire that are the lawyers who sat in judgement of you do not understand—the concept of working for a cause, for values or for ideals. You were bullied and you were brutalised by those who have never stepped foot inside an electorate office and who have probably never set foot in the outer

western suburbs. You were also abused and left with considerable emotional damage by IBAC and the Ombudsman, and you never put in an overtime claim. You always went above and beyond the call of duty in your roles, doing your jobs servicing the electorate after hours and on weekends, assisting me in my public duties and ensuring that every stakeholder and every constituent walked out of our office satisfied. You did this because of your sense of community pride and activism. I am so proud to have worked with you and to have achieved everything together. I will appoint all of you in a heartbeat.

To my loving and supportive family, thank you for reminding me each day that I am loved and that you are proud of me. I thank you for all the support you have given me my entire life. I am so fortunate to have you as my family. I love you more than life itself and more than words can describe. I promise you that I am not going anywhere. I will be present, and I will always be right by your side.

Being a member of Parliament has been the greatest honour of my life, and I realise that I have had a fortunate career. There are many good people that have served a long time in this place and have not had the same opportunities I have had. I came into this place in 2008 and had a great trajectory from backbencher to whip to cabinet secretary and then to minister in the space of 12 years, so I leave this place with a great sense of accomplishment and a sense of gratitude.

So what is next? I will still find a way to contribute to society and help those in need, but I am going to live life and I am going to take chances. I am not going to wait for anything, and for once I am not going to try to control things that are uncertain. I will light a cigar and sip on my favourite whiskey whenever and wherever I want, because life is too short. However, the one thing I am certain about is right now is the oldest I have ever been and the youngest I will ever be again. Thank you, and I bid you adieu.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR NARRE WARREN NORTH

Valedictory statement

Mr DONNELLAN (Narre Warren North) (16:20): I guess the final speech is very much as hard as the first speech. I will explain that a little bit later. These are very much the reflections and a little bit of self-analysis of someone who does not really like writing but is not a bad talker, someone who mangles the English language and can be quite colourful sometimes, which very much reflects my passion. I have got a record, but I am not going to talk and give people a long list of things I have been involved with. I have always seen myself as a member of a team, whether it be at the electorate office, the ministerial office, cabinet or the department. Stakeholders in the electorate and others will make individual assessments about whether we did a good or bad job. I have never been comfortable with self-praise. I have never liked trumpet blowers, to be blunt. I never really wanted to be an MP, to be honest. I really wanted to be the state secretary sitting in the shadows. I had enough of a fear of talking in front of people—or more than a few. I was manically driven to avoid that. I would have happily gone from Kelvin Thomson's office or Tony Robinson's, straight from the electorate office, into the state office. That would have suited me perfectly. I can say one of the happiest days of my life was my first day of employment for a Labor member, when I was driving the blue VG Valiant. I loved that car—that car loved petrol, I might add—and it was the car that I took Charlotte out in for our first date.

Part of the reason I did not like public speaking was that I had a mad nun called Sister Bernadette in Camberwell at St Dominic's who used to kick and punch and humiliate me in front of people because I could not read or write properly because I spoke Italian. That certainly did not help. It took me a while to work out that I was just as capable as everybody else, because I just had this utter fear of talking in front of people. That confidence has come over time, obviously. In many ways I am a contrary bastard, because I ended up loving being a member for 20 years. I never thought I would. No role could have ever captured my desire to strive for social justice better. I have truly loved sharing what is and will be the majority of my working life with the people of Narre Warren North, and I will be terribly sad to leave. I have had 20 years of thorough enjoyment, consistently challenged and always

delighted by my engagement with the community at mobiles or when doorknocking. Ninety per cent of the time we never talked about politics. I loved sharing their stories and I loved giving stories back. The joys and struggles of your people—my people—I was their hustler; I was responsible for part of their wellbeing every day and I felt very comfortable with that. For someone who hated speaking in front of people, God, I learned to love it. I love the argy-bargy of this place. I think it is a very rational way of dealing with serious public issues.

My first experience speaking in front of people was at 38 years of age. It was the worst experience I had ever had. It was in this house. Bloody Bracksy came in and sat down in front of me. I had *Cry Me a River* playing under my arms at that stage. I could have sweated for Australia. God, I was happy when that was over. I could not race enough to get to the end of it. But I did improve over time, and I got more comfortable talking in this house.

What is so special about being an MP? Well, for me, I do not think there is any role which allows you to effect change in the community like that of a member of Parliament—maybe a dictator. Judges, police, nurses, doctors—all those people sit at the end of the line after we make the rules or we fund the program. For example, Home Stretch—when I introduced that, it was the proudest day of my life as a minister in the Andrews government, and I said it and I meant it—introduced new service models for children 18 to 21 years of age who have experienced trauma and are in out-of-home care. What drove me to do that? It was the logic, the evidence of terrible social outcomes, guilt—Catholic guilt, heavy dosages of Catholic guilt with a Jesuit education with a focus on social justice and a focus on the wellbeing of others—never spending your time glorifying yourself, the importance of humility and treating all people with dignity. Also it was the campaign of the sector which I guess made me do it. Paul McDonald and others from Anglicare very much pushed it. But I guess what really made me do it in the end was my first announcement as Minister for Child Protection. I went down to the convent in Collingwood and had to sit in front of people like Rusty who had experienced out-of-home care and had to tell them to get excited because we were going to cover 10 per cent of them for this Home Stretch program. Well, that did not make me feel good. That was my first announcement as the Minister for Child Protection, and I was determined that we were going to cover 100 per cent—and we did. That is why that experience highlights to me what you can do as a member of Parliament.

Why did I become a member of Parliament? Well, my family made me do it, I guess they would say. When my father took me off to Xavier College he said, ‘Middle- and upper-class people shouldn’t be drawing on the public purse. There shouldn’t be subsidies for their lifestyle’. He always taught me about the needs of others, not ‘yours’. He hated the culture of the individual. The community always came first. He taught me to love a verbal fight, like his father who would fight with him and tell him he was wrong. Even though my father had gone to university and my grandfather had not, he would tell him the book was wrong. They loved to fight.

As my mother said, ‘Darling, bullshit baffles brains’, to put it crudely, and that is how she went about things in child protection. It was with passion and with confidence, and that is something that took me a while to work out; probably at about 40 years of age I finally had the confidence to understand what that meant. My mother is terribly passionate about social justice. She gets terribly angry when animals appear more important than the homeless in our society. She does have an animal, I might add. She sent me to department of housing playgroups in school holidays so I could understand the trials and tribulations of others. She taught me you need to be confident to get your message across and not to be afraid of a fight.

Regrets: I have got a few regrets. I guess not finishing the work on the early intervention program called Putting Families First, a program that I, along with the member for Sydenham, the member for Preston and the marvellously great public servants in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions worked on. Argiri and Beth and people like that put a marvellous program together. And why did we do it? Because we were sick of seeing people incarcerated, sick of watching poverty go from generation to generation and sick of the solution of

using a spray gun to spray bullets around the problem when the precision of a rifle would do the job properly. The future of the welfare state depends on a focus on early, evidence-based interventions with long-term tracking and methodologies to measure the longer term and social benefits. Far too often we retreat to *Kumbaya*, feel-good interventions that are often not evidence-based and that often do not have the impact we are desirous of.

Freight is another area where the ministerial office and the stakeholders and so forth did marvellous work. But there is so much work to do because the freight task is expected to double over the coming years.

My saddest moment was the fall of Kabul and our federal government's response. Why couldn't we have been more on the front foot? Why couldn't we have dealt with that a lot better? Listening to the trauma of my community was very difficult.

Funniest moments: John Brumby coming back from retirement to play for the Premiers cricket team against the Crusaders and hitting a six—he is still dining out on that at the Brunswick Street oval—or it could be the Kokoda mankini that Earl Setches paraded in Papua New Guinea in 2008. What a delight that was. I think we also had Ian Silk at the time, and we teased him about barracking for Hawthorn and all the blond boys he was associated with at Hawthorn. Well, he is now a director there—and a very good one at that.

The electorate is my greatest achievement. I need to explain that. I was truly privileged to work for and with the community for 20 years—people who I draw so much enjoyment and pleasure from. I worked with everybody irrespective of their politics. I have always thought everybody pays my wages, not just the Labor voters. For those who are conservative leaning, I guess my only test was: are they working for others? And if they were, well, then I would work with them.

When preselections were over, Cameron Lucadou-Wells, a journalist, pressed me a few times to enunciate my greatest achievements. The journalist wanted buildings, ovals, roads or something physical, but my thoughts went to things like the Andrews Centre, Carlos, community houses, Joe at Berwick City Soccer Club, Eric at the Narre bowls club, Sean at Narre Foxes, Rex and Fran at Endeavour Hills footy club, Gula, Selba, Phong, Be Ha Kevin, Loi and many people who are leaders in their community. I very much saw my role as helping others to help others—assisting people not making monuments to yourself. I have always found it quite bizarre when we as politicians sometimes claim credit individually for things which are very much a team effort. The volunteers and the groups put the work together, support the clubs and so forth and then put them in a position to be worthy of the ground, so that is why I thought always my greatest achievement was serving others who nourish the community of Narre Warren North. I very much saw myself as a team player for Narre Warren North, who had to occasionally play in a key position.

I felt likewise in the ministerial office. I worked with marvellous people in my office but also from VicRoads, child protection, aged care and many more. I was very much the team member who did a song and dance at the end of the exercise. That is the way I saw my role.

I loved doorknocking as a member, but my knees did not. You build a marvellous rapport with the community. I still know the doors where the grumpy Liberals live—I have got one of those visual memories. In 2008 they told me they did not like Brumby, which I thought was most unreasonable as I was doorknocking. What I guess it taught me was that I needed to do something about it. I could either collapse, fall on the spot, argue with them about whether Brumby was a good or bad person, or I could get on a phone over 18 months and do 11 000 phone calls to talk to the people directly—not to campaign at them, not to tell them that, say, John Brumby was a good leader, but to actually engage in their lives. It taught you over time by doing that to innately understand the psyche of the community, because you were listening. You felt the broader economic highs and lows, the rhythms and patterns of life.

And if you listen carefully enough, you sort of learn to understand why most of the community really has no interest in the day-to-day political minutiae that rocks our socks off in here. They have their lives to live, their struggles and so forth. They very much live in the present. Most wish for you to listen and over time develop interventions to assist them in their daily lives. That is why I think the community very much want face-to-face engagement, always available, not digital statements of individual success. The community does not distinguish between levels of government, and we have never sent anybody in our electorate office off elsewhere to deal with another level of government, because I just do not think the community sees it that way. Politics is very much about fulsome, proper, human engagement over extended periods with long discussions, but—I will put it bluntly—never at election time. It is the worst time to be trying to do that. For me, I always tried to be the most available member so when you went to the fridge I was a bit like Coca-Cola—you always picked that person because they were always doing their mobile offices and always available to you as their local member.

The difficult decisions—well, for me, I always thought, ‘How did I sleep?’, ‘How did I want to be seen in the longer run?’. Would I be seen as a self-serving spiv or someone who actually gave a stuff? Would my kids or their offspring in 50 years time be horrified by decisions of mine? Being brutally honest with yourself, measuring your behaviour every night at sleep, is what I did every night. A good dose of Catholic guilt each night—or a good glass of Catholic guilt each night—certainly helped.

Now, this is probably the hardest bit, the thankyou. The easiest bit is the family. First and foremost to my marvellous, beautiful, caring and loving wife, Charlotte. A true believer, nearly communist in her support, I could not ask for more; no person could expect more. Charlotte has been mum and dad far too often, and that is just a simple fact. I am a difficult bugger who has been overindulged in love, support and care, and for that I am truly blessed. I love you, wonderful Charlotte. It is as simple as that. Ben—well, Ben always gets things done without a fuss, but like his grandpa, he is very bright, very kind, sweet and loving and has an innate sense of social justice. He is frequently disturbed by the attitudes of some of his old-school colleagues, as am I. My son, Sebastian, old grumpy pants, the most political and Prince Charming of the family—big mouth, loud fella, loves a fight, whether they be big or small on the footy field, verbally combative but always loving. My mother—well, she is the full-frontal assault. There is no halfway house. In for a penny, in for a pound, as she would say. You put it on the nose—and she was the *Herald* racing girl many years ago, so that comes from racing parlance. You put it on the nose when it comes to the family and you do it with bravado, even if you do not feel it. My sister is always in my corner. She is the silent type, more like her father, who would happily jab someone but would not want to be seen doing it. Verbally brutal in support and always happy to share dastardly thoughts about actions which would lead to misery for our enemies.

Now, this is the really hard bit: the staff. I have had so many marvellous staff. Robyn Hale—honourable mention. I reckon it has been about 20 years. She is a bit like my extra mum but far too young of course. She feels each insult thrown my way personally. I could not have got a more skilled, hardworking, terribly kind and considerate individual. She managed my office like her own for seven years while I performed a ministerial role and for 13 years when I hung around like a bad smell. All my staff—I have been truly blessed, with so many special people to work with, and I have always felt I have been a member of a great team. So many special qualities; they shared my mania and my passions. And actually many of the ministerial staff are here today, even those from the ministerial wall of shame, which is the shame of when you retire—we put you up on the wall. Even those who introduced the ministerial swear jar, which I was not a great fan of, are here today.

Members interjecting.

Mr DONNELLAN: Yes, a great contributor.

In the electorate office, to be blunt, it often felt like a field battle in the early days with the City of Casey: dig the trenches and wait for another mad intervention from the councillors and the CEO. It was not easy going. Thank you for your mighty efforts.

There are the volunteers. Foxy and Beef, the friend whisperers. My Liberal-voting friends used to beat the Liberals every time to the polling booths and get there earlier than everybody else, so I am eternally grateful for that. I cannot say your hearts and spirits were all fully with me, but thank you for your endeavours. There are Trish and Keith and many others who doorknocked for many hours. There are the phone-callers like Doug. I think Doug is 80 and he is still making phone calls. There are so many beautiful people in the community who helped who are not members and who have very much become friends. From so many ALP members and colleagues there was marvellous support on so many tough campaigns—people like Loy, who madly put out signs. I could never work out how they got there in the first place, but I am eternally grateful. There are the people who financially supported me like George, Nick, Fib, Peter Anderson, Peng and many others. To the Premier and my colleagues, thank you very much for allowing me to patiently push my causes in cabinet and occasionally carry on like a pork chop, which was frequently.

The ministerial youth advisory group is a group of young people in out-of-home care who were happy to share with me their experiences—unfiltered experiences—of what the care system was like, which certainly assisted us in our endeavours to try and make improvements. I very much want to thank them for their generosity and their bravery.

I thank Bill Shorten for sending me off to the Carlton branch for 12 months as a volunteer on Kelvin Thomson's campaign to get him back into Wills; that was a great lesson. There are the constituents and the community leaders: Bert, Marco, Michael, Susan and so many others. Apologies especially to those I have missed. I have no doubt I have missed some; actually I was just about to miss the parliamentary staff. I have greatly enjoyed the company of so many of the parliamentary staff; it has been marvellous. A real apology to those I have missed. I will not sleep easy tonight because I know when you start listing people you always miss out some bugger along the way. Thank you.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR MORNINGTON

Valedictory statement

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (16:38): On 20 December 2006 I stood up in this house to make my inaugural remarks, and I stand at the same microphone, from the same seat, to make what I expect will be my penultimate remarks in this house some 16 years later. There were 88 members on the roll in December 2006, as there are now, but of those 88 I think there are about 22 left. Sixty-six have gone, and by my calculations at least another nine will not be returning for the 60th Parliament—that is, those who are going voluntarily or who are at least leaving at the end of this session.

