

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

hansard.parliament.vic.gov.au

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.

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Wednesday, 21 September 2022

The SPEAKER (Ms JM Edwards) took the chair at 9.32 am and read the prayer.

Announcements**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The SPEAKER (09:33): 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.

Petitions

Following petitions presented to house by Clerk:

MASKS IN SCHOOLS

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the fact that the Department of Education has written to all parents advising them that school children in Years 3 and above are 'expected' to wear a mask indoors. This expectation is having the following consequences:

1. Negative impact on learning and communication (In the UK 94% of teachers and 80% of students surveyed said masks compromised learning)
2. Adverse affect on children's mental health
3. Negative impact on socialization
4. Potential for bullying towards students who do not choose to wear a mask
5. Isolation and division among teachers and students over mask wearing

Numerous studies (eg Finland & Spain) have shown that mask wearing has no impact on the incidence of Covid and therefore this expectation is burdening children for no benefit.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly to call on the Minister for Education to

1. Demand the Department of Education rescinds this letter 'expecting' students to wear masks
2. Advises all students that they can go to school without any burden or guilt to wear a mask

By Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (298 signatures).

HEALESVILLE FREEWAY RESERVE

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that the Healesville Freeway Reservation (HFR) land between the Eastlink Freeway, Vermont, and Maroondah Highway, Lilydale, may not be required for a future road. Should a decision be made that any section of the HFR is no longer required for a road, the community want an assurance from the house that the section will be surrendered to the Crown, the land retained as Open Space and rehabilitated as a corridor of local flora for native fauna to travel through it. Without a caveat to prevent the HFR land being sold to developers for housing or other purposes, by Dept of Transport / VicRoads, the HFR land would be lost as a significant contribution to Open Space (which is already officially reported to be low per capita in the area). Any sale would negatively impact the nearby communities in terms of lifestyle, and loss of potential health benefits. Also, any sale would negatively impact the reserve's current ecology, with several sections of endangered remnant vegetation and wildlife habitat along the reserve.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria urge the Government to:

1. Place a caveat on the HFR so that if any section becomes no longer required for a road, that that section is to be handed over to the Crown and retained as Open Space.
2. Protect the possibility that HFR could become Open Space with vegetation and wildlife habitat. If this land is lost, it is lost forever.

By Mr HODGETT (Croydon) (205 signatures).

TWO HILLS ROAD, GLENBURN

The petition of *residents of Two Hills Road, Glenburn in Victoria* draws to the attention of the House *the ongoing safety hazards and nuisance to residents caused by speeding traffic, including recreational dirt-bike riders, 4WD and SUV drivers, accessing the Toolangi State Forest via Two Hills Road, Glenburn.*

Residents of Two Hills Road are subjected to the risk of accidents, excessive noise, commotion, littering and dust pollution caused by drivers and riders using this once quiet, residential road. Residents are concerned for their safety and well-being, therefore no longer use this the road for their own recreational activities.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria close the access point into the Toolangi State Forest from Two Hills Road. Noting, that the forest can be accessed from Marginal Road, 10km south on the Melba Highway.

By Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (45 signatures).

EUROA ACUTE HOSPITAL

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that Euroa's Acute Hospital, located in North East Victoria has been supporting the Euroa and surrounding communities for almost 100 years, but is now facing unfeasible challenges regarding its future operation.

The Chief Executive Officer and Board of Management of Euroa Acute Hospital are calling on the Victorian Government for assistance and support to safeguard the hospital's future, so it can continue to provide the vital health and medical care that they need. Euroa has an ageing population with 42.8% of 60 years and over and 40.2% of the population are living with at least one long-term health condition.

The Victorian Government has already committed to continuing investment into regional Victoria, to support housing and economic growth, enhancing social and economic participation and strong, vibrant healthy communities. In community, medical care is vital. Without support from the Victorian Government, this hospital will cease to operate or receive any new patient referrals and overflow from surrounding local hospital networks of Benalla, Shepparton, Wangaratta and Seymour. This will cause additional pressures on Victoria's already struggling hospital system.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly provide public funding to prevent closure of the Euroa Acute Hospital. In turn, supporting the much-needed reforms to the Victorian Healthcare system, our 22 beds can relieve pressures on surrounding overcrowded hospitals like Goulburn Valley Health and North East Health.

This will also enable Ambulance Services to stay local, where they need to stay to be responsive for the community.

Public Government funding will also create more opportunities to support the local community with more allied health services, enhanced urgent care centre services, and more availability and bulk billing for X-Ray (recently reinstated and funded by the State Government in 2021/2022).

By Ms RYAN (Euroa) (1525 signatures).

HAMPTON PARK HILL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Petition of residents in Victoria calls on the Legislative Assembly to note that:

The proposed City of Casey Hampton Park Hill Development Plan (July 2022 Draft) is not in the interests of local residents. The draft Development Plan has severe repercussions for residents, including significantly reducing the value of their homes and quality of life.

The petitioners, therefore, call on the Legislative Assembly to intervene on the draft Development Plan and ensure residents' house values, quality of life and health are not impacted negatively as a result of future activities on the site.

By Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (350 signatures).

SOUTH GIPPSLAND HIGHWAY INTERSECTION, LEONGATHA

The Petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the dangerous and confusing state of the main South Gippsland Highway intersection in Leongatha.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the Andrew Labor Government to fund design and construction of stage two of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route as soon as possible.

By Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (180 signatures).

LOCH SPORT

This Petition of residents from across Gippsland draws to the attention of the House the continuing advance of erosion along the Loch Sport township foreshore of Lake Victoria and that research has been concluded outlining solutions, including the installation of groynes that would protect public and private property.

The petitioners therefore urge the Legislative Assembly to call on the State Government to provide funding urgently to address the situation.

By Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (191 signatures).

CRANBOURNE TRAIN LINE

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly community support to extend the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Koo Wee Rup.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly 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 BURGESS (Hastings) (2060 signatures).

WEST GIPPSLAND HOSPITAL

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that it is necessary to fund the construction of the new West Gippsland Hospital. The current hospital is beyond its usable life and cannot continue to be patched up. In 2007 a greenfield site was secured by the WGHG and strong business cases have already been undertaken by Government. It is unacceptable to have a facility supporting a population of 58,000 with:

- 30 Medical Beds;
- 24 Surgical beds;
- No separate high dependency unit;
- No intensive care unit;
- Very poor self sufficiency (58%);
- Leaky roof;
- Aged infrastructure; and,
- Caps on maternity births for safety (1000 p/a).

Not building a new West Gippsland Hospital will result in increased pressures on other neighbouring health services including Latrobe Regional Health (LRH) located over 40 minutes away.

We need action now to ensure that infrastructure appropriately supports our existing and future community's requirements.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly and all sides of politics commit to the funding and delivery of a new West Gippsland Hospital.

By Mr BLACKWOOD (Narracan) (2843 signatures).

BELMORE STREET, YARRAWONGA

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the impacts of the newly installed pedestrian crossings in Belmore Street, Yarrawonga. Recent works undertaken in Belmore Street have led to the instillation of multiple striped pedestrian crossings, located at the entry, and exit points of multiple roundabouts located on Belmore Street. This is dangerous to motorists as they have to pay attention to traffic in the intersection, as well as being aware of pedestrians about to step onto the road. This is also dangerous for pedestrians, as they are at an increased risk of being hit by a car.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly

1. Notes the importance of pedestrian safety, whilst also acknowledging the need to limit congestion, and
2. Calls on the Andrews Government to relocate the pedestrian crossings away from major intersections in Belmore Street and locate them in-between these intersections on Belmore Street.

By Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (310 signatures).

BALLARAT ROADS

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that Ballarat's roads are increasingly in a dangerous condition and unfit for purpose. Ballarat's roads have deteriorated in recent years so much that drivers are frequently damaging their cars from the potholes and rough surfaces. However, the provisions of the Road Management Act make it largely impossible to gain redress.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the State Government to invest properly in maintaining Ballarat's roads so they can better serve the community of Ballarat and to amend the Road Management Act threshold amount and redesign it in such a way to make it financially viable to pursue and prove negligence.

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (388 signatures).

BALLARAT ROADS

The Petition of residents in Victoria, and the Ballarat Ratepayers Association calls on the Legislative Assembly to note that: Ballarat's roads are increasingly in a dangerous condition and unfit for purpose. Ballarat's roads have deteriorated in recent years so much so that drivers are frequently damaging their cars from the potholes and rough surfaces. However, the provisions of the Road Management Act make it largely impossible to gain redress.

The petitioners, therefore, request that the Legislative Assembly call on the State Government to invest properly in maintaining Ballarat's roads so they can better serve the community of Ballarat and to amend the Road Management Act threshold amount and redesign it in such a way to make it financially viable to pursue and prove negligence.

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (214 signatures).

MORNINGTON PENINSULA ROADS

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that the Mornington Peninsula roads are increasingly in a dangerous condition and unfit for purpose. Mornington Peninsula roads have deteriorated in recent years so much that drivers are frequently damaging their cars from the potholes and rough surfaces. However, the provisions of the Road Management Act make it largely impossible to gain redress.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly calls on the State Government to invest properly in maintaining Mornington Peninsula Shire roads so they can better serve the community of the Mornington Peninsula and to amend the Road Management Act threshold amount and redesign it in such a way to make it financially viable to pursue and prove negligence.

By Ms STALEY (Ripon) (769 signatures).

RINGWOOD-WARRANTYTE ROAD

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly to the deteriorating road surface of Ringwood-Warrandyte Rd between Kangaroo Ground-Warrandyte Rd and Milne Rd.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly Minister for Roads direct his Department and/or agency to take immediate action to re-surface the road in the affected areas, so as to ensure the safety of local residents.

By Mr R SMITH (Warrandyte) (223 signatures).

BUS ROUTE 343

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly the success of the 343 Hurstbridge-Greensborough bus route and the need to expand services to weekends, and further extend to rural areas such as St Andrews, Panton Hill, Smiths Gully and Kangaroo Ground, to better connect to activity centres including train stations, schools, TAFE, retail, sporting facilities and the soon to be established Community Hospital in Diamond Creek.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly extend bus route 343 to rural communities, increase weekday frequency and introduce weekend services.

By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (151 signatures).

BUS ROUTE 343

The petition of residents of the Diamond Valley region draws to the attention of the House the success of the 343 Hurstbridge-Greensborough bus route and the need to expand services to weekends, and further extend to rural areas such as St Andrews, Panton Hill, Smiths Gully and Kangaroo Ground, to better connect to activity centres including train stations, schools, TAFE, retail, sporting facilities and the soon to be established Community Hospital in Diamond Creek.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria

Extend bus route 343 to rural communities, increase weekday frequency and introduce weekend services.

By Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (479 signatures).

Tabled.

Ordered that petitions lodged by member for Ripon be considered next day on motion of Ms STALEY (Ripon).

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

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

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 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 petitions lodged by member for Croydon be considered next day on motion of Mr HODGETT (Croydon).

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Gembrook be considered next day on motion of Mr BATTIN (Gembrook).

Ordered that petition lodged by member for Mornington for member for Hastings be considered next day on motion of Mr MORRIS (Mornington).

Documents

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, LAND, WATER AND PLANNING*2021–22 Sustainability Fund Activities Report*

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Minister for Environment and Climate Action, Minister for Solar Homes) (09:39): I table, by leave, the Sustainability Fund activities report 2021–22.

DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET*Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2021 and Victorian 2021 Closing the Gap data tables*

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong—Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Treaty and First Peoples) (09:39): I table, by leave, the following documents: the *Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2021* and the Victorian 2021 Closing the Gap data tables.

DOCUMENTS**Incorporated list as follows:**

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

Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018—Advancing the Victorian Treaty Process Report 2021–22

Auditor-General:

Follow-up of Maintaining the Mental Health of Child Protection Practitioners—Ordered to be published

Major Projects Performance Reporting 2022—Ordered to be published

Quality of Child Protection Data—Ordered to be published

Quality of Major Transport Infrastructure Project Business Cases—Ordered to be published Report 2021–22

Eastern Health—Report 2021–22

Education and Training, Department of—Report 2021–22

Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Department of—Report 2021–22

Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of—Report 2021–22

First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria—Report 2021–22

Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Corporation—Report 2021–22

Greater Western Water Corporation—Report 2021–22

Health, Department of—Report 2021–22

Justice and Community Safety, Department of—Report 2021–22

Local Jobs First—Report 2021–22

Melbourne Health (Royal Melbourne Hospital)—Report 2021–22

Melbourne Port Lessor Pty Ltd—Report 2021–22

Melbourne Water Corporation—Report 2021–22

Monash Health—Report 2021–22

National Gallery of Victoria—Report 2021–22

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004—Report of requests under s 11

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003—Government response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's:

Report on the 2020–21 Financial and Performance Outcomes

Inquiry into Gender Responsive Budgeting

Premier and Cabinet, Department of—Report 2021–22

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV)—Report 2021–22

Respect Victoria:

Progress on Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women in Victoria—First Three-Yearly Report to Parliament

Report 2021–22

Rolling Stock Holdings (Victoria) Pty Ltd—Report 2021–22

Royal Children's Hospital, The—Report 2021–22

South East Water Corporation—Report 2021–22

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994—Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 83, 84, 87

Surveyor-General—Report 2021–22 on the administration of the *Survey Co-ordination Act 1958*

Transport, Department of—Report 2021–22

Transport Accident Commission (TAC)—Report 2021–22

Treasury Corporation of Victoria—Report 2021–22

Victoria Police:

Report 2021–22

Report 2021–22 under s 37F of the *Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003*

Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission—Report 2021–22

Victorian Law Reform Commission—Stalking—Final Report—Ordered to be published

Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA)—Report 2021–22

Victorian Rail Track (VicTrack)—Report 2021–22

Victorian Veterans Council—Report 2021–22

Victorian WorkCover Authority (WorkSafe Victoria)—Report 2021–22

Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board—Report of operations 2021–22

Yarra Valley Water Corporation—Report 2021–22.

Bills

CASINO LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (ROYAL COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

MAJOR CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

MONITORING OF PLACES OF DETENTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON PREVENTION OF TORTURE (OPCAT) BILL 2022

Council's agreement

The SPEAKER (09:42): I have received messages from the Legislative Council agreeing to the following bills without amendment: the Casino Legislation Amendment (Royal Commission Implementation and Other Matters) Bill 2022, the Early Childhood Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, the Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Monitoring of Places of Detention by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (OPCAT) Bill 2022.

Business of the house**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (09:43): I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until a day and hour to be fixed by the Speaker, who will notify members accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

Members statements**BALLARAT ROADS**

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (09:43): Western Victoria's roads are crumbling. Labor have failed to perform basic maintenance, and now they will not expand the road network. Last week I was delighted to join with the Leader of the Opposition and our candidates for Eureka and Wendouree in announcing that an elected Liberal-Nationals government will provide \$278 million to complete the Ballarat link road.

Ballarat leaders have vented their frustration the Labor government will not match the opposition's commitment to fully fund the city's "number one" priority project and help free up western traffic congestion.

That was the opening paragraph in the *Courier* that day. It went on to say:

Roads Minister Ben Carroll ... said the Link Road was not a priority for the state government ...

Well, it certainly is a priority for the residents of Lucas and Alfredton and all the way down through Winter Valley and Delacombe. The Labor Party member who is the mayor of Ballarat said:

We've communicated very clearly to all parties equally that the Link Road is our number one advocacy priority ...

Labor is failing to maintain Victoria's roads, and it is failing to invest in my electorate and the western region's road network.

SYDENHAM ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms HUTCHINS (Sydenham—Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (09:45): It has been a remarkable four years, and I stand here proudly to talk about what we have delivered in the seat of Sydenham and across the broader west. We have built the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital and opened it successfully. We have constructed a brand new emergency department at Sunshine Hospital. We have got a commitment to build the Melton hospital. We have got a redevelopment of Footscray Hospital, which is coming out of the ground at a rate of knots. We have constructed a new Taylors Lakes ambulance station that is on the verge of opening. I am so pleased for the people of Sydenham. They have told us what they want—that is, better health—and they are getting it.

They have also indicated that the Melton Highway level crossing is something that they are pleased to see has been removed, along with six other level crossings along the Sunbury line. I am really pleased that we have committed to getting rid of the dangerous level crossing at Calder Park Drive. We are also duplicating Melton Highway in the Hillside and Plumpton areas, and of course we have delivered free TAFE courses that have been taken up in abundance by residents of my electorate.

We have invested billions in Victorian schools over many years, and I am particularly proud of the hundreds of millions of dollars in investment across Melton and Brimbank schools, which continues to deliver better education outcomes and facilities for our students and for our teachers. This is in stark contrast to the Libs.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr R SMITH (Warrandyte) (09:46): Over the past couple of weeks I have had a real insight into this government, a government that talks big, talks the talk but fails to walk the walk. I have been trying to assist a young woman with a four-year-old daughter who left an abusive partner back in February this year and who have subsequently been bouncing around the system for eight months. I have been trying to help her because no less than three ministers will not. I will not use this person's name because of ongoing concerns with her partner, but no less than three ministers have been contacted and will know about this case. The first, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, who was this woman's local MP at the time, sent a letter off to the then Minister for Housing, did no follow-up whatsoever and subsequently abandoned her. On her behalf I have since written to the Minister for Housing, who handballed it to the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, who subsequently washed her hands of the matter.

What frustrates me most is that these ministers can help this woman but just refuse to. When this matter hit their desks, they each made a conscious decision not to help. With all the power and authority these people have, they could be this woman's champion, but it is just easier, apparently, to do nothing; after all, there are no consequences for them whatsoever. I want to say to them when they go home tonight, look at all the nice things they own and when they go to bed I want them to spare a thought for this woman and her daughter before they go to sleep tonight, because what they are doing is just atrocious in ignoring her. I hope that when they get up tomorrow morning they actually do something to help her.

MARYMEDE CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Minister for Environment and Climate Action, Minister for Solar Homes) (09:48): Last week I was delighted to visit Marymede Catholic College in South Morang to see the year 10 and 11 students present their mini magazines, or 'zines' as they call them. Designed to improve students' literacy skills, these zines showcase the personal lives and experiences of these students as well as expressing their views on issues important to them. Their stories were as diverse as the students themselves, from growing up in a minority community to how to deal with grief to how to express themselves through art and drawing. I was touched by their maturity and the confidence these students exhibited in how their work expressed their individuality. I congratulate their teacher, Laura Wilcox, for bringing the project together. I would like to also congratulate every single one of the students: Ashna, Emily, Chloe, Kaitlyn, Christian, Julia, John, Liam, Leo, Laura, Ciara, and Sienna. Thank you to Marymede Catholic College for inviting me to the project presentation. The future looks brighter with these young people as our emerging leaders.

WHITTLESEA MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION

Ms D'AMBROSIO: I would also like to congratulate Alex Joseph, president, and the hardworking committee members of the Whittlesea Malayalee Association for organising the spectacular Onam festival and thank them for inviting me to join them earlier this month. The Keralite community is making a wonderful contribution to what makes our community respectful, inclusive and strong. Since its inception in 2009, the Whittlesea Malayalee Association has played an essential role in enriching our local community, and I congratulate each and every one of them for what they bring to our community.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) (09:49): As we come to the end of this the 59th Parliament, I am reminded of the challenges that my community have faced over the past four years, particularly the challenges Knox residents faced during lockdown. With the world's longest lockdown here in Melbourne families in my community were locked down, not allowed to leave their homes, fined if they went to playgrounds and fined if they were out after 9 o'clock at night. Mental health challenges have been rife amongst many people in my community. That is what families in my community have told me.

That is why I stood up in this house and have stood up for them locally on these very important issues. I have stood up for local residents when it comes to getting better infrastructure, whether it is at Fairhills High School or Wantirna College or getting traffic lights at McMahons Road—it took eight years to convince this government that they needed to invest money in my local community. But there were so many other areas where this government has failed to invest any money, and that is why I have continued to advocate for my community. That is why we are going to commit to finally putting in place the tram extension—doing the study—to bring it down from Vermont South, something that Labor promised 23 years ago and has failed to do. That is why we are going to invest in upgrading Templeton Primary School and Kent Park Primary School and fixing our health system. That is what I am doing, standing up for Knox community, and I look forward to representing this community in the next Parliament.

GISBORNE FOOTBALL AND NETBALL CLUBS

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (09:51): It was brilliant to join members of the Gisborne Rookies Junior Football Netball Club and Gisborne Football Netball Club on Friday for This Girl Can Week. With the Rookies under-14 and under-16 girls teams both taking home premierships this season, I want to congratulate both clubs on a fantastic season. With the help of new female-friendly change rooms constructed with a \$600 000 grant from the Andrews Labor government, the two teams now field over 90 women and girls in their footy programs. This just goes to show: build it and they will come, because we know facilities are a huge factor holding women and girls back from trying their hand at team sports. That is why the Andrews Labor government will always back in women and girls to play sport, not just during This Girl Can Week.

LANCEFIELD ROMSEY LIONS CLUB

Ms THOMAS: I want to thank the Lancefield Romsey Lions Club for their hard work in advocating for upgrades to the Romsey skate park reserve. Members of the club have worked tirelessly to run community consultation and deliver draft designs for badly needed upgrades at the park. It was great to join local Lion Ged McLaughlin at Romsey IGA on Saturday to gather support for this fantastic plan. Romsey locals voiced emphatic support for the recreation facilities our teenagers need, and I will work with our community to get these upgrades delivered. I also want to thank other members of the Romsey skate park fundraising committee, Jenny Jones and Shantelle Grant, for their ongoing hard work.

PRAHRAN ELECTORATE

Mr HIBBINS (Prahran) (09:52): It is an absolute privilege to serve as the member for Prahran, as our local member of Parliament. I love Prahran. It is a thriving, vibrant, diverse community, with Chapel Street as its social and economic heart. It has been my home for well over a decade, from when I first shared an apartment with a flatmate to now raising my family. I know there is so much to do to make Prahran an even better place to live: further upgrades to South Yarra station, reviving Chapel Street, upgrading public housing and creating a Prahran arts and education precinct. It is also great to be part of a community with shared progressive values: equality, fairness, social justice and care for our environment. I am proud to be a strong independent voice for those values in Parliament. Action on climate change, ending homelessness, affordable housing, protecting and restoring our natural environment—these are big challenges. This is the critical decade, and I want Prahran to be in the heart of Parliament, taking on and solving those challenges. As a community we have achieved so much together, so let us keep it going.

LYNN BENTLEY

Mr PEARSON (Essendon—Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Housing) (09:53): I rise to thank Lynn Bentley for her contribution to Mount Alexander College. Lynn has clocked up an incredible 43 years at Mount Alexander College, and she has just been a wonderful servant of her community. She is an outstanding woman of great

values. I know she is going to have an enjoyable retirement, but I did not want to let this moment pass without putting on the public record my heartfelt thanks for everything that Lynn has done in serving my community for 43 years.

MOUNT ALEXANDER COLLEGE

Mr PEARSON: At Mount Alexander College I was delighted to visit the building that is underway. I spoke with Julian Kosloff from Kosloff Architecture, who did the design of this building. Julian said he wanted to ensure that the students would be able to gaze from the top of that building right across to the CBD to see their future. This is incredibly important when you are talking about African-Australian students who live in public housing who go to that school—to have their gaze lifted, to have their hopes raised, to have them be inspired about their future. You can do that with investment in key critical infrastructure like this building.

AILEEN COX

Mr PEARSON: I want to give a shout-out to Aileen Cox, Aileen is a pivotal member of my community in relation to the Ascot Vale Panthers. She is an outstanding sports administrator. She works incredibly hard for her community. The Panthers are flying thanks to Aileen.

EUROA HEALTH

Ms RYAN (Euroa) (09:55): I rise today in my final act in this place to urge the government to properly fund Euroa Health. Today I have tabled a petition with 1525 signatures. That petition ran just for a week. Local residents are calling on the government to properly fund their health service, their hospital, to keep the doors open. This is an issue of equity and justice for my community. Strathbogie remains the only local government area in Victoria that has no publicly funded health system. Nearby hospitals servicing similar populations to Euroa, such as Alexandra, Mansfield, Rochester and Kerang, receive on average \$438 000 for every bed that they have from the state government each year. Euroa Health, because it was established as a community-owned hospital nearly 100 years ago, receives \$9300 for each bed it has. This injustice cannot be continued. Without immediate intervention the hospital will close. Despite its incredibly efficient operation, this year it is on track to post a deficit of some \$630 000. I know our candidate for Euroa, Annabelle Cleeland, will fight for it if she is elected in November, but the truth is that by then it may be too late. At a time when the health system is in such crisis it is unthinkable that Labor would allow a hospital to fold simply because it is community owned.

WILLIAMSTOWN ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms HORNE (Williamstown—Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Suburban Development) (09:56): Today I would like to celebrate four years of massive investment across the Williamstown electorate. Whether it is our schools, our community groups, our sporting facilities, our transport connections or our open spaces and beautiful bays, Williamstown has benefited from the investment that only a Labor government delivers. If I look at our schools, Williamstown High School is currently finishing its year 12 study rooms and theatre complex, Wembley Primary School has got a \$10 million build of new classrooms about to start and Altona Primary has got scores of kids in its brand new classrooms.

Our parks and open spaces have also benefited, with new and upgraded parks throughout the electorate, including in Williamstown, Yarraville and on the foreshore of Altona. There has been a massive amount of trees planted, particularly along Kororoit Creek in Brooklyn and Altona North, thanks to our program Greening the West, and the transformed Hosken Reserve is bringing families to this beautiful new parkland in droves.

In Williamstown we have also got some of the most historic maritime features, so we have not wasted a minute in developing the Williamstown Maritime Precinct Framework and getting on with the job

of planning where our investment needs to go through the *Sustainable Local Ports Framework*. And work will shortly start on rebuilding Altona Pier and installing fenders on Gem Pier in Williamstown.

But there is more to come. In fact our sporting clubs, who are the backbone of our community, have benefited, whether it has been by way of the rebuild of Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club or the transformation of Crofts Reserve or Donald McLean Reserve in Spotswood. We have removed two level crossings on Kororoit Creek Road as well— (*Time expired*)

PARLIAMENTARY DRESS CODE

Ms CUPPER (Mildura) (09:58): Some girls rock the boat. I do it; it is in my nature, to my Mallee dad's horror. From a young age I was cautioned against it. Obviously it backfired badly. I have rocked the boat this term, sometimes unwittingly by wearing black jeans in Parliament, and sometimes deliberately by continuing to wear black jeans in Parliament. Rocking the boat was Dad's metaphor for disruption, and wearing black jeans in Parliament is mine. I am so fortunate in my life to be surrounded by women who have the guts, tenacity and wherewithal to wear black jeans in Parliament because this is the only way that change happens. It always starts there.

For me the essence of leadership is risk. Everything else is management. Kim O'Reilly wore black jeans in Parliament. She shone a light on the culture of toxic masculinity that enables and encourages gender inequality. She urged clubs to step up and own the problem, and she lobbied the government to support them. Fiona Patten wore black jeans in Parliament. She has been variously described as 'Australia's most effective legislator' and 'the hardest working member of the Victorian Parliament'. Her leadership has been transformative, and for the next couple of months she will be fighting on an additional front. As a patient, just as a parliamentarian, she will be a formidable fighter and without doubt also the best dressed.

I want to acknowledge all the Mallee girls back home who wear black jeans in Parliament, including rising stars like Ella Beard and Eva Berry, and I dedicate this, my last speech of the 59th Parliament, to Jude Cupper-Stevens, my mum, from whom I inherited the gene for black jeans.

ST ALBANS ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (09:59): The Andrews Labor government has certainly rocked St Albans and transformed it, delivering the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital; delivering a brand new emergency department at Sunshine Hospital, with additional mental health beds to be built and a new women's and kids recovery centre in the heart of St Albans; investing in every school in my community; building brand new kindergartens; revitalising Victoria University, which is really integral for my community, with the St Albans campus and also the campus at Sunshine; building the Sunshine Skills Hub, which means offering free TAFE and equals vital jobs for my community; and of course removing the most dangerous and deadly level crossings in St Albans, the Main Road level crossing and the Furlong Road level crossing. We promised we would remove these level crossings, and that was the first thing we did. Additionally we removed the Fitzgerald Road level crossing in Ardeer and so many more. There is so much more to do in the electorate of St Albans, a place that I was raised in, live in and absolutely love.

FELICITATIONS

Ms SULEYMAN: I also want to congratulate Bridget Noonan on her appointment as the Clerk of the Parliaments, all the clerks, the staff and of course Andrew Young for his service to this place. Also, to all the security, the staff, the cleaners, catering—everybody who makes this place move—and the human resources team as well, thank you so much.

KEW ELECTORATE

Mr T SMITH (Kew) (10:01): I wish to thank the electors of Kew, who have elected me twice to this place, particularly in 2018 when I was the only Liberal elected amongst four state seats which overlap the federal seat of Kooyong. I thank the Liberal Party. I thank my staff, Jen, Helen and Vanessa

Brown, who has done an amazing job. I particularly want to thank the federal vice-president of the party and someone who has put up with working with me for six years, Caroline Inge, her son Ander and her sister Cathryn. I must also thank my family, my parents, Colin and Deanne Smith, and my sister's family for their love and support. I must also thank my federal parliamentary colleagues whose friendship over the last year will never be forgotten—Michael Sukkar, Alan Tudge, Sarah Henderson and my friends from north of the border Senator Jacinta Price and that legend Senator Hollie Hughes. I also want to thank former health minister Greg Hunt, former High Commissioner to the UK George Brandis, my dear friend and mentor the 28th Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, as well as former foreign minister Alexander Downer and his family, particularly Georgie and Will. I must also thank my friends in this place and the other place, the members for Benambra and Croydon, Matt Bach, Bev McArthur and her husband Stewart. I also wish to thank John Roskam, the Kemp family and Dan Feldman.

The existential threat to the world is not climate change; it is the regimes in Tehran, Moscow and Beijing. With the time that I have left, I fear that our country's best days are behind us, not in front of us. As Churchill said, I feel we are going to once again have to arm ourselves, 'be ye men of valour' and stand for what we know is right: truth, justice and freedom.

TARNEIT ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (10:02): With this being the last sitting week for the term, it is my last in this chamber as the member for Tarneit. For the past four years it has been a tremendous privilege to serve our growing community in Melbourne's outer west. I have not wasted a day in fighting to deliver for our community's needs. Our road network has been transformed thanks to the \$1.8 billion western roads project: Derrimut, Leakes, Palmers and Forsyth roads—all major roads, all upgraded. The Old Geelong Road level crossing at Hoppers Crossing station has been removed for good, and Wyndham is now level crossing free on the metro line. Two new bus routes are running through our community. Tarneit station is finally getting the car parking spaces it desperately needs and a new bus interchange on top. Three brand-new schools have been built and opened by me, with another eight on the way, including two brand-new high schools. I love that when Liberal candidates are out and about schools are never something they talk about in Melbourne's outer west, because there is not a school in Tarneit that has not received support; an upgrade, a new playground, more portables—you name it, they have got it. Even our specialist schools are getting the support they need, and it is fantastic. Since I have been around, Werribee Mercy Hospital, our local hospital, has received two major upgrades—a mental health unit and a bigger, better emergency department, which is now on its way. I am so proud of what Labor has delivered for folks in Hoppers Crossing, Tarneit, Truganina and Williams Landing. It has been an absolute honour to serve these families. It has been an absolute privilege. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you, Tarneit.

NARRE WARREN SOUTH ELECTORATE

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (10:04): I rise today to thank and indeed acknowledge my community of Narre Warren South. It has been an unqualified privilege to represent them in this, the 59th, Parliament. It has been really, really tough too. We have had a big couple of years with the pandemic, but I have been so proud of Narre Warren South and the way it has risen to meet those challenges. All our local community groups, churches, community houses, multicultural groups, food services, sporting clubs, artist groups, schools, support and legal services, police and emergency services have made an invaluable contribution to our community during this time. It has been my pleasure to connect with these volunteers who run these groups and those who work on the front line to make sure that no-one missed out. I acknowledge that there is more to do, but while these groups are continually fighting to keep delivering the best possible services they can, we are indeed in very good hands.

I am grateful of course to be a part of this great Labor government that is funding our students and teachers, widening our roads, reducing bottlenecks, increasing our train services, providing new stations, removing level crossings, investing in our health services, helping with the cost of living,

fighting climate change and making sure that our area remains connected and moving forward. I would be humbled and indeed proud to continue this work with Narre Warren South, doing what matters and delivering for our community.

WENDOUREE ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (10:05): In 2018 I promised that I would work hard every day for the electorate of Wendouree, and that is what I have done. The Andrews Labor government has delivered for our community in spades, including \$500 million for the Ballarat line upgrade, which delivered a second platform for Wendouree station and an additional 100 services per week between Ballarat and Melbourne. We have also transformed the Ballarat railway station precinct with the restoration of the Ballarat Goods Shed as well as constructing a new bus interchange for our city's buses. Just a block away is our iconic GovHub, which created hundreds of construction jobs and relocated state government jobs to Ballarat.

We have delivered for local sporting clubs with the redevelopment of the Alfredton and Wendouree rec reserves as well as upgrades to sporting facilities at Russell Square, White Flat, Delacombe and the Ballarat Regional Tennis Centre. We completed Selkirk Stadium and continue to make Mars Stadium even better for AFL games and the upcoming 2026 Commonwealth Games. We have funded upgrades at primary schools across Ballarat, including Black Hill, Macarthur Street, Forest Street and Ballarat North, just to name a few. We have invested in new builds at Mount Rowan Secondary College and St Patrick's College, upgrades to Ballarat High School and \$10 million for the Ballarat Specialist School. We are creating manufacturing jobs at Alstom building trains, and we are also redeveloping Ballarat Base Hospital. We have upgraded intersections to keep Ballarat moving. It is an impressive list, but there is so much more to do to make Ballarat even better.

GAP ROAD, SUNBURY, LEVEL CROSSING REMOVAL

Mr J BULL (Sunbury) (10:07): On Sunday I was absolutely delighted to join thousands of locals at the Gap Road level crossing community open day to walk under the brand new rail bridge. Djirri Djirri dancers, First Nations artist and Sunbury resident Teena Moffatt, local singer Garth Ploog, Salesian College bands and massive crowds turned out, including Sunbury Rotary and many, many more. It was an absolutely outstanding day. I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to the incredible team who worked around the clock through the coldest parts of winter to deliver this massive project ahead of schedule and produce such a stunning result. On Friday, 30 September, the brand new road will open. It will be a less congested, safer Sunbury town centre. It is an outstanding project, and only the Andrews Labor government gets on and gets rid of dangerous and congested level crossings.

FELICITATIONS

Mr J BULL: As this term draws to a close, I want to take the opportunity to thank all members of the house. Having reflected on the privilege of serving not only as the member for Sunbury but also the parliamentary secretary for multicultural affairs, youth, health and carers and volunteers, I want to acknowledge and thank the committed Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Police and Minister for Child Protection and Family Services—I have had the opportunity to serve as their parliamentary secretary—and also thank, as others have done, the tremendous staff in the Parliament that make this place tick. I also want to thank my staff—Adam, Almendra, Josh S, Sharon and Jana—for their incredible service to and work in the community and every single resident within my local community.

CLAUDIA BARKER

Ms CRUGNALE (Bass) (10:08): Claudia Barker, a public school teacher and proud of it, music director, drum major conductor, no instrument unplayable—it was an absolute honour to attend her retirement celebration. The speeches had us in tears and fits of laughter and the solo and band performances in awe. Her passion to bring music to the world of our Koo Wee Rup Secondary students

is revered. It was the 1960s—her studies unfinished, her husband, Ken, already on the books, teacher shortages, classes were 50 full—when the team met a humble-in-manner, classy-in-stature, sonorous force to be reckoned with. Thirty-six musicals and 50 festivals later, she has left an indisputable legacy. The 1980s saw the senior school band debut and the college band marching ahead of the 39th Battalion in the Anzac Day parade. Since then they have played at Westminster, Paris and on the Western Front. Lessons she made free and accessible to all. She instigated the school joining the LGBT alliance and grew the music department to a now magnificent 10. The performing arts centre honours her by name. An Italian father and Portuguese mother, the war sent them from Singapore to Australia's Tatura internment camp. Amongst the 20 000 enemy aliens, they got organised, their children received an education and as artists they created masterpieces. Her love for music was instilled here. She is deserving of every recognition thus received: an OAM, ABODA life membership, Koo Wee Rup and district Australia Day Citizen of the Year and a Victorian education service award. On behalf of all the teachers, principals, students and their families, thank you, Claudia.

FOOTSCRAY ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms HALL (Footscray) (10:10): I must say that this, my last contribution of the 59th Parliament, feels a little less overwhelming than my first effort in here. It has been the greatest honour of my life to represent Footscray and Melbourne's inner west. I am so proud of what we have been able to achieve over the last four years, particularly during the very challenging years of the global pandemic. It has been a great honour to work with small businesses, community organisations, schools and constituents to make things happen in Melbourne's inner west, in particular our schools. Sunshine College, Glengala Primary School, Sunshine Primary School, Sunshine Special Developmental School, Rosamond Special, Footscray North Primary School, St Margaret's Primary School in Maribyrnong, Dinjerra Primary School, Footscray Primary School, Footscray City Primary School and Footscray High—there are major upgrades underway or have been completed at those schools, and I will keep fighting for the other schools in my community to get the resources they need, because our state schools are great schools.

We have got Footscray Hospital, with a thousand workers on site; the Joan Kirner hospital, as you would know, Deputy Speaker; 500 000 trees being planted in Melbourne's inner west; the Metro Tunnel; the next-gen trams; an upgrade to the Footscray Community Arts Centre and so much more.

NEPEAN ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr BRAYNE (Nepean) (10:11): I rise also today to talk about what I have used my role for to get done in my community on the southern peninsula since I was elected back in 2018. We have rebuilt Rosebud Primary School, with Dromana Primary, Peninsula Specialist College and Rosebud Secondary College rebuilds well and truly under way. We have upgraded Red Hill Consolidated School and made improvements at Boneo Primary and Dromana College. We have made the biggest transformation to the bus network on the Mornington Peninsula in decades with the route 788 Frankston to Portsea service now going every half an hour, introduced FlexiRide and we began the first express service bus to Frankston. We are building community assets like Flinders hall and the Southern Peninsula Youth Hub and restoring the iconic McCrae lighthouse—the opening is this Wednesday coming. We have upgraded the piers at Rye and Sorrento, and of course we have saved Flinders Pier and we will rebuild it. We have helped sporting clubs with some significant developments in Dromana, Red Hill and Rosebud and are upgrading the Sorrento Surf Lifesaving Club. However, there is still so much more to do. I am just getting started.

For new residents on the peninsula, the last four years have not been the status quo. In fact for literally decades on the Mornington Peninsula nothing much happened. Every issue we face on the peninsula has built up over the last 30 to 40 years. I have used my role to change this. I want to thank the community for the opportunity to be your member of Parliament for the last four years, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue to do things for the place we all live in and love.

MOUNT WAVERLEY ELECTORATE

Mr FREGON (Mount Waverley) (10:13): Being elected to represent the people of my home in Mount Waverley in 2018 has been the greatest privilege of my working life. The greatest privilege in the rest of my life is being husband to Bec and father to Sophie, Lindsay and Sam. It has been a very busy and sometimes strenuous four years, but we have got a lot done and there is a lot more to do. I look forward to seeing you all in a couple of months as the new member for Ashwood.

Statements on parliamentary committee reports**PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE***Report on the Complaint by the Member for Polwarth*

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (10:13): Today I rise to speak on a report from the Legislative Assembly Privileges Committee on the complaint by the member for Polwarth, which was tabled in this house yesterday. I speak on this report as a member of the Privileges Committee and a member of the House Committee, and it will become apparent fairly soon as to why that is also of interest. The reason I am really speaking on this report is that I want the house to read this report. Privileges Committee reports tend to have very anodyne titles, and this one is no different. However, this report goes into quite a lot of detail. We have made several findings and three recommendations which will affect every single member of Parliament if they are implemented. In summary we have found that:

The current electorate office CCTV access procedure does not provide sufficient safeguards to protect parliamentary privilege. It is the view of this Committee that procedures to allow third parties to access electronic security data held by the parliament must contemplate, as their starting point, the right of a member to assert privilege over such material, particularly when that material relates directly to the work of a member.

We also found that members of Victoria Police, particularly those that regularly interact with members of Parliament, may benefit from further instruction on the role of members of Parliament and core principles of parliamentary privilege.

I turn now to the recommendations. I will come back to recommendation 1, but recommendation 2 is:

That the Presiding Officers and Victoria Police review and agree to an updated Memorandum of Understanding ... to accommodate changes in organisational structures, methods for service delivery, technology, and procedure, of Victoria Police and the Parliament of Victoria respectively, since the last MOU ...

was signed in 2007. We also recommend:

That Victoria Police provide training on parliamentary privilege to Victoria Police members that regularly engage, or could reasonably be expected to engage, with members of parliament.

The main recommendation, though, that we make that affects the operation of this house and the House Committee is:

That the House Committee review the policy for access to electronic data to ensure that the privilege of the House is preserved, and that the policy includes:

- a) a presumption that all electronic data related to the work of members may be subject to an assertion of privilege;
- b) consequently, a general presumption that information or data should not be released to third parties without the authorisation of the relevant member ...

We acknowledge that there may be circumstances where it is not appropriate for the member to be informed of such requests or to make a determination about the release of that material, and in those circumstances we recommend that there be:

a process ... which allows the relevant Presiding Officer, as advised by the relevant Clerk, to make a determination about the release of material, having considered:

- i. whether there is a prima facie case for an assertion of privilege to be upheld; and
- ii. whether compelling circumstances exist that would override the presumption set out in b) above.

This goes to the issue of CCTV camera footage in our electorate offices, and the Privileges Committee has, through this report, recommended that that footage be only released to law enforcement bodies and anybody else once the member has agreed to that. Now, that is not the current process. That is not what happens at the moment. However, Privileges, having considered this, has come to the view that there may be, by default, circumstances where the member has the right to claim privilege over the CCTV footage taken in their electorate offices. We have recommended the House Committee look at this. As a member of the House Committee I recognise the House Committee now will not sit before the end of this term, but I recommend that this be taken up in the next term.

LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (10:18): I rise to speak to the Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into anti-vilification protections in Victoria and to say farewell to one of Victoria's finest. Many of you met Holocaust survivor Halina Strnad in June of this year, when she watched from the public gallery of this house as we debated legislation to ban Nazi hate symbols in Victoria, the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022. That bill responded to this committee report. It was a bill that made Halina proud of all of us in this Parliament. Sadly, Halina left us earlier this month after a life that can only be described as extraordinary.

Halina Strnad was born Halina Wagowska on an unknown date in 1930, a date not just unknown by me, it was unknown by her, because when she was very young Halina was imprisoned by the Nazis for nearly six years. She lost both parents in this time and endured unspeakable horrors, which I will not be canvassing again today, because today is about celebrating her life, marked though it was by death. And it was a truly remarkable life, because Halina survived the ghettos and the Nazi death camps and made it her life's work to give evidence over and over and over again at the trials of war criminals.

Her courage and conviction were legendary, and her steely determination to testify saw her continuing to give sworn evidence at trials into her 90s. She has told her story many times, including in her stunning book entitled *The Testimony* as well as through many, many interviews with Holocaust researchers. In 2020 Halina testified in the trial against Bruno Dey, a 93-year-old former Nazi SS guard at the concentration camp Stutthof in 1944 and 1945. Thanks to the testimony of Halina and many others, Dey was found guilty of complicity in the murder of more than 5000 prisoners. Poignantly, she often described the sentiment of herself and her fellow prisoners during the Holocaust in these terms: 'If we survive, we must testify until we die'. And that she did, quite literally, until she died. The last time I spoke to Halina she told me that she was preparing to appear as a witness in the trial of another SS guard. For Halina, assisting with the continued prosecution of the former Nazis who worked in the death camps she survived was her obligation. She undertook every opportunity available to her to ensure that the horrors of the Holocaust were known and the guilty were convicted.

Halina was not just an incredible witness in the trials of Nazi war criminals. She was an active, committed and passionate activist on a range of issues both inside the ALP and in the broader community. In particular she was a tireless advocate for women and girls, with a focus on access to safe abortions. She was a crusader against fascism and racism in all its forms. Finally, as a committed secular humanist, she campaigned for voluntary assisted dying, a cause that ultimately moved from the political to the personal.

For over 20 years she held the Burwood branch meetings in her living room. She was such a generous hostess and put on suppers for every meeting, which quickly became legendary. She told me a story recently about post Tiananmen Square in the 1980s when Box Hill was not quite the culinary hub it is now. A bunch of students who had fled from China were invited to the meeting and she, in an effort of cultural recognition, prepared 50 dim sims. None of them were eaten, and with her classic thrift she eked them out and ate them herself over the course of a couple of months, having stuck them all in the freezer. So she had them in soup, she had them in pasta and she had them in sandwiches over the course of the months that followed. These suppers were joyous because the Labor family became her

family, and this loss is felt like a family loss. Branch secretary Michael Watson described her as the glue that held Labor together in Burwood and the eastern suburbs, especially in times when we had no Labor representatives in either the Victorian or the federal parliaments.

Halina was a great student of history, a passion shared with Barry Jones, who she was so proud of having brought along to a branch meeting. Her quirky political archives meant that at a moment's notice she could walk out of a branch meeting and return a second later with a political cartoon or an article about Chifley or JFK or Whitlam that perfectly captured the sentiment of the issue being discussed and allowed her to opine that 'we have been talking about this issue for decades'.

I know she will be missed by many who spent time in or with the Burwood branch, including Janet Chiron, Michael Watson, Anna Burke, Christine Chapel and Halina's long-time best friend and comrade, the wonderful Maree Hodgens—and she will be missed by me. It was a special, once-in-a-lifetime friendship and one of the highlights of my time as the member for Burwood. I will always remember and cherish her incredible passion and humanity. On behalf of the entire Burwood community, I extend my sincere condolences to— (*Time expired*)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Forest Hill.

Mr Fowles: By leave, could I just have—

Leave refused.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Report on the 2022–23 Budget Estimates

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (10:24): I am pleased to rise to make a contribution on the *Report on the 2022–23 Budget Estimates* that was tabled in this place last month. I particularly want to make my comments in relation to the minority report that is located at the rear of the particular committee report. I note that within that report—it is a very comprehensive document—are contained 120 findings, 101 recommendations and the minority report, which, as you would expect, is up the back after page 229. I think this is a very informative component of the overall report inasmuch as it identifies two of the fundamental flaws, I believe, that relate to the current government here in Victoria. They are well articulated, and I just want to go through those, using the examples that the committee members who signed off on that minority report have used. They say:

The minority is concerned at both the denial of facts by Ministers of the Crown and deliberate obfuscation, stonewalling and lack of transparency by the bureaucracy.

I watched a number of those hearings that were televised on the system and saw what went on there with the ministers, including the Premier and others, in relation to some of the evidence that was given to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC). The example that the committee has put on the first page of the minority report is the questioning by the member for South Gippsland of the Premier in relation to the cut in the health budget. The Premier said that there was no cut to the health budget and that it was a ridiculous suggestion. Within this document we can see the extract from budget paper 3, page 220, which shows that there was a more than \$2 million decrease in output spending for the health department. Obviously if it is less this year than last year, that is a cut. It goes on and talks about the fact that the Premier would not accede to that reality. This is part of the problem that we are seeing with this government: that even when confronted with their own budget papers in black and white, they will not agree to the reality as to what has happened. It just shows a delusional response by the government in relation to their own budget.

To their great credit I believe, the committee members note that in the previous financial year there had been some significant extra funding that had gone into some of those departments, including the health department, so it was not unexpected in one sense that there might be a reduction there. Nevertheless, members of the government, including the Premier, were still in complete denial about the financial reality and the published reality of the particular evidence that was given. The minority

report goes on to talk about that particular denial of evidence occurring numbers of times throughout the hearing and it cites another example, where Minister Tierney was questioned about the portfolio cut of 4.5 per cent, or \$117 million, in her department. We can see again there an extract from budget paper 3, page 139, which shows that with the training, higher education and workforce development budget, the movement for the year, the variation, is minus 4.5 per cent. Yet the minister when questioned about that said:

There has been no cut.

That is just completely at odds with the reality. It just shows you how disconnected this government is from reality and how they will say one thing despite evidence that says what the reality of the situation in fact is. There are other examples. There was a \$24 million reduction in spending on dental services which again was denied, and on it goes.

The second issue they raised was an equally important one in my view, and that is the fact that the government, its ministers and many of the departmental secretaries and other officials would often say they did not have information to hand and they would take matters on notice, and then of course they never responded to the committee with the answer to the question that was asked in the first place. That is again deflecting, obfuscating and not being transparent with the Parliament and with the people of Victoria. It is behaviour that should be condemned, and it is behaviour that needs to change to make for a more transparent process, particularly with PAEC and the public hearings.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Victorian Universities' Investment in Skills

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (10:29): I am very pleased to stand today to speak about the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee's report on the inquiry into Victorian universities' investment in skills, which was tabled on 1 September by the chair, the member for Lara. This government is very committed to skills and training, and I would really like to thank the minister in the other place, Minister Tierney, for the great job she is going and the leadership she is showing in the fields of training and skills as well as being Minister for Higher Education. When we got the announcement that we were going to be looking into Victorian universities and investments in skills, I was really, really excited and thought that this was really important work in 2022 for us to be doing. This is a really great report.

But before I go on to that, I really would like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Lara; the deputy chair, the member for Narracan; the member for Northcote; the member for Geelong; the member for Euroa; and the member for Ferntree Gully. I would particularly like to wish the members for Lara, Narracan and Euroa all the best for their next chapter and thank them very much for the contributions that they made to our committee. It was really, really terrific to work on this committee, and I learned a lot through the leadership shown by the chair and the deputy chair, so I am grateful for that. I am confident that on behalf of our committee I can pass on our gratitude to the secretariat for their hard work and support. Our secretariat was first class. Kerry Riseley was committee manager up until July. We then had committee manager Igor Dosen appointed in July. We had wonderful research officers. I notice that Marianne is in the house as well, who has also done great work. I would really like to thank Dr Ana Maria Palacio Valencia for the work that she did, and thanks for the support she got from other research officers, including Raylene D'Cruz and Katherine Murtagh, from July onwards. Our committee also had the support of Aimee Weir as research officer as well, and big thanks to our administrative officer Janelle Spielvogel, who kept us all organised. I thank you very much.

On 8 March the committee received the terms of reference to conduct an inquiry into how Victorian universities can play a greater role to support the pipeline of skilled workers in government priority areas. In relation to skills, the Legislative Assembly asked the committee to consider future demands in developing a clean economy and regional needs in health, agriculture and community services. The

committee received 26 submissions and conducted three days of online public hearings to consider how Victorian universities can contribute to skilled workers across Victoria.

I would really like to thank ACU, Deakin, La Trobe, Monash, University of Melbourne, VUT and Swinburne University of Technology, and of course Federation University from my community of Ballarat. This was an incredibly timely inquiry given the Albanese government identified the issues of jobs and skills as a priority. We tabled our report on 1 September, the same day as the federal government's Jobs and Skills Summit. I was delighted to hear from the vice-chancellor of Federation University, Professor Duncan Bentley, how significant he thought our committee report was. The day following its tabling, Professor Bentley presented to the national Jobs and Skills Summit with the Minister for Skills and Training. Their panel was on skills and training for the future labour market. Professor Duncan Bentley told me he read our report on his flight to Canberra and it helped inform his contribution to the summit. That is how significant this report is.

It is also timely because skills shortages are impacting communities across Victoria, including my community of Ballarat. The issues of skills shortages and job vacancies are challenges for many local businesses, and they are often being raised with me with concern. We know that skills shortages are due to a range of factors, including low enrolment in courses relevant to priority employment areas, university graduates not possessing the skills required by industry and of course COVID-19. Victoria is facing skills shortages in several areas, and we know that university-level education will be required for many professionals in this sector. I thank the committee for their work.

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Apartment Design Standards

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (10:34): It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to make some comments on the Environment and Planning Committee report into apartment design standards. I thought I was not going to get this opportunity, but I am delighted that it has arrived. I think the report was tabled around about 2 August. The committee, exactly a year before in August 2021, was tasked with looking at current apartment living standards in Victoria; considering improvements that could be made, focusing on livability, the development of apartment buildings themselves as well as communal areas; and then looking at what people are doing in other states, nations and jurisdictions across the world in terms of apartment design standards. In response to those terms of reference, the committee made 66 findings and some 35 recommendations, and I will come back to a couple of those towards the end.

I did want to make the point, though, that this hearing was conducted in part during the COVID lockdown, but we were very lucky that conditions eased in February and we were able to go back and talk to a number of witnesses face to face. We had some public hearings over at St Andrews Place. We were able to get out and look at apartments, and obviously that physical inspection is critically important in a task like this.

I did want to make this point for future committees: if you feel like 'Oh, we don't want to drive to Shepparton, we'll do it online', resist that temptation because you do not get the reaction from the people you are talking to—you do not see the body language, you do not necessarily get to pick up on the facial expressions—and you do not get to see things on the ground. Can I suggest that while it might be easier and allegedly more efficient you do not get the input that you need. From being able to actually see things on the ground, to interact with the community you get a much broader picture of whatever the issue is you are addressing and see how the particular subject plays out in a range of scenarios across the state. So I do make that point.

I acknowledge the members of the committee, my colleagues the members for Eildon and Ovens Valley and, I think briefly in this inquiry, the member for Evelyn, and I also want to acknowledge the member for Burwood, the member for Yan Yean, the member for Box Hill and of course the chair,

the member for Tarneit. She made some kind observations about my work on the committee, and I want to acknowledge those and thank her for them.

I also want to recognise the secretariat. I think the member for Wendouree actually read out a few of the names that I am going to read out, which indicates the fluid nature of the committee staff, particularly during the pandemic. During the period of this inquiry we had two committee managers: Igor Dosen from late February and Nathan Bunt in the run-up to the end of January. Aimee Weir came on board with the committee on 4 April. Raylene D'Cruz also came on board on 4 April. Katie Helme was on board until 1 April and then moved across to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee. Helen Ross-Soden has been with the committee for the four years; she has been there for the whole journey—the only member of the committee staff that made it through. I just want to acknowledge all of those people. It is not easy to pick up an inquiry halfway through, when the inquiry phase is done, and then try and come up with a report, and the committee has managed to do that quite effectively.

Of course we looked at overseas jurisdictions, as I mentioned; we looked very much at what was happening in Melbourne and did a literature review in terms of other jurisdictions across Australia. We focused on dwelling amenity, building amenity and performance and external amenity as well.

We have a great opportunity in this state it comes to urban consolidation, but it is something that has been a battle for the entire time I have spent in public life. We really need to do something about the amenity of multidwelling developments. We need to protect the amenity, but equally we have got to protect agricultural land. We cannot just keep expanding and expanding, but we should not be achieving that consolidation at the expense of amenity. People should not be asked to sacrifice amenity simply to stop that urban expansion. Some clear minimum standards are required. We have identified those in the report. We need to encourage smarter development. We need to encourage development that is a genuine alternative to detached housing. I think there is a lot of good work going on. We need to do more. I commend the report.

LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Support for Older Victorians from Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds

Mr TAK (Clarinda) (10:39): I rise to speak on the inquiry into support for older Victorians from migrant and refugee backgrounds, which was referred to the Legal and Social Issues Committee on 4 August 2021. I start by acknowledging and commending you, Deputy Speaker, on your efforts as chair at the time, and also all the committee members. The inquiry was very relevant to my constituents. Clarinda is one of the most diverse electorates in the state, with more than half of our community born overseas. We are also home to a host of amazing multicultural seniors groups, and we work together with over 60 different groups to support our seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Victorian government recognises and acknowledges the wonderful contributions of our older generations in ensuring that Victoria has become such a multicultural success story. I send my thanks to all of our multicultural seniors, their support groups and all of those that shared their time and experiences with the committee. The resulting committee report explores how we can better support culturally diverse older Victorians to access services, participate fully in the community and be healthy. The report acknowledges that more can be done to increase multicultural older people's awareness of available support, build trust and provide services that meet their cultural and spiritual needs. The committee received 73 submissions and held five public hearings. With this evidence it was able to produce a report with 61 findings and 76 recommendations.

We heard of the difficulties in accessing services due to barriers relating to language, transport, housing, finances and visa status, as well as challenges around social isolation, barriers to economic and civic participation, digital exclusion, elder abuse and the cultural inclusiveness of aged care. The report aims to address these challenges to ensure that older people from migrant and refugee backgrounds can age with dignity and with respect.

To achieve this, some of the committee's recommendations include increasing funding for ethnospecific and multicultural organisations to provide essential services; more specifically addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on culturally diverse older people; supporting professional development and career pathways for bicultural and bilingual workers; supporting various initiatives to increase the financial, health and digital literacy of culturally diverse older people; supporting the expansion of activities to reduce the social isolation of older people and facilitate their civic and economic participation; and encouraging mainstream aged care providers to partner with ethnospecific organisations to improve their capacity to deliver culturally inclusive services.

I also would like to again acknowledge the hard work of my fellow committee members and the support and commitment of the staff who worked on this inquiry, and I look forward to working together to deliver outcomes for our older multicultural Victorians.

PANDEMIC DECLARATION ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (10:43): *(By leave)* I am pleased to speak on the report of the Pandemic Declaration Accountability and Oversight Committee that was tabled in this house in July. The review is entitled *Review of the Pandemic (Visitors to Hospitals and Care Facilities) Orders*. There were two reports during the course of the six months that the committee was in place that were both tabled in the Parliament. The committee was established under the pandemic management framework set up by the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. The new framework commenced as a result of the passage of what was highly contested legislation during the course of last year and passed both houses finally in early December 2021. The new pandemic declaration was made on 15 December 2021, and it was from then that the committee actually took form. The committee only exists when there is a pandemic declaration in force in the state of Victoria. Members will remember that prior to that we were operating under the state of emergency powers that exist under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

I was elected chair of the committee when it was formed just before Christmas 2021. Mr Jeff Bourman of the other place was elected deputy chair, and other members comprised the members for Sunbury, Ivanhoe, Lowan, Eltham and Rowville, and Ms Georgie Crozier, Mr Enver Erdogan and the Honourable Harriet Shing, all of the other place. I thank them for their contributions throughout the public hearings and the deliberations in the preparation of the reports. The opposition parties filed a minority report.

I also thank the secretariat. This was a new committee that was established at very short notice under very controversial legislation, and there was a pretty steep learning curve for everyone. The secretariat and particularly Mr Matt Newington provided great support to the committee during the course of its operations. Of course the committee still exists, and its role is set out under section 165AS of the Public Health and Wellbeing Act. It was quite legalistic and particular in the manner it had to operate in terms of looking at the orders that the minister would make following the making of a pandemic declaration.

Within a very short time of the committee forming there was a process by which the minister started winding back the orders we had all lived with for two years during a time when there were some very significant and restrictive orders in place in Victoria. The new legislation required the committee to look particularly at the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and whether the orders fitted within those. Of course the committee took particular legal advice and it heard from many experts and at times members of the public in coming to finalise the report.

It is important to consider the context around the preparation and tabling of the report. The case at that time was that we were in a worldwide pandemic and governments all around the world and Australia had introduced a suite of public health measures aimed at combating the virus and protecting public health. Various restrictions were placed on people in every jurisdiction to deal with that, particularly as the vaccination process was being rolled out.

The visitors to hospitals and care facilities issue came up as the very first one that the committee decided to look at. It did make a number of findings about the very restrictive nature of it and the impact on the mental health of people who were isolated in hospitals and care facilities during the pandemic, and of course there are still significant restrictions imposed by hospitals and care facilities. It is up to them as to how they do it, but it is based on their local needs. The committee generally found that the orders were in order in that they did not breach the charter and that they found the balance that was necessary.

More Australians have died in the past two years of the pandemic, and it has been a real struggle for communities to deal with the situation that they have found themselves in. I think it is important to say in closing that a community is determined by the value that it places on those most vulnerable in its community, and that is how we will be judged. I consider that we are no longer doing well on that score. An examination of how we can do better, particularly in caring for those in residential aged care and the more vulnerable, is essential if we are to maintain our integrity as a community that cares for all its members.

LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (10:48): (*By leave*) I am grateful to the member for Sandringham for the opportunity to conclude the remarks I was making. I was talking about Halina Strnad and saying that I know she will be missed by many who spent time in or with the Burwood branch, including Janet Chiron, Michael Watson, Anna Burke, Christine Chapel and Halina's long-time best friend and comrade, the wonderful Maree Hodgens. And she will be missed by me. It was a special once-in-a-lifetime friendship and one of the highlights of my time as the member for Burwood. I will always remember and cherish her incredible passion and humanity. On behalf of the entire Burwood community, I extend my sincere condolences to everyone who loved her. She died as she lived: with passion, purpose and pride, with bravery and with dignity. Vale, Halina Strnad—survivor, advocate, hero.

Bills

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Mr BROOKS:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr KENNEDY (Hawthorn) (10:49): I am glad today to be speaking on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. Earlier this year we committed to legislative amendments that would increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation as well as improve quality and safeguards in service for people with a disability. In preparing this speech today I had not come across this item which just has come to my notice, and that is some recent research in a report from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. The report, released earlier this week, found people with disabilities are more than twice as likely to be victims of violent crime as the general population. It also found disabled victims of violence are about 17 per cent less likely to either see their cases proceed to court or see an outcome outside court. This link between disability and becoming a victim of violence has always been an issue, but now we have seen some research that supports that contention.

As my colleagues stated yesterday, the Disability Act 2006 review has been underway since 2018. We are a government committed to ensuring that our legislative frameworks are modern and fit for purpose and create meaningful change for people with disability. Historically this is a policy area that has been largely ignored. Our society was not built for disabled individuals, and now in 21st century Victoria we are faced with the challenge of reworking our society to make it accessible for all Victorians. This bill is part of this reworking. It is a contribution to the realignment of the way we govern to encompass people no matter their disability. It is important to remember that this forms part of the broader reform

of the Disability Act currently being undertaken, in which work is being progressed over three stages. The second stage of this review is currently being completed.

Whilst legislation like this is an important start, attitudes must change, as must our infrastructure. Just a little word on the way now about train stations—you would know that this is one of my favourite topics given my hefty use of the train. We have 10 train stations in the electorate of Hawthorn, and constituents have come to me time and time again with different issues relating to these stations. Earlier this year the Minister for Public Transport accompanied me to Riversdale station to inspect it as I explained how that station and stations like it in the electorate can be improved. Consequently we saw a commitment in this year's budget of \$250 000 to develop plans to make six stations in Hawthorn more accessible for all Victorians. Unlike community car parks at Hawthorn train stations, this is something that the community is calling for and will actually be investigated and planned out properly before we invest in it.

This is a solid start, but there are still further accessibility issues with Hawthorn public transport that need to be improved, as indeed there are across the state. I know that this government is always looking to make our tram network more accessible, and it has been encouraging to see the new order of low-floor trams as well, as these will make travelling on our great tram network far more accessible to all Victorians. Our work making the train stations more accessible is an important start, and accessibility in Hawthorn will be aided by this bill. But we have more work to do. I am glad to see these changes to the overarching legislative framework because it will take more than these important local projects to improve accessibility. Changes like the removing of unnecessary barriers that hinder the sharing of critical information between service providers or 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 may not be flashy, but they will change lives.

People often make the mistake of thinking that accessibility issues are niche and do not really affect them. However, around 20 per cent of our population live with a disability of one kind or another. We are a government that are conscious of these issues, which is why our changes go beyond the local and the legislative. We are delivering the \$1.6 billion disability inclusion package. However, for decades little or no consideration was given to accessibility issues.

We now face the enormous task of reworking our infrastructure and systems to be inclusive of all Victorians, especially the 20 per cent living with a disability. We promised to introduce legislation in 2022 to improve support for disabled Victorians, and today we are delivering on that promise. These are vital reforms, with effects ranging from better safeguards for Victorians with a disability to better quality services for these Victorians. At a fundamental level the effect of this bill will be to improve service provision to people with a disability. I think it is important to consider the depth of the challenge facing us in this policy area. It is multifaceted, affecting every department in this government.

Earlier I discussed the impact of historically discriminatory public transport infrastructure. Now I would like to talk a little about education. I regularly visit the Rossbourne School in Hawthorn, which serves students who have difficulties in mainstream schools due to their educational and social demands. I applaud the students and staff of Rossbourne, and I believe that they serve as a model for similar schools across Victoria. They implement innovative programs to support Hawthorn students, and I applaud their commitment. However, we must continue to support institutions like Rossbourne. I have used these Hawthorn examples today to display both the immense barriers facing disabled Victorians but also the diligent institutions that support them. The changes that we need to make to create a truly accessible Victoria will not happen overnight, but it is important that we keep reforming legislation and supporting good organisations like the Rossbourne School. It is important to remember throughout this debate that historically the lack of focus on disability inclusion has had the effect of locking out many Victorians from a large part of our society. It is imperative that this government continues to govern as it has for the last eight years—that is, for all Victorians.

I particularly notice that each year Rossbourne invites me to hand out badges of responsibility to the student council. Time and time again I have seen what might be described as disabilities or outbursts, or whatever it might be, but what strikes me each time is how beneficial to society these kids' behaviours are. It is hard to explain, but that sometimes seemingly overly extroverted behaviour that I am greeted with every time I go to Hawthorn railway station, where they greet me with, 'Hello, John. How are you?' et cetera—you really could not imagine the average year 9 in almost any other school being so keen to meet the local member. That is the sort of thing I mean about harnessing those particular traits, if you like, and seeing that they can be then turned for the good of our society in Hawthorn, Victoria and beyond. Rossbourne is a great example, and it is one of my favourite places to visit, I have to say.

This bill forms part of a broader reform program, one that seeks to make our state accessible to all Victorians. I would like to thank all of those who made a contribution to the consultation in the process of the creation of this bill, and I appreciate their having shared their lived experiences. I am looking forward to further reform in this area as we continue to do everything we can as a government to promote disability equality and to boost the quality of our services. I commend this bill.

Mr MAAS (Narre Warren South) (10:59): It is a pleasure for me to rise and also make a contribution to the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. It is indeed always fantastic to rise to speak after the member for Hawthorn, who I might say at this point probably understated it a tad when he said that people would not be necessarily excited to meet their MP. Having been out on a few occasions of an evening after Parliament with the member for Hawthorn, it never ceases to amaze me how many people actually recognise him when we are out dining at many of the fine establishments that are around the CBD. He is a well-known MP and a very hardworking MP for his constituency, and his influence is indeed known right around Melbourne. So fantastic work, member for Hawthorn.

On the Disability Amendment Bill, the overall objective is that it forms part of stage 2 of the Disability Act review and will introduce critical amendments to enhance services, safeguards and protections. The bill will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to promote residential rights in specialist disability accommodation and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 in relation to worker screening. The Disability Act 2006 is being amended so that rights for persons residing in residential services and those subject to compulsory treatment and restrictive practices are uplifted and to align and reduce duplication of requirements for the use and authorisation of restrictive practices by registered NDIS providers and disability service providers. The bill will also amend the Disability Service Safeguards Act to remove duplication in the worker screening process for the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria, which will result in the board recognising national police checks completed by workers as part of the delivery of the national disability insurance scheme services. Finally, the Residential Tenancies Act will also be amended to ensure that there are no gaps in residential rights and protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation.

This is all being done in this context. It is to acquit the Victorian government's public commitment to amend the Disability Act to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and to strengthen the quality and safeguards in services for people with disability. It was earlier this year, in March, that the government announced that legislative amendments would be made to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and strengthen the quality and safeguards in services for people with disability. The bill is one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act review, which has been underway since 2018. It is a priority government reform aimed at ensuring our legislative frameworks are fit for purpose and contemporary and create meaningful change for people with disability. The second key piece to be delivered before caretaker is the release of an exposure draft of a new disability inclusion bill for public consultation. The exposure draft of this bill will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion.

The passage of the Disability Amendment Bill is important to ensure services, safeguards, rights and protections for Victorians with a disability are protected and enhanced. The bill clarifies 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 and protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation that do not meet the current definitions in the Residential Tenancies Act. The bill aligns and removes duplication. It also 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 strengthen clinical oversight of admissions and extensions of admissions.

The bill also 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. Of course better service and coordination is key, and the amendments will strengthen and clarify information-sharing provisions by removing unnecessary barriers that hinder the sharing of critical information between service providers.

In terms of this bill coming to this house, there has indeed been much stakeholder consultation. The bill itself has been informed by submissions which were received during the public consultation process in 2021, engagement with the expert Disability Act review advisory group and targeted consultation across the sector and government. Stakeholders are in broad agreement with the proposed reform. More significant and complex areas of the Disability Act are expected to be considered next year as part of stage 3 of the Disability Act review. This will enable more time for detailed consultation with the public advocate and other key stakeholders as well as enabling the review to be informed by emerging recommendations of the disability royal commission ahead of their final report in September 2023. In terms of that consultation, there were various bodies that were consulted in terms of giving that broad approval to the terms of the bill: bodies such as VCAT, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Victorian senior practitioner, the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner, the health complaints commissioner, Victoria Legal Aid, National Disability Services, Victorian Council of Social Service, Carers Victoria, Melba Support Services, Yooralla, Possability, Scope and the Victorian Disability Worker Commission. Consultation has occurred across government with the departments of Premier and Cabinet, Justice and Community Safety, Health, Transport, and Education and Training, as well as Victoria Police and the Transport Accident Commission, all of whom support these reforms.

Also key is what actual effect the amendments in this bill will have on workers. The reforms will make it both easier and cheaper for workers with an NDIS clearance to voluntarily register under the Victorian disability worker regulation scheme. The registration process will be easier to navigate for workers as they will not have to request an additional criminal history check. The cost of registration and any fee that will be applied as the scheme matures will be lower as applications will be cheaper to process if the Victorian Disability Worker Commission does not have to administer and pay for the criminal history checks to be completed for all applicants. The registration status of workers who are currently registered will not be affected by the amendments. However, workers will need to re-register annually, and the amendments will make it easier for these workers to register in future if they have an NDIS clearance. The Disability Amendment Bill 2022 has had some degree of consultation and work that has been put into it. On that basis, I would like to commend the bill to the house.

Mr EREN (Lara) (11:09): It is with pleasure and also a bit of sadness that I speak on this bill today, which is my last bill before the house. Obviously my valedictory speech will be this afternoon, and this is the last bill that I will be speaking on. But it is a pleasure to have such a bill before the house. I have been proud of every single bill that I have spoken on, indeed every single bill that has come through this house, while I have been a member here. It is all about making sure that we have a fairer society, a just society and a society where you do not leave anyone behind, and that is exactly what this bill does. It is about making sure that we do not leave anyone behind. The Disability Amendment Bill 2022, which is before the house, does exactly that, and I am so pleased to be a part of a government that is continuing on with the work of making Victoria a fairer place.

I am obviously very pleased to be speaking on this bill. I just want to go through some of it. It was eloquently put before the house by the member for Narre Warren South, but I will repeat some of those things that he said. I think it is important to put on the record some of the important changes that are happening in relation to this bill, so if you bear with me, I will refer to some copious notes.

This bill forms part of stage 2 of the Disability Act 2006 review and will introduce critical amendments to enhance services, safeguards and protections, which is obviously fantastic. The bill will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to promote residential rights in specialist disability accommodation and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 in relation to worker screening. The bill is one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act review, which has been underway since 2018. It is also a priority government reform aimed at ensuring our legislative frameworks are fit for purpose and contemporary to create meaningful change for people with disability.

The second key piece to be delivered in this release is an exposure draft of a new disability inclusion bill for public consultation. The exposure draft of that bill will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion. The passage of the Disability Amendment Bill this year is important to ensuring services, safeguards, rights and protections are protected and enhanced for Victorians with a disability. On 14 March 2022 the Victorian government announced that legislative amendments would be made this year to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and to strengthen quality and safeguards in services for people with disability. The Disability Amendment Bill acquits this commitment. Key amendments in this bill include increased rights and protections. The bill clarifies residential rights and duties for people subject to civil and criminal orders in disability residential services and parameters for service providers delivering residential and treatment services. The bill also ensures residential rights protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation that does not meet the current definitions in the Residential Tenancies Act.

The bill will also improve services, which is obviously needed and important. It removes duplication and ensures accountability and consistency of approval requirements for the use of restrictive practices for both national disability insurance scheme—the NDIS—and state-funded disability service providers. It will also address gaps and clarify the criteria and processes for compulsory treatment and placement in residential treatment facilities to support clients and operational safety and 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. Importantly, the bill will also improve service coordination. These amendments will strengthen and clarify information-sharing provisions by removing unnecessary barriers that hinder the sharing of critical information between service providers.

The bill clarifies the functions and 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 the acquiring, holding or disposing of land or granting of land.

Finally, the bill reduces duplicative requirements by allowing an NDIS worker screening clearance in lieu of a criminal history check for voluntary registration of disability workers. I think the member for Narre Warren South mentioned extensively some of the important issues that relate to that as well.

This bill has been informed by submissions received during the public consultation process in 2021, engagement with the expert Disability Act review advisory group, chaired by Graeme Innes AM, Australia's former disability discrimination commissioner, and targeted consultation across the sector and government. So we are not bringing a bill before the house without consultation; we have done wide consultation, with the agreement of the stakeholders to bring this legislation before us today. The stakeholders are in broad agreement with the proposed reforms. More significant and complex areas of the Disability Act are expected to be considered next year as part of stage 3 of the Disability Act

review, and this will enable time for detailed consultation with the public advocate and other key stakeholders as well as enable the review to be informed by emerging recommendations of the disability royal commission ahead of their final report in September 2023.

It is so important that we ensure our disability legislation is contemporary and fit for purpose. This bill will bring about critical reforms that will improve the delivery of disability services and enhance safeguards for Victorians with disability. Again I have got to say the bill is one of many reforms of our government which will promote disability equality and inclusion and enhance the quality and effectiveness of our services. Therefore obviously I commend the bill to the house.

Ms COUZENS (Geelong) (11:16): I am pleased to rise to contribute to the Disability Amendment Bill 2022, and it is a great pleasure to follow the member for Lara and hear his final speech on a bill. I know how passionate he is about providing services for people with disabilities. I do want to take this opportunity to thank people with disabilities, their carers and their families who have provided input into this bill and many other changes that we have made since coming to government in 2014. I had the privilege of being on the Family and Community Development Committee inquiry into abuse in disability services back in 2016. The final report highlighted the need to build a culture of zero tolerance, supported by a skilled and qualified workforce. I am delighted that over that period of time we have started to make significant changes in our community. Through that inquiry we heard from many people with disabilities and their families about their experiences, the need for change and what they saw as priorities for them and their family members in our community. This government has rolled out many of the recommendations from that inquiry.

Since becoming the member for Geelong back in 2014 I have passionately worked with people in my community who have lived experience of disability, in particular through the accessible and inclusive city work that we did for the community of Geelong. That was a group of people with disabilities coming together and talking about their experiences and what they see as being an accessible and inclusive environment for them to live, work and play. One of the areas that they expressed real concern about is that accessibility and inclusiveness have been lacking in years past. So through that coming together of people with lived experience we then looked at, 'Well, what do we need to do to ensure that at some point Geelong becomes a wholly accessible and inclusive city for people with lived experience?'. The minister at the time, the member for Albert Park, committed funding for a piece of research to be done that looks at accessibility and inclusiveness in our community of Geelong. Deakin University undertook that research, and that was completed in 2020. Unfortunately due to COVID there have been some delays in further work on that, but I am delighted that the Victorian government has taken on that important accessibility and inclusiveness work.

I want to thank all of those people with lived experience who contributed to that research and identified some of the key factors around housing and transport and around having that accessibility around our city which will make a huge difference to their lives. Over the last couple of years we have been able to ensure that we have Changing Places facilities incorporated into our city. What we heard from people with disabilities time and time again was that they needed those Changing Places facilities to be able to go in and have dinner in the city or go down to the waterfront and enjoy that. For many people that was not an option because the Changing Places facilities were not there. I am delighted to say that we just recently opened up the Changing Places facility at Kardinia Park—and go Cats, of course, this weekend. In mentioning Kardinia Park, I cannot not say that.

Sarah Albon was an integral part in ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness, the ability for fans to go to Kardinia Park and enjoy the game. The incorporation of the sensory room some years ago has been absolutely incredible for so many people that really need that sort of facility. It is utilised very strongly during game days now, and many, many families are now saying it is the first time that a member of their family has been able to go to watch a game at Kardinia Park because of that sensory room being there and having access to that alongside, of course, the Changing Places facility. For a lot of people in my community, they have not been able to go and watch a game at Kardinia Park—go Cats—because they have not been able to use the toilet facilities.

Members interjecting.

Ms COUZENS: I am getting it in as much as possible. We also saw the introduction of a hoist at the Barwon River for people to get into a canoe or a paddleboat or do whatever they want to do. Having that hoist there enables them to do that. This is about incorporating these sorts of facilities so that people in our communities actually have access and feel included in our community. These sorts of things are really important for people with disabilities.

A lot of the work, as I said, around the accessible and inclusive Geelong work that we have been doing has identified where we need to improve. There are a number of things on the agenda which are really exciting for people with disabilities, but looking at all people with disabilities, not just those with physical disabilities. These are important steps for my community, and I know that for people in Geelong this bill is important and having more legislative changes and providing more facilities for people with disabilities is really important.

In March 2022 the Victorian government announced a legislative amendment would be made this year to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and strengthen quality and safeguards in services for people with disability. As I said, through the inquiry into abuse in disability services we heard a lot about the issues confronting people with disabilities, particularly in home care situations. 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 and contemporary and create meaningful change for people with disability.

The second key piece to be delivered before caretaker is the release of an exposure draft of a new disability inclusion bill for public consultation. The exposure draft for this bill will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion. This is very exciting I know for my community and I am sure for other communities across Victoria because these are the very things that have been put forward time and time again, as I said, in my community but also in other communities across Victoria. That inclusiveness is so important. When you think about people who cannot go out to work or to any of our tourist attractions, not being able to do that is wrong. They should have access just like anyone else, and that is why I really appreciate the fact that this bill is so important to people in my community.

The Disability Amendment Bill 2022 amends the Disability Act 2006, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Services Safeguards Act 2018 to bring about critical amendments that will increase rights and protections, improve services, bring about better service coordination, clarify functions and responsibilities and reduce duplication. The passage of the Disability Amendment Bill this year is important to ensure services, safeguards, rights and protections are protected and enhanced for Victorians with disabilities. We are talking about some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Giving them access, as I have already gone through, providing a safe and secure environment for everyone in our community, including people with disabilities, is really, really important. I am really proud of the work that has been done in my community by people with lived experience. It is important to them. It impacts on their lives and the lives of their families, who are often restricted in what they can do. I am delighted to commend this bill to the house. Go Cats!

Ms THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (11:26): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. As my colleagues have noted, this bill delivers on Labor's commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of over 1 million people with disability who call Victoria home. This is all part of our broader work to review and improve the Disability Act 2006 which has been underway since 2018. It is a priority reform for this government aimed at ensuring our legislative frameworks are fit for purpose and contemporary and create meaningful change for people with a disability.

In the first stage of the review, technical changes were made to the act to facilitate the transition to the national disability insurance scheme. The amendments contained in this bill deliver the next round of

critical changes to improve the delivery of state-funded disability services by ensuring that legislative protections provide enhanced services, safeguards, rights and protections for people with disability, bring about better service coordination, address implementation issues with the NDIS, clarify functions and responsibilities and reduce duplication. Before we move into caretaker mode, we will take the next important step with the release of an exposure draft of a new disability inclusion bill for public consultation. The exposure draft of this bill will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion.

This third stage will consider more significant and complex areas of the Disability Act and will enable more time for detailed consultation as well as enabling the review to be informed by emerging recommendations of the disability royal commission ahead of their final report in September 2023. At every stage of this process consultation has been key and listening has been key. I want to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge all those who have participated in the development of these reforms as well as all those throughout our state and our nation's history who have fought with passion and untiring determination to improve outcomes for people with disability, because we need to acknowledge that this road has been long and it has been hard. As we continue to see through the testimony to the federal Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, we need to acknowledge that there is still a way to go on this journey together.

As governments we have an obligation to listen to and reflect on and stand with people with disability as well as their carers as we continue to make critical change, because we have come a long way. In many ways the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons was a turning point, a milestone in the movement towards inclusion and recognition of the rights and dignity of people with disability. In the years following, Australia saw both legislative and societal change. The very next year the Equal Opportunity (Discrimination against Disabled Persons) Act 1982 extended protection against discrimination to people with disability. In 1992 the Keating government introduced the federal Disability Discrimination Act, which would for the first time at a national level make it unlawful for people with disability to be discriminated against. More recently we have seen the introduction of the NDIS by the Gillard government, a world-leading and transformational scheme that changed the focus from crisis-driven welfare to a system with autonomy, choice and control at its heart, a system that recognises that the barriers preventing people with disability from fully participating sit with society rather than the individual. Now, there are problems with the NDIS. I recognise that, and we need to work through those at the federal level. Throughout, the disability advocacy movement have been a driving force for change, and they remain so today.

I was honoured to work closely with sector stakeholders and people with lived experience as part of the Legislative Assembly Economy and Infrastructure Committee inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with disability. We heard that while around 12 per cent of Victorians aged 15 to 64 live with a disability, only around 9 per cent of TAFE students have a disability. They are under-represented, but this is changing. In its first two years free TAFE enabled 41 per cent more students with disability to commence courses. We must ensure that TAFEs are accessible to everyone so we can maximise the opportunities presented by the NDIS and our free TAFE reforms. During its 12-month investigation the committee heard learners with disability can struggle with transition into TAFE and to fully participate because of barriers set up by poor career advice, the physical environment, inaccessible technology and of course people's attitudes to disability. We also found many learners with disability who enrol at TAFE do not disclose their disability to staff and so miss out on receiving support to help them with their training.

From this work the committee drew a number of recommendations, including that TAFEs employ transition officers to help students with disability navigate the transition into TAFE and that TAFEs create a safe space for learners with disability to share their diagnosis and seek support. We also recommended providing learners with disability with wraparound support, informal peer networks, better access to assistive technology and more flexibility in course design and assessment. Learners with disability have the right to participate in TAFE on the same basis as their peers. Critically the committee

recommended introducing dedicated funding to TAFEs based on the number of enrolled students with disability and the complexity of their needs. I am immensely pleased that the Andrews Labor government has welcomed these recommendations, and work is already underway on many of the areas we identified in our inquiry. This includes the delivery of the TAFE disability inclusion strategy in 2022, which will build on our progress to date with support from the committee inquiry's findings.