On the surface not much has changed in this Parliament, but there are a few things that I think are probably worth commenting on. The one that is probably most obvious is the fact that in 2006 this was a very paper-driven organisation. Not only was the Parliament driven by paper, our electorate offices were driven by paper. Something like 80 per cent of the correspondence that came into my office in 2007 was in fact paper, and of course we now work very, very differently. That opens up all sorts of opportunities for the way we work. The related change, I guess, is the accommodation. No-one is up over the dome anymore. We are all down in relatively comfortable offices. We all actually can get some work done when we come in here, and that is a big change as well.

While the working conditions have improved and while this is a far more efficient place, a change that perhaps is not so welcome is the fact that I think over these 16 years the relevance of this house and the relevance of the Parliament in the context of Victorian democracy has been further diminished. It was not great in 2006. I think, sadly, it has further diminished. This is not a partisan remark. This is neither the time nor place to be partisan, and I am not going to be, because both sides are guilty. Both sides have allowed this to happen. It is not good for democracy. There has been a serious decline. There are lots of examples I can give, and I am sure most people in this chamber now have heard me rant about the budget process and how that has so diminished over the years. The fact is that I do not

think at the moment we have the capacity to hold the government to account. We do not have the capacity to hold the Victorian public service to account, and we need to do something about that. We still have the tools to do it, but the current practices do not permit it to occur.

We have a culture of questions but not answers. We have a veneer of politeness in our standing orders that prevents us from calling out untruths, whether it be untruths coming from people in this chamber on very rare occasions or whether it be the far more frequent thing we all encounter—lots of untruths from outside, and we do not have the capacity to call that out. We have, as the member for Shepparton frequently reminds us, no private members business. We have, frankly, reduced access to public servants. I was in a bill briefing not that long ago—I cannot remember what the briefing was, and the briefing itself was perfectly adequate—and the people doing the briefing were entirely ministerial advisers. There was not a public servant in the virtual meeting, so we did not have the opportunity to query with the public service issues in terms of more broad Victorian public policy, issues of implementation or to discuss the actual legislation with the people that were responsible for preparing the drafting instructions, and I do not think that is a good thing.

The third point I want to make on this is the culture in the chamber. We have a highly partisan culture in this chamber, and I think personally that is a good thing as long as you are talking about policy, as long as you are talking about ideas, as long as you are talking about legislation. When it becomes partisan and personal, then the capacity for us to have serious discussion is diminished immediately. Too often, and certainly sitting in the Speaker's chair, you notice it again and again, the contributions to the second-reading debates are formulaic. They are points you have heard 17 times before. We have also developed a culture of the use of points of order to shut people down, and I know I have called that out a few times as well. If you do not agree with what someone is saying in debate, do not try and shout them down, do not take a point of order. Put your hand up, stand up next, argue your case, put the rebuttal and participate in the debate. That is the only way we can keep this chamber as a living, breathing organ that has an impact. If it becomes formulaic, if it just becomes process driven, it may as well not be here; it does become a rubber stamp. I think frankly no-one in this place wants it to become a rubber stamp. No-one wants to lose what we have got.

Too often in this house division is fabricated where truly none exists—far too often. Courtesy in debate is not a sign of weakness. Working together for the good of our communities is not a sign of weakness. The ability to compromise should be seen as a sign of strength—to get a solution. Surely that is what we are all here for, to get a solution, not to say, 'Oh no, I'm not going to engage because I can't get everything I want'. As a community we have got to stop shouting at one another. Perhaps it is part of social media, and it is certainly a worldwide phenomenon, but we have got to get people to engage again. You cannot get things done, you cannot have a cohesive society, if we allow this practice of just shouting at one another to go on, and I am not talking about question time in here; I am talking about wider public debate. We cannot have a situation where you allow the loud, noisy minority to dominate the majority. You cannot have a situation where this place is used to pass laws to further the agenda of a minority, regardless of how big or small that minority is, at the expense of the majority. I think that is a real threat for this institution, and I only make these comments because, as most people know, I do really care about the institution of the Parliament.

While I do have some concerns about the way the Parliament operates, I have also had the privilege of being part of some terrific debates in this chamber, and of course those debates particularly are the ones where the Labor members get a conscience vote and people on this side get a free vote. It is also the most exhausting way you can pass legislation. I am not suggesting we should ever go back to a free vote on everything or consideration in detail on every single bill, but on those bills, when they come up—I do not think we have had one in this Parliament—you see this house working in the best possible way. You really do see the Parliament at its best and, as I said, its most exhausting.

Personally it has been quite challenging. Whether it has been the stem cell legislation, the Relationships Act 2008, the Abortion Law Reform Act 2008 or the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017, the least I can say from my perspective is that it has been character building. When you

have got to make the decision in a physical division to walk around there and sit on that side and you are looking back—I have got a picture of me sitting in, I think, the seat where the Assistant Treasurer is—at a sea of Liberal and National members of Parliament and there are two or three of you on the other side, it can be character building.

I want to make two observations on that. The first is that those decisions were not taken lightly. They were taken after a lot of consideration of the legislation concerned, and I would not change any of those decisions. The second point I want to make on that is to say thankyou to all of my Liberal and Nationals colleagues past and present, who have never to my face, and I do not think much behind my back, if at all, been critical of the decisions I took in regard to those bills. I certainly appreciate that support. I talked about the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017, walked outside, sat down and had a beer with the Leader of the Opposition, who had a diametrically different view to me. I think the way the party has operated in the last few years internally has been terrific. I cannot say the same for many of the party outside—they are not quite as tolerant. But to my colleagues in here: I very much appreciate the way we have operated in that regard.

Sixteen years as a member of the house, 7½ years in local government—it is probably almost enough. I have had the great luck to serve not on the Treasury bench but as a shadow minister for seven years and as a parliamentary secretary or shadow parliamentary secretary for another eight years, so very little time in fact on the backbench in a metaphoric sense.

The other aspect I want to touch on is the importance of our committee system. I have had the great good luck to be involved with a number of committees, mostly as deputy chair or chair. The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee is of course very, very political, but most other committees in this place, including the Privileges Committee, I think make a genuine contribution either to public policy or to the way we run the Parliament. That is something I certainly was not expecting to be involved with when I came in, and it is something I have very much enjoyed. I was talking about Robin Cooper at the start of the year and his 12 years on the Privileges Committee. I find at the end of this Parliament that I have clocked up 12 years on the Privileges Committee and eight years as deputy chair, so I am hoping wherever he is that I will not have another meeting of the Privileges Committee between now and the Parliament expiring.

It has also been a great ride in terms of local politics. I had the privilege of winning this seat on primaries four times straight. The best I achieved was 60.5 per cent, which was not quite the postwar record for a Liberal candidate in Mornington. That was 65 per cent in 1955 for the seat of Mornington, but in that election the Liberal candidate was not opposed by a Labor candidate, so I think I can probably take credit for almost the best result.

Of course we cannot do these things by ourselves. I want to thank a number of groups of people: my current office staff, Kimberley and Andrew, and James, who works a day a week; and former office staff Jack; Sara; Max; Dan; Robbie—unfortunately now deceased; Debbie; Sharon and Jeremy. I particularly want to acknowledge my office manager, Raeleigh Speedie, of 13½ years service, who has always been a source of great advice and encouragement and, most importantly, has run the office like clockwork and allowed me to do other things, so I do thank her very much for that.

I also want to acknowledge that I have had great support in terms of the Mornington electorate conference and the Liberal Party in the electorate throughout the journey. In the past I have thanked pretty much everyone involved in those former campaigns. I want to acknowledge now, today, the outgoing executive of the Mornington electorate conference, many of whom are sitting up in the gallery there: the chair, Reagan Barry; Dr Alice Hill; Cr Steve Holland; George-Ann Sullivan, the long-serving secretary; Matthew Wilson; James Woodland; Bree Ambry; Linda Morris—and there will be a little bit more of that in a sec; and Peter Angelica, not a member of the executive, but a great contributor. I do not have time, I am afraid, to thank you all individually and recognise your contributions, but I do certainly value your support and value the opportunity to work with a younger

group of very keen Young Liberals who certainly put their stamp on the electorate in the time we worked together.

I acknowledge very quickly the parliamentary staff, particularly the clerks. We have a great team here. We are very, very lucky—and I think probably enough said on that—we have a great team in all divisions of the Parliament.

One final thankyou. In my inaugural speech I mentioned that my wife, Linda—I think the words were something like—had worked tirelessly every day of the 22-month campaign. Many members of course know Linda now, and I am sure they will not be surprised when I say that that 22 months is now almost 18 years. And it has been constant. It has been total support and it has been hard work—and it has not just been for me but it has been for a number of other Liberal candidates, including Sharn Coombes, the candidate for Dunkley, who is sitting up in the gallery, and also Tim Wilson, the former two-term member for Goldstein, who has also benefited from his mother's hard work. I am so thankful for Linda's support. She is a real dynamo. She is a great person to have in your corner, and I am so grateful for that support and the fact it is still ongoing, I have got to say. Whether it survives the end of Parliament, who knows. I say that in jest, but I have no doubt we have a great partnership, and I very much do appreciate that. While I intend to leave politics entirely, I am not sure Linda has quite got that plan yet—not on my behalf, on her behalf—so we will see where that goes. But her support has been central to my success over the past 18 years, and I do thank her for it very, very much.

I also want to say thankyou to all current and former members of this place. It has been an absolute pleasure serving with you. I am proud to say I have got friends right across the spectrum; I will not name and shame. But for all the vitriol that we can hurl at one another—and it is vitriol sometimes—across the chamber, I think in many instances we still have the capacity to do good work together. I sometimes think it is a shame that the public do not see that.

I certainly want to finish by wishing the Leader of the Opposition and the team every success in the coming election. I wish you all success, but I think Bob Cameron said something like 'I wish you all well and some of you more well than others', or words to that effect. I guess that is the sentiment here. It has been an absolute privilege, Speaker. It has been an absolute pleasure to serve the people of Mornington for four successive terms. Thank you, and goodbye.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR BELLARINE

Valedictory statement

Ms NEVILLE (Bellarine) (16:55): Twenty years in 15 minutes—I will do my best not to go over too much. Can I begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land we meet on and pay my respects to elders past and present.

The decision to not recontest the seat of Bellarine was a very tough one. Despite being a member of the Labor Party for 35 years, being engaged in student politics and being passionate about politics and communities, I actually did not have a driving ambition to be a member of Parliament. Here we are, 20 years on as an MP, 16 in government, 12 as a minister, four as a shadow minister, and I can truly say that I have loved the journey. It has been a privilege and an honour to have an opportunity to be part of people's lives. There are very few jobs where you can drive policy, legislation, infrastructure, services, reform—changes that have a lasting impact on our communities. I am still finding it hard to say goodbye. Even in the toughest of times I have loved this job, but you do need to know when it is time to move on, and that is now for me—for health and family reasons particularly—and I am getting to do it on my own terms.

There were certainly times in 2021 when I did not think I would get that chance and thought that Crohn's would win. I have been lucky that with great medical care over 34 years I have been able to do a pressured job whilst managing this silent autoimmune disease. When it really caught up with me

in 2021 it was through great care from my GP, Hugh Seward; my surgeon, Darrin Goodall-Wilson; and my gastroenterologist, Lauren Beswick, that I was able to return to my role as a minister and an MP and that I am able to stand here today. I hope that I can continue to raise awareness of this disease in the years to come.

I never imagined when I won the marginal seat of Bellarine—and there were certainly a couple of times through redistributions that it became even more marginal—that I would go on and win five elections. I thank the communities of Bellarine and the local Labor Party members for their continued support and their belief in me over those years. I had the privilege of working with some of the best people and being part of the lives of so many, helping them with their issues and working with communities to deliver better services and infrastructure. It really was a team effort, and I am now lucky to call so many people across the Bellarine my friends.

Bellarine has a diverse group of communities, as the Premier knows very well, with very different needs and voices. They all required investment in different services and infrastructure, and together we achieved historic funding, from schools to emergency services, new paramedics, surf clubs, sporting and community facilities. I cannot go through the whole list, but I want to touch on some of the highlights: the Drysdale bypass, a road no-one ever thought would be funded; the Portarlington ferry and safe harbour, which have transformed that community; the Queenscliffe Hub and Queenscliff footy and netball facilities; Point Lonsdale Surf Club; Barwon Heads arts hub and footy and netball club; Ocean Grove surf club and tennis club; and Leopold footy, netball, tennis and soccer clubs. You need to go back over my 20 years of *Hansard* to see the full list.

Of course being a Bellarine MP also meant pushing for critical regional services like health services, rebuilding much of Barwon Health—improved cancer, emergency, aged care and mental health services and the new children's and women's service.

The rebuilding of Kardinia Park Stadium, with the final stage almost complete, has been a real highlight—go Cats this weekend!

Members interjecting.

Ms NEVILLE: Never say 'final'—as was our funding to rebuild the Geelong Arts Centre.

As I said, I was lucky and honoured to be a frontbencher for 16 years, 12 in government as a minister. In my first term as a minister I thanked both Steve Bracks and John Brumby for their faith in me to become the first Minister for Mental Health and to take on the challenging and rewarding portfolios of child protection, disability and aged care. I hope that the first Victorian mental health strategy and the voices of so many who participated in that strategy who had lived experiences ultimately contributed to the establishment of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System that is seeing changes being implemented from the top and the bottom of the system.

The last almost eight years have been some of my most rewarding. I started as Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water and coordinating minister for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Water was a new area for me, including the complexities of the Murray-Darling Basin. I had the first meeting of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority Ministerial Council within the first week. I had a crash course, and from that moment I loved it. Once water gets into your blood, it never leaves you. I had many a South Australian minister yell and swear at me about our position on the basin plan.

I am the longest serving Minister for Water in Victoria. During my time there were some significant reforms that I feel proud of, and I will touch on a couple: achieving over 50 per cent of women on our boards and catchment management authorities and greater diversity across the sector; a new water strategy that saw investment in expanding the water grid right across our state, from Wedderburn down to Korumburra; recreation water; better water market transparency and compliance, leading to integrated water management projects; formal acknowledgement of Aboriginal links to water and

undertaking the first return of water to traditional owners; the completion of the Connections Project, with water returned to irrigators and the environment; and of course using desal—the world did not to come to an end, but it is now very much part of our water security.

In May 2016 the position of Minister for Police came up. I remember the call, the subsequent meeting and maybe a glass of wine with the Premier. I do now say I am forever grateful that Daniel saw in me the ability to take on the police portfolio at a very challenging time in terms of law and order. I thank you for that, Daniel, and for your support in that role. I quickly realised that I loved the police portfolio as much as I did water. I am so pleased that I had the opportunity to be both the first female police minister but also the longest serving. Through those six-plus years as minister I was able to deliver as part of the government team long-term service and legislative reform for police; the biggest ever investment of dollars; the biggest ever investment in police numbers; a long-term funding model; investment in equipment, intelligence and people right across the organisation; and new laws and powers for police and PSOs in areas like firearm prohibition orders, counterterrorism and road policing. This was about modernising Victoria Police to ensure it would meet the challenges of the future and drive service delivery transformation from local community policing through to the specialist capabilities to deal with our more challenging crimes and harm.

There were pretty tough times though too—times that made me realise the impact that the job had on so many members. From the Bourke Street attack in 2017 I witnessed not just the grief of those who lost loved ones and that of the broader community but also the impact on our first responders, especially our police. I saw the scars these events left. I also joined with the Victoria Police family to mourn five police officers killed in the line of duty. All of us were reminded of the danger our police face every day. I also saw the strength of the Victoria Police family, looking after each other, often at the worst of times—a true definition of family. Victoria Police, from its executive command and non-sworn members to those members on the ground, is a proud organisation and in my opinion one of Victoria's finest. It has been a privilege working with them all. I thank Graham Ashton, Shane Patton and their teams and also the Police Association of Victoria.