Change requires rethinking and transforming the very infrastructure of our society, the way our programs are designed and the way we socialise and think about disability. In my own electorate of Northcote we have seen some important developments towards greater accessibility and inclusion, particularly in relation to transport and education. People with disability have the right to access and participate in education on the same basis as people without a disability, and one element of this is making sure our classrooms and our playgrounds are inclusive. As an inner-urban electorate Northcote has many local schools with buildings that are reaching their centenary or have already reached it and that in no way meet the needs or community expectations of families. Across our suburbs we have seen some exciting projects completed and underway to make buildings more accessible, and this goes beyond the implementation of things like wheelchair accessibility, although that in itself is important.

It also means accessibility is built into the foundations of our major capital works, and that means implementing aspects of universal design, classrooms that support flexible learning, breakout rooms and lifts. We also worked with a number of our schools to support successful applications to our inclusive schools program. As a result, Thornbury Primary, Westgarth Primary and Pender's Grove Primary all have inclusive, welcoming outdoor play spaces on the way. We are also supporting our local special school, the wonderful Croxton School. Most recently we have delivered \$7.9 million to construct a new specialist building as part of our broader \$388 million investment in upgrading specialist schools as part of the 2020–21 budget, which is the largest ever investment in specialist schools in Victoria, and I believe now every single specialist school in Victoria has been funded for upgrades, which is quite extraordinary.

On the other side of this coin is ensuring students have the support they need to pursue their educational and career aspirations, and here again we have seen significant reform. Our new disability inclusion program is investing almost \$1.6 billion to ensure that every student, regardless of their ability, thrives at school. Locally we have also recently seen some important improvements in the transport space, including safer and more accessible shared pathways around the Chandler Highway bridge, and there are more underway through our level crossing removals in Preston.

This year we also announced funding to deliver critical accessibility improvements at Thornbury and Merri stations, including boarding ramps and tactile ground surfaces, which are critically important to allow people with disability and mobility issues to get around safely on our public transport system. When it comes to accessible transport, one of the big remaining gaps for locals in Northcote is the availability of level-access tram stops, particularly along the route 86. We are fortunate to have the trams on our local lines that are level access, but the infrastructure still has a way to go to catch up. From stop 33 to stop 54 there are no level-access stops, and that traverses part of Northcote, the entirety of Thornbury, the entirety of Preston and some of Reservoir, so we still have a fair amount of work to do in that space. Locals know how many venues, services and shops are located along that route.

This is a big, complex job. Victoria has one of the oldest and largest tram networks in the world, but we are getting on with it. As is the case with so many big reforms and projects across our state, Victorians know that a Labor government will deliver for them. The amendments contained in this bill are a fundamentally important part of this broader work to build a fairer and more inclusive and equitable future for Victorians. It is work that goes to the heart of what kind of state and what kind of society we want to create: one that is inclusive and one that is accessible to everyone, where everybody has the same opportunities and rights. This Disability Amendment Bill is critically important to that. With that, I commend this bill to the house.

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (11:36): I too rise to speak on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. This is a really important bill, because we know there are more than 1.1 million people in Victoria that are living with some form of disability. I think it can be really easy to come into this chamber and talk about disability and talk about legislation and the changes that legislation like the Disability Amendment Bill will make without reflecting on the people around us that might actually have a disability.

As the member for Northcote quite eloquently talked about, the Andrews Labor government's commitment to upgrading and delivering better services and facilities at some of the most important schools in our community, the special needs schools, has been a real cornerstone of this government. I certainly have got numerous special needs schools in my community, including Warringa Park School. We have a primary that is there in the seat of Werribee, but we also have the high school of Warringa in Hoppers Crossing—a fabulous school that is doing great work with kids. Yes, life is challenging for those kids and their families, but they do have a really great opportunity to get an education at that school that is going to suit them and their lifestyle and what they want to go ahead and do. I certainly commend the families and the students at schools like Warringa and also the incredible teachers that work at those schools, who are able to help students meet their fullest potential.

It is really interesting for me, because I have spoken in this place many times about people with disabilities in Victoria but I have never actually spoken about the person in my family. Sometimes I think she was the matriarch of my family, and still to this day I smile because she most certainly was that, even though, sadly, she has been passed away for some years now; I think about my nanna, Nanna Jean. I know my daughter is here in Parliament today, and she is watching and glued to the TV. I thought I would give a shout-out to my nanna, Jean—so Emily's great-nanna. Nanna, as I said, was a true matriarch of our family. Grandad had passed away many, many decades previously; he passed away when I was only about two or three years old, and he was certainly unable to see the birth of my siblings. Nanna had quite a significant disability, but no-one in my family ever considered it a major barrier or challenge to her. She certainly did not treat it as a disability. She was deaf. She went deaf at age 50—completely deaf, did not hear a thing. But I remember her telling us from a really young age that even though she could not remember ever hearing us speak as children and young adults she knew what our voices sounded like. She could hear it; we had our own sound to her.

I remember Nanna was an absolute expert lip-reader. She never learned sign language or anything like that. My family never learned how to communicate with sign language. Certainly over the last two years, watching Auslan and things like that when the Premier stood up to give his daily press conference was really interesting. I know Nanna watched a lot of TV—and this was before you could actually have the writing at the bottom of the screen for people who were deaf—but she would be lip-reading, so she was an expert lip-reader. It is really funny growing up only having memories of Nanna being completely deaf, never hearing a thing, because you always felt like she heard everything, and that is because she was such a great lip-reader. There was no way anyone could have a conversation around her and Nanna not know what we were saying.

But when I think about the types of challenges and the disabilities I see in my local community as the member for Tarneit and I reflect on Nanna now as an adult, it must have been incredibly challenging for her and indeed isolating. Nanna is not the only person that is deaf in my family. Her youngest son also started going deaf at around about the same age—around about 50 years of age. And I remember my Uncle Paul over a very long period of time was able to hear less and less. He loved live music. Whether that was a contributor to it or whether it was something genetic and hereditary we do not really know. But I remember for Uncle Paul we used to have to speak really loudly, and we never had to speak really loudly in front of Nanna because she could just lip-read us. But it was really different with Uncle Paul and watching him slowly going deaf. It was a really demoralising, challenging time in his life, and you could see the social isolation starting to happen. At family gatherings and get-togethers he could not hear the jokes, he could not hear the chatter, and he withdrew from conversation more and more.

It has been a while since I have seen Uncle Paul, but the last time I did see him—a couple of years ago—he had gone and done what we as a family had begged him to do for years. He had gone and gotten that cochlear implant. It was very, very expensive for him, and back then the cost was prohibitive of him actually going ahead and spending that money so he could hear properly. But having a conversation with him and watching him interact with family members—he was a completely changed man because he could hear. It was quite extraordinary, and again it really made me reflect on Nanna, who spent at least close to half her life completely deaf, not hearing a single thing.

If I come back to the bill, when we look at legislation and put bills through this house and this place it is really important that our laws go ahead and reflect every person in Victoria. Like I just said, 1.1 million people are living with a disability. It is really important that our laws reflect them and the challenges they face and most importantly afford them every right to live their lives freely and most importantly fairly to the fullest potential. I have to say it is really fantastic to see how a Labor federal government can make such a difference. It is fantastic to see a federal government in power that not only takes the national disability insurance scheme seriously but is actively ensuring that those who rely on it get the support they need.

The contents of this bill in particular build off a staged review of the Disability Act 2006, which kicked off in 2019. It is really important that the changes in this bill are delivered before caretaker mode kicks in, so I am really pleased to see this bill before the house on the last day of this term of Parliament. But it is really important that they are delivered before caretaker mode kicks off in order to make sure that our legislative framework is fit for purpose and that the services, the safeguards, the rights and the protections that Victorians with disabilities rely on are enhanced. The bill also precedes the release of a new exposure draft for the establishment of a new disability inclusion bill, which will go out for public consultation and include a proposed new role of commissioner for disability inclusion. I hope to be back next term in government in this same place to see this bill become a reality.

This bill does make a number of technical changes, and I am not going to talk about them in detail. I think my colleagues on both sides of this house have talked about them and the importance of them. These technical changes sometimes do not seem significant. They do not make the front page of the papers and there is not much retail value in them. But they do have really important consequences for Victorians living with a disability. Sadly, some Victorians living with a disability find that they do not feel like they have a voice. But they have a voice, and we are making sure that that voice is heard here in this place, which is part of this bill.

This bill is going to have important consequences, especially for people living in residential treatment facilities and those in specialist disability accommodation, because every Victorian living with a disability deserves to be able to live their life with dignity and with fairness, and I think this bill will go a long way to helping advance those goals. We say in Parliament all the time that equality is not negotiable, and now that we have fully acquitted the review into the Disability Act 2006 we are yet another step closer towards achieving that very, very important goal. That is exactly why I stand here and very proudly commend the bill to the house.

Mr BRAYNE (Nepean) (11:46): I also rise today to speak on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. The Victorian government is determined to protect and support the many Victorians who are living with disability and to deliver reforms to better support them, their families and their carers. This bill helps do exactly that, ensuring better support and protections for Victorians living with disability. The bill will protect safeguards, rights and services, it will clearly define bureaucratic and department responsibilities and it will help reduce red tape in worker screening processes.

The Disability Act 2006 requires amendment in order to achieve the following outcomes: to promote rights for persons residing in residential services; to reduce duplication of requirements for the use of restrictive practices for registered disability service providers; to improve processes relating to supervised treatment orders; to provide a clearer legislative authority to disclose protected identifiable information; to clarify the secretary's functions in relation to a number of items; to dissolve the

Disability Services Board, as the role of the board has been substantially reduced, with the majority of service providers obviously transitioning to the NDIS; and to allow the minister to declare additional categories of disability accommodation so that community visitors can inquire about the support provided to residents.

On 14 March this year the Victorian government flagged these amendments in order for us to get on with increasing residential protections for Victorians living in disability accommodation. In doing so these changes will strengthen the quality and safeguards of those utilising such services. These amendments are key outcomes of the Disability Act review, which has been underway since 2018 and remains a key priority of the Andrews Labor government, getting on and making sure that current arrangements are appropriate, current and meaningful for people with a disability. In doing so this amendment bill will amend the Disability Act 2006, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018, resulting in better service coordination and increased protections. It is critical that the passage of this bill is achieved through the Parliament before it rises to ensure we can achieve what this bill will deliver in a timely manner.

When I was elected in 2018 one of the first things I needed to do was meet with community members and community advocates. Marie Hell and Kevin Turner from my community were two such people, relentless and committed to making positive change in the carer space, chairing the Community Lifestyle Accommodation group, or CLA as they are known. I met with them very early on in my term as their local member of Parliament. They told me the work they have been doing in our region and why it is so important. CLA have worked hard on lobbying for housing projects; providing information, peer support and social functions; and making submissions to all levels of government. They are a grassroots carers group who are considered leaders in speaking out and advocating for and on behalf of carers and their families on the Mornington Peninsula. I have been pleased to meet with the group and attend functions on many occasions, where I continue to be blown away by the good work that so many people do right across the Mornington Peninsula, frequently unrecognised.

It is vital that we pass these amendments before the end of the year for many reasons, so I will now turn to some of the amendments in detail. Firstly, the bill will help clarify the rights and duties for residents who are subject to orders in disability residential services. It will also provide the parameters for service providers delivering services in those settings. It will ensure residential rights protections for those in specialist disability accommodation where the current definitions in the Residential Tenancies Act are not met. Secondly, this amendment will act to address the protocols and processes for compulsory treatment and then placement in facilities to help support clients and improve safety. This will also add to strengthening the clinical oversight of admission. It will also clarify information-sharing provisions and remove unnecessary barriers that hinder the ability for service providers to work together and share vital information.

This bill has been part of a public consultation period and process over the past year. The chair of the Disability Act review advisory group, Graeme Innes AM, has received submissions from the public and used these to engage with government and across the disability sector. Importantly, the amendments I am speaking on today have received widespread agreement across the sector. It is vital that acts that affect many Victorians keep up to date in the context of an ever-changing disability sector and the national disability insurance scheme. So much has changed since the Disability Act was enacted in 2006. In order to ensure the legislation is effective, the Disability Act review ensures that legislation is not letting down Victorians with a disability.

The review of the act will occur in three stages. Stage 1 in 2019 made amendments to the Disability Act in readiness for the NDIS. Stage 2 resulted in the development of the Disability Amendment Bill and the exposure draft for the disability inclusion bill. Stage 3 is expected to take place next year, and it will enable a more thorough review of complex safeguarding provisions. Additionally, it will make further consideration of issues that any stakeholders may have as well as undertake a forensic review of other relevant state and commonwealth reforms.

I have reiterated many times during my contribution that it is critical that this bill be passed before the end of the year. Why is that? Well, the amendments meet stakeholder legislative expectations. Simply put, it is what Victorians living with a disability expect us to do. Addressing gaps in the current system is always time-critical, and we will not sit idly by until after an election to make changes that need to happen now. Additionally, the changes to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 are quite urgent. These issues were raised by stakeholders during the public consultation process, and there are a few legislative issues that need immediate fixes. For example, people with a disability who do not meet the criteria under the Disability Act or Residential Tenancies Act currently have no protections afforded to them. This inflexibility is something we must address. Critically, this bill also addresses issues raised by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission where Victorian legislation is out of date. This relates to authorisation of restricted practices and must be rectified with these changes. Similarly, amendments are required for supervised treatment order provisions due to the Victorian law not reflecting the changed requirements of the commission. The resulting operational changes mean there are some gaps that need to be addressed. Finally, the information-sharing provisions between providers are outdated, and the bill will help rectify issues surrounding the disclosure of identifiable information and the ability of providers to carry out their work.

There have been monumental changes to disability care, disability accommodation and the provision of disability services over the past 10 years, headlined of course by the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme across the country. This government is committed to ensuring that disability legislation is up to date, contemporary and best serving Victorians. The reforms outlined in this bill will improve the delivery of services and improve protections for Victorians with a disability. The stakeholder engagement and public submission process has been extensive and thorough, and all Victorians and members of my community should be confident these amendments will enhance and improve the legislation and protect those Victorians with a disability. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (11:55): It is a great pleasure to rise and speak in support of the Disability Amendment Bill 2022 and, as always, acknowledge the minister's work on this; of course the staff and the team—always behind every piece of legislation that makes its way to this place is the hard work on the ground by departmental staff; and everyone who has been consulted—stakeholders, individuals—on what is a really significant piece of legislation that we are hopefully going to be passing through this place today.

It is fantastic to hear about the passion from across the board—from all members of this place—when it comes to disability inclusion and equal access, particularly from previous contributors I have heard since I have made my way back into the chamber. The member for Nepean, the member for Northcote and the member for Tarneit were talking about not just some of their personal experiences but some of the local context with how the Andrews Labor government is making for Victoria and indeed their local communities a more inclusive and more accessible space for those who need it. It is a great privilege to serve as part of a government, the Andrews Labor government, that takes very seriously the importance of reforms in disability and making sure that no matter your ability, no matter your disability, everyone has a fair go. We are continually looking for ways to make sure that we level the playing field and give everyone every opportunity in life. This legislation here today in front of us is but another important piece of the puzzle in what this government is continuing to do. Of course we have had some great reforms across the area—not all of them directly related but many of them indirect reforms—through pieces of legislation that have passed through this house, particularly around mental health very recently. That will have a significant impact in making sure those who need support absolutely get it and in building the fair and very best mental health system that Victorians deserve. They are significant pieces of legislation, and this one is also critically important to our government's work in making our state fairer and inclusive for all.

I will say it has been quite heartening to hear from our federal counterparts in the new federal Labor government through comments from the Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Bill Shorten, about some of the important work that he will be undertaking as minister. As a government

we know the NDIS is a critically important scheme but certainly an imperfect scheme. A lot of bureaucracy can be really hard for people to navigate their way through. It is indeed an important scheme, delivering critical support to those who need it, but it is really important that, as we have done with this legislation, we keep listening to people—people with disabilities, people with lived experience, those key stakeholders—to make sure that we keep levelling the playing field. I was really glad to hear from Bill Shorten that they will be conducting reviews into a lot of the issues that the NDIS system is currently facing. No system is perfect, but when it is something as important as this—and of course, as with all things in government, there is always room for improvement, particularly when it comes to the NDIS—it is very important that we keep improving it and making it more equitable, accessible and everything else in-between.

We know that this bill forms part of stage 2 of the Disability Act 2006 review, and it will introduce critical amendments to enhance services, safeguards and protection. The bill will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 to promote residential rights in specialist disability accommodation and amend the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 in relation to worker screening. On 14 March we announced that legislative amendments would be made this year to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and of course strengthen quality and safeguards in services for people with disability. This legislation acquits well and truly this commitment. This bill is but one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act review announced earlier, which has been underway since 2018. It is a priority government reform aimed at ensuring our legislative frameworks are fit for purpose and contemporary and create meaningful change for people with disability.

The second key piece to be delivered before caretaker is the release of an exposure draft of the new disability inclusion bill for public consultation. The exposure draft of this bill will include a proposal for a commissioner for disability inclusion as well, a very critical piece of work and I know something that certainly has been raised time and time again, and I am glad that our government is getting on with that important work. The Disability Amendment Bill 2022 does, as discussed, amend the Disability Act 2006, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 and the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 to bring about critical amendments that will increase rights and protections, improve services, bring about better service coordination, clarify functions and responsibilities and reduce duplication. Of course passage of the Disability Amendment Bill this year is important to ensure services, safeguards, rights and protections are protected and enhanced for Victorians with disability.

Before I get onto some of the key amendments, I just want to importantly note that when it comes to improving lives for all and making sure we level the playing field for people with disabilities, the local context and local investments are also critically important, and that is why I am glad we have just finished and we are about to open up officially the new Wantirna public aged care facility. That is an important facility for people with complex care needs—obviously our senior Victorians—and that is a really profound investment in our community. I am sure we will all have a story—perhaps not as big as that—across every single community in this area that hopefully we are all equally as proud of, because I know that is going to make a huge difference for people in my community who need it most.

I know the member for Northcote was talking about some of our inclusive, accessible programs through business-as-usual government programs. The Inclusive Schools Fund is making a huge difference. We built playgrounds for people in the community that I represent in Bayswater—at Bayswater West, for Lily-Fay, who otherwise could not have used the playground equipment. I know that she and her family are so excited about the new playground that we are going to be constructing there. Sometimes it is important to just take a step back and remember the things that we are doing here are so critically important. It is not always the big things. This playground is \$178 000 but will make a world of difference to a girl who has not had the opportunity otherwise. Of course that is just one example. I know there will be many children there who will benefit from those upgrades, so these are just a couple of examples.

With the indulgence of the house, I just want to say a few words. This is the last bill I am talking on for this sitting term, so I want to importantly thank the clerks of Parliament and all the staff. Hansard,

thank you very much for replying to my emails. You are pretty much used to getting them as soon as I finish a bill speech, so thank you very much. I really appreciate everything you guys have done.

Importantly, to my staff over the four years to date, I want to say a massive thankyou, and I hope I do not forget anyone. Julie Buxton is an absolute legend. I am still very good friends with her. She is an amazing human. Will Broadbent does the best graphics in town and the best videos. He is an amazing young man. It has been so great to watch him grow these last four years. He is an absolute gentleman, and I am very proud to have him as part of the team. Eve Cain-McAliece was a fantastic member of the team, particularly during the pandemic. She copped a lot of grief during that time and she handled it absolutely amazingly, so thank you very much to Eve. James Gan and Adam Abramovich were the OG team back in the day, when I first got elected. Thank you very much to both of those fantastic humans. Liam Pierides is a young, energetic bloke, and there is not much I ask that he does not do. In fact I do not think there is—he is just the Energizer bunny—so thank you so much to Liam. Patrick Kelly, we are like Shrek and Donkey. I am not sure who is Shrek and who is Donkey, but Patrick has just been amazing. I cannot thank him enough. He is the office manager, and he has gone above and beyond. He is the most amazing bloke and a great and dear friend, as are all of the people who have worked with me on an ongoing basis.

A big shout-out as well to Maria Avocone, my dad's partner, who is going through a really difficult time at the moment. I will send her a copy of this. I really wanted to get her name in *Hansard*. She is going through a very, very difficult time at the moment, so I want to say I wish her very well. I know that my dad, David Pearson, is doing a great job looking after and supporting her. Last and not least, my partner, Natasha Russo, my fiancée, is one of a kind, the best human, the best person I will ever meet. I am very glad that she has accepted my proposal to spend the rest of her life with me.

Members interjecting.

Mr TAYLOR: I know, right? She is a gorgeous human. I am sure Tash would like me to say this will not be my last speech in Parliament. I will be back again, and I will be back again because of the great support that I get from everyone around me. I commend this bill to the house.

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (12:05): I also rise to make a contribution to the Disability Amendment Bill 2022, a bill that is one of the key outcomes of the Disability Act 2006 review that has been underway for some time. Before I go into more details about the legislation, I want to raise an event that we are very proud of in the Thomastown electorate, where in the small suburb of Lalor there is an unassuming but thriving local bocce club called the Lalor United Bocci Social Club. This club on the weekend performed a most generous and compassionate act under the leadership of president Mr David Ellul. We celebrated their donation of \$100 000 to the Royal Children's Hospital. It was accepted by the Royal Children's Hospital philanthropic representative Philippa Prescott, who commented that she normally works with big corporations and wealthy donor organisations, highlighting just how significant and special the Lalor United Bocci Social Club is. This is a club made up of everyday people, hardworking members of our community that have saved and built funds through raffles, events, dinners and barbecues, and now they are providing that \$100 000 to the Royal Children's Hospital to treat children, many of whom have disabilities as well as other illnesses and injuries. I think any parent will know of the Royal Children's Hospital and will have visited there on many occasions.

This really demonstrates the multicultural nature of Victoria and the generosity of the multicultural community. The bocce club is made up of members of Victorian society that are of Maltese descent or background. It just shows that while they celebrate their Maltese heritage and background, they can also celebrate what it is to be Australian and to provide such a generous donation to the Royal Children's Hospital, who do so much work to treat and support children so that they can also thrive and have a good quality of life.

In finishing off on that, as I mentioned, there are supports that the children's hospital does provide for children with disability. Of course children grow up in many cases with disabilities that need continued support. This legislation that we are discussing and hopefully passing today is another aspect of the Victorian Andrews Labor government's work on making sure that those that may be perhaps more vulnerable in our society are given stronger protections to ensure that they are not exploited and that they are able to have access to good services, including services such as housing.

I just want to go to one section of this disability legislation that we are discussing today. It is looking to increase the rights of those with a disability by addressing gaps in residential right protections for people with disabilities that are in specialist disability accommodation. The reason we need to incorporate it in here is because it was unanticipated with the introduction of the part 12A provisions to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 that came into effect from July 2019 that perhaps there were some gaps in that legislation and we needed to ensure more holistic protection for residents that may not necessarily have been considered part of the protections in previous legislation. This is one of the important elements, especially when we know there have been a lot of media reports about some terrible situations and the exploitation and horrific behaviour of some individuals. It is sad that we have to constantly be changing legislation and introducing legislation in order to prevent loopholes and to respond to the very small proportion of people that do all they possibly can to get around systems in order to make a quick dollar for themselves. This legislation is important. While we are here on the last day of Parliament in the Assembly, this was a commitment—the government wanted to ensure that this legislation was introduced and debated and passed this year. That is why we are here talking about it now.

In line with other speakers, I would like to thank a few people in my office after such a hard year that we have had at the end of the term: Yammi El Rassi, who is the office manager; Lara Abuzaid and Holli Smith, who have both been with me for some time; others that have come in as casuals—Korey, Monika; and as Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety, Monique works with me in that position. She has done a power of work and just never stops. I thank them for all their support and all the work they have done for residents and constituents that have really shown resilience but also experienced a lot of disadvantage and hardship over the last 12 months. The people working with me have really stood up to that task in helping residents. On that note, I will finish my contribution.

Ms CRUGNALE (Bass) (12:11): I too rise to speak on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. The Disability Act 2006 was enacted in Victoria by the Bracks Labor government. In the 16 years since this act came into being we have seen many changes in the sector, one being the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018. The current legislation makes amendments to both of these acts and also to the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. Health care comes, as we know, in many forms, and one is housing. Stable, suitable housing is a critical parameter for both physical and mental health outcomes. Similarly, unstable or unsafe housing can have a devastating impact on a person. Our government made a public commitment to increase residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation, and we also committed to strengthening the quality and safeguards in services for people with disability. The reforms in this legislation acquit our commitment.

The legislation before this chamber is a result of submissions received during public consultations last year, and I thank the former Australian disability discrimination commissioner, Graeme Innes AM, for chairing the expert Disability Act review advisory group. Another notable contribution was that of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, chaired by Dr George Taleporos. I also thank the many stakeholders, including the Office of the Public Advocate, the health complaints commissioner, the Victorian Council of Social Service and Carers Victoria, for being part of this process.

The Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, in speaking to this bill last month, noted that there are more than 1.1 million people in our community living with a disability. The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 census counted 6.5 million Victorian community members. This means that approximately one in six Victorians live with a disability, and this legislation is aimed at safeguarding

and bettering the lives of not only the 17 per cent of our community who may need services but also those who work in the sector, and supporting their families of course.

I have often spoken about the diversity of my electorate of Bass and how it encompasses the outer suburbs of Melbourne, the agriculture areas around Koo Wee Rup and Lang Lang, the magnificent coastal stretches down in the Bass Strait and the quiet waters of Western Port Bay. I have often spoken about the diverse needs of my community as well, and this includes disability care for clients and service providers. It does not matter which part of the electorate you live in, the issues surrounding disability services are close to home.

One amendment in this bill streamlines the registration process for workers under the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018, and it will allow the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria to accept an NDIS clearance in lieu of a criminal history check. For example, a worker with a national clearance relocating to Victoria will be able to start work immediately rather than waiting for a state-based clearance check, reducing the red tape and duplication of the current system. We expect that this will encourage more disability workers to register and negate the additional payment requirements that currently exist. Workers will still need to prove that they have appropriate and adequate qualifications or experience to be a registered disability worker. They will still need to complete ongoing professional development and demonstrate that they are competent in the English language. There is no lessening of the profession, just of the red tape. We have all witnessed firsthand the shortage of care workers over the years of this pandemic, and we are committed to streamlining processes so that people can get back to work, ensuring that workers are professional and that those they care for are protected and safe.

Another important change will occur in the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. This bill will remove barriers for residences or group homes provided by disability service providers to receiving rights under the act. Residential rights and protections will also be afforded to residents in specialist disability accommodation under a residential rental agreement. Rental providers will be required to offer the option of entering into a specialist disability accommodation residential agreement. The bill also clarifies residential rights for those people subject to civil and criminal orders in disability residential services and parameters for service providers.

There will be a stronger and clearer information sharing provision as a result of this legislation. Unnecessary barriers that hinder sharing of critical information between service providers are being removed. The Disability Amendment Bill before the house will improve services, rights, protections and safeguards for people with disability. It complements and strengthens our ambitious reform agenda endorsed in the *Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022–2026*, and it satisfies the requirement of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, which provides that every person has the right to enjoy their human rights without discrimination—the most fundamental human right of all—along with the requirement that we have the right to equal protection of the law without discrimination. Again returning to the fine work of Dr George Taleporos in his message launching the plan, he wrote:

Victorians with disability are resilient and proud ... We still face segregation and exclusion.

That means one in six Victorians face segregation and exclusion because of a disability, and that is a problem for all of us, really. Bills like the one before us are part of a mainstream solution, along with mandating the Livable Housing Australia design guidelines silver standard as a minimum accessibility requirement in Victoria for new social housing construction through our \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build.

Lastly, this bill is not in isolation. It is the result of hard work by committed people. It is underpinned by the six systemic reforms that are at the core of the plan. The last two are disability-confident and inclusive workforces and effective data and outcomes reporting, which have been mentioned in my address. The other four, such as Aboriginal self-determination, are equally as important and are included in our government's commitment for the next four years to inclusive communities, health, housing and wellbeing, fairness and safety, and opportunity and pride. Across our state government

all departments have agreed that these six systemic reforms will be embedded in their policies, programs and services, and they will be reinforced by this stronger disability inclusion legislation, supporting the vision of a barrier-free Victoria. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) (12:19): What we are talking about is giving greater opportunity to people, giving them access and giving them a better life. I want to commend this bill straight off the top as a great initiative from the Victorian government. It is a new disability plan, and it will provide fairer communities and support every Victorian to fully participate in all areas of life. It is really about ability, and it is about access to opportunity. I think that if you have a look at what has been done through the NDIS scheme in particular, we have a national approach, and I want to particularly acknowledge Bill Shorten for his vision, plan and leadership and now for trying to make sure of the delivery. This is complex. It is groundbreaking. It will be one of the defining areas for extending equality of opportunity, and that is at the heart of why Labor in power matters.

I want to add from the recent Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference in Canada that I totally supported what was being done there for inclusion. This is for parliaments. There are some great ideas on how we can use new technology. In particular one of the speakers talked about how we can now look at bespoke technology. He has cerebral palsy, and he described how he is working with big ICT companies to look at how you can have tailor-made access through a mouse that is particularly designed for your access to be able to change the way you live. Bespoke technology will provide greater access. I was delighted as a representative of the Victorian Parliament to be there. The recommendation was that parliaments around the Commonwealth should introduce this, and I was delighted to move the amendment that they must introduce this, because I think the technology is the tool that can be harnessed and the creativity of how we can do this is wonderful. Here was a really smart application.

You can see that through harnessing this technology and people who are highly creative will work first of all for various people in these communities, but it will spread everywhere else. This will be innovation at a really high level. You can see how this will be the breakthrough and then you will see in the future how further adaptations will go into the entire community. I thought that was one of the best presentations I have heard on this innovation. I have already discussed this with Bill Shorten as the federal minister involved, and I had a quick discussion with the member for Ivanhoe as the new Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers here. I do want to connect everybody up on this because we have this world-leading ICT company that is now wanting to do this; we can get the software, we can get the bespoke pieces of equipment, and that just means that you can unlock the talent and give people access, because that is really all they are looking for.

Particularly with Parliament, this building—we know its history and its heritage—was never designed in that way, but here is a way we can, through smart technology, get over the barriers of the past that have been inherent. I want to put that on the record as something that I know the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will pursue as well, but it is really important to get that done. When you think of the reach and the breadth of the Commonwealth of Nations, we have been reminded very much this week of how significant it can be. You have G20 countries, you have the UK, India, Canada and Australia, and then you have all of these other nations as well. I think if we can use technology, it knows no barriers, and this is the value that we can have by coming up with smarter ideas. These will become ideas right through the community because they will make the difference, make the breakthrough. You create the opportunity, and you watch how people will thrive and the value that will be added through inclusion. I was delighted to represent the Victorian Parliament at that conference and to be able to move that amendment saying, rather than we should do it—because that is just a wishing and hoping kind of proposition—that we must do it, and that was unanimously supported. I think that is something we need to do to make it compelling so that we get the result.

Just on the bill itself, I want to commend the minister and the Victorian government. This is part of a long-term strategy for an inclusive Victoria, and the consultation was thorough. What it looks to do is to promote rights for people residing in residential services and those subject to compulsory treatment

and restrictive practices to give them better opportunity and to align and reduce duplication of requirements for the use and authorisation of restrictive practices for registered NDIS and disability service providers. I know it is really important to get this alignment right because just this week I heard Bill Shorten on the ABC talking about what we are trying to do to manage people's individual concerns and opportunities—because that is really what they are—and how to make it work for the specifics of each individual. We are all unique, so how do you actually harness the connection to make this have high value for each individual and give them the best opportunity in life? That is why Labor in power matters. It is about creating opportunity, connecting the disconnected and making sure that you allow them to flourish and to thrive so that everyone leads the best life they can. It is pretty simple in the abstract, but it is incredibly difficult to make work. Therefore you need innovation, you need to harness technology and you need the creative backing to make sure that can work.

Just on what has been going on at a federal level, I want to acknowledge the work that is being done to address the NDIS to make it fit for purpose and to make sure that people are included. I know that the Victorian government will look to continue to take out these barriers to inclusion. If you think through where this could have really good applications, what I said to the speaker from Canada is that we want to make a proof of this concept in Broadmeadows under the global learning village model, so here would be the final piece. We have got the models for lifelong learning, skills and jobs and better health and for connecting the disconnected. This is how you change the social determinants of health. We have now got models that are based around libraries as the foundation stone for the enlightenment. Then we have the health model, recently opened. We have another one centred around sport, but all the connectors are into lifelong learning.

I want to land this as my last contribution in this Parliament to give that opportunity to people so that we look at your ability—what you have and how we can harness that—and give you a better opportunity in life. If we can complete all of that, here is a perfect place to launch it. I would like to, whatever happens, be part of that at some time in the future because I think you have got to drive that. I have looked at technology-empowered leadership for more than two decades. We went from no library to a global learning village, an ideas lab, getting Silicon Valley to come and a multiversity. This would be the final critical addition.

Mr TAK (Clarinda) (12:29): I am delighted to rise today to speak on the Disability Amendment Bill 2022. It is even better to follow the member for Broadmeadows. I wish him all the best and thank him for his advocacy and strong representation for his electorate.

This is another important bill being delivered by this government and one that is very important to many of my constituents. Last month I had the pleasure of sitting down with Rev. Deacon Andrea Mayes from the Heatherton-Dingley Uniting Church as well as Mark Zirnsak, the Uniting Church senior social justice advocate, to discuss the importance of this reform and the difference that it will make to the lives of some of the members of the Heatherton-Dingley church. I have had the pleasure of working with Mark across several social justice issues in my short time here in Parliament. It was great to meet both him and Andrea to discuss this important reform that will enhance services, safeguards and most importantly protections. Social justice is a key principle of this government. Equality, fairness, promoting an inclusive society and a cohesive society—these are some of the pillars of the government's agenda. We can see that again here in this important legislation before us today.

There is an expectation from many stakeholders that this important legislation move quickly to address gaps in residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation and to strengthen equality and safeguards for people with disability. We see that expectation in the community, and we have also seen that through feedback received through the consultation process on the Disability Act 2006 on Engage Victoria in September 2021. Just on the consultation process, there was a considerable process conducted throughout 2021. The bill has been informed by submissions received during the public consultation process in 2021, engagement with the expert Disability Act review advisory group chair, Graeme Innes AM, Australia's former disability discrimination commissioner, and targeted

consultation across the sectors and government. This is a broad process and stakeholders are in broad agreement with the proposed reforms.

Further areas of the Disability Act are expected to be considered next year as part of stage 3 of the Disability Act review. This will enable more time for detailed consultation with the public advocate and other stakeholders as well as enabling the review to be informed by emerging recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability ahead of their final report in September 2023. I am looking forward to the recommendations and the outcome of that process. There are a host of critical amendments here which I am very happy to support. I hope they have broad support moving through this Parliament.

The bill forms part of stage 2 of the Disability Act review. Stage 1 of the review in 2019 made critical amendments to the Disability Act in readiness for the NDIS. Stage 2 has resulted in the development of the Disability Amendment Bill and the exposure draft for the disability inclusion bill. As mentioned, stage 3 is expected to occur in 2023 and will enable a more thorough review of complex forensic disability and safeguarding provisions, further consideration of stakeholder issues and examination of relevant state and commonwealth reform.

On the back of stage 2 there are three major elements of the bill, the first of which are important amendments to the Disability Act 2006. The act is being amended to promote rights for persons residing in residential services and those subject to compulsory treatment and restrictive practices, and to align and reduce duplication of the requirement for the use and authorisation of restrictive practices by registered NDIS providers and disability service providers. The amendments will also improve processes and practices relating to the supervision of treatment orders, provide clear legislative authority to disclose protected identifiable information and clarify the functions and responsibilities of the Secretary to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. These are extremely important and sensitive changes that need to be urgently delivered.

In addition to making changes to the Disability Act 2006 the bill will amend the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 to remove duplication in the worker screening process for the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria. This will result in the board recognising national police checks completed by workers as part of the delivery of the national disability insurance scheme service. These are also sensible and important changes.

Finally, the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 will also be amended to ensure that there are no gaps in residential rights protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation—again really important changes. Special residential protections were introduced as part 12A of the Residential Tenancies Act in 2019 to ensure that residential rights of people with disability living in specialist disability accommodation are upheld and protected alongside those of the rest of the Victorian community under the same legislation. The part 12A provisions are based on protections provided under the Disability Act 2006 for group homes and the mainstream residential rental protections under part 2 of the Residential Tenancies Act, with additional protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation, such as strengthened protections against evictions, provider obligations for maintenance and urgent repairs and tailored notification and information provisions. For example, the public advocate, the National Disability Insurance Agency and relevant funding authorities are to be notified when a resident is issued with a notice of temporary relocation or to vacate.

However, there is an issue with the current definition of an ‘SDA enrolled dwelling’ and an ‘SDA resident’ in the Residential Tenancies Act. With the current definitions it means that some residents are excluded from these protections. So the amendments will ensure that people currently excluded and all people who are residents of disability group homes within the meaning of the Disability Act can transition to these new protections. These are sensible and important changes and ones that I am happy to support here today.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers for bringing these important changes forward. We had the minister out in the Clarinda district earlier this month for the launch of the design of the new four-storey aged care facility at the Kingston Centre in Cheltenham. An amazing project, the \$134.6 million aged care facility will cater for 150 residents with more complex needs. The designs look amazing, and I am looking forward to working with the minister to deliver that important project and to deliver the changes here in this bill. Again, this is an important bill that will deliver increased rights and protections for those in disability residential services and specialist disability accommodation as well as improved services, addressing gaps and clarifying criteria and processes for compulsory treatment and placement in residential treatment facilities. These are important reforms that will enhance services, safeguards and protections for Victorians, and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Minister for Environment and Climate Action, Minister for Solar Homes) (12:39): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

RACING AMENDMENT (UNAUTHORISED ACCESS) BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Mr CARBINES:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr T BULL (Gippsland East) (12:40): It is a pleasure to rise and make some comments on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. In opening my speech I must say that racing is a great part of our state's and our nation's heritage. I note up-front that this bill is largely an industry-driven amendment bill that seeks to make those attending our race meetings more accountable and more responsible for their behaviours, and that is the reason why we will be supporting this legislation. But one must ask: here we are on the verge of spring with a number of major race meetings to be held over the carnival not only in the metropolitan area but across the length and breadth of Victoria, and yet we have this bill, which was introduced a number of weeks ago, not being brought on in the Assembly until the last day of sitting, with no hope of this bill going to the upper house and no hope of this bill receiving royal assent.

When we read the second-reading speech there is commentary from the Minister for Racing about how these are important reforms and how we need to get these processes in place. One could argue why, on the verge of the most important couple of months in our racing calendar, we have left this with no hope of it being able to pass through the Parliament when it has support from this side of the chamber—quite staggering. I know we have a new minister, and I think probably by his own admission one with relatively limited knowledge of the racing industry and on a steep learning curve, but I am not sure that he has twigged that spring is a big racing time here in this state. We should have got this bill introduced and brought on for debate far, far earlier than we did.

I also want to make a few other comments. Whilst we are supporting this bill, because the content of it is common sense, I will be very interested to see if our friends from the Greens party are prepared to come in and make a comment on the racing bill, because we know how anti-racing they are. But this bill is about behaviours on the racecourse and preventing situations where spectators interact, largely inappropriately, with the horses. This is a safety issue. We know the Greens hate racing, but I hope that they would see the common sense in this being a safety matter and that this bill addresses certain safety elements relating to the racing industry. I will be very, very keen to see what their approach is, whether they are going to have a commonsense approach or they are going to go on with their usual silliness about opposing everything to do with racing.

Racing does have a very, very long and proud history in this state, and anybody who is involved in the industry or has anything to do with it would know that. We have world-class racing and training facilities. It is an industry that employs many, many thousands of Victorians across the length and breadth of the state. The latest figures—and they go back a couple of years—are that the racing industry is worth \$4.3 billion to the Victorian economy, with over 33 000 full-time equivalent jobs and over 120 000 people directly involved in the industry. Obviously there are a lot of part-time workers when you are looking at stablehands, track riders and the like. It is a massive, massive industry here in Victoria.

I think it was only the week before last that I spent a day with my good friend the retiring member for Euroa and the new candidate, Annabelle, up there visiting horse studs in the area. It is an element of the racing industry that a lot of people do not get or understand. Euroa is the heartland of our breeding industry here in Victoria. We visited three studs on that day, which at this time of the year are 24/7 operations with not only the servicing of mares but the foaling down of all the mares from last year. We visited the Yulong stud, we visited the Godolphin stud and we visited the Swettenham Stud as well as visiting the Avenel Equine Hospital. That is just a very, very small snapshot and insight into what a massive industry this is. Each of those studs at this time of the year is a hive of activity, with people running around and undertaking this very important work in what is a multimillion-dollar contributor to the local economy in Euroa. Again, I repeat: that was just a small snapshot, but our breeding industry in Victoria has come ahead in leaps and bounds in the last decade, to the stage where we are now rivalling New South Wales, which for a long time was known as the breeding mecca of Australian racing.

When you take all these things into consideration, it just astounds me that some elected representatives who sit in this chamber and some who sit in the chamber on the other side of Queen's Hall are opposed to this great industry. I am obviously talking about the Greens and the Animal Justice Party, who openly say that they want to end racing. But when you have a think about some of the Greens policies, it is probably just in line with them wanting to ban most things that people enjoy—pastimes we enjoy and activities we enjoy, particularly rural people. The industry is and should be recognised as being a key economic driver in this state because that is very much what it is. It is not just about the Spring Racing Carnival. We see racing on at Caulfield at the moment. That will then go to Flemington and then on to Sandown for the end of the carnival. Right throughout that period we have a huge amount of significant country race meetings—a lot of country cups and other feature events—that are so, so important to the economies of those local towns. If you have a look at our picnic circuit, the annual picnic race meetings that go on in my electorate up at Canni Creek, which is just out of Buchan, they get a massive crowd there every year, and those funds go toward supporting the bush nursing centre in that area and they go to supporting the primary school. They are really a strong part of those communities and their culture.

The member for South-West Coast has just come into the chamber, and she would have a great understanding—I am sure when she makes her contribution she will mention this—of what the Warrnambool racing carnival does for that township, that area and that economy down there. It is absolutely massive. But still we have people who want to come in here as elected representatives and try and get rid of this magnificent and fantastic industry. The races are part of our fabric, they are part of our make-up, and we need to support racing because it is such an important industry. We on this side of the house support not only this bill but obviously the industry—well, most of us on this side of the house; there are a couple of Greens who sit up there who do not support it. But the majority of us do, and we need to recognise the great, great benefits that it brings to our state.

I want to get on to some of the elements of this bill and the provisions included in it. The first of those is to prohibit unauthorised access to certain areas of racecourses during race meetings and official trials. The trials are now big events where a lot of horses are schooled so that they can be presented to race effectively on race day. I am advised that there are no changes to the status quo of what exists now in legislation, but what the bill does is formalise those permissions that are included. It introduces

new charges for all race meetings and official trial meetings as well and provides enforcement for these provisions.

A key point that I will make is that what is included in this bill is currently covered in the Major Events Act 2009, which currently manages crowd provisions at eight race meetings in Victoria. When that was introduced originally into the Major Events Act these rules, if you like, were put in place for the major meetings of the spring carnival. We are now at a stage where racing is much bigger than those eight major meetings. We have more major meetings on city tracks, but we also have an enormous amount, as I mentioned earlier, of very, very important meetings right across the length and breadth of the state, from Mildura in the north down to Warrnambool in the south-west, up to Bairnsdale in the east and everywhere in between. This bill seeks to include equivalent arrangements to the Major Events Act and to duplicate them so that it covers all of those meetings, and we certainly support this.

The main area of change in this legislation sets standards for behaviour at certain locations on a course. That could be adjacent to mounting yards and obviously near where the horses are running and competing on the track itself. It relates to throwing or kicking projectiles, causing projectiles to enter a restricted area and climbing on fences or barricades that are adjacent to a restricted racing area. It will be interesting to see—as I said earlier, these are very important safety measures, and it would be ludicrous for any member of this chamber or any party in this chamber to come in here and not support those increased safety elements that we want to put in place. Those sorts of behaviours when they occur—and unfortunately we do see idiots trying to invade racetrack areas; they have run onto the course proper when horses have been coming down the straight to try and make a point that they are anti-racing—are stupidity at its greatest level. They lead to obviously the horses acting in an unpredictable manner. They can lead to not only jockey injuries but impacts on crowds and crowd injuries as well. For the patrons that we see taking part in this stupidity there are generally two reasons: they are usually either drunk and doing something stupid or they have got some anti-racing banner strapped to them and they are trying to make some ridiculous point in relation to that.

One small area of concern that I believe the minister needs to address more specifically is where the second-reading speech states that these new laws are to be enforced by police and authorised officers. Given police do not have a regular presence at our non-major race meetings, if there are no police there, according to the second-reading speech, the enforcement will fall to these authorised officers. But if by ‘authorised officers’ hypothetically we are talking about PSOs, they will not be there either. This bill intends to make stewards authorised officers and, where required, some club personnel. While there will be instances where these authorised officers will be required, I certainly appreciate they are not common. I respect that. But I am not too sure that the stewards and racing club personnel on race days have that much spare time that when required they can act as authorised officers. These new authorised officers, we are told, will be identified pre race meeting and they will be trained. Perhaps some members from the government might want to cover off on this when they make their second-reading contributions. We need to have a situation where we are sure there are people with the time available who are not otherwise engaged in what is a busy job on race day—we need some people with flexibility in their time to be able to act when needed.

I do note that all the codes and various interest groups have been pushing for this outcome and these stronger and tougher rules, so it is largely an industry-driven bill. I hope we do not have to deal later this day with any pedantic, stupid amendments from the Greens. It will not get to the Animal Justice Party in the upper house. Hopefully common sense can prevail and this bill will pass. It is a bill that we should support because it does rule out those unruly and potentially dangerous behaviours.

I will conclude my speech by saying it is very disappointing that a bill that is going to afford more protections on racecourses, a bill that is going to result in punishments for inappropriate behaviours and therefore put people on notice that when they go onto racecourses they must behave appropriately. It is extraordinarily disappointing that it is being debated on the last sitting day of the 59th Parliament with no hope of it going through and being in place for this upcoming spring carnival. It was introduced, I think, three or four sitting weeks ago and not brought on, and now we are going to leave

this in limbo, sitting on the table for someone to deal with in 2023. I find that extraordinarily disappointing on the eve of the spring carnival. With those comments, I will conclude my contribution.

Mr CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (12:54): It is with some pleasure that I rise this afternoon to make my contribution on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. I must say, in reflecting on this bill I very much turn to a fair chunk of my working life where I had the privilege of working for trade unions advocating for the health and safety of the members in that particular industry. I know many on this side of the chamber have indeed spent a significant portion of their lives doing exactly the same thing. I very much come to this place with a view that every single worker in the state of Victoria, no matter the work they do, has a right to a safe workplace, whether they be someone who works in the construction sector, perhaps as a rigger, a carpenter, a concreter; whether they work as a career firefighter, with of course the dangers that exist in that work; indeed whether they work in a coupe harvesting timber for the construction sector and our paper mills; or indeed whether they work in the racing sector. Every single one of those workers, in my view, across the state of Victoria has a right to be able to go to work and perform the work that they do in a safe way, in a way that does not expose them to dangers. Largely the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 as we know it was an instrument of Labor in government, where Labor politicians strove to structure an act that provided those workers the opportunity to identify risks and to regulate safe systems of work so that they could perform their work and be able to return to their loved ones at the end of a shift, at the end of the work that they do each and every day, in a healthy way—a way in which their work did not endanger them.

Of course we know that some vocations, some occupations, do have inherent risks and do have inherent occupational safety challenges that are unique to their sector. Indeed when we look at the racing sector, we are dealing with animals. Those animals are obviously often travelling at very large speeds, and they do weigh a significant amount—a racehorse is somewhere in the vicinity of 400 to 500 kilograms, as identified. Inherently that does expose those that are working around those animals, who have been inevitably appropriately trained to be around those animals, to some inherent dangers. We need to make sure, I think appropriately, that those workers have the opportunity to conduct their work, their lawful work that they do, in as healthy and safe a way as possible. This act very much from my perspective will ensure that these workers will be able to continue to go about their work.

From my perspective I am not a regular racegoer. I cannot remember the last time I went to a race meeting. It would not have been in this term of Parliament. I think the Avoca racing carnival, which is a picnic-type race, I may have gone to about six or seven years ago. That is probably the last time I went near a racetrack. So I am not someone who enjoys these activities as part of my social life, but I do very much recognise that those workers deserve that right, that opportunity, to go about their work in a lawful way and in a way in which those inherent dangers are regulated, are recognised—

Sitting suspended 1.00 pm until 2.01 pm.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

SAFER CARE VICTORIA

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Minister for Health. With a heartbreaking seven children having died in Victorian emergency departments since April, senior paediatricians wrote to the government pleading not to disband the clinical committee that provides oversight and expert health advice, yet the committee, the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Network, was disbanded by the government. Why was this decision allowed to occur against the advice of senior paediatricians?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:02): Can I first take this opportunity to offer my condolences to the families whose children have died in tragic

circumstances. As is always the case, Safer Care Victoria inquires into every unexpected death or adverse experience or outcome in our healthcare system, and that work will now be underway or indeed is already underway in some of those circumstances. Of course anyone, but particularly a child, experiencing harm in a place where they expect to get better and to be well cared for is a tragedy, so my focus as minister is on doing all that I can to make sure, with Safer Care Victoria, that we learn from these experiences. Safer Care Victoria is an independent agency. It was formed by our government in 2017. It has a responsibility to work with healthcare services and healthcare workers to understand what has happened so that parents, in this case, get the answers that they deserve. I might point out that indeed in some of these instances the coroner may well also be involved.

In relation to the question regarding the Paediatric Clinical Network I can confirm that Safer Care Victoria, which works every day to develop a culture of open reporting and transparency in our healthcare system and of learning from mistakes when they are made, has been refining its current clinical engagement strategy. They are now putting in place a learning health network system. This is a system that is utilised overseas and has been clinically reviewed, and indeed the *Lancet* and the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* have both recommended this approach. Paediatrics is at the heart of each of these learning health networks. Be they focused on acute care, perioperative care or cardiac care, paediatrics is included as part of each and every one of these networks. So again these are very distressing times, but I want all Victorians to be assured that here in Victoria, where these events occur, we will look into them, we will find out what has happened and what has gone wrong and we will make sure that we learn from it so it never happens again.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): Record numbers of sentinel events or critical mistakes involving children have been occurring under this government, and tragically some children have died. A further 33 Victorians have died because they could not get through to 000. Victorians are dying in the back of ambulances waiting for beds, and seven Victorian children, as we know, have died in emergency departments in the last five months. What will it take for the government to finally admit that Victoria's health system is in crisis and lives are being lost through continued government failure?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:05): Once again I will make the point that any death that occurs in our healthcare system is reviewed, or can be reviewed, by Safer Care Victoria or indeed by the coroner as is appropriate. In terms of determining the cause of death, this is for clinicians and the coroner and certainly not for politicians.

The questions in relation to ESTA have been well canvassed in this place and elsewhere. I am confident and I know that the Minister for Emergency Services is implementing and we are seeing change take effect at ESTA to ensure that we are now meeting the response times that are set down for them.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: PENTLAND HILLS BUS CRASH

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:06): I rise to update the house on a terrible incident in the Pentland Hills area on the Western Highway this morning. A school bus collided with a truck; I think we are all aware of and have seen the very graphic footage of that incident. I thought it appropriate to update the house that first responders were on the scene very quickly and provided care and support and transport for a number of those 27 female students from Loreto College in Ballarat. There were four adults, the bus driver and of course the truck driver involved as well. There was one child that was airlifted to the Royal Children's Hospital, and we send our best wishes, our thoughts and our prayers to each and every parent, each and every student, the staff members and their families. This will be an incredibly challenging time for them. The girls were headed for an overseas camp, a space camp involving NASA. They were travelling overseas on what would have been a trip of a lifetime. When you look at the footage of that incident, it is by the grace of something else that it was not more tragic, that there were not lives lost. Our thoughts are with those who are in serious conditions and are receiving the very best of care.

On behalf of the government and the broader community I spoke with Michelle Brodrick, the principal of Loreto, earlier today and provided her with a single senior point of contact so that she does not, at this very difficult and stressful time, need to navigate her way through the government. We have provided her with an assurance that anything any family needs will be provided.

Can I thank staff at Ballarat Base, across Western Health and at the Royal Children's Hospital and of course our first responders for their commitment, their high levels of skill and their dedication to providing care in the most difficult of circumstances. We know what Loreto students are made of—we work with them every day—and we send our very best wishes to everybody in that school community.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is to the Minister for Health. Gary of Glen Iris is 65 years old. He has rheumatoid arthritis and as a result of this has developed severe neuropathy in his right foot and severe deformity of his toes. He is in constant pain. He was first referred to have foot surgery to relieve the neuropathy and deformity of his toes six years ago. He is still waiting. Gary is in pain and virtually housebound. He cannot leave because he cannot walk properly. How is it acceptable that a Victorian like Gary is still waiting for vital surgery six years after his initial referral?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:09): Obviously I understand this must be a very difficult time for Gary. I, as I always do, welcome the opportunity for the opposition to provide me—with Gary's permission of course—his details so that I can inquire into why his wait has been so long. I certainly hope that Gary is accessing care through his general practitioner for both his pain and other consequences as a result of his rheumatoid arthritis.

Across our system we have seen during the last 2½ years unprecedented pressure on our healthcare system. The decision about when or where a person accesses surgery is a clinical decision. It is not a political decision. I am interested in working to support Victorian people. I have a genuine commitment, as does everyone on this side, to doing all that we can to ensure Victorians can access the health care that they need. That is why our government has invested year on year on year into our health services. It is why we have the \$1.5 billion pandemic catch-up plan. It is why we have recruited an additional 22 000 healthcare workers. It is why we have plans in place to recruit and train a further 24 000 healthcare workers. The people of Victoria can be guaranteed that under a re-elected Andrews Labor government we will continue to invest in health care, we will implement our pandemic repair plan and we will deliver the health care that Victorians need.

Mr GUY (Bulleen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): Walking and exercise help with both neuropathy and rheumatoid arthritis, yet Gary has been let down by the health system due to years of mismanagement by the government. He is here in the Parliament today. What confidence can the minister give Gary so that he knows that after six years of waiting he will get the surgery he needs at a time he needs it—as he sits as one of the 87 000 Victorians now on the elective surgery waiting list—before his condition gets worse?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:12): Once again I make the point—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask for the Minister for Health to be heard in silence.

Ms THOMAS: Thank you. I make the point that I am more than happy to follow up Gary's case for him. But again, our government have recently purchased two private hospitals, which will enable us to deliver an additional 15 000 public surgeries every single year, an initiative that was opposed by those on the other side. One thing—

Mr Walsh: On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance the minister has confirmed that she is happy to follow this up. Gary is in the gallery. Will the minister actually meet with Gary after question time—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of The Nationals knows that is not a point of order.

Ms THOMAS: Once again, Gary can be assured that under an Andrews Labor government we will not be cutting and closing healthcare services. That is the record of those on the other side of the chamber. We have a pandemic repair plan in place—\$12 billion—\$1.5 billion to address the planned surgeries in our state, and we will deliver on that.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, you are being very disrespectful in the chamber today.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: RAIL NETWORK

Mr CARROLL (Niddrie—Minister for Public Transport, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Minister for Industry Support and Recovery, Minister for Business Precincts) (14:14): I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is transforming public transport right through regional Victoria. We know regional Victoria is booming—record unemployment, strong agriculture, strong tourism and, just around the corner, the Commonwealth Games, and there is the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery right there—but our Big Build is transforming communities. It is giving rail infrastructure and jobs for local people. We know part of the Big Build is a \$4 billion Regional Rail Revival, upgrading every regional railway line right across our great state—more than 20 train stations being upgraded, \$8 billion regional stock being put on the line, brand new VLocitys. Isn't it great that we have got the Geelong Cats playing in the grand final this weekend? I know the train driver over there, the outgoing member for Lara, will want to be captain—along with the members for Bellarine, Geelong and South Barwon—of a Cats convoy coming from Geelong, going to the station that has been upgraded at Waurm Ponds, getting on a brand new train that has been delivered by the Andrews Labor government, and getting to the MCG. There will be extra services before the game, extra services after the game and extra services for the grand final parade.

That is what happens when you invest in transport. Those opposite, we know, had a rolling stock agenda that was behind the ACT government. They did not order one tram when they were last in office. Compare a government that is doing what matters with an opposition that does not know what it is doing. We are getting on with the job, making sure our transport is transport for the 21st century, addressing cost-of-living issues and climate change and investing in the future for young people, for students, for every Victorian, no matter where they live, whether it is Melbourne or Geelong. Go Cats!

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Health. Felicity from Warrnambool called 000 for an ambulance on Monday last week at 7.00 pm due to being in agony with severe abdominal pain and was told it would take 27 minutes to arrive. Three hours later and still waiting, with constant vomiting, crying in pain and her boyfriend trying to help her, they called twice more, but no-one answered their calls. Eventually giving up, Felicity passed out. Is a woman passing out waiting for an ambulance that never arrived yet another example of what the Premier describes as the government's world-class health care for country Victorians?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:17): Obviously this was a distressing time for Felicity, but I want to make this point: that under our government we have seen record investment in our ambulance services. We have delivered an additional 2200 ambos, and indeed we continue to recruit. This year alone we have seen 400 more recruits commence with Ambulance Victoria. Last year we had 700. I am very, very proud of what

we are doing to deliver services in rural and regional Victoria. Indeed, of the 400 recruits that are on deck this year so far, 26 will join the Barwon south-western region; 23 will join the Gippsland region in Bairnsdale, Cowes, Moe and Morwell; 24 will join the Grampians region in Ararat, Horsham and Stawell; 50 will join the Hume region in Mansfield, Wangaratta and Wodonga; and of course we will see more ambos in Mildura, Gisborne and Swan Hill. Of course there have been a range of other investments that our government—

Ms Britnell: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance. Last Monday Felicity called for an ambulance and nothing came. We are wanting to know why the health system is so poor now, not into the future, Minister—now.

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

Ms THOMAS: I will make this point: that our government continues to invest in our ambulance services. We are recruiting more paramedics. We are introducing the paramedic practitioner model, which will have particular application in rural and regional Victoria. We will not be going to war with our paramedics. We will not be cutting their funding.

But I do need to say that this has been a very challenging time for our health services, and indeed this has been experienced not just here in Victoria but across the nation and indeed around the world. When it comes to our ambulance services, we have just come off the busiest period ever, a record 16 per cent increase in the number of call-outs that they have received. That is why we will keep investing in paramedics. That is why we will continue to grow pathways for them. That is why we will continue to open new stations across Victoria, and we will stand by the workforce to support them to deliver the services that Victorians need and deserve.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (14:20): In Victoria's south-west, women have given birth on the side of the road, health services in Portland have been cut and ambulances are failing to show up to emergencies due to under-resourcing. Recently an 80-year-old woman waited in emergency on a trolley for 22 hours, people are being treated in corridors in Warrnambool hospital and 000 calls are still going unanswered. Why has the government allowed our country health system to deteriorate to such a shambolic condition that it is now putting Victorians' lives at risk?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:21): I have to reject the premise of the question. It is not true. There is no truth in the assertion that there have been funding cuts to health services in rural and regional Victoria. Maternity services have returned to Portland—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Barwon can leave the chamber for 1 hour.

Member for South Barwon withdrew from chamber.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I want to hear the questions. I want to hear the minister's answers.

Ms Britnell: On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is misleading the house. Portland has had services cut.

The SPEAKER: The member for South-West Coast knows that that is not a point of order.

Ms THOMAS: Only this morning I announced another four dual crews to serve country communities. This is part of a commitment to increase crewing in 15 crews right across rural and regional Victoria. We are investing in the Warrnambool hospital. But I will tell you what we will not do: we will not close 15 hospitals in rural and regional Victoria like those on the other side did.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: ENERGY POLICY

Ms D’AMBROSIO (Mill Park—Minister for Energy, Minister for Environment and Climate Action, Minister for Solar Homes) (14:23): I rise to update the house on our record-busting, job-creating, nation-leading climate action agenda being delivered by the Andrews Labor government. Yesterday I was absolutely delighted to announce that we smashed our 2020 emissions target and slashed our emissions by more than any other jurisdiction in the country. Our target to halve emissions by 2030 will make sure that we keep going, with more jobs, more renewable energy and more climate action. Thanks to our policies we have delivered the largest annual increase in renewable energy of any state ever and the most rapid decarbonisation. We are the first state to unlock offshore wind. We have made Victoria the home of batteries—the Big Battery, of course, and smaller batteries in neighbourhood areas, including one that we recently opened in Fitzroy, much to the member for Richmond’s delight. We put solar in the hands of 200 000 households through our Solar Homes program, creating 5500 jobs. We have built an incredible supply chain in energy technology. Our policies have meant more work for Wilson Transformers in Glen Waverley, a business I know that the member for Glen Waverley knows very, very well. It has meant incredible training opportunities, such as the first wind tower training facility in the country, built at Federation University, something that the member for Buninyong is absolutely delighted about.

There are those who complain and say, ‘What have the Romans ever done for us?’, knowing full well that we are leading the country on climate action. Then there are those who pretend they are in search of the climate change Holy Grail, except the horse clapping is just King Arthur prancing about to the sound of coconuts being banged together by his squires. We have a lot more action to do. We have got a lot of work ahead of us. Only a Labor government understands climate change and only a Labor government will ever deliver real climate action. It is about delivering what matters, and we will do it.

OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) (14:25): My question today is to the Premier. As we all know, burning gas makes climate change worse, yet the federal Labor government recently opened up new oil and gas exploration off the coast of Victoria in an area the size of Tasmania. Usually gas projects cannot go ahead without the approval of both the commonwealth and state ministers as they have joint authority for decision-making in gas drilling projects. If re-elected, will the Andrews government refuse to support this gas drilling?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:26): I thank the member for Melbourne for her question. She has asked me about federal government activity, and I am more than happy to assist her in making representations to the federal government. If there are decisions that have been made and she would like further clarification about those decisions, then I am happy to—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Melbourne!

Mr ANDREWS: I missed that. I am sorry, I was still recovering from the climate change advice that I just received from the member for Brighton. He wanted me to legislate by 2030. Maybe there will be a lot of electricity needed that day because it will be a very cold day in Victoria when we take advice from the member for Brighton on climate change action. As for the member for Melbourne and her question, I think it is a question that has a hypothetical in there, and we take nothing for granted in relation to 26 November. We will be out there working very hard, campaigning very hard and—

Mr Hibbins: On a point of order, Speaker, on relevance, the question—

Members interjecting.

Mr Hibbins: I know they do not want to hear about their gas drilling, but if I could get a bit of silence from the government. The question specifically went to state government approvals of

commonwealth decisions to open up areas for gas drilling, and I would ask you to bring the Premier back to actually answering the question. And further on the point of order—

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Prahran has made his point of order. The Premier was being relevant to the question that was asked, and a point of order is not an opportunity to repeat the question.

Mr ANDREWS: The member raised a question about the work of Labor governments and climate change. There is only one group that is completely irrelevant to that work, and that is of course the political party who asked this question. Because you see there is climate change talk and there is climate change action. There is a transition and then there is the search for perfection that is of no consequence because it is never about a megawatt of extra power, it is never about even one wind turbine, it is never about actually making the transition and delivering a decarbonised economy, lower emissions, a higher percentage of energy generated by renewable sources, thousands and thousands of jobs—and good jobs; high-skilled, high-paid jobs. That work is never delivered by the questioning of the Greens; it is delivered by the action of Labor governments.

And given—directly relevant—the member asked me about the federal Labor government, I will say to the member for Melbourne that it is very refreshing that after nine years and about 19 different energy plans from that miserable excuse of a Morrison government we have got a Labor government that believes in science, believes in physics and understands that we are all contributing to a warming planet and that we need to make this change, not talk about it.

Mr Newbury interjected.

Mr ANDREWS: The member for Brighton says ‘Legislate it’. Again, do not hold your breath—or perhaps you should—waiting for us to take climate change action advice from the likes of you. We just won’t. Isn’t it great when the teals get out there? There is nothing like a convert. Ring me when you arrive in Damascus, my friend. The words of the Greens, the half-truths of the Liberals or action, a plan, delivery, jobs—real action on climate change—that is what Labor offers and that is what only Labor will deliver.

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) (14:30): The Premier would like to talk about state government action on climate change, so let us talk about the fact that this Andrews government is allowing three new gas drilling projects to go ahead: Beach Energy’s gas drilling near the Twelve Apostles, Esso’s plans for a gas power plant at Hastings and Viva Energy’s plans for an import terminal at Corio Bay. You cannot stop the problem of climate change if you are also pouring fuel on the fire. If re-elected, will the Andrews government change track and not support these gas projects?

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave—Premier) (14:31): My honourable friend the minister for climate change action asked the question, ‘What have the Romans ever done?’. The real question today is: what have the Greens ever done? They are the greatest contributors to global warming through hot air and talk—no action whatsoever. In fact we had a chance as a nation some time ago to put in place a world-leading scheme, and because it was not unicorn perfect they voted it down.

Mr Hibbins: On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier is using this opportunity to attack the Greens and not answer the question. The question went to specific projects, and he is not answering the question. I ask you, Speaker, to bring the Premier back to actually answering the question asked in question time by the member for Melbourne.

Members interjecting.

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

Mr ANDREWS: I will tell the member for Melbourne and the rather agitated member for Prahran what a future Labor government will do: a future Labor government, with the strong support of the

Victorian community—that is what we will be campaigning for—if we are given that great gift, will not be talking about climate change, we will be getting on and doing something about it. We will leave the commentary to the commentators, those who sit in the cheap seats. Nothing is ever good enough unless of course they the ones that ought get credit for it. Shame on you.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: BIG HOUSING BUILD

Mr PEARSON (Essendon—Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Housing) (14:33): I rise today to update the house on the Andrews Labor government’s landmark Big Housing Build. We have invested a record \$5.3 billion to build more than 12 000 new homes, because only Labor governments deliver on housing. While the opposition were busy shamefully slamming our housing build in Brighton, this side of the house was doing what we have always done: doing what matters. I am delighted to report that we have now exceeded the halfway milestone, with 6300 homes completed or underway. These homes are modern, accessible, safe and energy efficient, and we have not wasted a day in making sure that we deliver for the Victorians who need it most.

What is next in the Big Housing Build pipeline? In early 2023 our new housing developments in Ascot Vale and Ashburton will be complete, delivering 378 new social and affordable homes. How good is that for the member for Mount Waverley? Just recently I was with the member for Hawthorn visiting the Bills Street housing redevelopment, delivering more than 200 social and affordable homes. Over in Dandenong we have delivered housing in partnership with Aboriginal Housing Victoria, because the Andrews Labor government is committed to providing self-determined, culturally safe housing for First Peoples living in Victoria. And let us not forget about the huge \$1.25 billion pipeline of works right across regional Victoria. For example, in Ballarat the hardworking members for Wendouree and Buninyong were out on site with me earlier this month and were thrilled to see the progress being made to deliver more than 300 social and affordable homes.

Unlike those opposite, this government can deliver on multiple priorities at once. We are doing what matters: supporting vulnerable Victorians and supporting thousands of jobs to boost our economy. Those opposite may talk, but this government is about action. We will continue to deliver our nation-leading Big Housing Build, supporting Victorians every single step of the way.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:35): My question is to the Minister for Health. The minister stated to this house that members of Parliament needed to obtain consent before she was able to comment on or action their concerns in relation to health matters of constituents. Did the minister receive written consent from Kylie or Jason Hennessy before inquiring about Kylie’s inability to get an MRI in Victoria to diagnose her brain tumour before she publicly spoke about it to the media?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:36): It is important to point out that it was not actually an MRI, it was an fMRI that Ms Hennessy was seeking, and of course it is exceptionally important because this is a highly specialised procedure. I became aware of Ms Hennessy’s case when it was reported on the front page of the *Herald Sun* and indeed was further reported across a range of media outlets—and, I might say, on the Twitter accounts of a number of those in the opposition. It was public knowledge that Ms Hennessy needed an fMRI—

Ms Britnell interjected.

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

Member for South-West Coast withdrew from chamber.

Ms THOMAS: and that Ms Hennessy made a decision to travel to Adelaide to access the procedure, so I made an inquiry in relation to the technology. There was no breach at any time of Ms Hennessy’s privacy and personal details.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (14:37): Last sitting week the minister told the house:

I cannot just ring up a hospital and say ‘Can you tell me about so and so?’ because that would be entirely inappropriate. Patient confidentiality is vital, so we require their consent. I need to know that the patient consents to their information being shared.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, this is a matter about a person’s health. I would ask you to be respectful.

Ms STALEY: With Mr Hennessy stating that the government never obtained written consent from him or his wife despite obtaining private details of their case and speaking about it publicly to the media, does the minister have any intention of apologising to the Hennessys for breaking the confidentiality she said was so important?

Ms THOMAS (Macedon—Minister for Health, Minister for Ambulance Services) (14:38): The inquiries that I made and was quite clear about were in relation to the availability of the fMRI machines in our health services. In terms of Ms Hennessy, any information that I repeated was what had only been reported in the media. I have not been able to make any contact with Ms Hennessy because I do not have any of her personal details. However, if she wishes to approach me—and indeed via you, member for Ripon—I am more than happy to speak with her. But I do not have her details, and I have not breached her confidentiality or privacy.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Premier to come to order.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS: RAIL NETWORK

Ms ALLAN (Bendigo East—Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (14:39): For the past eight years the Andrews government has been doing what matters when it comes to delivering road and rail projects that Victorians have come to rely on, and they have also come to know that it is only the Andrews Labor government that will continue this work and continue to support jobs in this area. Just this morning there was another great example of this. We released further details on Melbourne’s airport rail line. It will be a new train line for Melbourne’s west that will include a brand new station at Keilor East, or East Keilor, which the member for Niddrie is very pleased about. This is a project that has been talked about for decades, and cities around the world—

Mr Andrews: It’s been announced a few times too.

Ms ALLAN: I will get to that. Cities around the world have a train line to the airport, and now Victorians will too. While those opposite said they would deliver an airport rail, they did not. But hang on a minute, they did do something: they produced those fake train tickets. Well, we are building the real thing and supporting the 8000 workers who will be working on this project—and their families.

Some people say that rail lines are nice to have. I say to the Leader of the Opposition and his Liberal-Nationals colleagues that for the families who rely on those pay packets and the Victorians who rely on those train lines to get to work, to get to school and, yes, to get to medical appointments, they are a must-have. In regional Victoria we know very well that rail lines are also more than a nice-to-have, they are a must-have. They were particularly a precious thing when the Liberal Party and the National Party were shutting down country train lines.

I have had the opportunity to work with all my regional colleagues, and a few over there as well, as we go about upgrading and rebuilding our regional network on every single regional passenger line. It is only the Andrews Labor government that will continue this investment and support these jobs.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

Legislative Assembly

3791

The SPEAKER: Order! That was the last question time for the 59th Parliament. Thank you, members.

Mr Wells: On a point of order, Speaker, I have some unanswered questions—6370, 6450, 6480—about delays at Monash hospital, hospital parking fees and a lack of funding for the schools in Rowville.

Ms Kealy: I would like to raise a point of order, Speaker, regarding overdue questions on notice—*Members interjecting.*

The SPEAKER: Order! Members, there is too much noise in the chamber.

Ms Kealy: which have not been answered within the required time frame. Question 6071 to health was due in November last year; question 6183, again to health; 6478 to transport infrastructure; 6488 to education; and 6528 regarding education also. I would appreciate you following these up given it is the last sitting day today.

The SPEAKER: Those matters will be followed up.

Mr McCurdy: On a point of order, Speaker. I also have three questions that need following up: 6669, 6398 and 6394. Some of these go back to earlier in the year, and I would appreciate them being followed up.

Ms Vallence: On a point of order, Speaker, to the Minister for Housing, this is the fourth time that I have raised this point of order about housing affordability, accessibility and homelessness in the Yarra Ranges, adjournment 6388—also, to the Minister for Mental Health, to provide funding for the Lilydale Youth Hub because the Labor government's funding is running out, adjournment 6458; and to the Minister for Education, to support upgrades at Yarra Hills Secondary College, adjournment 6492.

Constituency questions

WARRANTYTE ELECTORATE

Mr R SMITH (Warrandyte) (14:44): (6536) My constituency question today is directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Ringwood-Warrandyte Road between the Warrandyte Bridge and Falconer Road has seen a severe deterioration over the past couple of months, with large potholes now becoming a feature of the road, causing locals to swerve to avoid them. As a frequent user of this road, I agree with the number of constituents who have raised their concerns about the quality of the road. One constituent wrote to me, saying:

I drive a truck, that road costs me damaged stock ...

Ringwood-Warrandyte Road is the main road that runs through the notorious Five Ways intersection, and the minister would be well aware of the issues associated with this intersection and the urgent need for works to upgrade this intersection. The deterioration of Ringwood-Warrandyte Road is yet another hazard added to this intersection, and concerningly it seems it might take a fatality for this government to finally act. My question is: when is the government going to fix this road?

TARNEIT ELECTORATE

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarneit) (14:45): (6537) My question is for the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services. Just two weeks ago the Premier announced a fantastic initiative to train more nurses to support the expansion of Victoria's health system. We know there has been some immense pressure on our healthcare workers lately and that our hospitals have been struggling. There is no doubt about that. But over the past couple of years our government has been getting on and delivering the health infrastructure that is needed to meet the health demands of our growing community. In Melbourne's west we have built and opened the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, we are upgrading Werribee Mercy Hospital's emergency department, and to top it off we are building new hospitals in Footscray

and Melton and a community hospital in Point Cook. But all of this infrastructure is meaningless without the staff needed to run it, so my question for the minister is this: how will this announcement benefit my community in Melbourne's west, who rely on our local health system?

GIPPSLAND SOUTH ELECTORATE

Mr D O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (14:46): (6538) My question is to the Minister for Housing, and I ask: what action is he taking to deliver additional social housing and also assist in the private rental housing market in my electorate of Gippsland South? This week I was contacted by a constituent who had been told by a private real estate agent that two-bedroom rentals averaged \$900 a fortnight in her town, and her maximum disability support pension payment is only \$1026. We have investigated further some local areas. In Leongatha there are currently just six rental properties available. So I seek from the minister, noting his answer in question time: what social housing is being provided under the government's Big Housing Build program in the Gippsland South electorate, and indeed what action is he taking to ensure there is more availability of private rental housing—not just fairer rules for tenants but more availability and affordability—in Gippsland South?

BAYSWATER ELECTORATE

Mr TAYLOR (Bayswater) (14:47): (6539) Free TAFE—it has given over 100 000 people the skills they need for the jobs they want, and it is an Andrews Labor government that is backing in TAFE every step of the way. My constituency question is to the Minister for Higher Education. How many Knox residents have benefited from the Labor government's free TAFE initiative? We should be extremely proud of the TAFE system that we have today. Over 100 000 students have benefited from now over 70 free TAFE courses. This means more people are getting the skills they need for the jobs they want. While the Liberals cut funding to TAFEs across our state, closing them and leaving them to fall into ruin, we have proudly rebuilt and invested in TAFE, not only because it is the right thing to do but because it is good for jobs and great for the economy. So many people in Knox have shared with me their stories about how free TAFE has absolutely changed their lives. I am proud an Andrews Labor government is backing in TAFE at every single step of the way, and so are Knox locals.

FOREST HILL ELECTORATE

Mr ANGUS (Forest Hill) (14:48): (6540) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Minister, what safeguards are in place to protect private medical information that is sent to the recently sold off VicRoads for the purpose of obtaining a disabled parking permit from being misused or distributed to a third party? I recently had a constituent contact me about the renewal of her disabled parking permit. She expressed her concerns that her private information, including her medical information, is required to be sent to VicRoads, now recently privatised. She also raised other issues regarding the renewal of her disabled parking permit, in particular the fact that the default communication method specified required the applicant to have both an email account and a mobile telephone number. This constituent, like many of my older constituents, does not have a mobile telephone. This is a problem, as the response she received from the City of Whitehorse regarding her application stated the following:

It is a requirement that you have a mobile phone number in order to lodge the application. If you don't own a mobile phone please ask a family member, friend or carer to help you with your application. All future notifications about your permit will be sent to this mobile number.

This means that her private medical information not only will be shared with VicRoads but will also be sent to a third party's mobile telephone. Surely there has got to be a better way to accommodate people.

WENDOUREE ELECTORATE

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (14:49): (6541) My question is for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Minister for Creative Industries. Will the minister please advise how the Andrews Labor government is continuing to support Ballarat tourism and our visitor economy? The Ballarat tourism offerings are interesting, immersive and innovative. Long gone are the days of

Ballarat being known for being old, gold and cold. Whilst our internationally renowned Sovereign Hill and iconic Art Gallery of Ballarat have always been significant drawcards for tourists, Ballarat's reputation as a tourism destination is ever changing and attracting new audiences. Proudly the Andrews Labor government has supported major events, including the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, White Night, AFL games at Mars Stadium and the *1000 Doors* project. Further, our government's \$6.7 million announcement in 2020 to establish— (*Time expired*)

Business interrupted under resolution of house of 20 September.

Members

MEMBER FOR KEYSBOROUGH

Valedictory statement

The SPEAKER: 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 reflect on their parliamentary careers, as I am sure all members in the chamber are too. In order to ensure that everyone's statements start on time, I ask members to restrict their congratulations in the chamber and 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.

Before I call the member, can I acknowledge Cr Steve Staikos, the mayor of Kingston council, who is in the gallery today.

Mr PAKULA (Keysborough) (14:51): The member for Eltham and the member for Footscray dared me to start my speech with that line from *The Wedding Singer*, which is 'I have a microphone and you don't, so you'll listen to every damn word I have to say!', but I think it would be inappropriate for me to start like that so I am not going to.

Leaving a career is a moment which causes you to reflect on the journey of life. I have watched my own kids—and I am glad they are here today—as they have grown and begun to develop interests, whether they are academic or sporting or occupational. You start to see them gravitate towards certain endeavours, whether it is getting their own bank account, buying a car or getting their first job, and I am at that stage with them now. The thing that is confronting is that for me personally that stage of life feels like about 5 minutes ago. I recall being in my mid-teens, admiring Cain and Hawke and Keating and bizarrely wanting to be a trade union official, having a deep interest in politics, being devoted to the Labor Party and joining the party and thinking of politics as a vocation and something that I wanted to be involved in, and I got to do it. And now it is all over. It puts me in mind of the closing line in *Goodfellas* when Henry Hill, having left the life and moved to the suburbs, says, 'I get to live the rest of my life like a schnook'—which I should say is not my intention.

I have been asked countless times in the last three months whether I miss ministerial life, and the answer is categorically no, but it is still a realisation at the age of 53 to know that you have reached your first real pivot point in decades. Until now everything has been fairly linear—university, law, trade unionism, politics, cabinet. The continuum has broken, and it is an odd feeling to arrive at that point. But it is also an appropriate time to say some thank-yous and to offer some reflections, which will be, by necessity, incomplete.

I do want to start with my alma mater, the National Union of Workers. In 1993 I walked into what was the strongest industrial and political outfit in Victoria—at least that was my view. The NUW gave me the best education a budding Labor activist could have. It was industrially strong and creative. It played the leading role in migrating Victorian workers to federal awards after the Kennett government abolished the state industrial system. It was full of talented people: smart former storemen and packers; tough, assertive women; exceptional industrial advocates—I am looking at one to my right—the cream

of the working class, topped up by academics. Now, we were not called ‘academics’—there was a little word in the middle, but the Speaker has told me I am not allowed to say that word in the house.

The union was at the forefront of efforts to ensure that working people had a say in the boardrooms, in the creation of capital, so that workers had dignity in retirement. They were the ballast of the Labor right. They aimed to put quality people into Parliament and to deliver Labor governments. In my time there the credit for that most specifically goes to people like Greg Sword, Denis Lennen and Charlie Donnelly, and for the longest time I was very privileged to represent that tradition in this place. The union is still industrially successful. It is a matter of sadness to me that it has, since its amalgamation, vacated a part of the field that it once occupied—that ballast that I talked about. I think it has been a bad thing for the Labor right and a bit unfortunate for the party, but time moves on. We cannot control matters once we are gone.

One of the happy coincidences, though, of working at the NUW was that in 2006 three of us entered Parliament together—the Treasurer was the assistant general secretary when I started and Jaala Pulford and I worked together in the Victorian branch for 12 of my 13 years there. Now, it might come as a surprise to people, but Parliament is not generally replete with trusted confidantes! Much of your working life is spent dealing with people who are trying to do you a serious mischief, so to spend my time here with not one but two people with whom I share a culture, a history, a tradition and a friendship has been a stroke of extraordinary good fortune. So Treasurer, thanks for all the cash, especially for racing. As for the Minister for Small Business and minister for medical research et al, seeing her manage her ministerial responsibilities for the past eight years in the context of her family’s unimaginable grief has put any problems that I have had into perspective.

In the same way that a baby can be lucky in its choice of parents, I have been lucky in my choice of leaders. When I engaged in political self-immolation by trying to unseat Simon Crean in 2006, that could well have been it for my political career. But Steve Bracks stepped in, threw me a Legislative Council lifeline, made me a parliamentary secretary and has remained a great friend and sounding-board ever since. John Brumby gave me my first opportunity to serve as a minister, even if it was only after his preferred candidate responded to his offer of a cabinet post by refusing it, retiring from Parliament and leaving the country forthwith. The episode proved two things: it is good to hold your form when you get bad news, and do not argue with Brumby about who sang *Cat’s in the Cradle*, even when he is wrong. I cannot speak highly enough of John though. Even when his sentences started with, ‘Mate, you’re on another planet’—which they frequently did—I was learning something from him.