Following the 2018 election I had laryngitis, but the Premier took the time to ring and ask me to take on the role of emergency services. Of course I could not say no. This is a rewarding, challenging and at times heartbreaking portfolio. Delivering fire services reform and presumptive rights legislation was one of my key tasks, and I am very pleased that we achieved this central and critical reform. Emergency services is a very diverse portfolio, and we invested significantly in all agencies. I learned just the bravery and courage of so many of our emergency services members, and I thank them for their work. Over the course of 12 years as minister I played a role in supporting communities following bushfires, including Black Saturday, Lancefield, Wye River and the recent Black Summer fires. Bushfires ravage not just houses and environments but people's wellbeing and sometimes lives. During these times I learned firsthand about fear, pain, heartache, resilience and courage from those communities I worked with.

Since those bushfires in 2019–20 we have faced an unprecedented once-in-a-100-year pandemic. As a member of the crisis council of cabinet and the COVID management committee it was a difficult period for all in our community, and the enormity of the decisions we had to consider every day will always stay with me. Every decision made was a result of research, health advice, discussions and feedback from community, health professionals and stakeholders. During my public life it was the most intense of all experiences, and I want to thank my colleagues who were members of those committees. We challenged each other, we challenged decisions and we acted at all times with the needs of Victorians at the forefront of our minds.

I have touched on areas just very lightly—on all I have done over those 20 years, and not everything—but I now need to move on to some thankyou's that are so important. To my parents—I lost my mum in 2009, and Dad set me up to be able to take on the challenges. To all my Geelong colleagues, we have worked as a team and achieved so much. A special thankyou to Richard Marles and the member for Lara, who encouraged and supported me to run for the seat of Bellarine.

Can I thank the Australian Labor Party and also Labor Unity. We have been a partnership for over half of my life. I want to thank my cabinet and caucus colleagues. It has been an incredible group of people to share this journey with. I want to thank the Premier for his friendship and support well before I even became the member for Bellarine but especially since 2014, when he became leader, and can I thank his office—especially Lissie, Ben and Jessie—for their support.

I thank all my ministerial staff over the years. Many of them are here today. I am not going to be able to name all of you, I am sorry, but I was blessed to have so many great people. I especially want to thank David Griffith, who was my chief of staff for most of the last eight years and in my view is one of the best in government. To Geoff Fraser, who is not here today, but what a gem—it was a joy having you as part of the team. I can see Jane there, who was my water guru as well and taught me much that I needed in my first week particularly.

I want to thank my driver, Cathy Buchanan, who drove me for almost 12 years. We shared so much of our public and personal lives. She was and is part of my family. To my executive assistant, Karen Yeo, thank you for keeping my life on track. Thank you to all my incredible media advisers—too many to name—who were part of helping me manage the challenging issues, but I particularly want to call out Hayley, who I had for nearly eight years in some form or other.

Can I thank my electorate staff over the years. I especially want to thank Kylie Rawson, who has been the most amazing office manager, always ensuring the community got the support they needed. Also thanks to Sharon, Denise, Kim, Parker and all the many others over the years. A special thanks to Sue Spence, who I have known and worked with since 1994. She worked in my electorate office and ministerial office, providing unquestioning support and friendship.

I want to thank Ian Trezise, a Geelong colleague, a friend, a wise counsel and my electorate officer for the last eight years. Who would have thought we would have ended up such close friends? He sadly is unable to be here today as he is having a double heart bypass in the Geelong hospital as we speak. To Joanne Duncan, who I sat next to in my first term and who always claims she taught me everything—I do not recall any of it, which is probably a good thing actually, Jo—your friendship has been so important and helped me manage the ups and downs of the job. My very good friends Gayle, Collette, Vic, Geoff, John, Merri, Harriet, my cousin Louise, Tony and Campbell have heard the good and the bad of the job and have always been by my side. This job can be very lonely; all of those above have made it less so.

I have had the pleasure of working with some incredibly hardworking members of the public service over the 12 years and as a local MP with the local departments. I have enjoyed the debate, the laughs and the work we have done together to put Victorians first and deliver best outcomes, particularly John Bradley, Helen Vaughan and the water team; Rebecca Falkingham, Corri McKenzie and the police team; Emma Cassar; Kate Fitzgerald; and Andrew Crisp. I have learned so much from you.

To the amazing staff of the Parliament—the library, IT, catering, attendants, security, PSOs et cetera—thank you for all you do and the support you provide to us.

I wish Alison Marchant all the best for the upcoming election. I am confident she will represent the communities of Bellarine exceptionally well.

Finally and most importantly to me, I would like to thank my son, Sam. It is hard to believe that when I entered this Parliament 20 years ago he was a little boy—six years old. Today I proudly look at the gallery and he is here supporting me as a mature young man. I am so very proud of him and what he is achieving in his life. He continues to show me the true meaning of compassion, commitment and love and has always made sure I keep my feet firmly on the ground. I thank him for the sacrifices that he has made that have enabled me to embrace my political career. Now is the time for me to repay him with much more of my time, support and attention—whether he likes it or not. In saying that, I do now look forward to the future with my family and good friends and to a different life outside the

Parliament. Of course I will continue to contribute in the community in one way or another. Community service has always been and will continue to be very much part of who I am.

In finishing, I wish all my parliamentary colleagues well for the future, those who are retiring and those who will serve in the 60th Parliament—hopefully many more on this side. Despite its critics, when you look around the world, we are fortunate to have such a stable and democratic parliamentary system. For me to have served within it and to have served this state and the community of Bellarine has been an honour and it has been a pleasure. Thank you.

Members applauded.

The SPEAKER: Can I acknowledge a former member for Macedon, Joanne Duncan, in the gallery.

MEMBER FOR EUROA

Valedictory statement

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (17:10): It has been the honour of a lifetime to serve in this place as the first member for Euroa. I will always be indebted to our community for putting their faith in me as a young 28-year-old, and many at the time said I looked 18 and wondered if I could vote. But I leave Parliament optimistic about the future of our region. I have always believed that our greatest strength is our people. I feel so privileged to have been invited into people's homes and into their lives, often in the most difficult of times. We have confronted bushfires, floods and a pandemic, and in the face of it all, we have gotten up, dusted ourselves off and kept going. More importantly, we have looked out for one another. I think about people like Barb Radford, who has devoted her time to helping families in crisis, and Ivan Lister, our rural outreach worker who spends his days checking in on people just to make sure they are doing okay. They are just two of the many extraordinary people who call our region home. When I started this job, I wanted to solve everything immediately, and it took me a while to realise that real change can only be achieved when you bring people with you. I am proud of what we have achieved in the past eight years, but anything I might have achieved has been done in partnership with my community.

Of course there are always a few constituents who drive you nuts. No-one has worked harder to support me during election campaigns than my predecessor Bill Sykes. A few weeks ago he offered me one of his better pieces of advice: 'Steph, you can tell at least 12 people to get stuffed on the way out the door', in slightly different Bill words. I have been happy to hear the complaints about the can-opener that was not up to scratch, the lukewarm temperature of the resident's hot-water system and, more recently, the slightly too strong scent of the air freshener at the local pool, and I have always done my best to assist. But today there is one person I am going to tell to get stuffed. Her name is Marg Ryan and no, she is not related to me. Marg moved into my electorate just before COVID. She contacted me in the middle of lockdowns, amid all those restriction changes, with the most ridiculous questions. Knowing how stressed people were, I spent literally hours poring over those bloody regulations in an effort to give Marg accurate answers. But after providing a detailed response and another detailed response, I would still receive tetchy emails. I made representations on her behalf to the federal Treasurer about her concern that she was not eligible for JobKeeper. To the former member for Kooyong, I am deeply sorry. But it was when Marg sent me an email asking how many intimate partners she was allowed to visit under the government regulations that I almost broke. Marg, quite honestly, made me question what I was doing with my life. After a while she went away, until two months ago, in a momentary lapse of memory, the member for Gippsland East revealed himself as Marg. 'Marg' is currently corresponding with her local dog groomer in Bairnsdale. She is outraged that the groomer will not agree to groom her Dorset sheep, her alpacas, her guinea pigs and a goldfish.

I will admit that it has not all been one-way traffic. Marg came into being shortly after Bully sent Chris Waller an email to inquire about what COVID-safe measures he was putting in place around his stables to protect his Cox Plate prospect. He was deeply concerned after reading that horses could contract

COVID. When the shadow minister received a very detailed reply from that prominent trainer the next day during question time, he looked at me and his eyes almost popped out of his head. It was the only time in eight years that I honestly wished I was not sitting next to him, and I think after that question time I fled the chamber rather quickly.

The hardest thing about leaving Parliament is leaving the camaraderie of our party room. The Leader of The Nationals is one of the giants of our party. His leadership has kept our party room together. No-one has worked harder to get more women into our party than Walshie, and I know he will be a fantastic Deputy Premier. Walshie's often repeated mantra that 'If you're not living on the edge, you're taking up too much room' is a wisdom that I will take with me into my next chapter.

Killer is a fighter, and I cannot wait to see what she does. Danny is one of the kindest and most considerate people I know. Macca is one of the humblest and the hardest working, and people underestimate him at their peril. Bully, I will miss our pranks on each other and also on Kim, though he remains oblivious to most of them. Melina, you are a glorious human being, and I knew I would cry when I got to you. I love you to bits. You care and you invest so deeply in the party and its future.

Beyond the party room I have been supported by an amazing network of volunteers and members, people like Nanny Marie, Neil Pankhurst, Darren Chester, Drummie of course—although sometimes it is debatable whether it was support or not—and local branch members including Frank Dean, the indomitable Bruce Nicholls, Maureen Cotham, Jim and Margaret Brook, Kevin Cooper, Ian Smith and James Brook and so many others.

During my 15-year journey in and around this place I have had the privilege of working with some wonderfully talented and caring humans, all of whom have shaped me. Wendy Nolan was responsible for bringing me into the party 15 years ago, and Paul Weller gave me my first job in politics. Peter Ryan gave me the next one. My career has intersected with incredible people: Catherine Horsefell, Ben Hindmarsh, Luke O'Sullivan, Deb Cole—all one-time colleagues but, more importantly, trusted friends and great sources of advice.

I am also so grateful for the assistance and friendship of the staff we have had in the leader's office and head office who supported me during the time I was deputy leader: Em, Royce and Gina, Kate, Laz, Paul, Kelly, Alex, Sharon and our wonderful Jess. We lived through the pressure cooker of premiers, through the nanny state numberplate saga, 'Moorpoopna', incoming and outgoing press conferences and Ted's cryptic sense of humour.

Then there was my time with Kim, where he came to love my clicking pens and I his meticulous lists. On one particularly memorable outing he left me behind in Geelong because I refused to call a press conference that in my estimation was a suicide mission, and I would still say that it was.

Mr Wells: No, it wasn't.

Ms RYAN: Over the last eight years I also count myself very lucky to have employed some wonderful staff. Rachel Tharratt and Lyndel O'Sullivan, you two inspired and motivated me every day. You brought enthusiasm, energy and joy. Our tour of 28 towns in 24 hours across the electorate at the last election will always be a highlight for me, and I am so proud to see the careers you are now carving. I love you both dearly.

To my current crew, what a team. I will miss the debates where Caitlyn and Mitch inevitably line up on opposite sides, Adam's random costume purchases and Lois's swear jar, which is overflowing—because of us, not because of her, mind you. I should point that out; I do not want to defame Lois, who is perfect. Mitch Itter has one of the sharpest minds I have ever come across and Adam Scott is the epitome of charm—there is nobody who does not love him They have been the perfect team. They both have very big futures, wherever they go next. Thank you for your loyalty, your hard work and the laughs. Caitlyn Putt has given me amazing continuity through changes in the office, while Lois Tharratt has been the calm through every storm.

I also want to thank the wonderful parliamentary staff for the support they have provided over the last eight years. Bridget, I am in awe of the work that you do and your achievement as the first female Clerk of the Assembly. I want most particularly to thank Adam in security, with whom I have developed a very strong rapport with my almost daily visits for a new pass.

When I was first elected in 2014 I received a letter from Tim Fisher with his top 10 tips for surviving politics. Tip number one: on entering Parliament write down 10 names of the close non-political friends you want to still have at the end of your career, and if you have not made contact with them by Cup Day each year, you initiate contact to keep the friendship alive. At the time I thought he was joking, but he was not.

I have been so lucky to have friends who have stuck by me when I have not always had the time or the headspace to respond. The Pondettes—Monni, Lauren, Micki and Flood—you are my oldest and dearest friends, and you have never wavered in your support for me. I know our friendship has sometimes felt one-sided, but I am so looking forward to spending more time with you. Nikki, I still have not met your two beautiful girls. Jus, I am sorry I could not be with you when you were terribly sick half a world away. Hugh and Ben, I will always regret missing your wedding. Smyth and Dunlop, I have just missed you, and I just really want to see a lot more of you—more dinners and more wine. And to the comrades, thank you for your support and your love—overseas group holidays are back on the agenda. Gerard and Sandra, I simply do not have the words to thank you for all you have done for us. You are generous to a fault, and you are like family to us. To Nina and John, Dave and Annabelle, Jim and Lauren: you have all been wonderful mates.

Now for the teary bit. Brad, hand me the tissues; wearing mascara was a terrible mistake. I am eternally grateful to my beautiful parents, Paul and Jenny, who have given so much love and support. We truly could not have managed without Mama and Pa. Lizzie and Philip, thank you for your belief, your quiet encouragement and for always turning yourselves inside out to help us. My wonderful siblings, Luke and Dave, and most particularly my sister, Tasha—without her I would in all likelihood still be single. I might also be homeless; she designed our house. She planned and organised my entire wedding, and had she been called upon to do so, I am sure she would have stepped in to play me when I could not get away from Parliament in time to make my own wedding rehearsal. Above all she has been the most enormous emotional support for me, and I love the three of them so very much.

Finally, to Tig and Sunday. From the moment that I plucked up the courage to hit 'Reply' to an email Tig sent to the Premier's media team titled 'Tim Holding on 774' to ask him out, to today, our life has never known anything but politics. In my defence, when we met I did not know he was a member of the Labor Party. All I knew was that he had the warmest smile and the kindest heart of anyone I had ever met—ripping taste in music too. It took another year before he relented to my single-minded determination, by the way. Always one to uphold the highest ethical standards, he believed it was inappropriate for a public servant to date a political staffer. This week I thought back to the moment Tig said to me, 'You should do it; think of the change that you can make'. It sticks in my mind like it was yesterday. He stepped back to let me enter public life. If I had not, it could very well have been him, and I know that he will hate me for saying that. The last eight years have brought so much change in our lives. The year after I was elected we got engaged then married. We built our first home, and most importantly and life changing of all we had one beautiful baby and we lost another. Tig and Sunny, I love you two above all else, and I am so very excited for the next phase of our lives together, one where I am around more.

Today simply marks the end of one chapter in my career and the beginning of another. Last week when I got home from Parliament, we danced around the living room to Talking Heads. *Naive Melody* is currently Sunny's favourite song, for which I am grateful because I was getting pretty sick of the Wiggles, and it is mine too. Home is where I want to be. If someone asks, this is where I will be. Thank you.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR ALBERT PARK*Valedictory statement*

Mr FOLEY (Albert Park—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services, Minister for Equality) (17:25): I thank the Parliament for the opportunity for a few final words. I want to leave you with a few thoughts on what good government can do before thanking a lot of people who have helped us deliver it here in Victoria. But first, a long way away in the Hall of Peace in Siena you will find Lorenzetti's 14th century civic masterpiece the *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*. It has for almost 700 years set out what governments ought to aspire to. Painted on the cusp of the Renaissance it reminded the leaders of Siena then, and speaks to us today, as to what government is really all about—namely, the common good. In this particular work good government is depicted as the agent of peace and prosperity. Government is assisted in this work by many virtues. On one side of the fresco you have wisdom, justice and concord. Their efforts join the people of the state to the right hand of the figure of the common good, who guides the operations of the state. On the same plane as the common good we have the virtues of peace, fortitude, prudence, magnanimity, temperance and, once again, justice—all striving for good government. It is a big wall with big ideas, and it is as relevant today as it was in 1339, probably more so, particularly as it relates to the role that the states in this Commonwealth play in the areas of the health and care of the people of Victoria in the 21st century version of good government.

I have been fortunate, having spent most of my time here as a member of the cabinet in the portfolios of the provision and reform of the health and the care that the people of this state need. This effort has focused on the most vulnerable, who look to government to hold their lives together, whilst also seeking to meet the demands and scope of access to universal services. I think that in Victoria we are well on the way to establishing what we might call the caring state. Over my time, like in jurisdictions everywhere, we have seen social and economic changes leading to growing inequality and the exclusion of many from access to the services they need to achieve this caring support. This in turn has driven more people into ever more complex and poorer outcomes for their health and their care, the end result being more people need more from the state than ever before, and the state responses have grown accordingly.

All of this was well underway before the COVID-19 pandemic came along and rewrote all of the rules. COVID has amplified the pressures in our systems of care and forced us to look to how we deliver more services in more effective ways. As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, it will be with a chance to reform how we both govern and deliver health and care needs. The work of the Andrews government leads the nation in this response. We might well be calling it the caring state, as we look evermore to how the experience of the pandemic provides us with an opportunity to take this reform effort to even greater heights. We are poised to be building a new model of care that improves the lives of and builds opportunities for Victorians, especially our most at-risk communities.

If I have learned anything over the course of the pandemic, it is that government-delivered health and care provision is more valued and effective than ever. The evidence is in, and it is clear. Government-provided health and care has shown itself to be the critical social institution that has built trust and confidence at this time of crisis. It has shown itself in circumstances where confidence is invaluable to success to be the pillar of social solidarity and success in the pandemic response. True, its weaknesses have been exposed; there is much to reform and change. But more importantly the public-led model of care and the interventions it has seen in the crisis of the pandemic have seen its underlying strengths revealed when it counted most. On the back of this terrible pandemic, with somewhere over 17 million lives lost globally, we are seeing a commitment to reform and growth of public sector delivered care rightly dominate the policy agenda around the world. It is here. I welcome this focus, for the time of the shrinking state in health and care has passed. This government has laid the foundations for models of a caring state, an enlarged model of care. I am confident that it will continue to build on this over the next four years.

The expectations of what communities demand from government have come into sharper relief over the pandemic. So many things government would not have contemplated delivering just a few years ago, partnerships that were not on the agenda and measures not contemplated are now part of what we do, and there is no going back. At the same time COVID has magnified challenges across the health and caring sectors at the commonwealth and the state levels and for government and non-government services alike. It has also set new levels of what constitutes the expectations of care and it has expanded the role of how the state needs to respond. Whatever else it has done, COVID has seen the leadership of the states grow in service delivery. How we create services that people value, how we share them equitably for access across the community and how we grow these services in the face of never-ceasing demand all mean a bigger leadership role for states. It also creates pressures on the settlements with the commonwealth and the private sector on delivering and funding for who does what and who pays for what. These are big questions and they are not easily resolved. The tough real world is complex. Reform is hard. One thing reform requires is a government that is bold in its sense of mission. Government needs to take reforms in social policy and service provision seriously and to bring professional, quality and equality lenses to the job of reform to achieve this.

I have been fortunate that my portfolios have placed me close to these very tasks. Piece by piece the Andrews government has shown that reformist governments count in people's lives. That hard work in progressive reform improves the real lives of real people. A few examples: how the responses to family violence have come to the centre of the national debate, not just about the way we deal with trauma and violence in all its forms, but more widely the role of women in society; how the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System has brought the crisis of mental and emotional wellbeing and of treatment and of recovery to the centre of the community's debates, but more importantly how that model of change designed here is now spreading around the commonwealth; how the push for better outcomes by Indigenous communities and a framework of truth and treaty are now locked together, not just here in Victoria but increasingly across the nation and now with the push to constitutional recognition of Indigenous voice; how the discrimination faced by LGBTIQ Victorians and others so easily excluded from our systems of care can be challenged through government-led and partnered programs that set about changing models of care and practice through community-led development and legislative reform; how ending the selling off of state-run aged care and investing in these services both showed its worth through the aged care royal commission and was brought into such deadly relief through the global pandemic; how efforts to keep people alive through a health-led response to addiction works as the first step to recovery rather than a policing-led model; how giving the agency that people need when they face the unconscionable suffering at the end of their life can go from controversial to the law of every part of this commonwealth in less than four years; and how early childhood education can be reframed as both a right and a necessary starting point for wellbeing and life opportunities that targets particularly those communities most in need.

I could go on—it is a long list of reforms in the way we care for people, how we treat people decently and how we can look after them—but time prohibits me. Impressive as it is, I know it is only the beginning. From the learnings from the global COVID-19 pandemic we now are in a position to drive even greater change to this reforming mission. We have the opportunity to question and end the failed systems of deregulatory approaches of market-led service provision when it comes to human care and health. There is now an opportunity to build new models of service—our public welfare and wellbeing valued, efficient and well designed around people and solutions that deal with the causes of poor health and drive better services and outcomes that people have confidence in: public services. It is a mission of building a caring state that people can see the value in because it involves them and works for them. We are not there yet; there is a way to go, but this government leads the way in this nation. Nowhere does this all come together more clearly than in our health system.

State health systems are at the intersection points of not only their own extraordinarily demanding pressures but the failures in other care sectors where the state system acts as a provider of last resort or increasingly as a provider of first resort. Consider, for instance, people with disabilities excluded from supports in the national disability insurance scheme who are stranded in our hospitals; the

collapse of primary care and GPs and the pressures on community-based models of care which see people with little alternative but the emergency departments via the ambulance; the growth in mental health demands and presentations, especially amongst the young, where the missing middle of community-based alternative is bookended variously by the demand on primary care at one end and the acute mental health services at the other, with the spillover of each ending up in the emergency departments; the untreated chronic illnesses and conditions showing up way too late in ever more acute presentations; aged care residents with little or no supports in their homes or the settings where they live, where the providers are driven by profit or the lowest common denominator service contracts that are designed to channel the frail unwell into our acute health services rather than them being treated in their homes; or at-risk groups—Indigenous Victorians, the CALD and LGBTIQ addiction communities, the isolated, the lonely, any of those groups who are unsupported by our mainstream health system that puts them on a path to exclusion and shuts them out from the unresponsive mainstream services until it is too late.

Add to that the problems of the federation's funding, of disparity of services based on geography and income and the very strangely diffused but oddly ad hoc model of how we govern key parts of our services nationally and the still unresolved issue of public versus private health delivery and we see many challenges for our health and care systems. Top all of that off with an ageing, culturally diverse community, a workforce and skills shortage, burnout and the technology-driven services in health, and our problems in a post-pandemic caring health system are all too real. Yet, COVID has given us the chance to give the reform of this system a red-hot go. It is now accepted by all but the harshest of flat-earth conservatives that the cornerstone of successful COVID responses everywhere has been having them government inspired and government led. Equally the failures globally, right around the world, of market-led responses to COVID and public health emergencies show the need for stronger, smarter government solutions that seek to bring new levels of what people value in services that work to meet their needs.

Innovation and reform are the order of the day. We need more better government, not less poorer government. One thing certain from this pandemic is that it seems that when it comes to our health system we are all Keynesians now. It is common ground in this state apparently that it is no longer a question of whether our health system is capable enough with the changes in our post-pandemic world, it is how much bigger and how much more capable government-delivered service provision for care and health needs to become. How are the issues highlighted during the pandemic to act as a starting point to deal with growing demand for services and address the causes of ill health and disadvantage? How will all this come together to make sure that we are better prepared to deal with the inevitable next pandemic or health shock? All of these roads lead back to the state, reimagined and reinvigorated as the major part of the solution. The Andrews government has been one that has stepped up to deal with this crisis. Time and time again we have filled gaps in services whilst looking to reform them at the same time, be it when the federal government failed so spectacularly over the era from 2014–22 or when aspects of our own system were not designed for the scale of the crisis they faced in the pandemic. At the same time, these public services have performed at globally leading levels of performance by delivering models of public health care and services and solutions that undoubtedly saved many lives. While we have been far from perfect, with too many tragic outcomes—and the faults of our systems have been rightly highlighted—we have been largely successful in our efforts.

From a public health preparedness model that was designed for short-run, high-impact rather than sustained crises, we have much to reform. This we have started to achieve, and by any global assessment we are amongst the world's best, as last week's *Lancet* commission report highlights. This we should be rightly proud of. It is our learning from COVID that will be at the heart of a new narrative of what government can do. It is a vision that extends well beyond health—one that is big on ambition, grand in its vision, broader and more encompassing in its mission, collaborative and bolder in its purpose, an idea of government that creates public value by its investment and leadership in new models of care and how they are delivered. That good government is not just possible; it is the main

tool that we have to achieve the reforms at the scale required and in the time frames demanded for the delivery of that common good.

It is not the market's job to do all of this but our responsibility, collectively through government agency. Only governments bring the resources, the legitimacy, the urgency, the management of risks and the relationships with other civic and economic players to drive the changes needed in health and care provision. Bigger, bolder government, more effective government, is back in town at lots of levels. Look no further than what is spent by the Commonwealth as measured by the general government sector expenses. These at the Commonwealth level have grown from \$156.7 billion in 2001 to \$651.9 billion in 2021, with the greatest increase coming in the pandemic years under the Morrison government. Projections show it is not heading backwards anytime soon.

Interestingly the rate of growth in those expenses has been a far lesser rate in the states, where most of the actual service delivery is undertaken. In New South Wales the same figure over the same period has only grown to \$95.5 billion, with Victoria's equivalent just topping out at \$90 billion. There is plenty of scope in that lot for a new national settlement on funding, health and care provisions to make this spending more effective. I am hopeful that the government of grown-ups now in Canberra will partner with states in this overdue reform.

With all of this it matters, then, who you elect to this place. It matters who frames that mission and defines that idea of the common good. It matters when you elect a Labor government that believes in this expanded mission, that believes that reforming governments meet great demands that the world throws at us. It matters most to the people who rely on these services to meet their existence and their needs. The Andrews government has a record of achievement on reform like few others in our history. Our pursuit of the common good will be turbocharged coming out of COVID, as it needs to be.

That gives me the opportunity to thank a few of those who have been at the forefront of this effort in building the caring state, starting in health. I would like to thank all those who continue to deal with the COVID pandemic. In this regard I cannot speak highly enough of our nurses and midwives under the leadership of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. Time after time their counsel, their advocacy, their unrelenting straight talk and their real-world intelligence have been central to the government and the wider community COVID response. It has saved lives. It has kept our health system functioning in the face of pressures never previously contemplated. They have placed the needs of patients and workers at the heart of what this government does. If the ANMF's members were the pillars of our health system pre pandemic, then they have been its heart, soul and muscle during the pandemic. I thank especially Lisa Fitzpatrick, her leadership team and their 97 000 wonderful members for their contribution to this state in its time of greatest peril. The same can be said for Danny Hill and the Victorian Ambulance Union, the AMA, the medical colleges and all the other health unions and professional bodies we work with. The success in the pandemic has been theirs.

I want to thank all those across government, but particularly in the Department of Health and the leadership of our health networks, that designed and rebuilt a new, more effective health COVID response in the midst of the pandemic. There are too many to mention them all, but I want to particularly thank Euan Wallace, Kym Peake, Nicole Brady, Naomi Bromley, Zoe Wainer, Kate Matson, Jodie Geissler, Sandy Pitcher, Ross Broad, Mary Perera, Kym Arthur, Jeroen Weimar, Brett Sutton, Allen Cheng and Ben Cowie amongst the many who have delivered one of the world's most successful, if tragic, COVID responses. I thank Tony Walker and Ken Lay and their workforce at Ambulance Victoria for their efforts in these most difficult of times. A special call-out goes to the community health sector, the volunteers, the community organisations and those many groups whose responses, particularly with our most marginalised communities, continue to be extraordinary. I thank them all.

Beyond COVID, if there is a model of what government can achieve through design reform and serious investment, it is in mental health. I thank the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System led by Penny Armytage and her team. The mental health system is rebuilding in a design co-

led by government and an array of community partners. I thank the team led by Pam Anders, Simon Stafrace from Alfred Health and Katherine Whetton for commencing that work. You are implementing the blueprint for world-leading change, and it is unstoppable.

We are continuing to reshape the field of alcohol and drug addiction. Whilst all the focus is on safe injecting, which the evidence continues to show here and globally saves lives, it has been the growth in other treatment options—acute options, community, pharmacological and social—that has really at the heart of it defined our changes over the last eight years. I thank all of those involved for their advocacy and commitment to this health-led response.

I thank all those people with disabilities and their allies, especially those who continue to fight for an NDIS that meets your aspirations. I thank those in aged care and housing in both government and community sectors for their roles in making sure that the thousands of Victorians who depend on them for their services are heard and looked after. They are the pillars of the emerging caring state architecture.

If I can turn to the creative sectors that I have been privileged to act as minister for, we have taken the idea of arts as a cultural benefit to the state and built the idea of a wider set of outcomes to be valued by more people across a bigger range of economic, cultural, social and innovative outcomes. The economic value of our creative industries has always been important to jobs and our status as the creative capital of the nation, but we have brought them into a sharper focus and given them greater support and seen their importance grow. Beyond the focus on economic value, we have increased access to cultural experiences and built a framework for diversity and collaboration across sectors that has favoured the small and independents. We have democratised the arts and cultural sectors by focusing on diversity and participation, ensuring First Nations and diverse communities are supported whilst building the institutional capacity to meet the ever increasing demands of participation and visitation.

Creativity in all its diversity is an important part of our lives, our economy and our future. I thank all of those from Creative Victoria, the state's cultural and arts agencies and all of those, whether they be large or small, independent arts organisations. I thank those in live music for driving new opportunities in venues and digital platforms, and particularly as the growth in gaming now dwarfs the traditionally important screen sectors, there is no more exciting place to be than Victoria.

Whilst well underway, there remains much to be done to take this level of creativity to a new height under our recovery. Once an aspiration, LGBTI equality is now on the way to being a reality. The equality portfolio was one that I took particular heart in, particularly as to how far and fast reform can really be driven. The celebration and engagement of diversity of LGBTIQ Victorians is embedded in a way now that it was not in 2014. Equality for Victorians is really not negotiable if you are an LGBTIQ Victorian anymore. But it is fragile and, as we have seen, constantly under threat from those who want to demonise the LGBTIQ community. So can I take this chance to issue a plea on behalf of trans kids, trans people and their families: can we not use trans kids and gender gotcha moments as clickbait in this coming election? Lives are at risk. Culture warriors and their deliberately hateful methods hurt real people. Can we just support people in being who they are?