And Dan. I think if I started pissing in Dan’s pocket now after 16 years, he would probably think less of me. It is not the way that we relate. There was a time there when people tried to make Dan and me bad friends, but it never worked because it misunderstood our shared ambition for the party, for the government and for the state, and it completely underestimated our mutual respect. Dan always gave me excellent portfolios, and he let me manage them. For my part, I never forgot that premiers sometimes have strong opinions about said portfolios. He absorbed my occasionally boisterous disagreements with patience; sometimes I even persuaded him. But critically I always accepted that where our judgements differed, as you would expect them to over 16 years, the ledger was squarely in his favour. He was right much more often than I was. He has led a brave and consequential government. I think I said that in my statement when I left the ministry. He has always been focused on moving the place forward, and he has been prepared to bear for all of us on this side the opprobrium, which far too often descends into bile, that comes from making hard decisions, and I thank him for everything he has done.

All of us here are lucky to have the support of the Parliament and the committee staff, and I thank them certainly for the work that they did while I was both on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and chair of the Privileges Committee. We also have wonderful, dedicated people who work in our offices. I have had too many to compile an exhaustive list, but I want to thank my exceptional electorate staff, who have provided so much support to me and to the good people of Western Metropolitan Region, Lyndhurst and Keysborough—of which I will be the only member

ever: Sebastian Zwalf, Christine Donnelly, Katherine Kirkwood, the late, great Jodi Dack, Tim Miller, Alex Fawke, Michael Xing, Molly Ashworth, Elijah Buckland, Scotty David and Monica Bladier.

Some of my electorate office staff eventually joined my ministerial office—people like Claudia Laidlaw and Charlotte Gray—and they worked alongside another great group of people. As a minister the line between success and failure is often about as wide as the shadow cast by one's staff. So apart from Claudia and Charlotte, my deep gratitude is owed to Chris Reilly, Amanda Billows, the Honourable Harriet Shing, Brett Hope, Jarrod Dobson, Mit Lolas, Steve Moynihan, Andrea David, Trystyn Bowe, Tully Fletcher, Sharon Broomhead, Holly Little, Anna Jurkiewicz, Sabina Husic, Anthony Illot, Melissa Arch, Simon Shiell, Chris Leach, Sarah Wilson, Penny Guadagnolo, Sally Carroll, Mounir Kiwan, Shaun Phillips, Saskia Wells, Anthony Templeton, my driver for a decade Lyndon Fracaro, and Olga Tsironis, who was my executive assistant for many years.

That leaves the three stars of the show, the people who served as my chiefs of staff. Shane Lucas was my editor at *Lot's Wife* in 1987, and we have been mates ever since. As I watched his career in the Victorian public service blossom I thought, 'If I ever make cabinet, I'll try to pinch Shane from the VPS'. He was exactly what I needed. He was experienced and trusted, he spoke the language of the Premier's private office and he doused my more combative instincts. He would have been with me longer if Brumby had not moved me to public transport in 2010, which meant about 15 calls per evening from the PPO to Shane, which was a bridge too far.

If Shane doused my combative instincts, Adrian Browne inflamed them. If I was pissed off, AB was more pissed off. If my instinct was 'Tell them no', his was 'And tell them to get stuffed for good measure'. But we also called him Cautionary Browne, and for good reason. Not only was he ever present with the phrase 'If I could just inject a note of caution here', he also read every word of every brief before it hit my desk, and I can only imagine how many reports got punted back to the department before I ever saw them. That is not to cast any aspersions on the amazing public servants who assisted me, and if I could just digress for a moment to acknowledge Howard Ronaldson, Jim Betts, Greg Wilson and Simon Phemister, who were the four secretaries I worked with so closely—they and all of the officials did an unbelievable job. But back to AB, he was with me from 2008 until the beginning of this year, apart from the four years in opposition, and without him there is no way I would have survived as a minister for as long as I did.

Finally, the incomparable Christine Tyrrell. Ministers who are in the job long enough tend to become associated with a particular staff member. The former Minister for Planning and Peter Keogh are a good example of that. But for me that was Christine Tyrrell, even though she worked for me, left, worked for me again, left again and finally returned this year as my chief. And to illustrate that, when I called the PPO to ask them when valedictories would be, Ben Foster said to me, 'Final sitting week—I've already told Tyrrell'. When I pointed out that Tyrrell did not work for me anymore, his response was basically, 'Yeah, come on'. Tyrrell has done every job going: electorate officer, adviser, media adviser, deputy chief and chief of staff. She made sure there were lollies and savoury Shapes for the road trips. She reminded me when it was somebody's birthday. These jobs are pretty unforgiving. We all need a Tyrrell, and I am lucky that I had mine.

We also need a supportive family. My mum, Adele, my late father, Lou, and my sisters, Rita and Tammy, were always embarrassingly proud of having a son and brother not just in politics but on the TV. My kids have known nothing other than Dad being in the public eye. When I was elected, Ben was four and Eva was one. I am not going to claim that I am retiring to spend more time with them, because they are 20 and 17 now so they probably do not want me to, but in any case the great thing about state politics is you do get to be home quite a lot. I am still sure they copped their share of unwelcome questions at school when I did something newsworthy, but the evidence at home was that it did not seem to bother them much. You see, my solution to bad stories, particularly during COVID, was to not watch the news. We have only got one living room, so I would go down to the bedroom and read a book while the news was on. I would hear Ben coming down the hall. He would open the

door and go, 'Papa, you were on the news just now'. I would say, 'Yeah', and he would go, 'It was bad'. 'Thanks, mate. Get out!'

Regarding the journey that I mentioned at the start of this speech, my wife, Lisa, has been alongside me for all of it. At uni we started going out. We got engaged and married when I was at the union, at the Treasurer's behest—that is an in-joke. We have raised our family together whilst I have been in this place, which means that in reality she has done most of the raising and I got to do the things that we do here. But we have got a lovely home, our kids are better than all right, and for all the holidays and the food and the downtime—all the basic sanity-preserving stuff—it is Lisa who deserves the credit. I am sure she would say it is now time for me to pull my weight a bit more, and I think my excuse for not doing so is about to evaporate.

I want to conclude with some reflections about this job and the real concern I have about how any of us would hand-on-heart go about convincing the next young idealist that this is a career that they should pursue. On any measure I think it is a less attractive proposition than it was even 20 years ago, and that is not about the abolition of the defined benefit scheme—not entirely anyway. There is email, social media, more extreme forms of abuse, a febrile political environment, a headline-hungry fourth estate and a seemingly relentless trend toward expanding the definition of what is considered improper and simultaneously narrowing the prerogative of the electorate to be the arbiters of such conduct. Some of those things we cannot do much about—Twitter is not going away; public discourse does not feel like it is about to get more polite—but most people are here to try to make positive change, and I am not sure we tell those stories well enough.

We receive the kudos for the big things we do. In my own portfolios I am put in mind of the implementation of the *Betrayal of Trust* recommendations, the work to assist business through the pandemic, the acquisition and extension of major events and working with my friend the member for Altona on voluntary assisted dying. Those sorts of things are incredibly rewarding, but they are also well understood. What is not so well understood are the countless little wins we are able to achieve for our communities every day. I think of the publican in Stawell who was on the verge of going under and whose business was saved through a cooperative effort that involved me, Minister Pulford and Ed O'Donohue when he was liquor and gaming minister. During COVID restrictions I received an email from a CBD restaurant owner named James who thought he was in the wrong category for Licensed Hospitality Venue Fund support because of a quirk in his liquor licence. I called him and sent a public servant down to have a look at his venue, and it was a much larger venue than his licence suggested, which put him in a higher category for support. That bloke stopped me in the street the week before last to say thanks, and it was easily the highlight of that week.

I am also reminded of Cheryl, a grandmother who approached me at a street stall in Dingley to tell me about her grandson with severe epilepsy and the benefits to him of medical marijuana. That conversation begat another conversation and another, and it got the ball rolling on the legalisation of therapeutic cannabis. I think about Cheryl quite a bit and the potential for a single person talking to their MP to generate significant change. We should talk more about those sorts of things.

We should be just a tiny bit kinder to each other. This is not the regular exhortation to raise the standards of parliamentary discourse—we have heard that in the last couple of days—but it is just an observation that courtesy and reasonableness are free. When I was in opposition it was the petty slights that I resented, the failure to provide an acknowledgement at an event, the letter from a minister that was so full of invective that you could not convey it to the constituent who raised the original query. That sort of thing depletes the karma bank, and it gets remembered and, importantly, it comes back with interest. If I have ever fallen short of those standards myself, I hope it has been the exception. But give the acknowledgement, write the courteous reply, and remember that members also have partners and kids and parents, so maybe do not make egregious accusations against people unless you are pretty confident they are justified. I think the circumstances where somebody who submits themselves to public life actually deserves to have their reputation or their livelihood permanently compromised are incredibly rare, and we should remember that about one another.

Lastly, I say to this Parliament, however it is comprised: guard your sovereignty jealously. Never forget that it is this arm of government that is formed by the will of voters. Representative democracy is a good thing. Making commitments to voters in return for their support is not improper. The allocation of public funds is not something that should be solely within the purview of public servants, and if voters disagree with our priorities, they have a way of letting us know that. I first had this argument with a lawyer, and I think the member for Rowville was there when I had it, and the member for Preston would have been there. It was an argument I had with a judge at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing in 2007. I do fear that an idea is taking root that voters cannot be relied on to assess these matters and that the only way to keep politicians in line is to have lawyers and judges be the final arbiters of the appropriateness of political decisions. Well, I am a former Attorney-General. I know how devoted the judicial arm of government is to the notion of the separation of powers. Let us never forget that it cuts both ways.

And that, my friends, is that. It has been great fun. Be smart, be tough, be brave, be kind. Earn the Blues! Join the union, and vote Labor. Farewell to you all!

Members applauded.

MEMBER FOR LARA

Valedictory statement

Mr EREN (Lara) (15:09): Can I firstly acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we meet, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I want at the outset to thank the Premier, the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples and of course the Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples for our leading the way in formulating a treaty with the First Peoples. Thank you so much.

It is very surreal—20 years, the blink of an eye, here we are, the last speech in Parliament. I am not sure how other members that are retiring are feeling, but it is certainly hitting home. Of course I was first elected to the other place. It seems such a long time ago, remembering the first day I stood in the other place as a first-time MP delivering my inaugural speech. When I look back so much has changed since that first day. Many people in the chamber may already know that I arrived in Australia from Turkey as a child migrant with my family at the age of six. My dad, a fitter and turner, decided to take up the offer from Australia, who were seeking skilled migrants. My mum was also a labourer.

Back then Mum always tried to get home from work before we finished school to take care of us, as many mums do, doting on their children. One day when I got home Mum was not there. I later found out that she had had a workplace incident—I do not call it an accident, because it was not; it could have been prevented. Prior to that incident there had been complaints about the press being faulty, but her concerns were ignored. She did not want to lose her job and continued with her work, and subsequently the press came down without warning, chopping half her index finger off. It could have been much worse, but that really resonated with me. As a young boy I could not understand how her calls for help were ignored and she was asked to continue in an unsafe work environment. That stayed with me for a while and then prompted me when I worked at Ford in Broadmeadows at the age of 22 on the production line to become a shop steward for the vehicle builders union—I was elected by the workers—and also the occupational health and safety officer, a role which was brought in by the then Cain Labor government in the mid-1980s. Looking back, I can see how that incident really inspired me to become a member of Parliament and to be here.

It seemed a good opportunity while preparing for my final speech here to I reflect on my first speech, which was of course in the other place. In that speech I remember mentioning the following:

Some historians say that in these battles on that day the entire outcome of the Gallipoli campaign was determined. The objective of these Australian troops was to take a hill called Chunuk Bair, and in defending this hill Mustafa Kemal uttered his famous command:

I do not order you to attack; I order you to die. In the time which passes until we die other troops and commanders can take our places.

To my knowledge on 25 April 1915 my grandfather, Hamdi Isteni, was fighting in a battalion commanded by Mustafa Kemal, later to become Kemal Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey. It is quite possible that my grandfather heard this command. Mustafa Kemal's troops were engaged in fighting against the northern line of Australian troops that day. There were his famous words of course in 1934, which are something I will always remember:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours ... You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

One of the most profound and amazing things that happened to me over my time as an MP was in 2015: having the honour of becoming the Minister for Veterans and to represent Victoria at the commemoration ceremonies in Gallipoli. I recall receiving the phone call from the Premier advising me of the portfolios I would receive in 2014. I am sure that he could recall that as well. He said to me, 'You are now the Minister for Sport', and I said, 'That's great'. He said, 'You'll have tourism and major events'; I said, 'That's great'. And he said, 'Get ready, you're going to Gallipoli. You'll be the Minister for Veterans'. That was a really important part of my life, and I really thank the Premier for giving me that opportunity. It is beyond comprehension to understand how all the stars had aligned for this to happen to me—a child who migrated here at the age of six from Turkey, whose grandfather fought in a battalion commanded by Mustafa Kemal, to go on to become a minister for the best state in our nation and represent that state in Turkey as the Minister for Veterans on the centenary of Gallipoli. It was an honour and a privilege that I will be forever grateful for and a moment in my life I will never forget.

However, as you could imagine, across the 20 years I have represented the wonderful people of Geelong there have been many proud and memorable moments. In my inaugural speech I mentioned how important I thought it was that we talk about issues to do with mental illness, and I said:

There is a stigma which attaches to mental illness which simply does not exist with physical illness, and yet it is one of the most common forms of illness in our society today. The acceptance of mental illness, of having it, of its treatment, and the acceptance by others of those who suffer from it, remains one of our largest public health issues ...

I am extremely proud of the investments into mental health that this government is making. It has taken our government to step up and tackle this issue head-on by having the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. This has been a massive step in the right direction—accepting the recommendations of the royal commission to implement a current and future plan of investment. Recently I was pleased to see this in my local community, with the Premier and the Minister for Mental Health opening a new 16-bed acute mental health facility at the Barwon Health McKellar Centre in my electorate.

One of my sad moments as minister—and they were rare, having the portfolios that I had, obviously—and members may remember this, was the Puffing Billy investigation by the Ombudsman. Through this investigation we learned that the Puffing Billy management ignored the repeated cries for help from children and their families about the abuse. Being briefed on and hearing the disturbing and horrific details had a profound impact on me, and I hope that that process of redress provided the victims some closure. I do also hope that this closure and support can be offered to other victims of abuse and suffering, such as those in the Care Leavers Australia Network, and I hope that their pleas for redress are answered soon. I am proud to be the chair of the Australian Orphanage Museum, and I urge all members to come to visit this important, nationally significant extensive collection in Geelong.

I am also proud of the work that we as a government did while I was minister to change the culture and profile for women and girls in sport, in particular the record investments of millions of dollars for

female-friendly facilities and the creation of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation. I am so pleased with the legacy we have left at the State Netball and Hockey Centre, the centrepiece of the Victorian government's investment in women's and community sport. I want to thank Rosie King, former CEO of Netball Victoria, and her team for their hard work and persistence. I am also proud of the legacy in creating Visit Victoria. When I stepped down as the minister in 2018, we led the way nationally with a strong visitor economy, having created 25 000 new jobs in the industry since 2014.

I have always had the firm belief that we should leave the world a better place than how we found it. As a local MP I have worked hard every day to ensure I leave the electorate a better place than it was when I first became the member for Lara. One of the areas that has always been close to my heart is our local schools. Along with my children and now my grandchildren I have attended state schools, and I truly understand the importance of a good public education. Many in this house would recall me saying, 'What if the cure for cancer was in the mind of a child that could not afford education? What if?'. I am so proud of the work that this government has done to ensure that Victoria is the Education State. In my electorate I remember the first time I toured some of our local schools, and I remember seeing for the first time North Shore Primary School, which was in such poor condition. I could not help but notice the looks on the students' faces, clearly not happy with their school environment. It brought a tear to my eye, it really did. Since that time I am pleased to say that every school in my electorate has received funding from our government. This major investment, especially in Corio and Norlane, saw the regeneration of local schools into a new school, Northern Bay College, with multiple campus sites. It is a different learning environment now after record investments in these facilities, and you can see the pride on the students' and staff's faces. It really makes a difference.

In 2007 Richard Marles, the member for Corio, and I formed Northern Futures to address high unemployment in Geelong's north. Over 15 years later, this service has helped so many locals find secure employment and a steady future thanks to the state funding that we provided. Thanks must go to all those involved in the wonderful organisation, who work hard every day to deliver real on-the-ground training, support and employment for people who have been long-term unemployed.

Another major investment in the north I am proud of, which I am sure many of you may know, is the Northern Aquatic and Community Hub. The landmark facility will be built on the current Waterworld and Centenary Hall site next to Barwon Health North. Many in the house will know that this project was a long time in the making, and in fact many in this house are also grateful that it was funded so I did not have to keep pestering them all the time about it. I am proud of this investment and how it will complement the state government's \$33 million Barwon Health North facility so that this whole precinct will be a fantastic hub for the community.

Another great achievement in infrastructure provided to the suburb of Lara: when I became the member for the area, the suburb of Lara did not have a secondary school, and I am proud to say under a Labor government it now does. It also received a brand new police station, CFA station and ambulance station. This investment into Lara is continuing, with recent budget funding to upgrade the Six Ways in Lara, which was a major road priority for the local community.

In my inaugural speech I mentioned the hopes that many of us had for Avalon and its potential. Since 2003 Avalon has gone ahead in leaps and bounds, and despite the struggle of the past few years, Avalon has continued to grow and diversify. I believe Avalon has done great work and this is only the beginning for it. I am proud that our government has seen the possibilities and continued the investment, alongside Avalon, to ensure that it reaches its full potential. I cannot wait to see how this hard work and dedication continues to pay off for both the airport and the surrounding community it supports.

In my inaugural speech I also highlighted that Geelong lacks a proper conference centre, which denies it many opportunities to bring revenue to the town. It has been a great honour as a local member for the region and as a past minister for tourism to see that this vision is finally becoming a reality. This project is one of many. Geelong is thriving, with cranes in the sky, and that is a legacy in Geelong that we are known for.

The upgrades to Kardinia Park have seen it turn into the MCG of regional Australia, another legacy in the region. Hopefully it is also the home of the 2022 premiership winners after Geelong take out the grand final. And I say: go Cats!

In order to ensure that I am not speaking in the house for the whole day I would like the leave of the house to table a list of achievement highlights in my electorate over the past eight years that I am extremely proud of. It is certainly not a comprehensive list—there is so much more—but it just shows the massive investment the northern suburbs of Geelong have received under a Labor government. I ask the leave of the house to table this document.

Leave granted.

Tabled.

Mr EREN: As most of you would know, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2019. This diagnosis, along with the COVID pandemic, has made me place a greater focus on my health and wellbeing and that of my family and friends and value the ability to spend quality time with them. It really was the catalyst for my decision to retire. I look forward to continuing my work with Fight Parkinson's. I will continue to work hard to raise much-needed money for research, and I will continue to get the message out there about support services that are available for people who are living with Parkinson's.

My journey to this place and over the 20 years since I first became a member of Parliament has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life. However, it has not been my journey alone. I want to thank the people in my life who have made this possible. Firstly, I want to thank all of those people in my electorate who term after term after term voted me back in to represent them. I hope I have made a positive impact on your lives and that it is a better place now to live, work and raise your families than when I was first elected. I want to thank everyone from the Premier's office, the Victorian ALP head office and all the ALP members who have stuck with the best political party in the world through thick and thin. Thanks to all the unions who uphold and protect workers rights, especially the Transport Workers Union.

Of course I thank the wonderful department staff, committee staff and Parliament House staff, including the clerks, Hansard, dining staff, security and all of the attendants. There is always a lot of behind-the-scenes work and support that goes into everything we do, and much of it goes without any recognition, so it is important for me to thank each one of these groups for their assistance over the many years.

Some say there are no friends in politics, but I can honestly say I have been very lucky when it comes to friendships I have with colleagues. Geelong has been represented by a fantastic group of local MPs, and I would like to thank Lisa, Christine, Darren, Gayle and former members Ian Trezise—I know he is not well at the moment; hopefully he is recovering well from his operation—and Michael Crutchfield for their years of friendship and support. My good friend Richard Marles is the federal member for Corio, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence—that title sounds good, and I am so happy for his elevation to high office. I thank Richard for being a supportive friend who has been a big part of my journey here.

My broader group of colleagues across the state also need a big thankyou. You have been the most tremendous bunch of people that I have ever worked with—ever. It is just an absolute pleasure to be a part of your lives as you are a part of mine, especially the class of 2002—isn't that right, member for Yan Yean?

Ms Green: Hear, hear!

Mr EREN: I wish everyone contesting the next election all the very best.

Over the past 20 years there have been changes in faces, but the support across the years has been constant and strong. It would be remiss of me not to mention the people who are no longer with us—Mehmet Tillem, my good friend; Fiona Richardson; Jane Garrett; Kimberley Kitching; Lynne Kosky—who all made huge contributions to a better Victoria, and I thank them for it.

I have been honoured to work under three fantastic premiers in this state: Steve Bracks, John Brumby and of course Dan. It has been a pleasure to work with such fine leaders. I would like to thank all the staff who have worked with me over the years. My electorate office staff are the backbone of everything I do. I want to thank my current staff—Kelly, Erin, James, Cansu—and all of the previous EO staff. I have had many amazing staff over the years, but it would be remiss of me not to mention David Saunderson, who was with me at the beginning and is still a great friend to this day. I would like to also thank my previous ministerial staff, Christina, Desiree, Anthony, Ella, Ozge, Letitia and Sally. A special mention for both Ella George, who is the Labor candidate for Lara, and Anthony Cianflone, who is the Labor candidate for Pascoe Vale at the next state election. It gives me a great sense of pride to pass on the baton to such capable, energetic and dedicated candidates. It is reassuring, especially in my seat of Lara, to have such a competent candidate who will work hard every day to carry on the legacy of delivering for the electorate. I also wish Alison Marchant all the best as the Labor candidate for the Bellarine.

My community has many people who have been a source of strength and support for me. There are so many to mention. I will not be able to thank them all, but a special mention to Jimmy and the Onturk family, Jack and the Mulayim family, Alex, Rodney, Lou, Vlad, Leonie, Zoli, Ismet and the Turrkan family, the Meddings family and so many more.

My extended family needs an enormous thankyou, and there are a lot of us. I will not go through all of them. My parents, Ali and Muyesser, and my parents-in-law, Gerald and Allison, who are no longer with us, were always so supportive, and I am grateful for their unconditional love and support. They would be looking down from above and would be as proud as they were when they were with us. Thank you to all the extended Eren and Brown families. Special mention to Kathleen; Bettina; Jim; Patrick; Allison; Terriann; my brothers, Tayfun and Anil; and my sister, Tulin; my nephews and nieces—and some of them are here; Nez and Nurel are here. We obviously have such a big family, which is fantastic. I am going to enjoy every minute with them. They know who they are, and some of them are in the gallery today.

My children, Kadir, Ekrem, Enes, Sumeyra and Adem. Where do I start? I love you all so much. As a parent you never want to compromise your ability to be a good father and to be a good MP, so you try to balance both but always try to put family first. But now it is time to concentrate on my family, especially my grandchildren, Ayla, Tahsin and Ayse, who are my world, and they are in the gallery—I am going to wave at them. Geraldine and I are lucky to have amazing partners for our children, so thank you to Minh, Daniel, Ashlee and Tahlia. With three of our children getting married in the next two years, Geraldine and I are looking forward to many more grandbabies in the future if possible—hopefully. No pressure.

Last but not least, to my wife, Geraldine, I know that none of this could have been possible without your support. You have been and continue to be a great source of love and strength to all of us. There is no doubt in my mind that I would not be here without you. There is so much work that would not have been done without you, and as I said in my inaugural speech, there would not have been enough courage to do this without you. You are a great mother, grandmother and my life partner. You have worked incredibly hard for the Labor movement and for the Geelong community—both are better for it. I look forward to trying to make up those times we missed out on together. I look forward to our travels and special moments with our children and grandchildren and our extended family in the next chapter of our lives. Thank you for being you, Geraldine.

I would like to just leave you with these last few words in this place. There are two things we will never know: when we are born and when we will die. In between live your best life. I wish you all the

best in this house and the other place. I hope you all have a happy, healthy life with your loved ones. Take care.

Members applauded.

The SPEAKER: Can I acknowledge the Deputy Prime Minister, the Honourable Richard Marles, in the gallery.

MEMBER FOR RICHMOND

Valedictory statement

Mr WYNNE (Richmond) (15:32): I commence my contribution to this Parliament with some acknowledgements and thanks. Firstly, I want to acknowledge and thank my wife, Svetlana Karovich, who is with us here today. Svetlana embodies the best values of Labor and along with her late mother, Zivana, always ensured that I stayed the course. I also want to take this opportunity to call out her career in the service of the public good through the arts, starting of course in regional Victoria as a director of the Benalla Art Gallery—

Mr Andrews: A great gallery.

Mr WYNNE: A great gallery—then on to touring exhibitions of art both nationally and internationally and continuing with her long-term commitment to developing and curating an outstanding collection of contemporary Australian art at the magnificent Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. She is one of only a handful of people who do this work across Australia as part of the tax incentives to the arts scheme, and I am immensely proud of the work that she has done. Her work of course is a source of comfort to patients, staff and visitors at this world-leading facility. I also want to thank my two sons, Dushan and Sasha, who have lived most of their lives with me in Spring Street and have seen perhaps the best and the worst of political life. I am immensely proud of what they have achieved in their professional careers. They are simply fine young men.

I also want to thank the heroes of the Australian Labor Party, the men and women of the union movement and the past and present ALP branch members in the Richmond electorate. We had a wonderful night last night, Premier, where the Richmond electorate folk came together and we celebrated what was really a fantastic journey that we have been on together. I acknowledge Danae Bosler, who is here today. She put that together. I thank you, Danae, for doing that work. You have all been steadfast in your support.

I also want to acknowledge of course our friends in the trade union movement, particularly some of the folk who have been through a very long journey together. David Leydon from the ASU is a magnificent person, a magnificent unionist but also a magnificent community person through his wonderful work with the Fitzroy Reds. I note upstairs a friend from the fourth estate who may have had some association over the journey with that particular team. I am sure he would attest to the fantastic work that David has done for such an incredible length of time. Senator Jess Walsh, of course, was a marvellous support to me through United Voice, just a fantastic person, and what a wonderful achievement for her to have achieved this new role as a senator for Victoria. It has been a pleasure to work with Luke Hilakari and the team at Trades Hall. We have completely reimagined the fighting team of unionists at Trades Hall, who do such a magnificent job in representing the trade union—I am going to need a bottle of water, I think.

Mr Andrews interjected.

Mr WYNNE: Thanks, Premier. They are coming from everywhere.

Mr Andrews: Something stronger afterwards perhaps?

Mr WYNNE: Yes, perhaps. They represent the trade union movement. And of course the magnificent renovation of the—

Mr Andrews: Spectacular.

Mr WYNNE: spectacular renovation of the Victorian Trades Hall—the workers' Parliament—was a marvellous project to work with you on, Premier.

I want to thank the ALP for giving me incredible opportunities to serve at the highest levels of all three tiers of government, firstly at the City of Melbourne where I served for six years and of course with a term as Lord Mayor. Just three observations from that time—

Mr Andrews interjected.

Mr WYNNE: Only three, Premier. The first was the amazing opportunity to provide the keys to the City of Melbourne to the extraordinary Nelson Mandela. If there has been one political highlight in my time, I remember Svetlana and I were there together, completely overwhelmed that this extraordinary world leader had come to Melbourne. He came to Melbourne almost as one of the first places that he came to after his imprisonment. Can you imagine that 27 years he was in prison for his beliefs? He came very soon after his release to thank people here in Melbourne and Sydney, particularly our friends in the trade union movement and particularly friends from my father's union, the Maritime Union of Australia, who did such an incredible amount of work to stand up against that vicious apartheid regime in South Africa. That was an amazing day in my life.

The second of course—and everyone claims credit for this one, but I do have to claim credit for this; victory has got a thousand fathers, as they say—was the project for postcode 3000. This was this mad idea that we had. This was in the late 1980s and early 1990s. We thought, 'Well, gee, maybe we could get a few people to actually come and live in the city. That'd be a good thing to try to revitalise the city a bit'. So we had this mad idea that perhaps we might be able to get 3000 people to come and live in the city, in the CBD. At the time a survey was undertaken, and they worked out that there were about 360 people who actually lived in the CBD. Most of them were hippies and squatters and so forth, living in warehouses around the place, save and except for this rather eccentric fellow called Captain Peter Janson—well known to some of us and still with us, I believe. Captain Janson lived across the road here in the turret of the Windsor Hotel. Allegedly he lived up there with a couple of dingoes that he would go for a walk around the gardens here with. I do not know about the dingoes, but anyway there was something up there. There was Captain Janson and about 364 others. We figured that if we got 3000 people to live in the city, that would be an extraordinary thing. Have a look at it now. It is absolutely amazing.

The third was that we were robbed. Let us be clear, we were robbed of the Olympic Games in 1996. I declare it: we were robbed, absolutely robbed by Atlanta. You have got to be kidding! To Atlanta? Are you serious? What did they call them? The Coca-Cola games. Righto, I will move on. Shocking.

Secondly, I was a senior adviser to the great urbanist and intellectual Brian Howe, who of course was Deputy Prime Minister in the Hawke and Keating governments. Thirdly, during my time in this Parliament I have had to serve in a number of roles. I believe, Premier, I am now the longest serving planning minister in the state's history. To be the Minister for Planning is a very, very onerous job because you have to do it without any reference to any other member of the cabinet or to any subcommittee of the cabinet. You have to make those decisions and balance out the competing priorities, as is always the case in planning, when it is often very contested. It was a very tough job, a very difficult job, and others will make their judgements on how well I performed in that job.

But I found a new friend. You will appreciate this. A call came in to me from a person; I did not know their number. They said, 'Mate, mate, it's Paul'. I said, 'Yes?' 'Mate, it's Paul Keating'. Is it the Jeffrey call?

Mr Andrews: On a point of order, there is no comparison.

Mr WYNNE: Paul Keating loves cities. He loves urban design, he absolutely loves cities and he loves Melbourne. I am probably revealing things I should not, but he owns a property here in East

Melbourne. He would ring me fairly regularly because he would have picked up something that had been in the *Australian Financial Review*. It would have been about a decision I had made, that maybe it was good or maybe it was not so good, and he would give me some free and clear advice about what he thought about those matters and indeed what he also thought about perhaps some of the people who stood behind some of those developments. I very much always appreciated the conversations I had with him. Some of them at times were lengthy; some of them may have been a little fruity, perhaps sometimes at my expense. But he was certainly always very fulsome in his advice to me and continues to be. I very much appreciated that.

I want to thank the Premier. He and I have shared a long journey over the past 25 years, and it has been a pleasure to serve and work with him in the pursuit of so many of our great reforms. We go back 25 years to the early days of the Premier, a fellow called Alan Griffin and my colleague here the member for Altona. I was tasked with the job of allegedly trying to be the campaign manager for Alan Griffin at the time. Alan Griffin won a marginal seat, but one of the reasons why he was successful in his campaigns was that we never let him out of the office. I foolishly let him out of the office. I was the campaign manager, but he would simply disregard that. The Premier will recall this.

Mr Andrews: I do.

Mr WYNNE: We sent him down to the Cranbourne shopping centre to do a bit of street stalling and meeting people. I went down with him. He lasted an hour. He argued with every single person who was there, and I said, 'You're never coming out again! You just go and stay in the office'. The member for Altona will attest to this, and so will the Premier. We actually said, 'You just stay in the office and we'll just get on with the campaign'. Extraordinarily we won the seat of Corinella, which was a marginal seat, and then the seat of Bruce on a number of other occasions. In some shape or form, Premier, we all came out hopefully relatively unscarred from that experience. The Premier has championed progress and made our state a much fairer place, and that, I would put to you, is what leadership looks like. We of course also served two other outstanding leaders in Steve Bracks and John Brumby, and their legacies endure and continue to burn bright.

Reflecting on my time in the Parliament, the political contest has always been framed, for me, by the left and the pseudo-left. The national secretary of the ALP, in a recent Press Club address, summed up that contest with great clarity. He said the Greens political party will always seek to be 'two steps to the left of Labor' and claim all of our progressive policy achievements as their work, then criticise us of course for not doing more. What a sad way to practice politics—to be always in the grandstand, never on the field of play where the real work is done and the real progress won. As the member for Richmond, I beat off the Greens on six occasions, and my colleague Lauren O'Dwyer, who is with us today, will do it again in November—just wait and see.

I spoke earlier about our social reforms, and I wanted to single out the massive commitment of this government to two things: education and housing. Labor has always understood the power of education. That is why we employ, rather than sack, teachers. That is why we build, rather than close, schools. After all it was the Labor government that reopened Fitzroy High School, the only high school of the many closed by the Kennett government that ever reopened. And it was the member for Monbulk as Minister for Education who initiated and oversaw the biggest funding boost to public education in this state's history. The massive investment in my electorate has been, frankly, stunning. Every one of our primary schools has received upgraded funding. We have built world-class teaching environments at Richmond High School and Wurun campus on the gasworks site, which of course we visited, Premier, only recently, and we have committed to upgrading the wonderful Collingwood College as well. The member for Monbulk—and I hope he is listening today, because he cannot be with us—has much to be proud of.

The record investment we are also making in public and social housing also speaks to the core values of this government and the need to back a party that delivers, rather than promises, progress. The commitment of \$5.3 billion for public and social housing is the largest investment by any state or

federal government ever. In just four years we will build not 12 000; it is likely we could potentially build, Minister, 15 000 new homes across the state. Those new homes of course are a great outcome for those in acute housing need.

In addition, those new homes are boosting the economy, creating jobs and training new tradespeople. Speaking as someone who started out as a social worker helping public housing residents and worked for two great advocates of public housing, Barry Pullen and Brian Howe, and who spent half his maiden speech in this chamber pushing for the expansion of public housing, I am immensely proud of the Big Housing Build. I am also proud of our response to rough sleeping and homelessness at the height of the pandemic. We took close to 2000 rough sleepers off the streets, putting them into hotels, and one by one found long-term housing for many of these individuals and indeed some families as well. That is real progress; that is the Labor way.

Others have spoken eloquently about our broader reform agenda. With that in mind, I will not detail the many, many things—I should have learned from the member for Lara, I should have tabled some of this. I will only talk about two things. I just want to touch upon a few memorable moments from what has been a long list of reforms. The first memorable moment is the profound impact of the voluntary assisted dying legislation. That humanitarian reform, driven by my colleague the member for Altona, has given great comfort to individuals and families in duress—and believe me, Jill was a tireless advocate for this work. She tracked me down—and my wife—when we were on holiday in Croatia. It did not matter that I was in another time zone on the other side of the world. Jill was relentless; she kept calling me night after night to insist that I lobby my colleagues in support of the legislation. What choice did I have? And so we did.

Another highlight of course is the establishment of the medically supervised injecting facility. I championed the need for the facility during my maiden speech in 1999. Why did I campaign so long and hard? Because I knew it would save lives. Prior to the centre opening 34 people died lonely deaths in the precinct of North Richmond—34 people, deaths that could have been avoided. But the centre has not just saved lives, it has also helped people beat the scourge of heroin addiction. That is what happens when instead of judging people you give them the support, counselling and treatment that they need.

Another highlight is our response to the challenge of combustible cladding on residential buildings. Victoria led the way on this issue, and I am so pleased with the progress of that work. We also led the push to amend the Building Code of Australia, requiring accessibility features in all newly built residential housing. And I am delighted that the new Minister for Planning had the opportunity recently to bring that important work to fruition. That building code reform will be increasingly important as our population ages, because it will help Australians with disability and mobility challenges to live with dignity in their own homes.

In conclusion, I have some people to thank. I have been privileged to work with many dedicated staff over 23 years, too many of them to individually name, but there are a few people I particularly need to mention. Maureen Corrigan—Maureen is here today. She has served the Labor cause for 30 years. She probably should not stand up—Speaker, I know that is unparliamentary—but she is there. Wave your hand. There she is. She has served our cause for 30 years with dedication and fidelity. There are my electorate staff, Hamish, Lloyd, Lucy and Harry, who are here today or who are listening in to this. There are my ministerial staff, led with professionalism and charm by Peter Keogh. I think he is here somewhere. There he is, my chief of staff, and there is his deputy, Glen Brandum, who served me in a variety of roles over most of my political career.

One of the first lessons I learned from Barry Pullen and Brian Howe was that as a minister you should surround yourself with people who are expert in their field and smarter than you are. As a staffer for Brian and Barry I was clearly the exception to that rule. But the successes I have achieved in politics are due to the team of brilliant experts I had around me, and I sincerely want to thank them all for sharing the journey with me. Many of them are in the upstairs gallery today. So many have gone on

to stellar careers in the diplomatic service, the United Nations, senior public service roles, the Melbourne Bar, community sector leadership and of course national leadership of our party.

Also my thanks to you, Bridget, the parliamentary staff, the catering staff, the gardening staff and the security people. To all of you who act with extraordinary professionalism: I thank you sincerely for everything you do for us. Anne Sargent and Greg in the upper house, great people who I have gone on a journey with together, I acknowledge as well. Perhaps there will be a better time for the Kangas—I am not sure; let us hope.

I am a boy from the working class, an inner-city kid of humble means, a son of a wharf labourer and one of nine children. We survived on the single wage of my father and the bedrock of my magnificent mother, who raised us all and who of course I lost when I was barely a teenager. I am grateful for everything my parents gave me, and I hope that they would be proud of what I have achieved.

As this chapter closes, I still have plenty of gas in the tank and, according to my specialist, I have been replumbed for another 20 years. Can I just say to the magnificent surgeons at the Royal Melbourne Hospital—I was a punter who came in off the street, and I was in big trouble—the work that they did to, frankly, save my life I will never forget. If you are going to be seriously ill in this state, make sure you are near a public teaching hospital. They were absolutely superb for me, and I will thank them every single day for what they did for me. So, Premier, who knows where I might pop up in the next stage of my working life. I am not going anywhere because my wife has made it explicitly clear: ‘You’re not going to be hanging around at home’.

When I made my maiden speech on 9 November 1999 I said I came with a sense of optimism and hope for the future of Victoria. Ever since then I have done my best to make that better future a reality for the people of Richmond and Victoria. For 23 years I have never left the field of play, never stopped fighting for social and economic justice and never stopped wanting to do more. I have given it everything that I could give, and now it is time for others to take my place. I have no regrets. And thanks to all those I have worked with, I am leaving this place as I arrived: with a real sense of optimism and hope for the future. Premier, to you, to the Speaker—who we have had a lot of fun with over the journey, particularly in our adjournments—and to all of my colleagues I say thank you. Thank you sincerely for the honour of serving the people of this great state of Victoria.

Members applauded.

The SPEAKER: Members, before I call the member for Yan Yean, under the resolution of the house I am required to interrupt business at 4.00 pm for our grievance debate. Is leave granted to allow the member for Yan Yean to complete her valedictory statement before the house proceeds to the grievance debate?

Leave granted.

MEMBER FOR YAN YEAN

Valedictory statement

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (15:57): Oh, dear Speaker, of the many joys I have experienced in almost 20 years in this place, one of them is seeing you, a sister regional MP and dear friend, ascend to the respected office of Speaker—indeed the first-ever regional woman to hold the position.

However, I want to begin my final contribution to this Parliament by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which I stand and pay my respect to elders past and present and especially to those emerging, who are leading the journey to treaty. I have the most profound confidence in the elected Indigenous leaders led by Marcus Stewart and Aunty Geraldine Atkinson, the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples and especially my friend the member for Geelong and Parliamentary Secretary for First Peoples. She has lived her values and stood up for working people, including First Nations people, her whole working life. Her lived experience of being widowed with four children when her

26-year-old Gunditjmara husband died of a heart attack on the cricket field makes her ideal for her current role and for so much more. I am calling on my colleagues—you back her in for so much more. She epitomises the hardworking, compassionate values of her much earlier predecessor, the first-ever Labor woman in this Parliament, Fanny Brownbill, who represented Geelong from 1938 to 1948.

There are so many reasons that I have been privileged to represent the electorate of Yan Yean for 20 years, but especially it is because it is one of the few districts to carry a name in traditional language. ‘Yan Yean’ means ‘young boy’ and ‘Mernda’ means ‘young girl’. Mernda is the geographic centre of the Yan Yean electorate. It means ‘young girl’ in the Woiwurrung language spoken by the Wurundjeri. For each day of the past 20 years I have tried hard to ensure the merndas and yan yeans of today and of tomorrow are at the centre of my work. It is not lost on me, but the first time I met the Premier was in the mid 1990s, when we were both on the Aboriginal affairs policy committee, and it is great to see this work coming forward.

Now I want to take a look back from where we have come, and one of the reasons I want to do this is that I am a La Trobe alumnus and I have tried and tried to get La Trobe University students to talk about the history of women in this chamber. Maybe I will have to write it myself, but I am going to make sure it is in *Hansard*. It is 40 years since I first voted. At that election the Cain government took office and a young mother of five, born in Horsham, became the first-ever woman cabinet minister in Victoria. Pauline Toner was then one of only seven women in the Victorian Parliament, and indeed there had only been three others prior across both houses. Pauline was the member for Greensborough, and along with Pauline’s successor, Sherryl Garbutt, and my dear friends and neighbours the member for Eltham and the member for Bundoora, we are all honoured to be part of Pauline’s legacy, representing some of the same localities that she did. I always feel a little thrill when visiting Yarrambat Primary School to see Pauline’s name on the plaque there. Her policy achievements, to quote the member for Altona, were impactful but too short.