It is impossible to name everyone, but I would just like to highlight a few leaders, like Ro Allen and Todd Fernando, amongst a host of others who have built and backed this equality project. Thanks to community leaders of rainbow organisations who have shown what a different model of community-led empowerment looks like. There are many fine people in the pantheon of LGBTIQ leaders and allies, and I thank them all. But can I give a shout-out to the number one rainbow ally who has backed every policy idea we have brought forward and had a few of his own—the Premier.

A final few thanks: the people of Albert Park district, besides being in the best place to live in this state, have supported me and educated me in ways that I am deeply appreciative of. All politics is

local, and building better communities counts. I would like to think we leave Albert Park better than we found it.

To the officers and the staff of the Parliament: can I thank them all for their important work in our democratic system. They are the quiet operators of our parliamentary festival of democracy, and we would collapse without their support. I thank the Australian Labor Party, the oldest social democratic and most successful of labour parties globally. I wish the party well in the next important phase of its redemocratisation, so important to its success.

I thank the Australian Services Union and its members and indeed all Victorian unions as our most successful community organisations. The grounding provided by the union movement, especially my union branch—which, just saying, has landed three federal MPs, three state MPs and five ministers from that lot, our little band of activists in the 1980s and 1990s—has built an understanding of how we build campaigns for better workplaces and communities in the face of the changing world. The union movement's lessons and its training have been central to modern Labor's success.

I thank the Premier and all my cabinet colleagues for their support. A cabinet system that holds us to account and that tests ideas is what drives good government. I want to particularly thank those colleagues that I have relied upon more than others for support. Whilst everyone is valued around our cabinet table, and at the risk of leaving out some, can I particularly thank the member for Altona, the member for Mill Park, the member for Richmond, Gavin Jennings, Ingrid Stitt, the member for Bellarine, the Treasurer and of course, on just about every major issue, the Premier for their backing when it mattered.

To my electorate office staff—problem solvers, grief counsellors, community organisers and much, much more—I thank all of those who have served my community and particularly my battle-hardened COVID veterans. They have endured the abuse, the death threats, the bomb hoaxes and the level of demand from the pandemic more than anyone, and yet they kept coming back. To my ministerial office, my staff over the years have been critical to managing the demands and the details and complexity of a reformist government. It is a tough gig. They were led by Lisa Calabria, the quietly effective and brilliant political administrator whose work ethic, loyalty, direct honesty and advice were more valued than she could know, particularly in the toughest of times that was the pandemic. Your dedication to the wellbeing of this state and to the success of this government is deeply appreciated and valued. She led a small team of people who worked unbelievably hard over the course of the last eight years, but particularly the last three COVID years.

I thank all my wonderfully smart and loyal team of advisers, whose efforts were constant and never faltered and who operated under the highest levels of demand with a dedication and effectiveness that goes unnoticed, as it should, by many, because they worked so well as a team.

Thanks to the media teams and all those who delivered on all the challenges that they were set.

Thanks to my executive assistant, Kathie Noble, and my driver, Dianne Taylor. You got me there, and you got me through. I wish you all every success in a calmer future.

Finally, to my family—to them I owe it all. My children, Emma and Tom, have grown into fine adulthood. I hope my life in politics has not jaundiced your world view too badly. The fully rounded human beings you have become will see you into exciting futures, I am sure. I am beyond proud of you. I look forward to seeing what worlds you will conquer.

Sharon Duff has encouraged, counselled and sustained me in so many ways and in every part of our lives together. Wisely she saw my obsession with the Labor movement as the vehicle for progress and reform, as imperfect as it is, and has backed me at every step while building her own life. You treated it all with the necessary and real-world scepticism that it and I needed. The support that I have received from you to sustain these 35 years has been immense. Your love and commitment have been immeasurable and have reinforced me time after time. You have navigated and tolerated my setbacks,

failings and occasional successes. The burden and joys of support have been ones that you have carried for us all. Thank you for this effort and love.

Whenever I look, from now on, to Lorenzetti's allegory of good government, I will think of this Assembly and the work of the Andrews government. I will look to this place as being a place that gives form to the pursuit of the common good. I wish the Parliament well. I thank the house.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR ALTONA

Valedictory statement

Ms HENNESSY (Altona) (17:58): I would like to begin my comments by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land and to pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I am sad and excited to give my valedictory speech, because it was only 13 years ago that I came to this place after I replaced the late, great, wonderful Lynne Kosky. I would just like to acknowledge Jim, her husband, who is with us here tonight as well. Jim, I hope that we have honoured Lynne through the contribution that our government has made not only to Melbourne's western suburbs but in respect of so many policy issues that I know she deeply cared about.

I also want to thank the good people of Altona for electing me and having confidence in me and for the support of the Altona branch of the Labor Party, many of whom are here tonight as well. Of course my union, the Australian Services Union, has always been a wonderful source of support to me, and I am so delighted to see so many leaders from the Australian Services Union here today.

My journey into parliamentary politics was a bit of a windy one, in a sense. The Labor Party for me has sometimes been like a bit of a bad boyfriend: when I have been really into it, it has been less interested, and when I have moved on with my life, it has come a-knocking. Because I am a super-nerd I joined the party when I was 15 years old. My mum, as an unreconstructed Whitlamite, was very delighted about this. My dad was only bemused because he thought it would relieve him of having to take me to drama lessons—as if I needed those, was his view—but the drama was just to begin. I got involved in the Labor Party, and it has been the most wonderful decision of my life, because that of course took me on a bit of a journey, and that journey involved ending up in what was a pretty crazy office, the office of Alan Griffin. That will be known to many people in this Parliament. It was one of those offices that was fuelled by Alpine cigarettes, fast food and Coke—the drink, I should say, not the white stuff.

But what my experience in that office did other than make me very resilient was bring me into connection with all of these extraordinary people, these amazing community, labour and union activists—I have mentioned some of the wonderful people from the Australian Services Union, and I see the wonderful Dave Leydon and Linda White and Matt Norrey sitting here; our wonderful colleague Minister Stitt; and the member for Albert Park, who was as droll then as he is now. And I met the wonderful Minister for Energy when I became the young president of the Labor Party. She was the assistant secretary then. She was always up for a fight, always across the detail—a skill we see her reflect in every one of her question times, and may there be more power to it. There was the newer, quirkiest federal member for Bruce, Julian Hill, who I know has joined us here today. Also there was this man that worked for the Deputy Prime Minister and subsequently kind of joined that office, and he used to slide in like Kramer slides into Seinfeld's kitchen all the time, talking about Mabo and housing policy, and that man of course is the member for Richmond as well. So to meet all of those extraordinary people through that experience really did change the landscape of my life.

But there was one other person that I met through that office—actually, I did not first meet the Premier in that office, I first met him at a Newman Society function, which is a social group for young Catholics. It turns out that not only is he a much better politician than me, he is a much better Catholic than me.

Mr Andrews interjected.

Ms HENNESSY: There may have been green tins involved.

But what an extraordinary thing to have happen in my life, to have that opportunity to meet those people, to become involved in the Labor Party and to meet such a motley yet wonderful and inspiring group of people. So I am not only just grateful for the opportunity to have made them as friends and as activists, I am so extraordinarily grateful to have had the opportunity to come here and to serve our Premier, to have the opportunity to be in a government that has done so many magnificent things. As a person that has always been really interested in reform, to have the opportunity to come into this place, to get to be the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services and Minister for Workplace Safety and Attorney-General and to have a government and to serve a leader that is actually seriously up for it—that is the stuff that most young political activists' dreams are made of. I cannot tell you how grateful I am. I am incredibly grateful for the leadership and the sacrifices of our Premier and those of his family and friends who have to share him so generously. Others have reflected upon how tough this job is, but when you get to see that up close and personal, it is something to behold. It is something that people do not brag about often, but it is an incredible form of service, and it is service to the public interest. I am so deeply grateful for having had the opportunity to serve with our Premier.

Paul Keating, who so many of us love—except the left when we were a bit cross with him about a few things back in the day—said that leadership was about two things, that it was about imagination and courage. To have been part of a government that has been full of such imagination and courage, again, has been one of the great honours of my life. It has meant that we have not just been served by a leader and a cabinet and a caucus but by people of conviction, people who are prepared to go out and argue the case for that sort of reform. They have got the ability to actually see it through and implement it, and I think that that is something that has been incredibly unique.

Reform is really hard, and many of my colleagues have spoken about that today. It is messy, it is multilateral, it is not a simple policy development process. It is often a contest, and it kind of needs to be because otherwise you get cornered into thinking about things in a very limited way. I think one of the hallmarks of this government has been its preparedness to try and think about things in a different way—to try and challenge things, and in a sense, some of the great unforecastable events have meant that we have had to. I think that that will be an incredibly important new step, a new standard, for how we think about policy development, because good policy development needs not only a brilliant public service—and I want to honour and acknowledge the Victorian public service, and particularly those from the justice system and the health system and the regulators that I had a chance to work with—it really involves stories and people and community organising as well, and doing that in partnership and combination with other people. We have had the opportunity and I have had the opportunity to work in partnership with so many wonderful people, and I do just want to call them out because I do not think many of the great reforms that our government has been involved with and associated with would have happened without them, because what they do is bring out the human story and the human face. It is really easy to say no to a proposition for change. You can always find a million problems. But to find a reason to reject the status quo and get to yes is about the urgency of taking action.

I want to particularly call out the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation. Their wonderful secretary is here as well. There is the Victorian Ambulance Union, and I know Danny and Olga are here. The member for Melton I had the chance to work with very, very closely in my tenure as health minister before he had—I do not know; how many was it, Steve?—five retirement parties before he bounced back with a new job the following Monday. Do not put in the first time—that is the trick on the gift.

Mr McGhie interjected.

Ms HENNESSY: And Karen Batt as well and her members and the members of the CPSU that I worked with—without them, I tell you, and without the support and the leadership of our leader and

our cabinet, we would not have the first nurse-to-patient ratios as law in this state. We would not have no jab, no play laws and actually have had a government that said, 'We back science', back when it was less fashionable to do so. We would not have things like advance care plans into law. We would not have legalised medicinal cannabis or established Safer Care Victoria out of the great horrors of Djerriwarrh. We would not have rights for donor-conceived kids, which the Minister for Police spoke about so movingly just a few weeks ago. We would not have safe access zones, which protect women accessing lawful medical services, as is their right. We would not have had people that had to deal with the really tricky and messy issues associated with the Royal Commission into the Management of Police Informants and people doing the hard work to expand the jurisdiction of the Drug Court into the County Court and expand it into country Victoria and saying that we actually believe in second chances and the productive potential of people. I think that that is a very powerful sentiment and one that I also want to acknowledge the member for Morwell spoke about very movingly beforehand.

We also formed a great partnership with Trades Hall, and I want to acknowledge Luke Hilakari and Wil Stracke, who I know is glamming in up on Rhodes, in Greece, at the moment. But without them and their members and without them showcasing the exploitative sorts of work that has been done, we would not have in this state the country's first wage theft law. We would not have workplace manslaughter laws. We would not have got to be able to do things like ban dry-stone cutting, which is killing so many young men working in manufacturing. We would not have reform around compensation claims to give people early support on mental health and to give people early access to compensation. All of those changes require a coalition of people to not only keep us motivated but also help us take that into that scariest of places, the Legislative Council. I do just want to thank my colleagues in the Legislative Council for all of their great help in trying to bring home many of those reforms.

I also want to acknowledge the voices of victims that have been so incredibly important for us to pursue reforms like the removal of the veil of the confessional when it comes to reporting child abuse and child exploitation, or improving manslaughter accountability and homicide by firearm—all of those offences that are so prevalently used around the abuse of women and children. We would not have banned gay conversion therapy, something that rejects the essence of who people are, and we certainly would not have had important reform around having the state's first spent conviction scheme, to give people a second chance. We saw that our great brother Uncle Jack last week unfortunately died—one of the great advocates to this government about a spent conviction scheme, and one that was delivered by this government.

Without all of that sort of support we would not have got to deliver another state first, and that was the voluntary assisted dying laws in this state of course. That was a great, fine moment in this Parliament. I want to honour and thank all of the people that told their stories. One of the very sad experiences I now have is that people ring me to tell me they have been approved for a voluntary assisted death, and sometimes their family will contact me after. But they have gratitude for the courage of this government and this Parliament to deliver on that reform. For even those that were not supporters of that reform, for us to be able to come and talk about death so openly and so vulnerably I think was just really a great moment, certainly in my parliamentary experience.

I should also give a shout-out to the Embassy Cafe in Spencer Street. A little aside, when things were looking a bit tricky in the upper house around assisted dying, and it was about 2.30 or nearly 3.00 am in the morning, I was afraid that we were losing some of our yes votes. They were getting tired. Everyone was a bit over it. Things were a bit testy. You know, friends were on different sides of debates. It was very, very challenging. There was no food and I thought, 'If I can get them some food, I can maybe keep them here'. There was nothing open at 2.00 am so I rang the Embassy Cafe down in Spencer Street and said, 'Could I please have 200 bucks worth of potato cakes and 100 bucks worth of chips' and the guy hung up on me. So I rang him back. I had to rock out the old, 'Don't you know who I am?'. Of course he did not know who I was. Then when I said, 'I'm the health minister,' he's like, 'What's a health minister doing ringing up wanting 200 bucks worth of potato cakes and \$100

worth of chips?'. So a credit card fixes most problems, I have learned in a busy life. Money talked and Charlie and I went on down there. He still could not believe it, but we picked up those potato cakes and we took them back. Those that were voting yes got a potato cake, and the rest as they say was history. Oh, there was chicken salt on them as well—we had to keep people thirsty.

When I think about all of those wonderful reforms that our government and our partners and our community have been able to deliver, can I just tell you how delighted I am to have had a seat on those bandwagons. This is a really special time in history. I cannot wait to see what this government continues to do, because my very short tenure in this place has been one that has taken me to all the extraordinary places.

I do just want to acknowledge the women of this Parliament and the women of our government in particular. When I came to this place my mother and Joan Kirner sat in that back corner, and they would just be so delighted to see all of these incredible women in this place. We had three women at the table two sittings ago when the Premier was at national cabinet. We have a cabinet now that has 65 per cent women. That is a really extraordinary and important thing, and that shows I think in the quality of the policy priorities of this place.

I know that when you come to this place sometimes you can feel like an impostor, and I want to say to the women of this Parliament that we are not impostors any more. We have a rightful place. We are representing. I know sometimes people used to mutter the old impostors prayer: give me the confidence of a mediocre man. But women in this Parliament are in leadership positions, in non-traditional—

Mr Andrews interjected.

Ms HENNESSY: I did not look that way.

Mr Andrews: You looked that way, though.

Ms HENNESSY: I sure did. But we are making some extraordinary strides and whilst we need to make sure that we have got better diversity, to serve in a government and when you leave there is 65 per cent women, I will be out in the village really cheering you all on. And it does take a village to survive in this place. I would just like to briefly thank many of the people that have been in my village that have helped me through.

First and foremost if you want to be in politics you not only need a beautiful partner but you also need a wife, and I have had many wives who have helped care for my children, clean my house, do the shopping, life administration—you know, help you when you have forgotten it is dress-up day at school and your children have been dropped off at before-school care in their school uniforms again. So to my mother's group but also to Sue Henkell, Tess Henkell and Bridget Henkell who have been babysitters of mine throughout the entirety of my time in this Parliament—I acknowledge them because they helped keep our life together.

I also really want to thank some of my staff as well. When I retired from the cabinet I had a chance to acknowledge all of my ministerial staff, in particular my chief of staff Chris McDermott who had been with me from the get-go. But there were also so many people who helped to really keep my life together during that period of time in the electorate office, and again if I could acknowledge Memphis Calzone, John Ballestrino, Amanda Crossin and of course Kyah Monaghan who continues to support me to this day. But in the ministerial office Jane Lawless and Tracey Lanza, Charlie Genovese and Noni Sproule particularly helped me with such extraordinary support. You do need to try and be a human being in this job. You do need people who understand what school holidays are, what doctors and dental appointments mean, and to have people like that around me was a matter of great strength. I know they are going to be really glad that they no longer have to see the 'password to your email is changing' day coming, when everyone used to have to put helmets on and get under because of my technology shortcomings.

Two other final thank-yous: the help and the support and can I say the cheap champagne counselling of many of my neglected friends has been something that I deeply, deeply valued. To Llewellyn Prain and Claire Burford and Kathleen Riches, who are all here tonight, and to Matty and all of my childhood girls from the hood, the Avila gang, Donna Maree Janes, Suzette Goodwill, Georgina Randall and Marlene ‘Mars’ Fry, thank you for your decades of loyal friendship and in particular for not giving a brass razoo about politics when we would catch up. The extended Hennessy and Dean clan: they have endured my lack of physical and emotional presence. I want to thank them for their love and support, particularly my fun aunts Tricia and Herbie, who are both here tonight. To all of my brothers who in our quirky childhood really guaranteed that I was going to be churned out as a feminist with some resilience: I am very proud of their extraordinary achievements and all of their beautiful families.

Thirteen years ago when I came to this place two little girls were sitting up in the public gallery there and they were in really big trouble. They got told off by the attendants because they were hanging over and yelling out, ‘Hi, mum’. Well, Speaker, I have to tell you that they still disrespect authority, they still break the rules, they are still pushing back and I could not be prouder of them. They are the great joys of my life. I love them dearly. They have endured a lot, as all children of politicians do, but they have also had a front seat at so many exciting moments in our political history. I cannot wait to spend even more time with them as they quiver in fear.

Of course last but not least, my beloved Bernie Dean. We kind of agreed when I came here that my time in this place would be short and impactful. He would have liked it to have been a little shorter and I would have liked it to be a little more impactful. But he is the most patient man in the world. He waited 19 years before I would get married, so he has hung on for that long. I am so very, very grateful for his endurance and his humour. He is smart, he is decent, he is a wonderful cook, he is very patient and he is more earnest and handsome than Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*—just to give you the vibe. I am very much looking forward to spending more time with him.

Can I say to you all: good luck, have fun. I have had an absolute ball, and I will be cheering you on from the sidelines. I am so deeply grateful for having had the opportunity to serve with you all. Adios.

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR BROADMEADOWS

Valedictory statement

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) (18:21): Australia’s greatest gift is the opportunity for a better life. We must nurture people and inspire generations to come. The global pandemic, like climate change, has exposed how we are all connected and vulnerable. Self-interest and tribalism will not save us. Collaboration on common interests defines our enlightened future. We need optimism and an outward focus to drive economic recovery and social cohesion relentlessly and compassionately. We live in chaotic times of threats, economic upheaval and opportunities. A new period of counter-enlightenment declared facts alternate instead of stubborn and cherished. Existential threats converged with the impact of climate change, and a pandemic stalked inequality globally, exposing systemic fault lines like an X-ray. The battle between autocracy and democracy rages, with war in Europe, and shadows our regional security.

The people of my heartland, Broadmeadows, elected me to Parliament in 2011 when hyperpartisanship and hyperfactionalism defined Australia as the democratic coup capital of the world, with five prime ministers in as many years. Amid such turmoil my focus has been on providing stability, creating opportunities and delivering results. Big problems require big ideas, and proposing bold ideas has proved successful. Victoria’s partnership with the White House internationalised President Barack Obama’s Cancer Moonshot. Joe Biden declared, ‘You are making cancer research a team sport’, defining his admiration for the billion-dollar jewel in Australia’s medical research crown, the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. People forget he came to Melbourne for the opening in 2016, following my advocacy and the pursuit of the Premier.

Australia needs new ambition and bold action pursuing leadership and excellence. We must confront complex challenges or risk backsliding to the derisive days of the so-called 'lucky country'. The next step is to partner with President Biden in his plan to translate the US model designed for national security, which led to discoveries including the internet and GPS under a defence department agency, to a focus on health, adapting artificial intelligence and other technologies in an aim to supercharge breakthroughs to prevent, detect and treat diseases including Alzheimer's, diabetes and cancers, predicted to outstrip half a century's advances in the next decade. This is one of the biggest life-changing and life-saving opportunities to crack the code of some of the world's worst killers. We need to be partners. The plan I have proposed is to extend our Cancer Moonshot partnership with President Biden and establish AUKUS health for health security. This collaboration would deliver a brain gain between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States and could be expanded to other countries to deliver worldwide breakthroughs.

Australia and the UK have signed a trade agreement. The UK has €2 billion it wants to invest in science. Value should be raised beyond an exchange of Vegemite and Marmite to inspire greater innovation. Proof exists. One of Australia's leading companies, CSL, has been manufacturing more than 50 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine from Britain in Broadmeadows, saving lives at home and abroad. A \$1.8 billion deal for vaccines against influenza will establish a new lucrative export industry nearby soon.

Big ideas require big data. Australia is close to the top of the survival list for most cancers and plays a major role in future discoveries through the value of our data being distilled into understanding, knowledge and remedies. Melbourne, like Boston and London, is a world leader in medical research. Our major universities anchor the ecosystems—the University of Melbourne's boulevard of big dreams and the multibillion-dollar boulevard, Innovation Walk, joining Monash University and the CSIRO. Monash will be the first university in the world to manufacture mRNA vaccines on campus with Moderna and is uniquely placed to capitalise on access to a €1 billion funding opportunity I have identified for collaborations with the Italian biomedical sector.

Australia can collaborate with other like-minded democracies to establish independent supply chains and national sovereignty and extend benefits to our neighbours, from the fourth-largest country, Indonesia, to vulnerable Asia-Pacific nations. Saving lives is the best diplomacy. Driving the 'lead like the lion' strategy has secured the lion's share of funding for Victorian institutions. Working with world-leading medical researchers has helped clarify imperatives, culminating in defining successes and the Victorian government's commitment of \$1.3 billion since 2014 to establish national leadership for research, especially into cancers, genomics and infectious diseases to improve and save lives. Our medical research leaders are predominantly culturalists, not monetarists. Professor Peter Doherty, the everyman with a Nobel Prize for medicine, gave me his book *The Knowledge Wars*, which defines in forensic detail how politicians have historically failed science. The Andrews government I hope has at least bent this arc of history. Collaborating with these brilliant leaders has been the humbling privilege of my eight-year service as Victoria's first Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research, and I remain committed to driving these causes.

Being labelled 'the relentless Frank McGuire' is a badge of honour—relentless in the pursuit of remedies for the catastrophes of our times, helping more people deny that miser fate and preventing Einstein's definition of insanity. Breaking the cycle of disadvantage requires creative solutions and collaboration. The unwritten laws of power, politics and money mean resources are too often gifted to marginal seats ahead of those in greater need, entrenching place-based disadvantage. This remains a defining cause and exposes the cost of inequality in the time of pandemic and the paradox of Broadmeadows. Broadmeadows matters because it symbolises the hope of Australia, but its proud history and people have too often been overlooked as the undeserving poor. Australia turns to Broadmeadows in times of existential threats: from wars, training soldiers since the Anzacs at Gallipoli and heroes on the Western Front; to fighting our worst bushfires; home to immigration when 'populate or perish' defined our economic peril and to recent refugees from Iraq, Syria and Somalia; home to

large manufacturing, underwriting prosperity with muscle jobs, powering the world's longest uninterrupted period of economic growth, and to advanced niche manufacturing, producing the gift of science, vaccines.

When catastrophes pass, Broadmeadows is largely forgotten and abandoned to disadvantage like an orphan. Like wave upon wave of postwar migrants, my parents had the imagination to dream of a better future for our family and the courage to cross the world to pursue it—beyond the rancour of the march and the nightmare of the dark, where all the dogs of Europe bark. When we arrived in Broadmeadows in 1959 it was a raw fringe at the end of the line. Victoria's leading mandarin, Major General Ken Green, confessed to me on his retirement as the head of the Premier's department in the 1980s that Broadmeadows was still the biggest failure in a generation of government. Lack of coordination even at one tier of government reveals systemic failure, wilful blindness and political indifference.

As a boy off the boat I campaigned for greater investment for more than a decade before being elected as the MP for Broadmeadows, founding the global learning village model in the heart of this community, impoverished to the point of lacking even a public library. The successful model coordinated the three tiers of government, civil society and business appreciating enlightened self-interest. The community was evolving into virtually a United Nations in one neighbourhood, with families from more than 150 countries. Accents changed but not aspirations.

Talent is not defined by gender or demographics, but too often opportunity is. My aim was to transform Broadmeadows into a prototype to improve the social determinants of life through skills, jobs and meaning, better health and connecting the disconnected by harnessing technology-empowered leadership. Silicon Valley came to Broadmeadows. Big ICT leaders established an ideas lab second to London to bridge the digital divide. A multiversity delivered courses in the community with the lowest uptake in tertiary education from three universities and a TAFE institute, long before online learning became popular.

This vision and commitment had been nominated for an international award for leadership and innovation when the Brumby government unexpectedly lost and the Australian Labor Party recruited me as an outsider to succeed the former Premier in Parliament. A convergence of coalition governments, state and federal, left Broadmeadows again abandoned. The Australian government rejected the chance to move beyond the 'lifters and leaners' budget, which devastated Broadmeadows most, to critical issues confronting our country—globalisation, the demise of local manufacturing, population growth, a fair go and multiculturalism forged on local factory floors. They adopted former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's 'managed decline' approach, which had caused social catastrophe in England's north, leading to similar consequences in Melbourne's north. The one-term Victorian coalition government employed a reverse Robin Hood strategy, redistributing more than \$100 million in funding to better-off communities in marginal seats they subsequently lost. The chaos of rotating prime ministers, the lost values, the loss of the car industry and manufacturing scale, the highest unemployment and the freeze on wages for working people meant many families in Broadmeadows lost hope.

From 2014 the crucial constant is Labor in power in Victoria. This provided the opportunity for me to keep reimagining Broadmeadows, for which I will always be grateful. Instead of criminal justice models and building bigger police stations, grander courthouses and maxi-prisons, Broadmeadows is being converted from a rust belt to a green belt and brain belt. Attracting the Business Council of Australia to Broadmeadows and collaborating with the private sector has inspired \$1 billion in investments into the derelict Ford site for cleaner, greener industries, predicting 5000 new jobs at no cost to taxpayers. The brain belt is advanced manufacturing featuring vaccines. A health and community centre of excellence is being built, new social and affordable housing has been secured and the Field of Dreams project will link local youth to the world-class Melbourne Storm, connecting them to a sporting team instead of a gang. In a great result for vulnerable women and families, I have just launched Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus's model to help women start businesses, another Australian first in Broadmeadows, creating 6000 jobs nationally for women in the next two years.

Hume City Council had no plans for Broadmeadows, missing the investments from the biggest state budget in history, but I am delighted to announce the council has recovered—under some influence, cajoling and encouragement—and is committing almost \$50 million to revitalise the Broadmeadows town centre during the next four years.

I wanted more time to deliver more results. Broadmeadows is now the prototype for government collaboration and proof of concept for business to transform postcodes of disadvantage into *Postcodes of Hope*. The ALP national executive's intervention into preselections for Victoria's upcoming election was never meant to target a sitting MP like me who had nothing to do with branch stacking or the red shirts controversy. As the first person raised in Broadmeadows to represent this community in the Victorian Parliament I felt obliged to confront the so-called faceless men and women, telling them I joined a cause, not a gang, and reminding them Australia's oldest political party was founded to fight for the powerless and the poor, too often done over in secret deals behind closed doors. I have long championed the cause to change politics through needs-based funding and performance-based MPs.

The preselection process was manipulated. The technique used was to falsely link me as a member of the faction Victoria's Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission was investigating. This was wrong, misled the public and damaged my reputation. The subsequent IBAC report has proved the faction under investigation was branch stacking in Broadmeadows against me. The national executive refused to meet me before casting their votes. The factional deals were done. I was disendorsed because I was outside the new controlling factional power alliance. Performance, results and big-picture ideas did not count, because Broadmeadows is a safe seat, too valuable in the eyes of factional powerbrokers not to control in a numbers game with a winner-takes-all sense of entitlement. This sends a disturbing message to the next generation of community advocates who are independently minded and forthright. It also denies democracy. The people of Broadmeadows elected me with the highest primary vote of any candidate at the last Victorian election. I was elected representing the ALP and would only stand at November's election under that banner, despite the number of people urging me to stand as an independent. The ALP confronts a moment of truth for its values and integrity with its truest believers.

For more than 40 years I have been coming to this Parliament in various roles, so I want to thank everyone who has helped me. Supporting the institution is important. I want to acknowledge all involved in the investigation into the handling of child abuse, revealing a cover-up that killed, in the landmark report *Betrayal of Trust*. MPs searched for the truth, determined Parliament would not be another institution that failed people with little power, whose voices are rarely heard and whose lives had been blighted. The children were innocent. Their fortitude in testifying as adults remains inspiring and their courage humbling.

To my Labor Party colleagues: you are the best chance for people who need you the most. Never forget what that means to so many. This is the added responsibility of Labor in power. Relish the challenge to help people rise. This will reward us all and help build our state and nation. Thank you for your support.

I buried my parents and raised my children while serving this Parliament. To Colleen: I could not have done it without you. To my children, Tess, James and Matt: I did this for you. You have inspired me when I needed it most. Being your dad is the best thing I have done. Tess has already made a contribution to this Parliament, informing my call to Raise the Age. So anyone who has a problem, take it up with her. Good luck. Remember who is in your blood, where you come from and why it matters for the future, as my siblings Eddie, Ev and Brigitte always have.

To my staff: you are not paid enough, especially for putting up with me. To the guests who have joined us today and have been steadfast and to everyone who has supported me along the way: thank you. To the people of Broadmeadows: I thank you the most. I will not forget you. You must never be taken for granted again or be left last in line. Stand tall, be proud and keep hope alive.

Members applauded.

Bills

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (18:40): Having been in the chamber now for 4 hours and 40 minutes and having consumed three bottles of water, I can assure you that this speech will not be delivered in anything other than a degree of physiological distress, but can I say that the Disability Amendment Bill—

A member interjected.

Mr FOWLES: If you make any water noises, you are in trouble. The prostate may well give way. The Disability Amendment Bill 2022 amends the Disability Act 2006, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 to bring about critical amendments—really important amendments—that are going to increase rights and protections, improve services, bring about better service coordination, clarify functions and responsibilities and reduce duplication. They are largely pretty uncontroversial changes. They have come about because at the start of this year we announced that legislative amendments would be made to increase the residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and strengthen quality and safeguards in services for people with disability, and that is exactly what this bill does. It acquits that very important commitment. It is one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act review, which has been underway since 2018. This is a priority reform. It is about making sure our legislated frameworks are fit for purpose, are contemporary and create meaningful change for people with disability.

It is appropriate to reflect a little bit on the journey that Australia has been on with the national disability insurance scheme. That of course was a scheme that would only ever have been conceived of and delivered by Labor, and it was. It was absolutely undermined, almost tortured, by the previous federal coalition government in their efforts to claim false savings and produce a false budget surplus—a claimed surplus that still to this day the newly ex member for Kooyong claims to have delivered. If you push him on it and go, ‘Sorry, no. There was a deficit’, he says, ‘No, no. I delivered the budget for a surplus’. So it is part of the creative accounting strategies frequently deployed by those opposite that they persist with these furbies.