When I entered Parliament in 2002 I was part of the largest influx of women ever, 24 sassy and diverse Labor women, so many hailing from regional areas. At that election the National Party elected its first woman to the Assembly and the Liberal Party had only two women, making a total of 27, or just over 30 per cent of this chamber—a huge increase of 22 women from when I had first voted, 20 year earlier. Across the Labor caucus 40 per cent were women in that amazing transition. I remember hearing Channel 9 journalist David Broadbent, the then chair of the press gallery, opining that this female influx was the single largest change he had ever seen in his 25-plus years of reporting. Children were everywhere during the sittings, and toilets for women, just like at the theatre and at the G, were scarce.

Our large numbers translated to many female cabinet ministers, not just playing bit parts but in senior, meaty roles. We elected the first woman Speaker, Judy Maddigan, a former librarian who struck terror and silence into the house, me included, when she stared imperiously over those glasses. Monica Gould, who has been visiting the Parliament today, I was delighted to see, was elected the first female President of the Legislative Council, with Glenyys Romanes the first female Deputy President. In my second term, in 2006, Jenny Lindell became the second female Speaker, and Ann Barker, another sister Bomber, became the first female Deputy Speaker. Since 2002, in Pauline Toner’s heartland of the north, female MPs have outnumbered men two to one. Twenty years on from my election there are now 34 women out of 88 MPs: 24 Labor, four Liberal, two National, one Green and two independents. This makes it crystal clear that the other parties have a long way to go when it comes to equality, and I was so, so happy yesterday to have that magnificent photo with all of the Labor women’s caucus, with you, Premier, and with all our sassy women candidates that are standing for this election.

Some on the other side of politics have wrongly tried to dismiss our women at every election as mere quota girls. The evidence is in on that, I reckon. Yes, we have party rules requiring a balance of women and men; however, these rules have never had to be invoked, due to the flood of women who have nominated since the rules were altered almost 30 years ago and the support that the branches and unions have given those women. To any who may think this imbalance is unfair to men, consider this:

for the most part of Victoria's history men have comprised a huge majority in this place. More than 1500 of them have represented seats in this chamber and in the Council, compared to only 98 women in this place. I am really hoping, sisters, you are going to make the ton after this election. So I simply say it is our turn. Our current cabinet comprises 65 per cent women, with three out of four party leadership positions held by women: Deputy Premier, Leader of the Government and Deputy Leader of the Government.

A more gender-equal Parliament is not just about who is occupying the positions; it means it sees huge changes in public policy in matters that truly impact women's lives. Sherryl Garbutt established the *State Disability Plan* and the Victorian Honour Roll of Women and, as the first minister for children, built children's centres, many in my electorate—the first being at The Lakes in South Morang, but they are now all over my electorate and across the state—a policy that was adopted by the Gillard government. My dear ski buddy and friend Maxine Morand, together with the Premier, passed abortion law reform during a marathon sitting.

The late Lynne Kosky, another ski buddy, reformed applied learning in our schools and elevated craft to its rightful place, equal to that of the other creative arts. It is fitting that there are awards in craft and TAFE that bear Lynne's name, and I am so glad that Howard Kelly, who this year got the Lynne Kosky Memorial Award for Lifetime Achievement, is here to hear my speech today. Thanks Howard. Lynne's work in TAFE continues under the close watch of the current minister, Gayle Tierney. A special shout-out to Lynne for her support for the South Morang rail extension. It never would have happened without her and the then Premier John Brumby. The late Fiona Richardson, another warrior woman of the north, implemented the findings of Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence, changing forever the responses of the police, the judiciary and the service system for women and children seeking safety. Her work is continued today by the member for Yuroke, another woman of the north.

Victoria's first female Attorney-General, the member for Altona, who we heard an amazing contribution from yesterday—I have been thinking, 'How do I top that?'. The line where she said the Labor Party has been like a bad boyfriend to her was the best line ever. My husband lovingly called Jill the 'Attorney-Jilleral'. Jill undertook a labour of love in honour of her mum to pass our voluntary assisted dying laws, as the member for Richmond mentioned. I will be forever indebted to her for initiating reform into forced adoption, which impacted my aunt Anne Radford, June Smith and so many other women who have been in contact with me over the years. If circumstances had been a little bit different, my Blake would have been taken from me too. I am so glad that he was not and that he is here today. Jill's work included the legalisation of medical cannabis, and I thank her and the Premier for responding to the pleas of the Wallace family; Cooper Wallace has the most wonderful life, being able to legally have that treatment. Thanks to Jill for banning gay conversion therapy. I want to echo the member for Albert Park's call yesterday to anyone in the forthcoming election: do not use trans people for your purposes to seek a vote and for clickbait. Xandra Metcalfe is a fantastic trans woman raised in Diamond Creek. I have worked closely with her family, and I particularly want to give credit to her mum, Deb Metcalfe, who has been a fantastic teacher at Montmorency Secondary College supporting the rainbow youth support group there. But from the stories that they have told me, of all of Xandra's friends—who are in double figures, 10 to 20 of them—Xandra was the only one that had family support, the only one. As political leaders we need to understand that these young people need our support, not derision.

Jill's groundbreaking work is now being carried on by the current Attorney-General, Jaelyn Symes—she is actually a distant cousin of mine, if you did not know—and my dear friend the Minister for Health, the member for Macedon. The member for Bellarine, a sister member of the class of 2002, became the first-ever Minister for Mental Health. She reformed the water sector and, as the first-ever female Minister for Police, led the implementation of the Victorian community safety statement, including an agreed police allocation model ensuring that our police academy is always pumping out great new graduates to be tasked to growing communities like the north.

Another northern neighbour and 2002 classmate, the member for Mill Park, is Australia's longest serving energy minister, leading the transition to alternative generation to mitigate climate change, and has also played a part in delivering some mighty fine walking and cycling trails for our shared patches. I have said to a number of people that my sister Gabrielle shared a house with David Kirner in Turner Street, Abbotsford, just as Joan was first elected to this Parliament, and it was where I first met Joan. I met Julia Gillard, who was a young Labor activist, and the O'Connor boys, and I met Lily. While there were massive parties going on in this house, Lily sat quietly in the corner drinking her cup of tea. But it has been a pleasure to continue working with her. She was the good one.

Members interjecting.

Ms GREEN: Thanks, Lily, for letting us have a laugh. No conversation about the achievements of women in this place would be complete without mentioning my twin, the Deputy Premier. We are not quite twins, but we do share a birthday and a passion for regional Victoria and improving it as a place to live, work and visit. I recall messaging JA on her 26th birthday and saying, 'How did you get to be so young and so clever?'. That birthday was the day after she was elected in 1999, some 23 years ago. She is the longest serving woman ever in the Legislative Assembly, and early in her next term she will become the longest serving woman ever in Victorian parliamentary history—and she is not even close to 50. She will surpass the record of Louise Asher, whose service was across both Council and Assembly, and I do not think Louise will mind at all being surpassed by another Essendon supporter. Go Bombers! Jacinta and I said this morning, with the news about Hawthorn, that our Bombers are looking pretty good. But the AFLW team is going very well. The Mernda community will always remember the Deputy Premier for the delivery of Mernda rail, three new stations, walking and cycling paths, an upgraded bus network and 2000 extra car parks.

My parents both grew up on farms, and many family members still farm, so it is in my DNA. It is not just the province of the National Party. That is why I was so chuffed to work closely with another regional buddy, the first-ever female Minister for Agriculture, the brave Jaala Pulford. When she tasked me with re-establishing the Victorian Rural Women's Network, not only was this the right thing to do, it was a love job for me. Walking here this morning I spoke briefly to another past trailblazing female minister, Caroline Hogg, who was the first-ever minister for rural affairs and the founder of the Rural Women's Network. It was actually Labor in government that saw that as important as agriculture and the industry is, there is so much more to what is out there, and Caroline led that.

In the early 1990s I worked as a young public servant in the office of rural affairs, editing the Rural Women's Network magazine and supporting events like Women in Action workshops in small towns and communities across regional Victoria. It was a lifeline to rural and regional women, and it celebrated and nurtured their contributions to community and economic development. At its peak the magazine had a hard copy distribution of over 20 000, and it moved online as well. When elected in 2002 I was pleased to see the network thriving and growing. In 20 years in this place I feel blessed to have served only four years in opposition, from 2010 to 2014. During that time I was the Shadow Minister for Women. My heart sank when the then government moved the Rural Women's Network magazine to online only. That told me that the Liberal minister for women had zero understanding of the lives of country women and how marginal and inaccessible the internet can be in some parts of rural and regional Victoria.

A subsequent budget then completely shut down the Rural Women's Network. I sincerely hope that both the Liberal and National parties have learned what folly that was. Jaala, as the first female Minister for Agriculture, has been succeeded by Jaclyn Symes, the Minister for Health and now Gayle Tierney. Labor currently has 18 MPs representing rural and regional Victoria, and 15 are women. I leave this place content that they will always fight for regional communities, especially for women, and I so hope that they are going to be joined by Martha Haylett, Dr Kate Maxfield and many others.

Caroline Hogg's work as the first-ever minister for rural affairs in 1990 has been expanded and grown by Jaala, Jaclyn, Mary-Anne and now Harriet Shing, as ministers for regional development. The

Andrews Labor government established the Growing Suburbs Fund, and I want to thank in particular the member for Kororoit and the Minister for Education, outer suburban MPs who backed in these investments as ministers.

Of course the work of all these fabulous women has been supported by some amazing blokes. I first met the member for Richmond, a passionate housing advocate, when he was an adviser to then housing minister Barry Pullen in the Cain government and I was a young public servant working in program development. Now the Big Housing Build is the pinnacle of his work. Thank you, Richard.

I have been privileged to work with three outstanding premiers in Bracks, Brumby and Andrews and their equally great and loyal deputies Thwaites, Hulls and Merlino. In particular treasurers Brumby and Pallas have always respected the needs of a growing Yan Yean, and the Treasurer told me on numerous occasions that Yan Yean was the gold medallist in numerous budgets—I think almost every one—during this time.

I will always remember in the lead-up to the 2014 election when the then shadow minister, the member for Monbulk, and the then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier, launched the Education State at Mernda's Hilltop Park. As Minister for Education the member for Monbulk took a special interest in making up for the pause in education capital funding during the 2010–14 Liberal government. His care saw the delivery of numerous schools, and I seek leave, as my dear friend the member for Lara did, to table that list of schools and the other list of what has been funded over the last eight years.

The SPEAKER: Leave is granted.

Ms GREEN: Thank you. I have been privileged as parliamentary secretary to work alongside some outstanding ministers: Bob Cameron in police and emergency services; the member for Lara, tourism and major events, who turbocharged our visitor economy and major event sectors; Jaala Pulford, Jaclyn Symes, the member for Macedon and now Harriet Shing in regional development; the member for Keysborough in sport; the member for Oakleigh in sport; and my neighbour the member for Yuroke in community sport. Thank you to all and to your staff, some of whom are here today.

Many column inches have been written about Labor's factions. I want to thank my friends in the Labor Unity faction for backing me to get here, but there are many, many other fun factions that I have been a member of too: the women's caucus; the regional caucus; the food faction and its love child, the yum cha faction; the fashion faction; the ski faction; the Fatsadika faction of Kythira island; and the BVA, the Benalla veterans association, which the Premier, the member for Ivanhoe, the member for Altona, the member for Sydenham, Lee Tarlamis and many more are members of, and I feel so proud to have Denise Allen's son, Paul, here today. Every subsequent wave of Labor MPs following 2002 has added strength to the whole. I want to give a special shout-out to the class of 2018. They are the largest wave of new MPs since 2002, and it has been an out-and-out pleasure mentoring them on the ways of bay 13.

I want to thank the staff and all the committee buddies that I had, and that is across the Parliament. To anyone coming into this place: please get on parliamentary committees. You learn so much, and it can completely change your thinking. Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, outer suburban and environmental planning have all been amazing.

Thank you to my loyal, resilient and multitalented staff, especially my adviser Virginia Wellard, who has worked for me since the start days of 2009 until now, but we have been friends since the mid-1990s. My previous adviser, Pam McLeod, has been a stalwart of the Yan Yean electorate since its creation in 1991, a past diligent Whittlesea city councillor, a past president of Australian Local Government Women's Association and so much more. Thank you to both of these fabulous women for their wise counsel and friendship.

Former colleague Simon Mead once said, 'Don't ever resent your staff moving on to greener pastures. They're not leaving you; they're actually helping you grow your empire'. I wear it as a badge of honour that so many of my fine staff have been picked off to work for premiers, ministers, deputy prime

ministers, federal members, senators and more. Thanks in particular to Brooke Haffenden, Naomi Joiner, Josh Raymond and Olivia Tregambe for their courage during COVID, and to Brian O'Connor, Matt Sheean and Chris Piper for outstanding work in opposition—a special shout-out to Matt for teaching me so much about living and thriving with disability and being a voice for the voiceless. To Amanda, Rosy and Jinane: amazing work following Black Saturday. I will never forget the day after that terrible day and my staff being in the office just ringing and finding out what people needed and in fact whether they were still with us.

To my first staff, the late great Jan Martorana Cleeland, the late Santo Spinello and Marg Burbidge, now a stalwart of Ripon. To all the bright young things who filled part-time roles, were my interns or were part of the Yan Yean Youth Council. My current electorate officers: Louise Kenney-Shen, Paul Allen and Aden Davison. My branch members from the former Diamond Valley, Epping, South Morang, Wallan, Whittlesea, Kinglake and Yan Yean branches. The unions—the Transport Workers Union, the ASU, the Health and Community Services Union, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. The hundreds of community volunteers, especially the Yarrambat crew, who have staffed polling booths, street stalls, Clean Up Australia Days, community festivals and agricultural shows and who have doorknocked and made phone calls with and for me over five elections. To my local government councillor friends, especially the past Murrindindi and Ararat mayor, Peter Beales, who is here today, and his fabulous wife, Jenny, for their friendship and their work in relief and recovery. Jenny, you deserved a second crack at McEwen and would have made a fine MP. I know you have mentored so many others along the way.

To past Nillumbik mayors: my dear friend Helen Coleman, Warwick Leeson, Peter Perkins, Michael Young, Greg Johnson and Lex de Man, and current mayor Frances Eyre. I hope many of you noted that they are not all Labor mayors there. To other councillors: brave Natalie Duffy, Bob Stubbings and Michael Hall; in Whittlesea, former mayor Lawrie Cox and Cr Pam McLeod; in Mitchell shire, former mayor Cr Sanderson and all the councillors at Mitchell shire and local government professionals; the late, great David Turnbull and his loyal deputy at Whittlesea and Mitchell, Mary Agostino; Griff Davis and Liana Thompson, both ex-Whittlesea; and the current CEO, Craig Lloyd.

To the sporting clubs, for their fun and joy of competition, especially the Panton Hill Football Club, who made me their patron. For all the women and girls playing footy, especially the groundbreaking Diamond Creek Women's Football Club; the north has been the cradle of AFLW. I also want to shout out to other football clubs—Laurimar, Hurstbridge, Diamond Creek, Mernda and Whittlesea; the Greensborough Hockey Club; and also the artisans in my electorate. It is great to be a Renaissance person and to love sport and the arts. You can do it, despite what Sigmund Jorgensen used to say.

I want to give a shout-out to the most wonderful first responders in my electorate, who have been through so much, both career and volunteer: VicPol, Ambulance Victoria, SES, FRV firefighters and all CFA volunteers but especially my brother and sister volunteer firefighters at the Diamond Creek, Doreen and Wattle Glen fire brigades. We will never forget what we went through on those dreadful days of Black Saturday and its aftermath. I give a shout-out to all those survivors who live on to this day, despite their losses, and to the health professionals who worked then and throughout COVID.

To my family—my mother, Wilma; my sisters, Gabrielle, Julianna and Francine; my nephews Giona and Xavi; my brother-in-law Simon; my beautiful sons, Blake and Carlo, and their partners, Glen and Paola; and my wonderful, funny husband aka cultural attaché—I think he knows more people than me—Maca. To even my first husband, Michael Rizzo, who has worked on every campaign and always been supportive of me. We are really like siblings now. Thank you, Michael—both Michaels.

My old ski buddies Nicole, Helen, Maxine, Belinda, Michelle, Colin, Geoff, Puc, Mel, Tim and so many more—you were there when I needed you, so much after Black Saturday, and I will never forget that. To my new friends at Disabled Wintersport, I have been a volunteer guide for six or seven years now, and I am now on the board, and I really hope that that is going to be the next stage of my life. My touchstones—my girlfriends that I have known my whole life—you have kept my feet on the

ground and made me remember who I am. Angela, Anne, Anita, Deborah, Jenny, Kerrie-Anne and Louise, what on earth will we do when we grow up? I am certain that I would not have had a 20-year political career if you had not kept quiet about the shenanigans of our youth. Thank goodness social media was not invented then and cameras were scarce. In politics there is a saying: if you want a friend, get a dog. Well, I have both. I owe a debt to Jo Duncan for making it cool to bring dogs to Parliament. Bailey thanks you with a big woof for being a trailblazer.

I leave this place in the same year as that long-running soap *Neighbours*, and I invoke that show's tagline 'when good neighbours become good friends'. The Yan Yean electorate has more neighbouring MPs than any other, and I think that is why I am giving such a long speech. I indeed have made good friends: Liz Beattie and Ros Spence as members for Yuroke; Jo Duncan and Mary-Anne Thomas for Macedon; Ben Hardman in Seymour; Bronwyn Halfpenny in Thomastown; and Lily D'Ambrosio in Mill Park. And then there are the Hurstbridge line MPs: Brooksy, aka TC; Carbs; and those Eltham ratbags and their much better successor, Vicki Ward. We have had a fabulous partnership and delivered so many projects to our shared community. We have had so much fun together, Vicki, torturing tory mayors. We played naughty teenagers to his angry dad, and I am sure people know who I am talking about, especially those on the Privileges Committee. We delivered Christmas trees dressed as elves and trick or treat packages, with me in a blue sheet with eyes cut out—Dick Hamer's green wedge ghost—and Vicki as Pokémon.

Finally, another historical fact that I am quite proud of. The Andrews Labor government is the most Catholic government in Victoria's history. Post the 2014 election, many of us kept questioning why a Latin American Catholic Speaker had not altered the Lord's Prayer from the Protestant one to the Catholic one. Something had to be done. One night someone glued the Catholic version over the well-used Protestant one that was read by the Speaker. The Speaker was flummoxed and unusually hesitant and ummed and ahed, racking his brains for the right words. I will carry to my grave the number of shoulders heaving with silent mirth throughout the start of that parliamentary sitting day. I have it on good authority that the next Speaker had one of the parliamentary staff saying, 'Please be careful of the Lord's prayer. There was an incident for the last Speaker, and we never found out who it was who played the prank'. Well, I unmask myself today. It was me. I want to apologise to the parliamentary staff who had to look under every rock to try and find out who did it.

I want to thank all the parliamentary staff across all the departments here. I knew so many of you before I came to this place through my work with the CPSU. You have just been outstanding.

The part of my life over the last 20 years and earlier has been the one where I have been so much like my father. My father was full of duty and team play. I was never the full forward or the wing breaking out of a pack. I hope I was the best team player, just like dad was. It is now time to channel my mum. My mum is an artist, and I really want to connect with that creative side of myself and be connected more to home. I still feel I have got so much more to do in work. I entered here in my 30s, I am leaving in my 50s. I leave with so many friends. Thank you all.

Members applauded.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Grievance debate

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That grievances be noted.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (16:28): On 27 October at just 14 years old Alisha Hussein looks into her mother's eyes and says, 'I'm not going to make it', and she was right. Alisha died that day. Prior to these words from a terrified young girl to her mother, Jasmin, the story was all too common here in Victoria. I think it is essential that the words from the call are recorded in this place to ensure that the

focus of any government in the future is about protecting lives, saving lives and delivering at minimum the services that can make a difference.

Operator: Emergency, police, fire or ambulance?

Jasmin: Ambulance.

Operator: That's ambulance ringing out now. Please wait.

Jasmin: Thank you. She's going blue.

Operator: I'll see how long it's going to take.

You can hear other family members in the background. Jasmin was put on hold by the Telstra operator. May I add here that our thoughts are with the operators from Telstra who are not at fault but simply trying to get an answer in Victoria. They had to listen to the heartbreaking conversation as it happened.

Operator: (off hold) Ambulance still ringing.

Jasmin: I'm going to maybe ... drive her. Is it going to be quicker?

Operator: I would have no way of predicting that for you, I'm sorry.

Jasmin: She's not going to probably make it.

Two minutes later:

Operator: Still connecting.

Jasmin: She's dying.

Five minutes later:

Jasmin: I'm not even getting a pulse.

Operator: Still connecting to ambulance.

Ten minutes later:

Operator: Ambulance still ringing out.

Fifteen minutes: Jasmin finally hears the voice of an ambulance call taker, as they walked into hospital. Jasmin told the operator:

She is not breathing properly, and she is not going to make it.

Jasmin made the decision to drive to her to hospital, and you can hear that in the recording—the recording that should live with every person here forever:

Jasmin: Breathe, Alisha. Alisha breathe.

This is because people here in Victoria are waiting minutes and not the 5 seconds that is required when people call 000. Jasmin believes that if the call was answered in 5 minutes or maybe even 10 Alisha would be alive. Thirty-three people have lost their lives. Thirty-three families will still be feeling the pain of knowing that something could have been done that would have impacted the outcome, and that would be very difficult for each of those families to live with.

The government that has overseen this showed a lack of empathy and compassion to the families. Instead of reaching out to them to offer them support when the inspector-general for emergency management report was released and offering additional care, the Premier, the Minister for Emergency Services and their teams reached for the phone to call the media team to ensure the PR was right and the timing would limit the damage to the Labor Party. This report was released as over 90 000 people made their way to the biggest AFL final in Victoria in three years. It was a Saturday. I imagine the thinking from the Premier and his team was that there would be limited staff on the newsdesk, most likely not those all over the detail, and they could release and ride the wave of footy finals over that weekend with barely a headline in the news—wrong, so very wrong. The media rightfully called out this disgraceful behaviour, and on behalf of the families and every person in the state, who deserve the truth, I will say it again: this decision to attempt to hide the truth of 33 deaths in this state makes me sick. It was an absolute disgrace.

The government then continued to try to say that the issues with 000 are not their fault but the fault of COVID. They are more interested in PR, in stunts and in spin to cover up the fact of the failings. You only need to read report after report in the *Herald Sun*, including while this was happening. The government opted to do a review using Graham Ashton, and when that review was put forward and the details started to come out, those that were having input into that report were hand-picked by the senior management of ESTA—hand-picked. What did that do? It covered the truth. In the *Herald Sun* on 16 March:

Concerns were raised about a major review into the operator of Victoria's triple-0 service after staff were hand-picked for consultations.

...

A government spokeswoman confirmed ESTA managers were asked to nominate staff ...

...

On Monday it was revealed Deputy Premier James Merlino—a former emergency services minister—was warned about serious staff shortages in ESTA in 2016.

Yet they were hand-picking staff for a report to try to make sure it would favour the government rather than reveal the truth to 33 families. The government knew about the problems. They knew about the issues in relation to funding. On 15 March in the *Age* there was a report about the 000 alarm raised before 12 deaths:

Victoria's Deputy Premier, James Merlino, was warned in 2016 about serious staff shortages at the state's triple-zero call agency, more than five years before an explosion of call delays was linked to the deaths of 12 people.

The *Age* has obtained a letter to Mr Merlino dated December 2016 in which unions told the then emergency services minister that call-takers at the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority (ESTA) were so overworked they were unable to take proper breaks or access leave and were expected to work overtime, and that some were suffering from stress and mental health issues.

In a separate development, experienced emergency call-takers for ESTA said they were reporting call wait times of more than a minute dating to at least mid-2019—

pre COVID—

... well before the pandemic, and said numerous warnings were not acted on.

...

Unions representing paramedics, firefighters and emergency call-takers claimed ESTA had promised 48 new full-time-equivalent positions during enterprise bargaining ... in 2015, but the pledge for the new operational roles was later withdrawn because the money was no longer available.

So the government cut the funds.

“Unfortunately, in what is a bizarre set of circumstances, at our most recent ESTA consultative committee meeting Tuesday 13 December 2016 ESTA made admissions to the unions that not only were they no longer employing the 48 additional FTE positions promised but that they ‘no longer had the funding’ ...

This email was also sent to the Premier in 2016. Further:

Two experienced call-takers said the issue of understaffing had been regularly raised with ESTA management by workers in forums over many years and “regularly dismissed”. One of the workers, who could not be identified because they still work at ESTA, said they had kept records of call-answering delays around May 2019, including waits of more than two minutes to reach ambulance operators and four minutes to reach police.

“At that point we said, ‘You’re going to kill someone. This is not acceptable.’ To blame COVID-19 is disgraceful ...

That was call takers calling out the government for the disgraceful behaviour of trying to blame COVID for their failures in the 000 system. I know we speak a lot about the 000 crisis and ambulances, but we cannot forget, as is in the *Sunday Age* of 4 September:

The deaths of four children in a house fire in Werribee have been linked to the crisis that engulfed Victoria's triple-zero call agency, the true scale of which has been revealed in a damning report highlighting 33 deaths.

...

One person waited more than 76 minutes for their call to be answered ...

...

While the report does not identify where the fire occurred or the number of fatalities, *The Sunday Age* has confirmed that it is the Werribee fire that killed four siblings, aged 1 to 10, in November ...

The initial triple-zero call to police was subject to several delays caused by a backlog of calls for ESTA ambulance dispatchers in Victoria. The caller was initially unable to get through to the Telstra service charged with directing every Australian triple-zero call to either police, fire or ambulance because too many of the operators were on hold trying to connect calls for Victorian ambulances.

They waited 22 seconds listening to a pre-recorded message ... of the delays, then waited another minute for the call to be answered and dispatched ...

Following that, it took another 79 seconds before an operator at ESTA was available to answer ...

For those that understand fires, in a current, modern house, if a fire is ignited, within 4 minutes—in about the time that I have got left in this speech—that room where the ignition point started would probably be destroyed. That is how long it took for that call to eventually get through. Then you add on that it takes 10 minutes for the fire department to get there; that is enough for a house to go. Four children died in that fire, and the government's interest was PR and trying to hide this report so they did not have to face the damning questions.

There was 'Doubts cast on Dan's excuse in ambulance row', where Victoria's inspector-general for emergency management poured cold water over findings that they did not need to release it on that Saturday. When the Premier came out stating that it was still being worked on, Mr Pearce said there was one digit that had to be changed—simply one digit. We know this is a big issue. We know this has been a major concern for all Victorians, and that is why we are very proud on this side that we will commit to fixing the 000 crisis. We will make sure that there is a proper and effective backup system at 000 so we never return to pen and paper, which happened during COVID. When the system failed, pen and paper were being used for ambulance call takers—not good enough. We will then ensure that the system available with the dispatch system is upgraded so it is a modern system. The current government have stopped and withdrawn the funding for that upgrade at the moment. They have withdrawn that from 000 at the same time there is a crisis in this state. How could a government in their right mind withdraw the funding to upgrade the system after every report that has come out? It is bewildering.

There is another major issue that was identified in this report: only 16 per cent of call takers are cross-trained. They work in silos. This is not the fault of call takers; this is the fault of policy by a government that does not have the courage to go in there and say, 'We need to invest in training these staff so they are in the best position to take calls within the 5 seconds required', and we will train up to 50 per cent so they can move where the surge is at the time. Whether it is a Black Saturday event, thunderstorm asthma, a Bourke Street tragedy—wherever those call takers are needed, we will make sure they are trained and they can move there.

As part of that \$125 million we will ensure that we have recurrent funding for 000, because report after report after report has said that is one of the major issues. Even this week Stephen Leane has come out and said that whilst the funding is okay at the moment, that is exactly where the problem lies. You cannot continue to have a system where the CEO is coming out and saying, 'The funding is okay at the moment'. How does the government, how does ESTA, plan for surge through our state?

As we close this Parliament and we go to an election, Victorians will have a clear choice when it comes to 000: a government that ignored reports in 2015, a government that ignored reports in 2016, a government that ignored a call for \$1 million extra in 2020, a government that cut call-taking staff in 2021, a government that promised 48 new staff then withdrew the funding, a government that withdrew the funding to upgrade the computer-assisted dispatch system to bring it into the 21st century; or you can elect the Liberal-Nationals to go into government to deliver on our commitments

and ensure that we treat ESTA 000 as a genuine emergency service here in Victoria and that we work with every call taker to get the advice and information from them directly—not hand-picked ones, we will meet with the ones that are on the ground taking those calls and feeling the pressure and the stress. We will deliver the world-class 000 system that Victoria deserves. Only Victoria had an average of above 100 seconds during the full COVID period. Only Victoria cut staff. Only Victoria had 33 people die because of failings at 000. Every other state managed to cope. There is only one thing that Victoria has that those other states do not, and that is an Andrews-led Labor government, and we need to change at this election.

HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr J BULL (Sunbury) (16:43): I grieve for the people of Victoria if those opposite are to come to power and have responsibility for the health portfolio, because all we will continue to see are cuts, chaos and closures. Let us never forget that in their time, from 2010 to 2014, those opposite oversaw continued cuts, continued chaos and continued closures. Of course we know if they have the opportunity to do so again, that is exactly what they will do.

My honourable friends on this side of the house, and I think the vast majority of Victorians, know and understand that despite the best attempts, the desperate attempts and indeed the shameful attempts by those opposite, it is this government, the Andrews Labor government, that will continue to invest in our healthcare workforce, in our healthcare infrastructure and in making sure that we are always supporting those that support our local communities and our health care each and every single hour of every single day right throughout the year. We know that the global pandemic had a massive, significant impact on our healthcare workforce. It was a sledgehammer to what was our incredible healthcare workforce. But at each and every opportunity, through the very tough and challenging and most difficult times of COVID, it was this government that stood with our healthcare workforce each and every day and stood with local communities and people right across the state.

We know that it is the Andrews Labor government that invests in our nurses. We know that it is the Andrews Labor government that invests in our ambos, in our call takers—in our massive healthcare workforce. In my contribution this evening I want to touch on not just the incredibly important and significant large-scale investments that this government has been able to deliver for our healthcare workforce but also our healthcare infrastructure right across the state, and just over the last couple of weeks there have been some critical announcements and investments that have been made, particularly one within the growing communities in the north, which I will come to, but some others as well.

I believe, and I think Victorians know and understand, this government is about doing what matters. It is about putting patients first. It is about not playing cheap political games and making stunts in here to scare local communities, to put fear into people, but is indeed about supporting our ambos, our nurses—our healthcare workforce—and that is exactly what we are getting on with doing. We know that hospitals do not treat patients; it is nurses, it is midwives and it is doctors, and since coming into office we have made significant investments—investments like the Monash Children’s and the Joan Kirner Women’s and Children’s Hospital. But we have also recruited over 22 000 additional healthcare workers. We are building on this investment through our \$270 million healthcare workforce package, which I mentioned earlier, and since 2014 our investments in our healthcare system total more than \$158 billion. This is an extraordinary investment.

Compare and contrast that to the \$1 billion in cuts that were delivered by those opposite between 2010 and 2014. Unfortunately I will not have the opportunity, nor the time, to go into some of the decisions that were made by the former miserly Morrison government, but when it comes to health care in this state Victorians know and understand that it is the Andrews Labor government that gets on and delivers these important investments. That is the Wonthaggi Hospital, a \$115 million expansion which was delivered, the upgraded emergency department to treat an additional 26 000 emergency patients each year and the very recent and contemporary commitment of \$250 million for the second stage of works. We know that \$1.05 billion for the Maroondah Hospital was recently announced. Once

complete, this new hospital will deliver a new emergency department, new operating theatres, specialised care, allied health, day procedure facilities, an expanded medical imaging unit and two six-storey inpatient towers with over 200 additional beds. Construction on the project is expected to start in 2025—2500 jobs, a significant investment. It is complemented by our extraordinary investments in TAFE and our massive rebuild of the entire TAFE sector—some outstanding opportunities to provide TAFE to those who deserve an opportunity to go on, to retrain, but may be limited by their financial means. This is why free TAFE is so important, and it complements this announcement and many other announcements for those wanting to get new skills and new opportunities in life.

The list is very long. I did mention the investment in the growing north. I note that the minister at the table, the member for Yuroke, is someone who is acutely aware of growth. New residents are moving into our growing community each and every day, and what we know and understand is that we need to make sure we are providing infrastructure for growth communities, ones such as mine but also right across the north, in the west and in the south-east, and that is why I was really pleased to see such a significant announcement, more than \$1 billion in a combined announcement for both the Austin but critically in the north the Northern Hospital. That is a significant investment, over \$1 billion, at the Northern; \$770 million to \$855 million of investment will make sure that there is the delivery of a new emergency department, with up to 70 treatment spaces as well as a new tower for inpatients, with more than 100 beds. This continues to build upon a really large pipeline of projects and initiatives that have been made possible in the eight years we have had the opportunity to be on the Treasury benches, to be in government.

Unfortunately what is so often lacking in this conversation, in this debate, are the facts. It is this government that has in each and every budget and at each and every opportunity made significant investments in health. We know there are big challenges within the healthcare sector, we know that COVID has placed extreme pressure on the healthcare workforce and we know that, because of growth—this was present before the pandemic but was exacerbated by the pandemic—we need to continue to invest. The \$12 billion health repair plan is a significant and large-scale investment in our healthcare workforce. One significant announcement made just recently is our paramedic practitioners. The \$12 billion health infrastructure investment for building the facilities Victoria needs is important, but we also need to make sure we are supporting the workforce. That is why we have listened to our paramedics about how we can deliver better care across the healthcare system. In an Australian first, we will create the new position of paramedic practitioner in our ambulance service, ensuring that sick and injured Victorians can be treated faster. This is about using best practice. It is about making sure that we are supporting our paramedics to have the skills, to have the qualifications and to be able to make decisions on the road to treat and provide urgent care to patients who need it and to eliminate that need for the trip to the hospital for many patients.

I know, Deputy Speaker, that you are someone who is also very passionate about local health care within your community, but what we know is that right across the state—whether it is in the growing communities that I mentioned earlier; whether it is, as mentioned today by the former Minister for Planning, our terrific hospital precinct within the CBD; or whether it is in rural and regional Victoria—we will make sure that we are providing all of that support, all of those services. It is incredibly important.

With only 6 minutes to go I am not going to attempt to rattle through all of the investments that we have made within the healthcare portfolio, but I do want to touch on a couple: \$250 million for the Monash Children's Hospital, which was opened in 2017; \$200 million for the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital; \$1.5 billion, a historic investment, for the Footscray Hospital; \$900 million for the new tertiary hospital in Melton, just next door to my home in my electorate; \$500 million to deliver the Barwon women's and children's hospital; and \$236 million for the Casey and Werribee Mercy hospitals. I know that the member for Frankston is here and that he has spoken at length about the importance of the \$562 million expansion of the Frankston Hospital. He has done significant work in that.

Mr Edbrooke interjected.

Mr J BULL: \$1.1 billion—amazing, member for Frankston. And the work, the advocacy, the support just continues, so it is terrific.

I talked about rural and regional Victoria. There is also the expansion of the Ballarat Base Hospital, \$230 million for the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health in Shepparton, funding for additional upgrades at Latrobe Regional Hospital and an increase across the board of \$300 million for the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund. In health infrastructure there are more than 100 projects under construction. We know that that pipeline needs to continue. As we come through COVID, as we are on the back of the pandemic, we know that the population of this state will continue to grow, and that is why we need to keep investing, we need to keep working with local communities and we need to keep working with experts in the field, with the department, with community healthcare workers, with nurses, with ambos and with doctors to ensure that we are providing the very best care that we can.

We know that those small funding programs, some of the smaller initiatives that have been allocated across the last eight years, are at more than \$1 billion, so more life-saving equipment for hospitals and funding for upgrades and improvements to our healthcare services. There is \$35 million for the medical equipment replacement program and \$25 million for the Metropolitan Health Infrastructure Fund. With all of that work and significant investment in health infrastructure but, critically importantly, also within the healthcare workforce we are providing our healthcare workforce with not only terrific infrastructure but also training and skills to perform the very tough and very challenging role that we know they do each and every day. This is a government that will continue to work with all in our community to support health within our state.

In a previous contribution on a very similar matter in the house I spoke about my view around our understanding, our conversation if you like, with the community and having an honest conversation about the practical challenges, the extraordinary challenges, that COVID has placed on each and every one of us in this state, on all states and territories right across the country and indeed across the globe. As I said in my previous contribution, nobody saw the pandemic coming, and if they did, I am sure nobody would have thought that many of the experiences that we have all shared would have been as tough, hard and challenging as they have been. But what we have sought to do, both through the pandemic and of course through the investments that I have outlined today, is make sure that we are continuing to work with the healthcare workforce, making significant investments at each and every opportunity and actually being a government that works with science and invests in medical research and innovation. That is something that I am particularly proud of. I know as Parliamentary Secretary for Health and as a member of this government that we will continue to put patients first. We will continue to do what matters.

But what I have alluded to and what is incredibly important is that we listen to science, we trust the experts and we value the incredible contribution and sacrifice that our healthcare workers make each and every day. Members on this side of the house, I believe, are very focused on ensuring that those investments are delivered within local communities and that each and every time somebody requires that additional support we are ensuring that we are working as hard as we possibly can with those local communities—no matter where you live, no matter your background.

One of the things that I have spoken about in this house, and I know that other members have as well, is that notion around universal health care and making sure that it should not be your credit card or your Medicare card that determines your ability to get support. Of course we know that there was a time in this state and in this country when that was not the case. Thankfully we are a country that supports universal health care, but we know that that is something that must be protected; that is something that must be defended.

We will continue as an Andrews Labor government to work with all of those right across our community, go back to science, work with the experts and ensure that we are working with the department, with community health, with local communities, and of course with all of those that experience health challenges right across the state so that we have the opportunity to be the healthiest

community we can possibly be. This is a terrific opportunity as we recover from the pandemic to work with our community and to think about new and innovative ways to transform health care in this state. The former health minister, the member for Albert Park, spoke about that yesterday, and I proudly commend— (*Time expired*)

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (16:58): Today, my grievance will be in two parts. First, I am going to grieve for Labor's woeful, totally inadequate and now complete betrayal of the people of Ripon, and then I will move on to some remarks about the government's corruption. I hope I have time. There are many things to cover.

If I start with my electorate of Ripon, so far the Labor government has not made a single commitment to the people of Ripon beyond this election. They clearly have given the seat away. They are not in any way offering anything up to the people of Ripon. The most recent media release, dated 20 September, I found somewhat amusing. It tells me that works are underway on the new Beaufort station car park. This was a commitment that the government made in 2018. It was clearly one that was dreamed up out of one of the Spring Street offices, because the Beaufort car park, which currently would have about 10 car spaces in it, never sees them filled. They are never filled. They certainly do not need an additional 40 spaces. The money that is being spent on that—there are many other projects in Beaufort alone that would be far more useful to the people of Beaufort and far more welcomed by the people of Beaufort. But no, as they say, they are getting on with it. Well, really they have had four years to get on with a project that nobody wants. They are now providing these 42 car spaces, somewhat to amusement on one side, but on the other side, 'Really, couldn't we have had something that we actually wanted?'

By contrast, the Liberal Party is committed to the people of Ripon, and I have had the great pleasure of making a number of announcements which we will implement when we come to government in November. I want to start with the Ballarat link road. This is a significant project—\$278 million to finish the Ballarat link road. We will start with the duplication of Dyson Drive. That is between Remembrance Drive and the Ballarat-Carngham Road. That road is totally overwhelmed by the growth in Lucas and the western suburbs of Ballarat. It is the number one project for the City of Ballarat and for the group of Ballarat community organisations who came together to put their priorities to government and to opposition. We are going to deliver that project. The Minister for Roads and Road Safety has already come out and said that is not a priority for the government, so the people of Lucas and the people of Alfredton know they will not be getting a road under the Labor government. We will deliver one for them.

We will also put in buses every half hour from Smythesdale through to Delacombe in the CBD of Ballarat. Currently Smythesdale is really growing quite quickly, and that whole region only has a V/Line bus that goes three times a day. This will create opportunities for young people. It will also allow people to get to the doctor, because the two doctors in Smythesdale are no longer there. Labor has not found a way to replace them. Medical services in that town have now ceased, so at least people will be able to get to medical services.

We will also deliver a new sporting and community hub for Miners Rest. That is again a community that is growing really quickly and needs new sporting facilities and community facilities. We will adopt the town plan for Miners Rest. This is something that the previous Minister for Planning promised he would do. Unfortunately he is no longer the planning minister, and I am not sure that the current one is going to do it, but if it does not occur, we will get on with it.

We will provide \$30 million for the St Arnaud hospital redevelopment, \$1.9 million for Skipton's football and netball clubrooms and \$1.5 million for Dunolly's Deledio pavilion. We will finish the \$100 million Maryborough hospital. Again the government announced it with great fanfare in 2018 and has not turned a sod on that hospital project. We will finish it.