One of the greatest of them was the effort by the former prime minister, Scott Morrison, who was the minister. He was probably the Treasurer, the industry minister and a few other things at the time—the health minister and various others. He, unbelievably, claimed that the coalition made this multibillion-dollar saving in the NDIS. You did not have to scratch the surface of that piece of confected nonsense very hard to work out just what a sensationalist piece of bulldust it was, because sure enough the savings had all come about because they had not employed the people to process the applications. ‘Oh, we’ve saved money’, they said, ‘because we didn’t even employ the people to process the applications’. The applications were stretching out into an ever-growing list, but they claimed that it was their expert management of the NDIS that was delivering the savings. Well, in fact it was just their denial of the life-changing opportunity of the NDIS that was delivering this saving, so-called. I think that speaks—is anyone else finding the chamber unnervingly quiet at the minute? Can you all talk amongst yourselves or something?

Ms Green interjected.

Mr FOWLES: Yes. It speaks to the fundamental gap between Labor’s approach to those with disabilities and the approach of coalition governments, state and federal. Part of the evidence for that is that we will be delivering before caretaker an exposure draft of the new disability inclusion bill for

public consultation. That exposure draft will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion. It is a very, very important commitment because it is only through properly resourced and institutionalised—and I mean that in the good sense of the word—advocates that we will secure the right change that we need in this space. I have dealt with a number of advocates for various constituents with disabilities over the course of my four years in this place, and I have always found them to be people of great integrity and great passion but who quite rightly, by the time the matter has reached me or others, have endured on behalf of their clients an amount of frustration of a quantum that is somewhere between a lot and an amount that would induce homicidal rage. Some of the barriers that have been thrown up to people with disabilities in my community are just breathtaking, and I want to thank all of those disability advocates who work right across the sector—some of them in funded organisations and some of them in not-for-profits where they raise their own funds for their organisations. The work they do is absolutely incredible, so it is important then for us to have a commissioner for disability inclusion. I look forward to joining—as I cast my eye around the chamber—every single person to the right of the Deputy Speaker in legislating this change in the 60th Parliament, with the exception of you, member for Yan Yean, and we will miss you.

The passage of the Disability Amendment Bill this year is important to ensuring that the services, the safeguards, the rights and the protections are enhanced for all Victorians who are living with disability. I think it is important to note that those rights and protections are about the residential rights and duties for people who are subject to civil and criminal orders in disability residential services and parameters for service providers in delivering those residential and treatment services. It ensures the residential rights and protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation; it ensures that they have those protections if they do not meet the definitions in order to be covered by the Residential Tenancies Act. To paraphrase, those that are in specialist accommodation that is not treated as an ordinary residential tenancy will, as a result of, hopefully, the passage of this bill, pick up a bunch of protections for their rights. They are very important protections. We appreciate that there are a whole range of different modes of delivering specialist accommodation. We need to make sure that they are adequately captured by the rules so that people who are living in accommodation like this who clearly have a disability can enjoy a similar set of protections to those living in more conventional accommodation.

In the 90 seconds I have left I just want to talk a little bit about some of the approved services. This bill is about, in part, removing duplication and making sure that there is consistency of approval requirements under both the NDIS and state-funded disability service providers. We have, unsurprisingly, in our great federation opportunity for duplication and complication of those various matters, and it is important for those things to be regulated in a consistent way but in a way that is nonetheless accountable. The parts of the bill that go to improved services also address gaps and clarify the criteria and processes for compulsory treatment and placement in residential treatment facilities to support client and operational safety and strengthen clinical oversight. Again, I think these are reforms that are, frankly, relatively uncontroversial.

What it will also allow the minister to do is to declare additional categories of disability accommodation so that community visitors can inquire into the quality and standard of support provided to residents. That is an important regulatory power and one that I am sure will be utilised as the quantum and quality of specialist disability accommodation grow. With those comments, I will conclude my comments and race off to the loo.

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (18:50): I too rise to speak in support of the Disability Amendment Bill 2022, which will improve services, safeguards and protections for people with disability and will further acquit this government's commitment to reviewing and reforming the Disability Act 2006. Like many others on the Labor side, I too would like to acknowledge the carers. Often carers work goes unrecognised. I want to acknowledge and thank them for the work that they do. I also wish to thank all the workers and the Health and Community Services Union members in the disability sector across my electorate for the outstanding work they do, including allied health professionals, teachers

and aides, bus drivers, cleaners, personal care assistants and human services providers. It can be challenging and incredibly rewarding work.

I know from firsthand experience the significance it makes to people with disability having people in their lives who care for them. It makes such a difference. My mum, Trudie Dickinson, is a physiotherapist who worked for decades in disability in Ballarat at organisations including the Spastic Society of Victoria, now Scope, at Pennyweight Park and Pinarc. Mum was passionate about providing early intervention, treatment and support for children with disability across the region. She was also a board member of McCallum Disability Services and the Ballarat Base Hospital. Growing up with a mum who was passionate about disability as a role model has had a profound impact on how I view disability and Victorians with a disability. It is important for me as a member of this place to be a strong advocate for and work to promote the needs of Victorians with disability, improving access and inclusivity to education, public services and facilities across our community.

I am so pleased that that Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers is in the chamber while I deliver this speech. I wish to thank him, his ministerial office and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for the good work they have done to bring this bill to the house. I want to thank them for their extensive consultation that has occurred throughout the drafting of this bill. Equally, my thanks go to all the stakeholders and community members who have taken part. I know that interest has been strong, reflecting the importance of disability services for many Victorians. The reforms in this bill have been informed by public consultation conducted via Engage Victoria as well as targeted consultation across the sector, including with key bodies and government agencies. The department has also been advised by the Disability Act review advisory group, a diverse and experienced collective chaired by former disability discrimination commissioner Graeme Innes AM.

Our government promised to protect and promote the rights of people living with disability in Victoria, and it is what this bill delivers by bolstering residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and reinforcing the quality and safety of disability services. These reforms are enacted primarily by amending the Disability Act 2006, with additional amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018. Changes to the Disability Act align and reduce duplication of restrictive practices, which means we will be improving the consistent application of requirements across both disability service providers and registered NDIS providers. The role of the Victorian senior practitioner is also updated to include promoting the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices. These changes will further align the act with the national framework, as regulating restrictive practices is a shared responsibility of both the state and the commonwealth. Rights of a person subject to compulsory treatment are also reinforced. This bill addresses gaps in legislation by strengthening clinical oversight of the residential treatment facility admissions criteria as well as confirming its continued application beyond admission. Information, including treatment plans, is explicitly required to be provided in an understandable and accessible format. Further, processes around obtaining and explaining supervised treatment orders are also to be improved.

The bill also looks at community visitors. By empowering the minister to declare additional categories of disability accommodation beyond those captured by the act, the bill allows community visitors access to a wider number of residential services. Community visitors are volunteers appointed to inspect the quality of these services by observing conditions, making inquiries, communicating with residents and identifying concerns. They provide an important safeguard for the rights of people with disability.

This bill will further clarify and support their role. These sorts of clarifications can make a real and significant difference in service provision. By making improvements to the outdated information-sharing arrangements the provisions of collaborative support for complex clients will be enhanced. It streamlines oversight by dissolving the Disability Services Board, an entity whose role has been substantially reduced since the introduction of the NDIS, as well as better defining the role of the department secretary. Further amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 ensure that

Victorians living in specialist disability accommodation remain covered by the appropriate residential rights, while amendments to the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 remove the duplicate requirement for disability workers seeking voluntary registration to obtain a police check when they already hold an NDIS worker clearance. These reforms will safeguard the rights of residents while also removing barriers for aspiring disability workers, increasing services and amplifying benefits for the community. These amendments will address gaps in residential protections, strengthening quality and safeguards for people with a disability.

Our government is determined to make Victoria a more inclusive and accessible state, and I am proud to be a member of the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee, which has held two significant inquiries that have made important findings and recommendations to support Victorians with a disability. The first one, which the member for Sandringham was a part of the committee for, was an inquiry into sustainable employment for disadvantaged jobseekers. That was tabled in this place in August 2020. The second one was an inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with a disability, which we tabled in September 2021.

Victoria has also established a new Victorian Disability Advisory Council and launched a new *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022–2026*. This plan is about making things fairer for people with a disability. The plan outlines what government departments are doing to build a fairer community for everyone. One example of this is the inclusive playground for all children at Victoria Park in the heart of my electorate. It is a place where children and adults of all abilities can play, socialise and connect. In June this year I was delighted to announce a grant of \$186 000 from our government to develop a new sensory-friendly play zone at Ballarat's Victoria Park inclusive play space. It will be built in partnership with the City of Ballarat, which is contributing \$124 000. I wish to acknowledge the strong advocacy of Rebecca Paton and the City of Ballarat's Disability Advisory Committee, who worked so hard to establish the Victoria Park inclusive play space in 2016.

I am also proud that we are supporting students with a disability in my community and across the state. In the November 2020 budget we announced that the Ballarat Specialist School would receive \$10 million to upgrade and modernise the school, including providing additional permanent buildings. The Ballarat Specialist School provides exceptional education for students from kinder to year 12. Families from around the region have moved to Ballarat to be a part of this nurturing school community. I thank the amazing teachers and support staff for the extraordinary job they do, from supporting the littlest learners at the specialist school kinder to our school leavers at the farm campus in Invermay Park. The \$10 million funding announcement means that the school's infrastructure will become fitting for the outstanding teaching and learning happening at our Ballarat Specialist School.

Further, in September 2021 the Andrews Labor government announced \$1.3 million of Building Blocks grants capacity funding for the Ballarat specialist kinder, which is a part of the Ballarat Specialist School in my electorate. The Ballarat specialist kinder program specialises in students with additional needs. This funding will enable the Ballarat Specialist School kinder to increase the three-year-old program from 2½ hours to 15 hours per week, and it will provide an immense benefit to the local community.

This is an important bill. It is emblematic of what this government stands for: being inclusive, being fair and making Victoria an even better place to live. I am proud to support it, and I commend the bill to the house.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

GLENN EIRA PLANNING

Mr SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (19:00): (6536) My adjournment is to the Minister for Planning, and the action that I seek is for the minister to implement mandatory height limits across the City of Glen Eira. You have heard on many occasions me raising issues around overdevelopment in the City of Glen Eira. Under eight years of the Labor government the Caulfield electorate has taken more than its fair share of development, and from 2016 to 2021 the City of Glen Eira has had more building permits for new dwellings than any other area throughout the Southern Metropolitan Region. As we have seen, all too often this has been in the form of towers out of scope with the character of the local community and endangering many of the heritage homes that have been there for hundreds of years.

Unfortunately the government has not provided infrastructure support to follow the development that we have seen. We have had no support for school upgrades, no support for hospitals or health, no support for public transport and roads and no support for public open space. In fact we have said on many occasions Glen Eira has the lowest amount of open space of any municipality, and under the Andrews Labor government we are jamming people into suburbs like sardines and doing nothing for people's mental health and wellbeing.

Unfortunately the current Caulfield structure plan is heading down the same path, and we desperately need to pull the handbrake on overdevelopment. In the Caulfield station precinct, the state government want to jam as many residential towers as they possibly can into a confined space. I am told that we have just recently had 5000 recently built or permanent apartments in the area around the Caulfield Racecourse, but the Andrews government wants to jam more and more in. In fact in Grange Road, bunched together 12-storey towers will soar above residential streets of Caulfield East and Carnegie, overlooking local infrastructure and creating unlivable box apartments.

The Liberals have consulted. We have listened to the community, and we want to put forward ideas of mandatory height limits in Caulfield, Elsternwick and across Glen Eira. As the Stop the Elsternwick Towers campaign has showed us, the community have had enough, and they are sick and tired of overdevelopment. Residents want heritage protection. Residents want mandatory height limits and appropriate setbacks. Residents want tree canopy protection. Therefore in light of the Caulfield structure plan, in light of overdevelopment, in light of what has happened with the Woolworths overdevelopment in Elsternwick in particular and the areas also of Caulfield, Elsternwick, Ormond and Glen Huntly, I urge the planning minister to come to the party and join the Liberals with sensible planning controls to protect the livability of the City of Glen Eira.

PASIFIKA YOUTH RESEARCH PROJECT

Mr KENNEDY (Hawthorn) (19:03): (6537) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Crime Prevention, who is gracing us with his presence at the table tonight. The action I seek is that the minister join me and visit Swinburne University to see the progress that the supporting Pasifika youth program has made. As part of the building safer communities program, the Victorian government has funded this Swinburne-led research and impact program. I attended the launch with the minister's predecessor earlier in the year, and I am looking forward to seeing the progress that has been made in this area. Swinburne, in collaboration with the Centre for Multicultural Youth, will be the first university in Victoria to lead a university community research partnership to explicitly support secondary school completion rates for Pasifika students and to encourage Pasifika students in further study and work.

In my own time as a teacher and then as a principal, I witnessed the inequality in education outcomes all across our school system. Programs like this are necessary to impact the systemic inequality within

our society. Indeed education can address these issues. Pasifika young people are over-represented in our youth justice system. We know that young people are more likely to live positive, productive lives if they complete school. This project will help us lift school retention rates for Pasifika students from the current low.

That is why this kind of program is so important. It allows stakeholders to understand the cultural underpinnings of Pasifika youth interactions with the Australian education system and to then collaboratively improve how our education system deals with these issues. We on this side of the chamber are committed to a better, fairer justice system, and we are committed to making sure that our multicultural communities have the tools they need to be afforded every opportunity our great state offers.

Over my years as a principal I witnessed a shift in attitude towards the issue of systemic inequality in our society, and I am glad to be part of a government that takes this issue so seriously. I would like to thank Swinburne University for their work in this area. Specifically I would like to thank Professor Susanne Garvis and Dr Maryanne Pale, and Jemal Ahmet from the Centre for Multicultural Youth. I look forward to the minister's visit to Swinburne, a university that we are particularly proud of.

ROADSIDE VEGETATION

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (19:06): (6538) My adjournment tonight is to the Minister for Environment and Climate Action. It could have probably been to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety also, but I will go with the minister for environment. For the 10th and final time this term I want to bring to the attention of this government, and on this occasion the minister for environment, an ongoing issue in my electorate. The action I seek is for the minister to address the black wattle infestation and build-up of debris on our roadsides prior to the upcoming summer.

As I said, I have asked for this on nine previous occasions. I first raised it in April 2020, then in November 2020, December 2020, June 2021, September 2021, October 2021, December 2021, May 2022, August 2022 and now September 2022. We have piles of debris that were pushed up after the 2019–20 fires that are still sitting on our roadsides in Gippsland East and black wattle infestation above your head. It is a massive, massive fire risk.

I acknowledge that we have had a wet spring, which will put back the fire risk certainly into next year, but East Gippsland residents know too well that it only takes a few days of really, really hot weather to turn all of this debris and all of this vegetation into a huge fire risk—

Ms Britnell interjected.

Mr T BULL: As the member for South-West Coast says, a tinderbox. These are roadsides adjacent to private property where families lost everything almost three years ago. We have not learned our lessons. We have now got a government that is letting the debris build up to incredible levels again, so I finally ask the minister for environment to liaise with the minister for roads—you both say it is each other's responsibility—and get this problem fixed before summer, because we cannot go through a period with this level of debris on our roadsides.

CRESWICK FLOOD EVENTS

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (19:08): (6539) My final adjournment matter ever in this Parliament is for the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services in the other place, and the action that I seek is support for the town of Creswick to floodproof themselves against future flood events. The 5 January storm and flood event unfortunately was not considered big enough to qualify for commonwealth disaster funding, but that does not mean the impact on the residents of Creswick was not and is not still severe. People are still living with tarps over their roofs, as I was devastated to see on the evening news a few nights ago.