We will duplicate the highway to Ararat. That project has now been stalled for over eight years. The government is incapable of getting that vital Western Highway link completed. We will reroute the western transmission line and stop Labor's AusNet towers through prime potato country, and this will secure 1300 jobs at McCain's. And we will never build a terminal station at Mount Prospect, unlike Labor.

We will also deliver child care for Wedderburn, and that will be co-located at Wedderburn College. This is just the start of where we are going to get the facilities, the things that people need across Ripon, reinvesting in Ripon, which this government has neglected to do over its term. When we come to government, we will get on with these things and we will deliver them for Ripon.

I now turn to two additional pieces of information. I have got many more that are perhaps a bit older, but I am going to start today with an Auditor-General's report that came out and looked at three projects that I will talk about. One is the Suburban Rail Loop—the Box Hill to Cheltenham rail line. Another is the airport rail link, and then there are two smaller roads projects. They are still substantial projects, though.

What the Auditor-General did was he used the usual ways to assess these projects, the accepted ways, the Department of Treasury and Finance guidelines, the way you should assess these projects—and what did they find? They found that on the Suburban Rail Loop, for every dollar the government spends, they will only get 51 cents back in economic value—only 51 cents back. This is yet another voice saying this project does not stack up for Victorians. It does not stack up. It never stacked up. Everything the government has done to try and make it look as if it stacked up has been underwritten by dodgy assumptions, self-serving assumptions, to try and make this project that was cooked up on the back of a coaster in an airport lounge look as if it was of any benefit to this state, but it is not. It is not a benefit to this state—51 cents returned for every dollar this government wants to waste on it.

We have said that fixing health is more important, and we will put all of the money into fixing Victoria's health crisis. But that in itself will have a better return for Victorians—they will get a properly functioning health system—than the government putting it into the Box Hill to Cheltenham rail loop, which does not even stack up. It does not stack up. Similarly, the way the government is choosing to build the airport link—now, we support an airport link; we do not support the way they are going about it, though—is 48 cents in the dollar. An airport link should stack up if you build it with a proper cost structure. The reason this is looking so bad is that they have already blown the budget before they started. We know once they do start it will blow out even further. So the Auditor-General yet again has found that the way this government goes about it is not to the benefit of Victorians.

I also want to talk briefly about a perhaps not as well noticed report that came out from IBAC, the anti-corruption commission, and their strategic focus areas. It is in fact linked to what I was just saying about the infrastructure projects. IBAC said:

Major infrastructure projects across state and local government involve significant expenditure and corruption risks exist in the management and control of public funds.

It says, 'What actions will IBAC take?'. They are going to report on corruption risks associated with major transport infrastructure projects. IBAC is very busy under this government—very busy.

Mr Battin: Just with this government.

Ms STALEY: That is right, member for Gembrook; perfect. It is busy with this government. It has already got multiple inquiries that involve members of this government, members who sit in this Parliament—the Premier—having to appear before corruption hearings by the anti-corruption commission. We also know, by the way, that IBAC is looking into the stacking of the public service via political appointments. They are now saying, 'We are going to have to have a look at corruption within our major infrastructure projects'. It really is the stink of this government. The rotting carcass of corruption surrounding this government is becoming unbearable, when you have the Premier appearing at least twice that we know of, probably three times, in secret hearings. Some of those are

being fought in court to have them made public. They should be public. Of course they should be public. We should absolutely know the level of corruption that has gone on with the property developer, Mr Woodman, and the comments that his associates have made clearly linking him to the government, noting how well they work together. We need to know what that report says. We need to know what the deals were between the Premier and Peter Marshall—Operation Richmond. We need to know what was done there. What was the quid pro quo?

But they are being suppressed. At every stage this government has fought against the sunlight that the integrity agencies want to shine—and we cannot forget what happened with the red shirts rorts. The Premier—very, very usual practice—went out and said, ‘We’ll cooperate. This is what we’re doing’, and then of course nobody cooperates, and then on top of that, ‘We’re going to fight the Ombudsman all the way to the High Court being allowed to investigate’. The High Court found that she could. The government claimed that she had no jurisdiction and that the Council could not set this up. At every point they were very, very certain. When people did comment on it, it was clear that it was wrong, it was an artifice. What they did was wrong. Some might say what they did changed the result of an election.

A member: That’s corruption.

Ms STALEY: And that is corruption. At every level this government, whether it is the way they manage their projects, whether it is the way they stack the public service, whether it is they themselves—the member for Cranbourne has been in front of IBAC. There will be others in this place that have been in front of IBAC; they are keeping it very, very quiet. We would not want to see any of them get re-elected and then it all come out. I think the people of Victoria deserve to see this before the election, but no, it is all being hidden again. At every turn this government thinks that Victorians do not matter. Everything that matters is them. When they say that they are doing the things that matter, they are doing the things that matter for Labor. They are the things that matter for their re-election, certainly not the things that matter to Victorians.

A member: Like the health system.

Ms STALEY: Because what matters to Victorians is having a health system where people do not die when they do not need to. What matters is having ambulances that turn up. What matters in my part of the world and in the member for South-West Coast’s—she is sitting next to me—part of the world is having roads that are not so unsafe that people are damaging their cars. I have yet another one, who has emailed the Minister for Roads and Road Safety today, trying to get the Western Highway fixed again. Basic government services—health, ambulance, roads—that is what Victorians want. And they want their projects managed within a proper budgetary process that means that our debt is not more than that of New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania combined. How can that be? We certainly do not have the population of those three states combined. We certainly do not have the economic activity of those three states combined, yet we have debt of more than their debt combined. This government is wasting money at every point. We are not getting the services we need. We are not getting what Victorians have every right to expect, which is a world-class health system that comes to the aid of every Victorian who needs it. That is why we need a change of government in November.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Ms WARD (Eltham) (17:13): Here we are, the last day, and we are grieving. My condolences to all those who have lost lives during this pandemic. There is no question there need to be improvements in our health system. In fact we have learned a lot in the last few years. This pandemic has, sadly, taught us much. It is a great pity that, unlike other oppositions in this country, those opposite did not work with the government or the health advice to help keep people safe. Instead they chose to regularly undermine health advice at any opportunity, to drum up fear instead of hope and to bathe in the cold water of hate rather than work to protect health.

I grieve for the conservatives of this state. Conservatism by its very nature does not like change; it really does not like difference. We have seen this with the constant opposition by those opposite to so

many of our Big Build projects—scare campaigns, even trying a rail scare campaign in my own community with the North East Link. Sadly, scare campaigns are all the conservatives have in their toolkit. Conservatives thrive on fear—the fear of change, the fear of the unknown, the fear of difference. They use fear as a vote-gathering activity.

Wherever they can find it, wherever they can drum it up, conservatives use fear as a motivation for people to vote for them. They do not use hope; that is not in their wheelhouse. Hope is for us—us, those of us here on this side of the chamber, those of us on this side of the house who believe in government, who believe in helping people, who believe that we can work together to make things better. We believe that there is a role for government in people's lives, because we are here to help them, we are here to provide safety nets; we are not here to leave people on their own. Sadly, I grieve for the conservatives who view it that way, who believe in small government and who do not think that there is a role for government to help people lead the best lives that they can.

What I grieve for is the fact that conservatives do not rely on good policy. They do not look at how to make a better world, a more compassionate world, a more creative, more inclusive world. They do not rely on hope, they only rely on fear. That is how we see trans kids disgracefully used as political fodder by conservatives. They do not care about those kids, their families, their schoolfriends, the people around them; they care about drumming up votes sourced through fear and hate, and that is so shameful. We have seen so many examples, so many sad examples, examples for which I grieve, of conservatives using fear and hate over the last few years, and for this I grieve heavily.

I grieve for conservatives and their fear of change. I grieve for the lack of opportunities that conservatives see that change can deliver. Change gives us hope but it also gives us opportunities. The investment in our Big Build has not just transformed the built environment, it has not just transformed how we move around the state and how the state looks, it has transformed the jobs that we have and the opportunities that are available to every Victorian. I grieve for a bunch of conservatives who cannot see the wood for the trees, who cannot see the opportunities that are here in this state that come through change, that come through investment, that come through government involvement.

What matters to Victorians is a government that has a record of getting things done, like this one. What matters to Victorians is a government that understands their needs and acts on them, like this one. What matters to this state is a government like ours, a government that gets things done and does things well. The Big Build is an unprecedented \$90 billion investment in Victoria's transport infrastructure, and that is 165 road and rail projects.

So you want to talk about what the government has been investing in in this state. What would you cut? It cannot just be suburban rail, because suburban rail does not fund everything, as we have seen with the recent trouble that the opposition had with maths, where it is not \$35 billion, it is \$12 billion or \$11 billion, but it is not really, because it could be \$8 billion—but no, \$8 billion will not be spent in the regions, \$8 billion will be spent here, but it will be up to \$8 billion; we are not quite sure. So where will the cuts come from? The money that we are investing in our road and rail projects will help us keep moving around in the decades to come rather than spending time at choke points, time on the road or time at train stations, bus stops and tram stops which could instead be spent with our families or our friends or even just vegging out on the couch. This investment in infrastructure helps us get some of our time back; it helps free us up to do other things that we want to do.

We saw how conservatives tried to use sky rail fear campaigns to turn people against level crossings. We are up to, what, 66 done already, and people love the removal of these level crossings because of how it has changed their lives. They have embraced this change because it has brought so much to their communities, and I can say that anybody who lives in the northern suburbs, anyone who has driven down Bell Street in the last few weeks, would be amazed at how well Bell Street flows because of these level crossing removals. It is fantastic, and the opportunities that have come through this investment are just terrific. It creates jobs, it creates opportunities and it frees people up. It is not just jobs in concrete, not just jobs in digging holes, in laying down asphalt, in doing engineering. There are

all of these other jobs that support our Big Build. There are more than 50 000 direct and indirect jobs that have been created because of our Big Build.

We are not only upgrading road and rail infrastructure but creating great community spaces along the way. Our Big Build projects have delivered more than 380 000 square metres of new open space. I see the member for Mordialloc here, and I know how much his community has benefited from the Big Build, from the level crossing removals, but also from these new spaces and investment in clubs, in sporting facilities and in other local community assets that have been so important to people. That 380 000 square metres of new open space is the size of our Royal Botanic Gardens. This is playgrounds, it is dog parks, it is sports ovals, it is courts. It is so many different things that people can enjoy with the time that they are actually saving because they are not caught in traffic or they are not caught on overcrowded trains. These important community assets would not be there if not for our Big Build, if not for the fearlessness with which this government embraces change, the fearlessness with which we make things happen.

We have planted more than 1.8 million seedlings, trees and shrubs. That is the equivalent of around 25 Wilsons Proms that have been planted in this state. We are also linking people with active transport options, delivering more than 120 kilometres of walking and cycling paths, with another 370 kilometres of paths and upgraded cycling infrastructure to come. This includes the new path that is being built between Greensborough and Montmorency in my own community, which is a fantastic investment that I know matters to people. It matters to people, as does the extension of the Diamond Creek Trail to Hurstbridge from Diamond Creek that we have recently opened. These are things that matter to people.

We know that jobs are important to people and we know that valuable jobs are important to people, so the Big Build has supported thousands of jobs and helped boost our economy. There are 18 000 people in Victoria who are working directly on Major Transport Infrastructure Authority projects. For every 100 jobs supported directly, an average of 200 jobs are supported across the economy. So let us translate that into something like suburban rail and think about the job potential that is being created through that important infrastructure investment. It is a fantastic project that matters to people, and I can tell you a bunch of people it matters to are the people of Box Hill, who love this project and see its worth. It matters to them. During peak construction MTIA projects are expected to support around 38 000 indirect jobs. Including direct and indirect jobs, that is over 50 000 jobs across our state and across our economy.

More than 168 million hours have been worked on our Big Build projects. That is a lot of people being pretty busy, and being busy matters to people. Having a good job that pays well matters to people, and that is why our Big Build and our infrastructure projects actually do matter to people. It is something that they care about. More than 5.4 million work hours have been clocked up by trainees, apprentices and cadets since 2018 thanks to our Major Projects Skills Guarantee. These are the things that do matter to people. They want opportunities for people who are coming out of the jail system, for people who have struggled, for people from migrant communities and for people who have struggled to find an opportunity because there have been barriers in the way. We have been opening up doors, and anyone who thinks that does not matter is someone who is not out there talking to communities, because they do matter to people. There have been more than 2.4 million hours worked by Aboriginal people on our projects. That matters—it matters absolutely.

I will give you a bit of a breakdown, with your indulgence, Deputy Speaker. With the Metro Tunnel there have been 7000 jobs supported during construction. With the West Gate Tunnel there have been 6000 jobs supported during construction. With Major Road Projects Victoria they have had 2224 workers on projects as at 31 July 2022. The Level Crossing Removal Project has had 5586 workers on LGRP projects as at the end of this financial year. The North East Link Program has 1200 currently working on NELP projects and will have 10 000 jobs over the life of the project. I can tell you that that matters to people in the north-east. We have seen it with the skills and jobs centre, where people have been knocking on the door saying, 'I want a job closer to home. Sign me up. Please,

sign me up now'. With the Suburban Rail Loop it is 800 direct jobs in the initial and early works for SRL east and 800 jobs during the construction of SRL east. SRL east and north will support up to 24 000 jobs during construction. Again, these are jobs that matter to people. The Geelong fast rail will support nearly 3000 jobs, and Melbourne Airport rail will support up to 8000 jobs.

These jobs are not just for blokes in hard hats. This government has been working hard to get more and more women into transport. I can tell you, to women this matters. Having well-paid jobs, having jobs that are respected, having jobs that give them flexibility and having jobs that can help them demonstrate their skill set are important to Victorian women. They do matter. So I want to give a shout-out to the women in transport steering committee for all their work as we work out how to create more pathways for women to work in the transport sector. We have recently seen the 500th woman to graduate as a train driver, making up about a third of drivers, and it was great to be at Flinders Street station with the minister for transport, seeing those women drive those trains.

As part of the Victorian Big Build there are even more opportunities on more than 165 rail and road projects across the state, and some of the jobs that are there include traffic controllers, signalling specialists, engineers and train drivers, machinery operators, project managers and directors. These are jobs that are currently vacant. These are opportunities for people in our state, including women. Transport construction is rich with challenge and reward and allows women to transform outcomes for communities across the state. Women can take on positions of leadership and influence as part of Victoria's Big Build, with thousands of jobs in engineering and construction available now and into the future. We are actively recruiting women into graduate programs and supporting experienced women to develop further education and other programs.

We are working to transform this state—the fabric of this state and what it looks like. And this matters; it absolutely matters. We are giving people in this state hope by giving them opportunity, and it is only a conservative group of people, only a conservative government, that take away that hope, that take away that sense of opportunity, that take away the fabric of a state, because all they do is cut and slash. Projects like the Metro Tunnel, West Gate Tunnel and Suburban Rail Loop are supporting the development of women in the sector and unlocking leadership opportunities for women. It is about growing the next generation of skilled female workers in Victoria. In 10 or 15 years the workplace in this state will be dramatically reformed—it will be substantially changed—through the work of this government, which has created opportunities for so many people.

The Department of Transport's women in transport strategy and action plan was developed to ensure that progress continues towards achieving gender equality across the transport industry, and we are making great strides in getting this done. We are really achieving good outcomes in helping women find their place in transport as well as in construction.

By the end of 2024 we will have increased the overall number of women working in the transport sector to 30 per cent, the number of women in senior roles in the public sector to 50 per cent and in the private transport sector to 30 per cent. We are doing some amazing work. We are doing things that absolutely matter to people. To think that this investment, that giving hope to people, does not matter is foolhardy. To think that the way forward for the future of our state is through fear and division is absolutely foolhardy, and it is only a recipe for defeat. It is only a recipe for defeat, because it is only hope that will give Victorians what they need, and that is only with a Labor government.

FOOD SUPPLY

Ms SHEED (Shepparton) (17:28): It grieves me to have to grieve on the last day of the 59th Parliament, but I do take the opportunity to draw attention to what I regard as a very important matter, and that is the lack of attention to issues of food security, diversity of food production and supply chain issues here in Victoria and more broadly across Australia.

I believe that ministers holding the portfolios of agriculture and water should be represented in the Legislative Assembly of this Parliament, this house that forms government. These are high-profile

portfolios, deserving of much more attention. Just as we saw the Minister for Health take on a major role during the pandemic, so too will our agriculture and water ministers in the years ahead, as food security and associated issues become more precarious.

In the Shepparton district we have already established the main elements needed to create an enviable circular economy to safeguard our communities from future global disasters. We have food production, manufacturing and the elements that are needed to create our own energy and repurpose or dispose of waste in an environmentally safe manner if it is invested in further.

Never before were we so aware of how vulnerable we were as a community, as a nation and as a local district as when we saw the bare shelves in supermarkets during the pandemic. This was due to a shortage of international, interstate and local transport to bring in supplies, and some production was also impacted due to the high demand and staff shortages. It was only when we were pushed into a corner and supplies of surgical masks from China dried up that the state and federal governments looked to our local medical suppliers for the manufacture of masks. Med-Con in Shepparton suddenly had the army in there, grew in size dramatically and was serving the whole country. These essential supplies need to be produced within our own country. We have now seen how vulnerable we can be, how quickly borders can close and how those impacts can spread out across the country so quickly. We want industries to survive and thrive, and we want to keep our workers in stable full-time work not just when a sudden need arises and within a very short time governments are looking back to other countries for the cheapest source of supply.

In the Goulburn Valley we know how to manufacture everything from tinned fruit to steel tanks so focusing on our manufacturing industries could see our region become a powerhouse for the supply of food and other essential goods not just for our local district but for the entire state and help to provide food security for our region. We are growing solar energy in our region. Wind energy is popping up all over our state. We are looking at innovative ways to re-use waste to make fuel.

The fundamental problem that we have here is that while we have the capacity to produce food, we rely on a huge amount of overseas imports for the inputs into agriculture. Let me just tell you a few startling things. Perhaps before doing that, though, I will just say that ABARES—the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences—in their 2020 report indicated that Australia does not have a food security problem. They relied on issues of affordability, availability, stable domestic supply, surpluses for export, but they did fail to take into account in considering that the fact that we import huge amounts of our fuel. Something like 90 per cent of our fuel is an input that we import from overseas. We do not have the capacity here to produce so much of those products that are absolutely pivotal to driving a tractor, to driving a truck, to shifting goods around the country.

Again, the pandemic delivered so many shocks to us, but it was not just that. We saw the fires of 2019–20. We are seeing more and more wild weather with floods all along the eastern seaboard. More floods are predicted and in fact are happening now. The Murray River is flowing over its banks in many places. All our dams are full, all our water storages are full, the ground is wet and we are looking at a significant risk with the La Niña effect that is currently looking at us.

There are potentials for ongoing shocks to our food supply chain and it has really exposed some of our weaknesses. Fruit and vegetable crops were wiped out by unseasonable rain in Queensland in recent times. It was regarded as an emergency. New South Wales wheat and canola farmers are facing 50 per cent yield losses after record rainfalls. These are just some of the headlines in Australia about what has been happening and where our vulnerabilities could lie.

Looking overseas—it is not just here in Australia, environmental shocks are being experienced all over the world—all over the Northern Hemisphere countries are experiencing drought and extreme weather conditions. We often do not take notice of that. Europe's flood damage is beginning to emerge. Droughts, with crop yields down by 45 per cent in England. Farmers fear for future harvests as climate change takes its toll on Spanish agriculture. Hungary harvests 3.9 million tonnes of wheat, maize and

sunflower, crops that are at serious risk because of the drought. All these things are happening in other countries. In the Middle East climate change is triggering intense drought throughout Iraq, Syria's drought put Assad's 'year of wheat' in peril and the rise in Turkish food prices is sparking fear and food shortages—all of these things. I could go on at length about every country that is currently and has in recent months been highlighting the damage being done to their food supplies by drought, and often by floods—China had floods. The heating up of the planet is having an impact.

So the concerns this raises are about how we might think about dealing with it. Not only is it fuel that we import 90 per cent of, we import 70 per cent of the fertiliser that we use on our crops throughout Australia. Now, that comes to some large degree from Russia, so the war in Ukraine is having a very significant effect on the ability we have to continue to import the fertiliser we need for our crops. But presently it has an impact on the cost of those imports, and those sorts of things again impact on Australia. Australia does not have the economy of scale to produce its own seeds and tissue culture, so we are relying heavily on major international companies for imports of those sorts of products. Australia imports about 80 per cent of its urea—that is the fertiliser that is really critical to so much crop production. The grocery manufacturing sector relies on supply of imported inputs, including ingredients, raw materials and packaging. So we might all sit here thinking how amazing we are—we grow wheat, we grow canola, we grow sunflowers, we grow vegetables, we have amazing horticulture—but we simply cannot do it unless we have that capacity to import so much of the product that goes into that whole production. It is a cause for concern.

Here in Australia we have no national body looking at the issue of food security. We have many different organisations looking at it, like the CSIRO. You could probably name five or 10 different organisations or universities who are doing studies—you see articles in newspapers about the study done at Melbourne University raising concerns about food security—but we do not actually have one body looking at it. Now, we have departments of agriculture; we should have departments of agriculture and food security. We can look at our capacity to grow things, but we are not looking at our capacity to get what we need into this country or to produce here the things that we need to actually be able to grow those things, and that makes us really very vulnerable.

Even things like harvesting—we have got very sophisticated harvesting equipment now, and during the pandemic we saw pilots who were no longer flying planes going out to Western Australia and learning how to drive some of the extraordinarily expensive and sophisticated machinery that is used on farms. They were able to do that, but something like 30 per cent of specialist harvesting machinery staff come from outside Australia, so when it comes to harvesting those massive wheat crops across Western Australia, western New South Wales and the like, the staff that we need to do that in large part are coming from overseas. We have seen even more recently with the closure of our borders the fact that a lot of our fruit produce has not been able to be picked in a timely manner and taken to market. We have had a shortage of fruit pickers. We saw that the countries of Vanuatu, Samoa—these Pacific Islands countries—that were on a yearly basis sending workers here during the fruit production season, with borders closed they were not coming. Fortunately some of that is starting again, but it did really highlight the vulnerability we have in that we do not have the people or the capacity to pick it. We might be able to grow it, but we have not got the whole chain in order to be able to produce it, pick it and get it to market. It is concerning.

I drive up and down the highway a lot, so Audible is my best friend, and I have recently been listening to Gabrielle Chan's book *Why You Should Give a F About Farming*. It is a very salutary exposé of all these issues that I am talking about right now: about what has happened in farming, about the impacts of globalisation, about the fact that we have lost so many of our small farmers in recent times, about the fact that here in Victoria our largest water holder is a Canadian pension fund—and then you go to the New York police pension fund. I mean, these are factors that we have allowed to arise over a period of time just because of market forces. People come in, they have got the money, they buy the water, they buy the land—we have got massive almond crops growing across northern New South Wales. They will not be enough to feed us should we see our borders close, should we have some sort of

catastrophe. We might have almond milk and we might have almonds, but really we need more than cotton and almonds. We need really significant food production across the whole spectrum.

One of the things that our previous water minister, the member for Bellarine, was always very concerned about was the fact that we need to maintain our diversity, and that is one thing that in the Goulburn Valley we have been able to do, although it is now very challenged. The number of dairy farmers in our region was massively reduced and largely because of water buybacks—something like \$500 million worth of production was taken out of our region because we gave up so much water to the environment during the last 12 years or 11 years of the plan, a plan that is now coming to an end.

All of these things are having an impact. I think we have all seen and noticed the effects of rising prices for food. When I go and talk to my community at the moment, the cost of living is the issue that they are the most concerned about. It is food prices; it is rent; it is petrol prices. These are issues which really focus people's minds, because they are so basic—they are so much about day-to-day living. So it is incredibly important that in the next Parliament these portfolios of water and agriculture and food security are given absolute priority and that we do highlight that the government takes the lead on this and establishes a food security council or at least lobbies the federal government to have a federal body that does that, because all we have got at the moment are defence experts, public policy types, the occasional journalist, people like this talking about the issues but no-one bringing it together, nobody thinking about the future, nobody thinking about those inputs. We need to really make sure that we as a community have the security we need.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO VICTORIA'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (17:43): It is a pleasure and honour to rise for the grievance debate this evening and reflect. On behalf of Victorians I grieve for the lack of a bipartisan policy approach to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, the reforms that have been brought forward and the risk of a lack of a bipartisan approach undermining some of those significant recommendations and reforms for the future.

You see, after some of those valedictory contributions that have been made it is quite telling and amazing to think of the points that people reflect on in their moment of pure honesty with the Parliament and the chamber, what they sought to achieve, and a lot of those reflections go to times where they made substantial impacts on others and supported others in a range of different areas, whether it was a policy initiative or whether it was simply a constituent-based inquiry. To hear some of those reflections was really moving. And in this 59th Parliament, with everything that we have been through as a community, as Victorians—the pandemic and the challenges that we faced and now on the edge of the most substantial work of the royal commission into the prevention of mental health harm into the future—it is a really important time to reflect on what is at stake and what could happen if we walk away from those reforms. Just because someone says something at a press conference to kick the issue down the road does not mean they will not cut mental health funding if given the opportunity. I, on behalf of Victorians, would really grieve if that was to be the case.

You see, we lose 700 Victorians to suicide each and every year. Each one of those tragedies is preventable, and we have to see it as that, just like we do in our approach to the road toll and the significant trauma and harm that that brings to communities. Lifeline, today at the Victorian Parliament at their event, talked about how over 300 000 Australians reach out for help in times of need. That is 300 000 times that someone has contemplated ending their life and needed to turn to someone else for support, comfort and care. We need to make sure that the greatest focus we have in the months and years ahead is on the prevention of more deaths from mental ill health in our community.

With all the funding that was invested and all the support that was put in, the Premier and the then Minister for Mental Health acknowledged that we had a broken system and that despite the hundreds of millions of dollars that had been invested we were not getting it right—and not for the lack of effort from a range of different organisations and stakeholders and particularly the workforce, which for decades has worked so hard in the support of people with mental ill health. I recently caught up with

the Health and Community Services Union, a great crew who brought to us a number of people with lived experience and workplace experience who for decades have been working against the tide in a challenged system. But it is not for the lack of love, care, respect and kindness for their fellow Victorians. They front up every day to support one another.

We realised there was a substantial challenge that we needed to confront—that challenge being a broken system that needed something like a royal commission. It was not supported in its first phase. I remember the coverage around that time; it was not supported at that time. We were attacked at that time for putting our hand up and saying, ‘We need answers not only for the years to come but for the generations to come’. We need those answers now, because every day we are losing nine people across our nation, and each and every day that we miss an opportunity is someone we cannot get back or someone we cannot support and care for.

The mental health levy was a large part of those recommendations. This was a real opportunity. We saw with the prevention of family violence recommendations how impactful they were, how well researched they were and how evidence based they were, but we could not quite get bipartisan support for a number of months. It was the real work of the former member for Northcote and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, Fiona Richardson—all the work that she did in that space—that really drove the Parliament to that point. That was again a really powerful moment in the last few years. So that levy was a key recommendation—like the TAC, quarantined funding and support for Victorians to make sure, in perpetuity, that we have a funding source that is certain, that grows over time and that makes sure that we are investing more.

You think about those recommendations—how powerful they were, how impactful they were—and the substantial submissions that we had. Thousands of people contributed their lived experience that underpinned all that. At that time it was described as ‘just another tax’—just flippantly, another tax at that time. I really worry about the comments that were made by those opposite at the time, and I will share them with the house because they echo across multiple policy areas that we have seen in the past. I think they should worry all Victorians who care about mental health and wellbeing: ‘If we can, we will’. They were the words about the cuts they would make. It would be over \$5 billion now that they would have cut out the mental health and wellbeing support and funding. ‘If we can, we will’. You always trust that first innocent comment, not the rubbish that comes later at a press conference trying to kick the media scrutiny down the road. ‘If we can, we will’. That was evidenced by the member for Ripon, who really attacked the mental health levy in the take-note motion on the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System, talking about it multiple times, attacking it and saying:

... it is profoundly wrong to say, ‘We will fund mental health services differently to how we fund the police or health or education’. It should be the same.

Well, if it should be the same, what does that mean? That is more of the same impact that we have had in year after year after year of a broken system—more of the same, losing more Victorians. More of the same are the cuts that we would experience if the Liberal-Nationals were ever in charge of policy on mental health and wellbeing, because it is not instinctive for them to be caring and supportive. We saw that attack on paramedics in 2014, standing with them each and every day, when we literally saw the Liberal establishment give the middle finger to nurses at the time. And there is a really interesting hallmark: whenever you see those opposite now lining up for health announcements, you never see workforce. It is just shadow ministers, and that is it. You do not see workforce with them. At the announcement that was made with nurses the other day, you saw the support for the policy to make nursing courses free, because we legislated nurse-to-patient ratios. That was attacked by those opposite. That was attacked at the time. They went after our nurses, they went after our health workers and they undermined that again.

Past behaviour is normally an indication of what we might see in the future. They might front up now without the workforce behind them, because they know what happened in 2014. They know what their policy position is. And we know when we hear things about, ‘If we can, we will’, with reference to

cutting the mental health and wellbeing levy, where the impacts will be in the future. That is the real challenge for those opposite. Like, what services would they take away?

We are already underway with 90 per cent of the recommendations, and we are working closely with the community stakeholders and most importantly those with the lived experiences to make the royal commission's vision a reality. The future mental health and wellbeing system will provide people with dependable access to services when and where it will make the most difference. That is in the community. That is at the grassroots level, all the way from preventative work, which is so very important, through to the acute stage, where people are really debilitated.

But if you do not do it because you care about your fellow Victorians and it is all about bottom lines, then look at the economics of this. Our businesses and communities know that this is an investment in the future. A dollar invested in preventative mental health returns a \$9 investment. It is a substantial number, and it makes economic, social policy and health policy sense to do this and support communities into the future. When you think about all the work that we can do to make sure people are safe and supported and protected for the future, the economics of it stack up—the saving of lives into the future, those lives that we would not lose, from a better system that supports them at their most critical time of need rather than have some of the cracks that people fall through and the lack of support and care that we saw tragically detailed in the royal commission.

This is the opportunity. We have got to seize the moment. But there is a lack of bipartisan will and respect for those recommendations and what is the trusted language that came instinctively from people who talked on that take-note motion—talked for hours about why they would not support such a landmark reform. But then they came out at a press conference a little while later and said, 'No, don't worry. We'll trust the evidence. We'll trust the science. You can trust us into the future'.

But we have had evidence of this previously in other policy areas, haven't we? We have just had a couple of years of health advice constantly undermined by those opposite—from, 'Let it rip and let it open, and let's go without a vaccine', all the way through to chastising the chief health officer and demonising public health officials who are literally putting in each and every day to support their fellow Victorians and the health workers who front up in PPE, covered from head to toe each and every day, sweating their guts out to support those in critical need and care. At that time those opposite were making their job harder by preaching to those that would undermine science, the empirical evidence and basic facts. That is where we have gotten to just recently.

Or there have been the climate wars. I did like the backwards and forwards with the member for Brighton, who has come to the light recently—legislate 50 per cent, go even further. I reckon the member for Brighton might have a crack. He has found his way finally into empirical evidence and research. He might be a lone voice over there, but he certainly gets on Facebook enough to try to tweet or say, 'No, forget about the last 15 years'. I remember those days of the opposition leader, Tony Abbott, tearing up climate policy. I remember when the Greens walked away from the carbon pollution reduction scheme at that time.

Mr Hibbins interjected.

Mr RICHARDSON: There is a saying, member for Prahran: do not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Hopefully the lessons of the future have held him in good stead. But we saw empirical evidence on the challenges of more unpredictable weather events torn to pieces, and we lost a decade. We have more impactful weather events—storms, floods, bushfires. We see that now traumatising our nation. The evidence was back there.

I remember working as an adviser then to the then Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Mark Dreyfus. He and Greg Combet, the minister, and all of the Treasury team with Wayne Swan and then Julia Gillard came up with this policy, and we lost all that momentum. So when is the time that those opposite will front up in bipartisan support for empirical evidence and research that underpins the hallmarks of our communities? If we do not respect that, then what do we

do? Is it just the loudest voice? Is it the minority groups that dominate certain sections of our communities and erode away their party's base to a percentage in the mid-20s? It is time to stand up and back something that should be instinctive and believe in those measures to support communities into the future. This is evidence and research based. Our plea to the whole Parliament is to respect these recommendations into the future—the 65 interim recommendations that will underpin the health and wellbeing of generations to come.

I just go back to that really important point: if it is not about caring for fellow Victorians, including the 700 people each and every year that we lose in Victoria to preventable deaths from suicide and from a broken system that we have been given all the evidence and research on, and if it is not about the prevention space and all the work that can be done there or at the acute end when people need that support and find themselves in emergency departments absolutely debilitated, then look at the economics. The economists, business councils and industry leaders understand that a broken workforce and a broken mental health system impact on the economics of our community and lead to billions of dollars of economic harm and impact into the future. To get our workforce back to capacity when they are impacted by mental health and wellbeing issues makes economic sense. Every organisation in our community should have a mental health and wellbeing plan and a strategy that they audit and implement each and every year for the future. That is the changing, nurturing way that we need for the future at every single stage of your life.

I have seen that in the work that I have done with the former Deputy Premier on the mental health and wellbeing practitioners being rolled out across schools, primary and secondary, to lift up a culture of inclusive practice of mental health and wellbeing support. It is changing cultures in primary schools and secondary schools, and it is going to make a massive difference, because it is not about the haves and have-nots of mental health and wellbeing. We hear about the stats, but every single person in their life will be touched by mental health and wellbeing challenges, whether it is through someone they know that they love and care about, all the way through to being debilitated themselves. As a village and as a community we have a collective responsibility to care for one another.

As we exit the 59th Parliament, let us front up in the 60th in whatever make-up we have with a shared resolve to make sure in the years to come, in the 10-year agenda of the mental health and wellbeing reforms, that the rollout is impactful and has bipartisan support and that we make sure that we save Victorians into the future. There is nothing more important to do as members of Parliament than this work, and I hope that those opposite will share those values into the future, even if they are opposed to the mental health and wellbeing levy at this moment.

COST OF LIVING

Mr HIBBINS (Pahran) (17:58): I rise to speak on the grievance debate today, and I want to grieve for those Victorians who are struggling with the cost of living—Victorians who are being pushed to the margins and Victorians who are being pushed, essentially, off the metaphorical cliff. There are rising costs, flatlining wages. There is a real risk of declining living standards. It is a generation for whom quality of life is worse than that of the previous generation. The response from government must be systemic change—not just short-term relief for the cost of living but something in the long term that is going to bring costs down for people as well as create secure jobs with increased wages. There are no increased costs and challenges for people more pressing than those from the housing crisis, where rents are rising four times faster than wages. Housing is just not affordable, especially for people on welfare, when there are virtually no affordable rentals in our city for people on welfare.

I want to make this point about welfare as well, and this goes to the federal government: raising the rate of welfare, particularly during the pandemic, really was shown to have a demonstrated positive effect on people and their housing security. It is something that the new federal government, despite making the right noises about it in opposition, is so far refusing to do. So I would urge the federal government to raise the rate—raise welfare payments—to a level that people can actually live on and where people can get out of poverty and are not locked into it, which is what the current rate does.

Homelessness is a problem that I have raised continually in this place throughout this term and the last, and it is what Prahran residents continually tell me is a priority for our community. A wealthy society like ours should not have people living on the streets and should not have people living in unsafe, insecure accommodation. I thought that during the lockdown—and in fact the minister alluded to this—that the From Homelessness to a Home program, using hotels to put people in accommodation and then find long-term accommodation, was actually a first step towards ending homelessness. It was a successful program, but it was subsequently cut by the government with the excuse that, ‘We can’t expect the same level of spending during the pandemic as when it’s over’. But I would just say this: if we can give people a roof over their head during the pandemic, we can do it all the time. No-one should walk into a homelessness service and get turned away, and that is exactly what is happening with our underfunded homelessness services. We can solve homelessness. We just need the resolve to do so.

Going hand in hand with homelessness services is of course building more public and affordable housing. The public housing waiting list has skyrocketed to more than 100 000 people. People are spending years, if not decades, on the waiting list, and the conditions in many estates are just appalling. We need to go back to that idea that it is the government’s job to make sure that everyone has a safe and secure place to call home. The Greens have consistently raised this issue in here. Earlier this term we held a matter of public importance debate on homelessness, where many homelessness advocates and organisations attended. We called there for a big build in public housing to end homelessness, and we certainly welcome the government recognising that this is something that it should be doing.

But there are two issues for improvement that need to be taken in with the government’s approach: one, of course, is we need more. It is not enough just keeping up with the rate of social housing dwellings, let alone building enough for everyone who needs one. There needs to be far more investment. The government recognised this when they announced their social housing levy on developers. Unfortunately they caved in to the developers and the fear campaign and axed it. It needs to be restored. Two, there is far too much privatisation involved in their current plan. With building private units on public housing land—in separate towers, mind you, not mixed in—the value of the land is not what can be got from privatising it, but there is the fact that you can put public housing close to schools, close to services and close to communities that care, just like my community in Prahran. Consistent public investment in public housing for the public good can bring us back to when public housing was broadly available to people, from low-income workers to those most in need, and that is also a far more economically sustainable model that would allow for better upkeep and maintenance of people’s homes.

Half of the Prahran electorate are renters. They are not only telling me that rents are rising but also that the conditions in some of the rental homes are really poor. Just like other governments are doing around the world, we need rent caps here in Victoria to stop excessive rent rises and make sure that rents do not rise faster than wages. We need higher standards for rental properties. Energy efficiency, insulation and getting homes off gas—not forcing them to connect—will improve living standards and bring down bills. As I said, ultimately with housing, just like with public health and public education, governments have a responsibility to make sure that everyone has a safe and secure place to call home. We also need to embrace stamp duty reform here in Victoria. Everyone from advocates to economists are saying this is the way to go—to replace stamp duty with an annual land tax. They are doing it in other states as well. It is something that we need to embrace here in Victoria.

I want to touch also on another area where rising costs are hurting families, again particularly those on low incomes, and that is the cost of what should be a free education. The reality is that public education is not free. Books, uniforms, technology, camps, materials and of course voluntary school fees—for disadvantaged families, for those on low incomes and single parents, it is just impossible to afford them. I make this point about voluntary school fees, and I said this at the AEU conference recently: families cannot pay them, schools cannot rely on them. It is a model that just cannot work any more. Fully funding schools will mean they will no longer need so-called voluntary school fees to help them pay for basic things like school buildings or libraries or maintenance. Parents are paying thousands for

essentials. Teachers are dipping into their own pockets. State Schools Relief cannot keep up with demand. These costs need to be fully funded by the government. Our public schools here in Victoria are some of the lowest funded in the country. They are underfunded by more than a billion dollars a year. The state and federal governments need to come together and make sure that in the next school funding agreement Victorian schools are fully funded to 100 per cent of the Gonski-recommended school funding levels.

I want to particularly mention something else that should be covered by the state, and that is digital devices. This is something that I raised particularly in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and our role of oversight of the inquiry into the pandemic. During the pandemic a real digital divide was exposed, with thousands of students not having access to computers, devices or the internet at home. This really is an essential part of education, whether you are having to learn from home or learn from school. Something I advocated to the Minister for Education was for students who were provided with devices to be able to keep those devices. I am really pleased that he did that. There were some really good stories of students who were provided with devices now actually coming to school. They had previously been school refusers, but now they were coming to school because they did have access to the internet and devices. The challenge now is to include the digital devices and the internet as part of the essential for schools and ensure that all students have access so there is no divide.

One element that could help this that I would like to see in Prahran—and in fact all Greens would like to see in our public housing estates—is free wi-fi installed in our public housing towers so everyone can have access to the internet there. We got them costed up by the Parliamentary Budget Office. I think it only costs a few hundred thousand dollars per tower, so that is something we would really like to see.

When it comes to transport, those costs have already risen, particularly petrol prices. The answer really is to support people to make that shift to cleaner, cheaper, climate-friendly transport. Earlier this year the Greens proposed temporary free public transport to reduce the cost of living and encourage people back onto public transport. However, there definitely is a case for a permanent reduction in fares. It is happening now in other countries—again, it would have benefits to cost of living and our climate as well, supporting people to get around with cheaper public transport tickets.

When it comes to jobs and wages, low wage growth, particularly now with high inflation, is reducing living standards. That means people are getting a real wage cut. This is particularly the case with the government public sector wage cut. It means that hardworking, essential public sector workers are not getting the pay increases they deserve. Not only that, it is putting downward pressure on wages across the entire economy. The best way that we can say thankyou to our essential public sector workers, like our nurses, our teachers, our mental health workers, is through better pay and conditions and more jobs, and you cannot do that with a 1.5 per cent cap on wage rises in future enterprise bargaining agreements, particularly at a time of high inflation. Policies like rate capping and the billion dollars of cuts to the public sector through the government's efficiency dividend are putting downward pressure on wages, conditions and the government's ability to deliver the services it needs.