Hepburn shire councillor Don Henderson and Labor's candidate for Ripon, Martha Haylett, herself a Creswick resident, have shown me around the town to see the damage. Sadly, this is not the first time

that Creswick has experienced flood damage, and it may not be the last, and it is not the first time that I have seen it in person. In fact it was in early 2011, after the 2010 Christmas storms, when I visited, then as Shadow Minister for Emergency Services, with then local MP Geoff Howard and the then opposition leader, now Premier. There have been four storm events since.

But I am relieved that now in Canberra there is a government that takes climate change seriously and understands that more catastrophic weather events are sadly expected. I understand that the Albanese government has established a new fund that could assist Creswick to recover and also to ensure preventative drainage and other work that may be funded to help this fabulous little town not be at the whim of Mother Nature. I urge the minister to look at funding sources within her own department, within Bushfire Recovery Victoria, but also to liaise with the federal government and advise them on how they are putting together the guidelines for the new fund. I feel certain that this minister will take this seriously and look at the needs of Creswick very closely in consultation with the local community, with Hepburn shire and with Martha Haylett as a local resident and the Labor candidate for Ripon.

SOUTH-WEST COAST ELECTORATE ROADS

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (19:10): (6540) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister to drive to South-West Coast and have a firsthand look at the roads this government seems to believe are in a magnificent condition. This is not the first time I have invited the minister to come to South-West Coast to have a look for himself at the absolutely atrocious conditions our roads are in. My last request was ignored—not surprising, really, because the minister either lives in denial or simply does not care that many of our roads are in such a bad condition and that they are dangerous. There is an irony in the fact that we have a minister for road safety, because there is no way we could have a minister for safe roads given what drivers in my electorate encounter on a daily basis. Put simply, our roads are not okay. I have been constantly raising the issue of poor road conditions in this place, but I am not sure the minister believes me. So rather than me just pointing out the bleeding obvious once again, I thought I would share just a snapshot of some of the hundreds of social media comments I have received in recent months from constituents.

We towed a loaded float back from Mt Gambier yesterday and the road to Heywood is really dangerous.

Yeah here in the Sth West we don't drive on the 'left hand side of the road' we try and drive on what's 'left of the road' ... stay safe everyone ...

The national highway is an absolute disgrace! Road crews just went through today fixing holes armed with a shovel.

I'm sure they went through less than a week ago!

So they thought it was a good idea to put all the rails in between Panmure and Allansford on the highway to make it safer. What a joke. All they have done is stuffed the road and potholes everywhere.

Can roads come under health and safety, then they'd be accountable have to do something properly. They only do a bandaid fix doesnt last at all.

Minister, are you listening? These are the words of everyday drivers who have to navigate huge potholes, dangerously large shoulder drop-offs and every other array of problems that impact on our daily lives. I have had numerous freight and transport companies contact me in recent months detailing the amount of damage being caused to their trucks. This puts drivers at risk and has increased costs at a time when the financial pressures of rising fuel prices and the COVID-19 aftermath continue to be felt. Minister, our roads are not okay. Will you be brave enough to travel to South-West Coast to see for yourself?

The SPEAKER: Can I remind members to address their remarks through the Chair.

EMERGING STRONGER GRANTS

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (19:13): (6541) The adjournment matter I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers and concerns the Emerging Stronger grants program. The action I seek is that the minister provide further information on how the Emerging Stronger grants will support volunteers in my electorate of Narre Warren South. Our government recognises the importance of volunteers and the contributions that they make in sustaining and binding the fabric of our community. Volunteers build stronger, more resilient and inclusive communities and are vital to the delivery of everything from essential services through to grassroots sport.

Before the pandemic there were some 2.3 million Victorians, or 42.1 per cent, who volunteered. They were a really vital part of our community, especially, as I said, during the pandemic period, but now still have an important role to play. This work includes delivering many of our community's functions, including the delivery of food, multicultural support, community radio, sporting clubs administration, elderly engagement and helping victims of domestic violence, and of course the list does seem to go on. To that end I would appreciate any further information that the minister could provide on how the Emerging Stronger grants will support volunteers in my electorate, and I look forward to sharing the minister's response with my community.

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (19:15): (6542) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery, and the action I seek is that she visits Shepparton and the region to see the wonderful facilities our electorate has to host events as part of the Commonwealth Games in 2026. Shepparton was disappointed to learn that our district was not selected as a major hub to host the Commonwealth Games, as we are in a prime location and we could have used this opportunity to further develop and expand our sporting facilities to a world-class standard ahead of the games.

We want to ensure that we are in the running to hold some sporting events such as road cycling, BMX racing and BMX freestyle. We could hold a criterium event, a street road race with loops, which would make an interesting spectator event for the Shepparton community. The roads are flat and the scenery is picturesque. We have the only internationally accredited BMX track in Victoria that has an 8-metre hill, which is a requirement for Commonwealth Games BMX events. The track was built by the track builder who built three previous Olympic tracks.

As well as our unique facilities and stunning landscape we have an abundance of accommodation opportunities in Shepparton and its surrounding towns. In 2019 there were approximately 3000 commercial beds available in Greater Shepparton, excluding Airbnb listings. Spectators have the operation of 10 000 other beds in the surrounding towns of Nagambie, Kyabram, Numurkah, Benalla, Echuca and Yarrawonga. The events would not only bring a welcome financial boost to our region following two tough economic years but would also uplift the community and offer a new event that we can enjoy together and will make us feel that we are part of the Commonwealth Games. Our Indigenous community is also keen to contribute and showcase cultural and other engagement opportunities. I am sure once the minister takes a chance to look around at these facilities she will see for herself what a perfect place Shepparton would be for a number of Commonwealth Games events.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (19:17): (6543) Free kinder starts next year, permanently, and this is the biggest overhaul to early childhood education in Victoria. From 2023 three- and four-year-old kinder will be free, meaning families will save up to \$2500 a year for every child. Locally, Knox families are absolutely stoked. So I wish to raise a matter for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep. The action I seek is for the minister to inform my community about how many families in Knox will benefit from the Andrews Labor government's free kinder starting next year permanently.

Of course in 2025 we will also begin to open 50 government-owned childcare centres across the state in the areas that need them most. But wait, there is more. Also in 2025 we will begin to transition from

15 hours of four-year-old kinder to a 30-hour pre-prep program of play-based learning for every four-year-old in Victoria. This is game changing. It will make a profound difference for women and families who want to get back into the workforce. It will take pressure off family budgets. And it will mean every kid across the state can get the best start in life.

I also want to take a moment to thank our wonderful early years educators for all the amazing work that they do. I have had the greatest privilege of visiting many of our early years centres and I am always in awe of your work, so thank you. I am proud that a Labor government continues to back in early childhood investment by continuing to roll out three-year-old kinder, announcing free kinder and getting on with huge reforms that make a world of difference to so many.

SANDRINGHAM ELECTORATE ELECTION COMMITMENTS

Mr ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (19:18): (6544) My adjournment matter is for the Premier. Over the past four years, as a champion of our local community, I have worked with many great people, groups and organisations to identify what our community needs to set it up for this generation and for the next. I am very proud to share that plan this evening. An elected Victorian Liberal government will deliver \$25 million to secure the future of our Sandringham Hospital to ensure that our community gets the health care that they deserve. This funding will deliver modernisation works to refresh the run-down and tired wards and facilities; the total refurbishment of the Sandy Hospital maternity ward, well used by local mums and families; and the establishment of a Sandringham Hospital community reference group to write the very first Sandringham Hospital community charter.

We will deliver the removal of two dangerous and congested level crossings at Highett, at both Highett and Wickham roads. This commitment has come from the community, who know very well that they could be waiting for up to 30 minutes during peak periods at these intersections.

While the Andrews Labor government have consistently rejected the community's requests and my requests on their behalf to have these crossings removed, I have listened to residents in Highett and I intend to deliver. We will seek greater protection for the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary and deliver \$100 000 to replace existing sanctuary signage with new clearer signage, install surveillance cameras on buoys that mark the sanctuary boundary, improve education for fishers through the licensing process and direct the Victorian Fisheries Authority to conduct more frequent patrols. We must never take for granted Bayside's most treasured and significant environmental assets, and I will always fight to protect our Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary.

We will create equal sporting opportunities for both men and women in Bayside. We will deliver \$1.5 million to fully upgrade the north pavilion and commence upgrades of the south pavilion at the Trevor Barker Beach Oval, the home of the Sandringham Zebras football club. This commitment towards modern, inclusive facilities will transform Trevor Barker Beach Oval and will help boost female participation in sport.

We will deliver \$13.1 million for the essential and world-class upgrade of both Beaumaris and Beaumaris North primary schools: \$6.7 million to Beaumaris North Primary School for a new gymnasium and competition-grade, multi-use court, art and performing art and music facilities, a kitchen, change rooms, storerooms and office space; and \$6.4 million to Beaumaris Primary School for a new multipurpose sport and performing arts space, including a competition-grade gymnasium, specialist classrooms, a kitchen, change rooms and storerooms. Our children and communities of Beaumaris and Beaumaris North primary schools deserve amazing facilities where they can gather finally as one community. The action that I seek therefore is for the Premier, on behalf of the Victorian Labor government, to match my commitment to our community for the benefit of this generation and the next.

THE CROSSING

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (19:21): (6545) My last adjournment of this government term is to the Minister for Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to strongly, strongly consider a commitment to The Crossing worker-led residential rehabilitation project as soon as possible. When we are presented with great ideas, it is our responsibility to grab those ideas, grab those opportunities and make them a reality, and we have such a profound opportunity in front of us right now with the successful worker-led residential rehab model that I have witnessed working firsthand. The Crossing is a model that gives people suffering addiction and crisis the avenue back to a healthy life, respect from their families and also back to work. Right now we literally fly workers to Sydney for treatment at the original worker-led residential rehab facility, Foundation House. That is the preferred treatment option for many people. Foundation House has been in operation for over 20 years, and the clients of Foundation House, or 'Foundo' as it is called up there, are not just statistics, they are overwhelmingly success stories.

From healthcare providers to construction industry groups, many sectors are broadly supportive of the concept, including: the Master Builders Association; Yooralla, which has a workforce of around 1800; Incolink, with 84 000 members who work in a number of specialisations; 3PE; Possability, with their 1600 staff; and Amcor, which has 46 000 employees across 40 sites across the globe. The cost-benefit ratio is unquestionably good but hard to quantify, as it always is when you are dealing with a crisis at the top of the cliff and not using 10 times the resources and funding to treat people in catastrophic circumstances at the bottom of the cliff afterwards.

I know the minister is seriously considering this project because it is the type of project that only Labor governments do. It is innovative and it is courageous, and we can reshape the future of our community, our workers and their families. We certainly should invest in the lives of workers by funding this proposal, The Crossing.

RESPONSES

Mr CARBINES (Ivanhoe—Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:23): I think I might just take them in the order that they were raised. The member for Caulfield raised a matter for the Minister for Planning. The member for Caulfield is no longer with us but it was about implementing mandatory height limits across the City of Glen Eira. I will certainly do that with the Minister for Planning. I can commend to the member for Caulfield that we did introduce mandatory height limits in the Ivanhoe electorate—in Ivanhoe—through the former Minister for Planning, the honourable member for Richmond. So there is certainly a track record there.

The member for Hawthorn raised a matter for my good self in relation to joining him at Swinburne University. I would like to thank him for raising that adjournment matter with me, and I would be delighted to join the member for Hawthorn at Swinburne University of Technology in Hawthorn and observe the progress of their research partnership, and in particular the partnership with Swinburne University that was announced and launched by the previous minister, the honourable member for Sydenham, back in June last year.

I note the member outlined that Swinburne was the first Victorian university to undertake this type of research partnership with Pasifika students in collaboration with the Centre for Multicultural Youth as part of the building safer communities program. We have current projects underway through the program involving a number of research institutes, including La Trobe, Monash, Swinburne, Melbourne and Victoria universities. In July I attended the La Trobe University campus in Bendigo to announce the second round of our Crime Prevention Innovation Fund grants, where the team from La Trobe Uni rural health school—which I know will be of interest to you, Speaker—in Bendigo and industry partners are tackling drink spiking and addressing drug- and alcohol-facilitated sexual violence in the Bendigo region. But really it is a project that is about worldwide ramifications and implications. This research is not being undertaken in any measurable way anywhere else in the world.

So while it is happening in Bendigo, it really is about responding to worldwide concerns, and it really shows the great leadership at La Trobe in Bendigo.

A \$90.4 million investment in building safer communities is a cornerstone of our government's crime prevention strategy. Our government is investing in local communities to deliver innovative and local initiatives under that strategy to help Victorians feel safer. Our crime prevention strategy sets out how we are working in three action areas to support and invest in communities, enabling them to innovate and address issues at a local level. It is why our government has invested some \$90 million since 2015–16 to support over 900 community crime prevention initiatives across Victoria.

I look forward to visiting Swinburne with the energetic and passionate member for Hawthorn to receive an update on that important work in my capacity as the Minister for Crime Prevention. I should just conclude on the note that we saw in the independent crime statistics released only last week that crime across Victoria is down some 10 per cent—further work that demonstrates that our investments in crime prevention are having a very significant positive effect for all Victorians.

The member for Gippsland East raised a matter for the minister for environment and is seeking action to address black wattle infestation and roadside debris prior to the upcoming summer, and I will see that those matters are passed on.

The long-serving member for Yan Yean raised a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services seeking action and support for flood and storm prevention in the Creswick area and particularly to have some further conversations and actions with the very hardworking local resident and our Labor candidate for Ripon, Martha Haylett, and I will see that action is taken there.

The member for South-West Coast raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. She was keen for the minister to drive across the South-West Coast electorate and see the roads that are 'in magnificent condition'. However, I should add—

Ms Britnell interjected.

Mr CARBINES: I was quoting there, member for South-West Coast. I should also add that she did go on to say in her contribution that she does feel that many of those roads are unsatisfactory and require the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. We will be very clear in quoting the member for South-West Coast that perhaps she would like some further action there.

The member for Narre Warren South raised a matter for the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers. He would like further information and action from the minister on how the Emerging Stronger grants will support the Narre Warren South electorate and his community, and I will see that that is passed on.

The independent member for Shepparton raised a matter for the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery. She has sought for the minister to visit Shepparton to see the range of events and facilities that would put Shepparton really in the box seat to host Commonwealth Games events and activities and host Commonwealth Games athletes, and I will be sure to pass those matters on for action to the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery.

The member for Bayswater raised a matter for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep. He wants to know how many families in Knox will benefit from the Andrews Labor government's free \$2500 kinder initiative—that is \$2500 per kinder student—for families and related programs.

The member for Sandringham raised a matter for the honourable Premier and in particular sought action from the Premier to match the member's commitments, and he listed very many of those that he has made in his electorate, including to remove those level crossings at Highett and Wickham roads and related matters, and I will see that passed to the Premier for action and response.

The member for Frankston raised a matter for the Minister for Health, in particular about The Crossing program, a very significant program. He wants action to see that rehabilitation model supported and acted on by the government, and I will ensure that those matters in relation to that very significant

ADJOURNMENT

3736

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 20 September 2022

program, which industrial partners and many others have raised on behalf of that program, The Crossing, are passed on. I know that many of our caucus members are very familiar with that advocacy and that work and the value that that program can provide to so many people in relation to rehabilitation services.

I commend all of those matters to you, Speaker, and I conclude my remarks.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The house now stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 7.30 pm.