I make a final point on jobs, and I think this point has been made a few times over the last couple of days. The future of work is in the care sector—health care, education, community services—people helping people. There probably is not a community service organisation in the state that is not stretched and could do so much more if they could employ more people. More funding for well-paid, secure jobs in community service organisations is not only a very good bang for the buck in terms of job creation as most of the funding goes into wages, but it will make sure that people in need can get the help they need. Investment in the care sector to create jobs is the future of work, and that is how we can create more jobs, better paid jobs and help people in need.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (18:10): It is a delight to rise this afternoon for the final grievance debate of this term of the Andrews Labor government in this Parliament, and I rise to grieve about the revisionist history we seem to keep hearing from those opposite. They are desperate to escape the facts

now that they know there is an election coming. They are desperate to remove the idea that they govern by cuts and closures, but history shows us that they certainly do. I am about to go through a little bit of that with you so we can reset that broken record that we have heard a couple of speakers today talk about during this grievance debate.

We have heard members of the opposition talk about how, if they form government, they will create jobs—huge job creation—and that they will deal with a number of issues revolving around health and the pressures COVID has put on our system for nurses and nursing staff, ambulances and paramedics and of course also call takers and other emergency services, but really the opposition have zero or even below zero credibility in this space. It has been mentioned a few times today, especially during question time, and to hear those opposite talking about health really makes your gut churn a little bit. I do not know anyone at any time who would turn around and think that lowly of a nurse that one of their party members would give nurses the finger and go to war with nurses. I do not know any sane person who would go to war with paramedics. They have stood here today in question time and in this debate and said that they will solve the problems that have mostly been generated by a global pandemic that has put pressure on nation states globally, but we have got states in Australia—namely, New South Wales—that have the same pressures. It is not unique, and frankly our health services need to adapt to this. They were not built for this kind of demand.

It is not just our health services. We have heard people repeatedly in this place talk about what they will do for the mental health of our community. At that same time though there is no real commitment to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, and we have heard people sounding very, very confused about whether they would fund that through a levy or whether they would not fund that through a levy. It has become very confusing for those opposite—not quite as confusing as the Leader of the Opposition's stint the other day in front of the media explaining the \$8 billion black hole in their proposed budget.

Then we come to jobs and jobs creation, and those opposite are really the party of jobs destruction. Under the previous coalition government, the unemployment rate increased from 4.8 per cent in December 2010 to 6.7 per cent in November 2014, and that was the highest on the mainland of Australia. Only Tasmania was higher. The opposition's record also reflects that nearly 70 000 Victorians found themselves unemployed, and the least hours were worked per capita since the early 1990s under their government. The coalition managed to create—or should I say assist to create—a meagre 39 000 jobs in their time in government, and that is in their entire four years of government. We doubled that in regional Victoria alone. And when they left office, regional unemployment, by the way, was 6.6 per cent—more than double what it is now—and again that was the highest on the mainland. Their record is one of continuous war on workers, whether it be paramedics, whether it be nurses or thousands of vulnerable casual workers. We need to ensure that the people of Victoria are reminded of that every day and what the price of not re-electing an Andrews Labor government will be.

I will go on to say that I think that, from the perspective of a constituent maybe in Frankston or maybe across Victoria—or maybe it is just my personal feeling on the matter, but certainly I have heard it quite a bit—those opposite always invest in the politics of the matter and not the people, and we have seen that time and time again. These people invest in the politics of the matter and not the people, and we have seen that time and time again, whether it be during a pandemic where we were hearing calls to kill the bats or when we heard calls from the then opposition leader that there might never be a COVID vaccine so we would have to learn to live with it, which is fairly defeatist, I think you would agree. God knows how many people would have died under that kind of governance.

Now we are looking at a Melbourne that has opened up again. It is a reality that we have got the Formula One Grand Prix—that was the largest F1 we have had; we have got the MotoGP coming up; we have got Melbourne arts; we have got music. Melbourne is open again, Victoria is open again, and that is in large part due to the governance through COVID and more importantly at the tail end of COVID. The budget that we just passed was one of the most important budgets in Victoria's history

because it is the catalyst or foundation budget for us to go forward. We cannot click our fingers and make these things go overnight; we know we are still living with COVID-19. But some people in this chamber were not even up for the fight of keeping people safe.

I would say to Victorians: there has never been a more exciting time to be a Victorian, and data at the moment reflects that. Our state's road map back to being the engine room of the nation is well on track. I think it was a *State of the States* CommSec report that said that, bouncing back out of COVID, we are leading the nation as far as the economy goes, with the best unemployment figures and the best retail figures as well.

It is fair to say that there have not always been fans of some of the policies of this government, especially among those opposite, and that I think comes through very short-term thinking. When you come out of a crisis like COVID you need to play chess, not checkers. You need to have a plan, and things have gone according to plan. We still face some challenges; that is fair to say. But with Victoria's unemployment at 3.7 per cent—and with regional unemployment down at 2.8 per cent—that is the lowest of all states and the lowest on record. I think 3.9 per cent is still the national average for unemployment, and we are under that. Since we took over from those opposite and throughout COVID and at the other end of COVID, we have added more than 600 000 new jobs, including 325 000 jobs since September 2020, slashing the unemployment rate by more than half since November 2014. This record is built on the back of a huge infrastructure pipeline. It is built on the back of that infrastructure agenda, the nation-leading free TAFE initiative and our targeted investments in growth industries as well.

Now, regional Victoria is another area that I think we can be very proud of. We have got 18 members in this house who represent regional areas of Victoria. I know the minister at the table, the Minister for Health, is certainly one of those and very proud of it. Victoria's regional unemployment rate, left by those opposite, as I have said, in 2014 was 6.6 per cent. The latest figures released today show us at 2.8 per cent. That is less than half of what it was in November 2014, when those opposite left government.

Unemployment in metropolitan Melbourne is now down to 3.4 per cent. If you do not deal in figures, if you do not believe the data, just turn on your TV: on free-to-air TV you will see, of all businesses, McDonald's advertising for workers. They cannot get enough workers. I have never seen McDonald's advertising for workers. The Big Mac, the McFlurry, the soft serve, whatever—I have seen all those ads, but I have never seen them advertise for employees. If you do not believe the figures, just watch free-to-air TV. There is a lot happening in Victoria and there is a lot of jobs growth as well.

Unemployment in Melbourne is one thing. In the regions, in Shepparton we have got unemployment down from 7.8 per cent to 2.8 per cent, in Geelong down from 8.1 per cent to 2.6 per cent and in Warrnambool in the south-west unemployment is at 1.1 per cent. Since November 2014, 84 000 jobs have been created in regional Victoria alone. I think those statistics illustrate the story of this government's infrastructure agenda and also the low payroll tax rate for the regions, which is at just 1.21 per cent, and I believe that is under half of the metropolitan rate.

I would like to finish this contribution off just talking about some of the confusion our community feel when they see announcements from those opposite. We have recently had the member for Eltham talking about the Suburban Rail Loop, the level crossing removals, the other raft of projects that are happening in her area as well and how many jobs come from that. We have an opposition that says you cannot do two things at once: you can only have modern health facilities or you can have modern public transport; there is a decision for everybody at this election. To that I say: well, you can travel probably anywhere in Victoria, but Frankston is as good a place as any—in fact probably the best place in Victoria if you ask the local MP. But I would say come to Frankston. We have got a candidate somewhere telling people that they will can the Suburban Rail Loop and they will build and invest in health care. Well, we have got the \$1.1 billion Frankston Hospital redevelopment out of the ground. The big pile drivers are in, the foundations are being put down right now. We have just acquired the

Frankston Private Hospital. I know that patients Keryn and Vanessa were overjoyed when that opened. I know the minister at the table, the Minister for Health, was present that day. They were overjoyed at being able to have their elective surgeries sooner than they expected. I can quote Keryn:

After the delays caused by COVID-19, I think it's amazing that people are finally able to access the surgery they need ... It was great to be one of the first patients; all of the staff were extremely accommodating and friendly.

Vanessa, who was in the tier 3 category of the elective surgery wait list, was not even meant to undergo surgery until 2023. However, thanks to the new acquisition of the Frankston Private Hospital, now known as the Frankston Public Surgical Centre, her surgery has been brought forward 10 months, and she said—and I think the minister should hear this loud and clear, because it is a big, supportive statement of the work we have done in this area:

I am very fortunate ... I think it is wonderful that they have opened up more surgical wards to assist with shortening the waitlist especially if you were in the tier three category.

So this hospital, the Frankston Public Surgical Centre, will carry out 9000 more elective surgery procedures every year, year upon year. It has not got an emergency centre, so it is dedicated to elective surgery, and in the first week they carried out 56 elective surgery procedures and got those people off the list.

But at the same time we can flip to that other side of the coin, which is public transport. We have got an opposition that do not believe that they need the Suburban Rail Loop, which is really sad for people in Frankston, because they still believe that people in Frankston and in the Frankston area should travel 25 stations up the line to Richmond to cross to another line which will take them to the eastern suburbs or up around the city. With the Suburban Rail Loop, it means people in the Frankston community will be able to get on at Frankston—at the brand new Frankston station off the brand new Young Street—and jump on a train and in 11 stops get off at Cheltenham, swap lines to the Suburban Rail Loop and go east, to the Cranbourne line et cetera. I have got no idea why a candidate or an opposition would come forward with an idea that makes things worse for the community of Frankston or anywhere. The Suburban Rail Loop is one of those visionary ideas.

Ms McLeish interjected.

Mr EDBROOKE: The member interjects—I think that was about car parking. Thank you for reminding me. We are just about to come out of the ground with 500 new car parks at Frankston station, which will be an absolute game changer there. This, again, is not something that is interesting to the opposition in that area. We have just heard that part of their plan is not to build to Baxter or duplicate and electrify the Baxter line, not to Langwarrin and not to Stony Point but to Leawarra, which extends the line maybe a kilometre. I have no idea where the community consultation is. It is going to cost about \$850 million. I am not sure that anyone or who thought this is a good idea. But again it goes to my point that those opposite are very, very confused.

When they come to this house and they talk about job creation, when they talk about supporting our health system, when they talk about supporting our healthcare heroes, there is a history there that we certainly cannot forget if you ask those nurses, if you ask those teachers, if you ask those paramedics, if you ask those firefighters. The point was well made before that when you see the opposition making announcements, there are never any workers behind them, because they do not trust them, they do not believe them. They have seen it and heard it a million times before.

Ms Britnell interjected.

Mr EDBROOKE: I take up the interjection about that not being the truth. You can next time ask some nurses to come and stand behind you at your next announcement and we will see how that goes for you. I will be watching, but I do not think they will be there, because they do not respect you. This has been a fantastic time to talk about how much the Andrews Labor government has done. Fifteen minutes certainly is not enough. But I know one thing for sure, and that is that this is a government

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

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that was getting things done, now is getting things done and will continue to get things done and deliver for our communities in a huge way come 26 November, when we win the election.

Question agreed to.

Constituency questions

WENDOUREE ELECTORATE

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (18:25): (6541) My question is for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and Minister for Creative Industries. Will the minister please advise how the Andrews Labor government is continuing to support tourism for Ballarat? Ballarat's tourism offerings are interesting, immersive and innovative. Long gone are the days of Ballarat only being known for being 'old, gold and cold'.

Whilst the internationally renowned Sovereign Hill and the iconic Art Gallery of Ballarat have always been significant tourism drawcards for our city, Ballarat's reputation as a tourism destination is ever changing and attracting new audiences. Proudly, the Andrews Labor government has supported major events, including the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, White Night, AFL games at Mars Stadium and 1000 Doors Ballarat. Further, our government's \$6.7 million for a National Centre for Photography will further enhance our reputation as a creative city. I look forward to hearing from the minister and hope to welcome him to Ballarat soon.

ROWVILLE ELECTORATE

Mr WELLS (Rowville) (18:26): (6542) My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Minister, when will construction begin on the duplication of Napoleon Road and Wellington Road and an extension of Dorset Road to Lysterfield Road in my Rowville electorate? Three-and-a-half years ago, can you believe it, in the May 2019 budget the federal government provided the full funding to duplicate these arterial roads, with \$50 million for Napoleon Road, \$110 million for Wellington Road and \$80 million to extend Dorset Road to run out to Lysterfield Road. The money was all there. The state government only had one job to do, and that was to build the roads. Through every COVID lockdown, roadworks continued on Labor's priority projects in Labor priority seats. The pandemic is no excuse. The potholes on Napoleon and Wellington roads are now so deep that drivers are damaging the wheel rims of their cars. A motorcyclist would have no chance if they hit one. Road resurfacing is urgently needed.

FRANKSTON ELECTORATE

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (18:27): (6543) My constituency question is for the Minister for Health, and the question I ask is: we have an amazing new elective surgery hospital in Frankston. It was acquired by the government.

Ms Thomas: The public surgical centre.

Mr EDBROOKE: Yes, the Frankston Public Surgical Centre has carried out its first 56 procedures in the first week, and my question to the minister is: how many procedures is this centre predicted or estimated to carry out by the end of the year?

BRUNSWICK ELECTORATE

Dr READ (Brunswick) (18:28): (6544) My constituency question is for the Minister for Planning. The residents of an eight-unit building in Brunswick are removing flammable cladding to meet the deadline set by a council-issued building order and face bills of up to \$100 000 each. One resident, a single mother with an autistic daughter, owns less than half of her unit, having bought it with a 10 per cent deposit four years ago. She is not confident of getting a loan to meet this bill nor of being able to meet the repayments on top of her existing mortgage, given rising interest rates.

Cladding Safety Victoria has still not assessed this building despite an application in March last year. My constituent feels abandoned by the government, and she has been, along with many others in similar situations. Will the minister ensure that all buildings are assessed within a reasonable time frame and that support is provided for cladding replacement, particularly for people in difficult financial circumstances?

ELTHAM ELECTORATE

Ms WARD (Eltham) (18:29): (6545) My question is to the Minister for Youth. Minister, on the weekend my youth advisory council put on a wonderful art show in the Eltham town square to raise money to for ReachOut Australia, a mental health service that supports young people across the country who are experiencing mental ill health. The art show was an outstanding success, raising almost \$400 for ReachOut, giving young people in my electorate the opportunity to show their art and also sparking a conversation about art being a vehicle for positive self-expression for young people. It also offered a number of young people an opportunity to express their mental health journey. It was an event made even more special through the talents of the Eltham High School choir; the generosity of the Eltham Chamber of Commerce, who helped pay for snags; and the kindness of the Eltham Men's Shed, who cooked them. Minister, along with my community I am very proud of these young people and all they have achieved. Minister, my question to you is: please detail for me the current funding and investment in place for young people and the supports available to them in mental health as well as the broader support available that will help them achieve their potential.

Bills

RACING AMENDMENT (UNAUTHORISED ACCESS) BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (18:30): It is with some pleasure that I again rise to my feet to continue my contribution on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. In my earlier comments I was of course referring to the very proud tradition of the Labor Party and indeed of people who seek preselection and make their way as Labor members to this chamber in championing the rights of people in their workplace, particularly in terms of making sure that people have fair occupational health and safety arrangements which ensure effectively that they are able to return each night to their loved ones without workplace injury. That is a right that is very much something that has been championed by members of the Labor Party here in this place.

Workers in the racing industry I believe are equally entitled to have a set of rights in their workplace that ensure that they can very much participate in their workplaces and not be subjected to circumstances which may see them injured or killed. From my end, we have seen from time to time people in an unlawful way interfering with the conduct of a race. As I was reflecting earlier, racehorses weigh something like half a tonne and are moving at exceptionally quick speeds. In that circumstance, if people make their way onto the racecourse and interfere with the conduct of that race, that has the potential to cause horrific injuries if not death to those animals and indeed to those jockeys. When I was looking at the elements in this bill and reflecting on the work that I have done for most of my adult life, at one point as an occupational health and safety representative on the job, what I sought to do in that role was to represent workers to make sure that they were able to conduct their work with the necessary tools, the necessary training and the systems of work to keep them safe. With this legislation, if this passes, I think it will very much add to those workers in that industry being able to do their work.

I am a country member. I represent one of the four seats in and around the Geelong region. We do have a significant racing industry in our region. That racing industry of course contributes to our economy massively. There are many thousands of people that have their employment and their economic livelihood underpinned by the racing industry, and we want to make it sustainable, and we want to make

it safe for people to be able to participate. This bill in so many ways builds on that capacity to have a sustainable and safe industry, and that is why I am very pleased to see that it has made its way to this chamber. I am looking forward to it passing through this chamber this evening and making its way to the Legislative Council. I certainly commend the work of the minister on this bill.

Ms BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (18:35): I rise today to speak on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. The purpose of the bill is to amend the Racing Act 1958. It will prohibit unauthorised access to certain areas of racecourses during meetings and official trial meetings. The main area of change in the legislation will set the standards of behaviour at certain locations at racecourses—restricted areas including the track, mounting yards and stables. Behaviour such as climbing fences adjacent to restricted areas and throwing or kicking projectiles into restricted areas are included in the legislation, as is flying drones over those restricted areas. This is an important bill because this type of behaviour, whether deliberate or accidental, can lead to animals reacting unpredictably, in turn creating a risk of injury to both people and animals near that area. It also ensures patrons do not inadvertently enter a racetrack area, which can endanger them and participants or disrupt the races.

The racing industry, made up of thoroughbreds, harness and greyhounds, is extremely important to my electorate of South-West Coast. Recent figures show racing contributes \$112.3 million to the south-west economy annually, made up of \$78.6 million from thoroughbred racing, \$19.1 million from harness racing and \$14.5 million from the greyhound racing industry. The industry employs 900 people in the region, 637 full-time equivalent positions in thoroughbreds, 148 in harness racing and 114 in greyhounds, so the employment benefits of the racing industry in South-West Coast are clear for everyone to see. But it also has many social and economic drivers. One example is the three-day Warrnambool May Racing Carnival. This year almost 30 000 people attended the carnival. While it is a favourite event for locals, it also draws many people from across Victoria, interstate and even internationally. The carnival generates almost \$15 million to the Warrnambool economy, \$8.9 million representing new money into the area and the region. More than 250 people are employed on a casual basis for the carnival outside of those who are normally employed in the industry. There are 20 race meetings in Warrnambool each year, with the Jericho Cup, the Lafferty Thackeray Steeplechase Day, and Koroit, Port Fairy and Woodford cups being other major race days.

Greyhound racing also has a strong following in South-West Coast. Warrnambool Greyhound Racing Club was formed in the 1920s and moved to the Warrnambool Showgrounds in the 1970s. It hosts many meets, with the Warrnambool Cup being the showcase event. It is one of 11 country cups held in Victoria each year and it is the last leg of the Western Festival of Racing, which also includes the Horsham, Ballarat and Geelong cups. There is no doubt some of the major attractions of the May racing carnival are the Grand Annual Steeplechase event and other jumps races across the three days.

Jumps racing is a contentious issue and is the catalyst for much of the protest action we see at Warrnambool, particularly over the May racing carnival. The protest action is why this legislation is needed. In 2010 a then 56-year-old full-time student from Melbourne ran onto the Warrnambool Racecourse only minutes before the Grand Annual Steeplechase. He was convicted and fined in the Warrnambool court \$500. He told the Warrnambool *Standard* he would do it again if it would end jumps racing, and this is the problem with some of these protesters. I have been told that in recent years protesters have used drones at the Warrnambool Racecourse, which is why I am glad to see legislation against this in part of the bill. Many protesters believe the end justifies the means and are prepared to go to any lengths to get their point across, but we cannot accept a situation where protesters put their own lives at risk as well as others' lives—patrons, officials and the animals—for the sake of making a political point.

I am a supporter of jumps racing. It is a major drawcard for the May racing carnival and it is steeped in tradition. Importantly, enhancements to the jumps in recent times have helped strengthen the safety for horses and jockeys. There are those who want to see jumps racing banned. They do not care about the benefit it brings to my electorate and the racing industry as a whole. They refuse to listen to any

reasoned argument due to their own dogma. This bill does not restrict people from protesting outside courses, as happens at the May racing carnival. Most of those protests, while sometimes disruptive, are for the most part civil. Protesting is a right in Victoria but harassing or intimidating other patrons is totally unacceptable. It is not a right to act in a way that endangers people or animals, and this bill will help ensure that there are added deterrents to such behaviour. This bill is widely supported by the racing industry, an industry that I proudly support. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) (18:40): It is great to rise and speak on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. We have heard a number of very spirited contributions from members of Parliament. It seems that quite a few people have got some opposing views, but nevertheless very passionate views, on horseracing. I would say though that in my opinion horseracing is a legal sport, it is a sport that many people enjoy, and this bill goes a long way to ensuring that this sport can be done safely and the spectators, the people that work in this industry and the sportspeople themselves can be safe.

The Victorian racing industry contributes \$4.7 billion annually to the Victorian economy, it helps sustain 34 900 full-time equivalent jobs across our state, and the government is committed to ensuring that Victorian remains a pre-eminent racing jurisdiction in Australia. I have friends who love to go to the Mornington races, the Port Albert races, the Moe races. They love to have a bet on the nags and the gee-gees. I have been with them. It is not something that I say I really enjoy—I like the atmosphere and whatnot—but I do see the way this industry contributes to our community.

It is good to be here today talking about a bill that in many ways puts in regulations and enshrines into law safety around these races, because for years we have had some fairly sporadic but fairly serious issues with people protesting by running onto racetracks, which could be just disastrous. Several members have talked about that there seems to be a misunderstanding of how fast a horse can pull up, what they weigh and how dangerous it is to be running out onto the field whether you are protesting or not. I do not begrudge anyone's right to think how they want to think, to believe what they want to believe or to have an educated opinion, but there are ways to do it, and the way that some people have carried out their protests has been dangerous. They are not only endangering themselves but endangering animals, endangering sportspeople and endangering the people that work in this industry.

To that end this bill identifies certain parts of a racecourse as restricted areas for the purposes of the new offences and penalties relating to unauthorised access to those areas during a race or official trial meeting. I think this makes total common sense, and it is being done in consultation with the racing industry. There are also a bunch of new offences to manage crowd behaviour. The bill inserts provisions into the Racing Act 1958 to create offences with regard to specific behaviours in and around restricted areas without a reasonable excuse. These offences are entirely consistent with similar offences in the Major Events Act 2009, which applies at major sports events covered by the act. These include eight of Victoria's feature race meetings during the Spring Racing Carnival: Caulfield Racecourse on Caulfield Cup Day, Caulfield Guineas Day and Thousand Guineas Day; Flemington Racecourse on a day that a race meeting of the Melbourne Cup Carnival takes place; and Moonee Valley Racecourse on Cox Plate Day. The bill does not affect the operation of the Major Events Act itself; it is just an important piece of legislation to ensure that those race meetings continue to be subject to all the relevant legislation and provisions in the Major Events Act, which extend beyond the management of crowd behaviour.

Fortunately this bill seeks to address behaviour that does not occur frequently, that is quite sporadic. Nevertheless, the potential consequences of that behaviour are very, very serious for all involved, and I think any occurrence is extremely concerning. Again, many members have said that people who work in Victoria, regardless of what environment they work in or what area they work in, are entitled to a safe workplace, and this bill ensures that. It does that by adding these additional deterrents, which are already in place in other major sporting events and codes and are obviously now needed to make sure the safety and welfare of participants, workers, animals, sportspeople and patrons at Victorian

race meetings and official trial meetings are put at the forefront and offences are able to be prosecuted via the law. I commend the bill to the house.

Dr READ (Brunswick) (18:45): I am doing my best not to get thrown out of the chamber on my last day. I rise to speak on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. This bill amends the Racing Act 1958 to prohibit unauthorised access to restricted areas of racecourses during race meetings and create offences and penalties for breaches. As we have heard from other speakers today, this bill is presented as a safety measure to prevent people from getting too close to horses during a race, and I am sure that safety is one reason why we are seeing this bill. However, the other reason for the bill is to prevent protesters from disrupting races. Many of us observe that commercial horseracing is a cruel and outdated pastime which pushes horses often beyond their limits, leading to regular fractures and lung haemorrhages requiring the horses to be put down. Unsuccessful horses become pet food. It is an industry centred around gambling, cruelty and ostentatious displays of wealth. There is an awful lot of money in commercial horseracing, particularly when you think about the rapidly growing online betting industry.

So it is no wonder that people may want to hold protests at race meetings and no surprise that, fresh after passing a bill to outlaw and intimidate forest protesters under the guise of occupational safety, this government has produced this bill, which would do the same to those protesting at horseraces, and it should therefore be no surprise that the Greens oppose the bill. Since Parliament is not expected to sit beyond today, this bill will not get to make it to the upper house—during this Parliament, anyway. If the government thought it was really necessary to bring in this bill, it would be law by now. In fact I wonder if the bill will even return next year or whether it has just been presented as a time-waster to prevent Parliament from discussing non-government business on the notice paper. Parliament's time should be more valuable than that, and on that note I will conclude here.

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (18:47): I rise to speak on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. I have quite a number of racetracks in my electorate, and whilst you would think and expect that what this bill is trying to do is already in place, actually it needs to be formalised, because this is, as I understand, an unwritten agreement. But we have had incidents, and we have had way too many incidents, where horseraces have been disrupted and disrupted to quite a large extent. When we see serial pests consistently—and there was a time quite a number of years ago that one serial pest consistently turned up at so many different events to disrupt them—I think that is not positive for anybody. If you have a look at the horses that get spooked by these sorts of people, the worst thing that can happen to a horse is to get spooked and race off in the wrong direction through the barrier, throw the jockey and end up causing all sorts of damage to the horse themselves, the jockey and possibly innocent bystanders. Horses that are spooked—it is not a very nice thing to see. They are very large beasts, and they can cause, as I said, some damage.

Often it is all because of some idiotic behaviour of somebody who thinks that they want to make a stand and would like to show everybody how brave and good they are, but I think the damage that they do to the industry is pretty sad, actually. It is really disturbing to hear. I heard the member for South-West Coast in her contribution talk about the importance of particularly jumps racing down in her electorate at Warrnambool. Everybody knows the jumps carnival. It is one of the features of Warrnambool's calendar of racing every year, and many people go down to that. Jumps racing can be done very well. Overseas it has managed to go on for a really long time. They breed horses specifically for jumps racing, rather than try and turn some of them into jumps horses if they have failed at the gallops. But hearing the damage that that does—when you have somebody who is going to say, 'Every year I'm going to turn up, and I'm going to do this and look at using drones and all sorts of different techniques to disrupt the horseracing'—I think that that is really quite disturbing.

If you have a look, I have a lot of racetracks in my office—none in my office, but plenty in my electorate. I have a lot of picnic tracks. I also have the track at Yarra Valley, which has the gallops and the harness racing, and I have dog tracks at Healesville. I have the greyhound track, a really great straight track at Healesville, which is one of the only ones without a bend in it, and it is particularly

good. If you had people running onto the track or getting into unauthorised areas—there are lots of unauthorised areas, because you have the mounting yards as well as the tracks themselves, and people can get in there. You have the horses that are in the stalls, and if you go to the big race meetings, there are a lot of people in those areas, and it needs security to make sure that nobody interferes in any way with horses. I think you only need to go back to the times of Phar Lap and look at the demise and the death of Phar Lap and what happened in that instance—because somebody did get close to that animal and did interfere, and that was the end of what was a majestic horse who had done really well.

If I look at all of the picnic racetracks in my electorate, we have Mansfield, which has a couple of meets a year; Merton have their New Year's Day one; Alexandra get a couple; Yea get a couple; and Healesville get a few. And it is actually interesting, because depending on the weather sometimes these events are rained out; sometimes at Healesville the river is up too high and it is flooded. But they bring so many people to the races, so many people, and it does a lot of benefit to the local economies. I implore the government in the short time that they have left to make sure that all of their members do understand that, because I am not convinced that around the cabinet table there are enough people who actually understand the benefits certainly of picnic racing—and of broader racing, but picnic racing does not seem to get the funding it deserves. People come from the city, they get in buses, they go up, they stay the weekend and they have a great time. And they do so much for the food and beverage catering, the accommodation. It really makes a big difference. I do not think that there are enough people around the current cabinet table that do understand that, because I see and I feel and I know others in the industry are very concerned that this picnic part of the racing is under threat, and I would hate that to be the case.

I am a strong supporter of picnic racing, and I am a strong supporter of racing. I go frequently to the races and certainly support that, and I do not think that people that disrupt it should get off lightly. They need to be penalised much more heavily than they have been in the past. I am pleased to see that the government has brought this bill forward, and with that I will complete my speeches for the year.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) (18:53): I am delighted. I did my valedictory speech earlier today, but I am really pleased to have a final contribution on the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. Racing has been one of my passions since I was a little girl. My grandmother Eileen Minnie May Plozza, nee Brady, with her Irish Catholic forebears was definitely very passionate about racing, as were many in my extended family. It really has been something that has driven us, and it was one of my connections to my grandmother. She taught me how to punt, she taught me how to play euchre, she taught me how to play five hundred and she taught me what was of value in our communities.

I was raised in Warrnambool, like the member for South-West Coast, and we both know how important the racing industry is to the south-west and to the whole west of Victoria. And that three-day race carnival in May has just been something that has been part of my life and my upbringing and part of the economic fabric of that community. Now with the Jericho Cup it really has grown, the interest in racing in the area. I have never been one that has been opposed to people having a say in our democratic society and being able to protest about things that they do not agree with, having worked at the Victorian Trades Hall Council, having been involved many times with rallies—as has the minister at the table, the Minister for Planning—which were about workers having their say about things that they thought were not right. But we always did that, the organised trade union movement did that, with respect to other workers and ensuring the safety of workers. Unfortunately what we have found sometimes in forestry protests and also the protests against the racing industry is that other workers have their rights trampled on and are actually endangered in the process. So this bill is important in relation to that.

The Victorian racing industry contributes \$4.7 billion annually to the Victorian economy and helps sustain almost 35 000 full-time equivalent jobs across our state. The member for Eildon talked about picnic race meetings and cast a bit of a shadow over whether members in government are as committed to picnic race meetings as she might be. I could say to her that I am absolutely positive that is the case—that picnic race meetings and other race meetings are definitely supported by members of our

government. I was pleased today to give my valedictory speech at the end of that part of the proceedings, but the lead speaker today in the valedictory contributions was the member for Keysborough and the former Minister for Racing. I share the passion that he has for our racing industry and I know that there are plenty more like him that are in the queue in our caucus and in our government.

In recent years there have been instances of unauthorised entry to a racetrack area during the running of horseraces at Victorian racecourses. While the frequency of track incursions by spectators is relatively low, the potential consequences are significant and could result in serious injury or death to patrons, human and animal participants, and officials.

I really want to congratulate Jamie Kah and the amazing number of female jockeys that are now participating in this great sport. I understand from a recent article I read about Jamie's contribution that more than 50 per cent of apprentice jockeys are now female. I think that we need to be supporting gender equality in this sport and in fact celebrating that. I want to commend jockeys like Jamie Kah and others in the racing industry for what they do with horses after they have finished their racing life. Particularly if anyone has not read the recent—I believe it was in *Good Weekend*—article on Jamie Kah and the work that she does down on the Mornington Peninsula with former racehorses, it just shows that people like Jamie Kah and others involved in the industry, far from being disrespectful of animal welfare, are actually lovers of animal welfare.

I see the member for Gippsland East, a member of the National Party who sits in front of me, and we have a shared passion for racing, a shared passion for a punt. I am departing this place but I hope that I will see him out at a racetrack in the near future, and I will certainly be going to racetracks in the future with my husband. I commend this bill to the house.

The SPEAKER: The time set down for consideration of items on the government business program has arrived, and I am required to interrupt business. The house is considering the Racing Amendment (Unauthorised Access) Bill 2022. The question is:

That this bill be now read a second time.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 70

Addison, Ms	Guy, Mr	Pakula, Mr
Allan, Ms	Halfpenny, Ms	Pallas, Mr
Andrews, Mr	Hall, Ms	Richards, Ms
Battin, Mr	Halse, Mr	Richardson, Mr
Blackwood, Mr	Hamer, Mr	Riordan, Mr
Blandthorn, Ms	Hennessy, Ms	Rowswell, Mr
Brayne, Mr	Hodgett, Mr	Ryan, Ms
Britnell, Ms	Horne, Ms	Scott, Mr
Brooks, Mr	Hutchins, Ms	Settle, Ms
Bull, Mr J	Kairouz, Ms	Sheed, Ms
Bull, Mr T	Kealy, Ms	Southwick, Mr
Carbines, Mr	Kennedy, Mr	Spence, Ms
Carroll, Mr	Kilkenny, Ms	Staikos, Mr
Cheeseman, Mr	Maas, Mr	Staley, Ms
Connolly, Ms	McCurdy, Mr	Suleyman, Ms
Couzens, Ms	McGhie, Mr	Tak, Mr
Crugnale, Ms	McGuire, Mr	Taylor, Mr
Cupper, Ms	McLeish, Ms	Theophanous, Ms
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Morris, Mr	Thomas, Ms
Edbrooke, Mr	Neville, Ms	Walsh, Mr
Eren, Mr	Newbury, Mr	Ward, Ms
Fowles, Mr	O'Brien, Mr D	Wells, Mr
Fregon, Mr	O'Brien, Mr M	Wynne, Mr
Green, Ms		

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Noes, 3

Hibbins, Mr

Read, Dr

Sandell, Ms

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

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

DISABILITY AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Mr BROOKS:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

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

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Announcements

FELICITATIONS

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (19:07): I seek leave to make some statements and thank those who have contributed to the 59th Parliament, as this is indeed our last session.

Leave granted.

It is appropriate as we conclude to record our thanks and the thanks of the government to those who make this place work. Indeed it is also my final contribution both as Leader of the House and member of the Assembly, so many of my thankyou's have a personal note to them as well.

Firstly, Speaker, can I thank you; the previous Speaker, now the Minister for Child Protection and Family Services; as well as the new Deputy Speaker for the work that you have done in presiding over this chamber and the Parliament. You have shown great independence and patience in maintaining the order of this house over the course of this Parliament in your previous role and in this one.

To the clerks of the Parliament, Andrew Young and Bridget Noonan, including their respective deputies and Parliament support staff, we say thank you. I note this morning we had the morning tea to wish Andrew all the best in his future following his resignation as Clerk of the Legislative Council and as Clerk of the Parliaments. I personally have appreciated his wise counsel, and I know he will be missed by the Parliament. Indeed the Parliament is better for his service. Thank you to Bridget for all of your work. Without you I have no doubt that this place would not work. Over the past eight years I have greatly appreciated your advice on all manner of things, not least on trying to help keep the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee in order and more recently in my time as Leader of the House, so

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thank you. Your intelligence, calmness, independence, humility, kindness and good humour always is greatly appreciated. As I said yesterday in speaking to the government business program, I am sure all of us here join me in congratulating Bridget on becoming the first female Clerk of the Parliaments.

Can I also thank those who support Bridget. I know that they help make this place work as well. We want to thank Robert, Vaughan, Paul and Sarah for their support of both my role as Leader of the House but also the house more broadly.

Can we also thank Hansard, who, as I think a few people in their valedictories have said this week, always manage to make us read better than we sound—although I do note that the recent addition of video footage cannot always hide the same flaws.

Thank you to the committee staff, who keep all of the important committees of the Parliament working. Again, with the indulgence of the house, on a personal note I particularly thank the staff associated with the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. PAEC always has a huge workload, with its annual budget estimates and financial and performance outcomes inquiries, and yet in this term we have also seen the additional inquiries associated with the management of the pandemic. This has put a huge strain on all of the committee secretariats but in particular the PAEC secretariat.

To all of the Department of Parliamentary Services staff who assist us as members and our staff, both here in this place and in our electorate officers, thank you. To those who work in Parliament's hospitality, thank you for the good coffee, always with a smile. And thanks to the cleaning staff who have not only cleaned up after the usual Parliament messiness but who during the pandemic in particular have really gone above and beyond to help keep us safe and help keep this Parliament working through the pandemic. Thank you to the security staff. I think it is fair to say that in many respects this Parliament has faced much greater security threats than any other in Victoria's history. It is also fair to say that members and their staff—our staff—all have a greater sense of anxiety, both in this place and also when in their electorates, regarding their own security and that of their families. So all members really do appreciate the work that has been undertaken by this Parliament and overseen by these Presiding Officers in particular in relation to keeping us all safe and keeping our families and our staff safe, and I record our thanks to all involved.

Thank you to all electorate office staff across all of our offices. You are the front line for the work that those of us that are elected to this place do, and you see the very best and the very worst of our society at times. Your commitment across all of our offices to real public service is appreciated by all of us and the communities that we represent.

Finally, can I thank all members in this place for their contribution to the 59th Parliament. I would like to particularly acknowledge all retiring members. On the government side, in particular I acknowledge those ministers who are retiring. I can hear one of them behind me. They certainly leave giant footsteps for all of us, whatever side of this chamber we sit on, to follow in their commitment to this place and their communities. The Victorian public service has certainly set an example for many of us who are here to follow. Across the entire Parliament, I think everyone really does come to this place—wherever they sit, whatever their politics—with a view to wanting to do something good. So, on behalf of the Parliament, I thank everyone for the contribution that they make.

To recontesting members of all persuasions, I hope that you take care of yourselves and your families and your teams on the campaign trail. As I think we said yesterday, may you all go well and may some go better than others.

Ms STALEY (Ripon) (19:12): (*By leave*) I too want to join the Leader of the House in some thank-yous. I want to particularly start with the Speakers. You, Speaker—I am going to perhaps break convention and use your name because we have two speakers and I want to make sure I am getting the right people. I have previously got your electorate wrong more times than I want to acknowledge. To you, Maree Edwards, the member for Bendigo West: thank you for being both the Deputy Speaker and now the Speaker. To Colin Brooks, the former Speaker, the member for Bundoora and now the

Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, and to the current Deputy Speaker, the member for St Albans: I thank you for your leadership and chairing what is a very rambunctious place, a very noisy place and one that we could perhaps in the future improve all of our behaviours in.

I want to particularly thank Bridget Noonan, the Clerk, and congratulate her again on being not only the first female Clerk of the Assembly but now the first female Clerk of the Parliaments. I have recently been in the Council chamber where Council members paid tribute to Andrew Young, who is the current Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Council, and I join with them in recognising his service to the Parliament as Clerk of the Parliaments. To Bridget, though, your ability to help us and even help us ask the right question is incredibly valuable. I think for all of us who are in need of, ‘Well, you could do this’ or ‘There would be this’, it has been incredibly helpful to have that advice and to know that you were always there at the end of the phone, even when I rang you on a Saturday or a Sunday. Thank you very much. To your team, I particularly mention Robert, the Deputy Clerk, but also Paul, Vaughan, Sarah—your whole team. Always so professional, always so organised, you always make sure that this chamber runs the way that it should.

I want to thank Hansard for all of their work and as others have said for making us sound and look good. I understand—I cannot even see you from here—that Hansard reporters wear bowties on the last day. There is yours, in spectacular red. That is a lovely tradition, and thank you for upholding it.

I want to thank the attendants. This is one of the ways in which, because of COVID, people have had to step up into roles, and the attendants have been really at the forefront of some of the measures we have had in this chamber over the COVID journey in keeping us safe.

I would like to thank broadcasting. They tell me I am a power user of broadcasting. I think that means I always ask for my videos. I will be asking for this one, do not worry.

A member: In fact I’ll put my order in now.

Ms STALEY: Yes, I might as well put it in now. I am sure you are listening.

I would like to thank parliamentary counsel, the parliamentary library and all of DPS. I particularly want to mention catering, cleaning and grounds. I think our grounds here are such a delight. I often sit in my office in the annex, and I look out on that quadrangle and just think how lucky we are to have such a beautiful set of grounds. Particularly those of us who come from the country like the greenery; it is just really very special.

I also want to mention security. We do face increasing threats in our jobs as members of Parliament. Security is, I know, always there looking at ways to keep us safe, and they do keep us safe. With that I also include the PSOs.

The last group of people that I would acknowledge is, of course, my fellow members of the Assembly—all of us, the 88 members who make up the Assembly. We are the Parliament with our colleagues in the other place, and like the Leader of the House I would like to pay tribute to those who are retiring, particularly those on the Liberal and Nationals side, for their contribution to public life and to all of those who are continuing. Like others have said, I perhaps would hope some of those who are seeking to continue on the other side might not get the opportunity, and I suspect they have a similar feeling about me. However, I will be back in December, and I look forward to rejoining the fray sitting on that side of the chamber.

The SPEAKER (19:18): Before the house adjourns I would also like to say a few words. Members do not need to be reminded about the importance of our democracy and the fundamental role this institution plays in it. It is fair to say that the 59th Parliament has been one of the most challenging in the history of this Parliament. The disruptions we have experienced from the pandemic have presented challenges for all of us. There have been times when the very act of sitting has presented doubt and uncertainty. Yet it has been during these times when we have been at our best. We have shown that

we can put aside our differences and work together towards our shared values of democracy and parliamentary integrity.

So it is fitting to give a special mention to the current and former managers of opposition business and the leaders of the house, particularly the member for Rowville and the member for Bendigo East during their time in these roles for the many hours of negotiation which took place to ensure that this Parliament could continue to sit and perform its vital functions as safely as possible through the pandemic challenges.

To the parliamentary staff who work so hard behind the scenes to make this institution function, we can perform our work in this place so seamlessly because of the work they do. They have been resilient in the face of much uncertainty and have answered the call to go above and beyond their normal duties in this Parliament. So a huge thankyou to Bridget Noonan, to Robert, Paul, Vaughn and Sarah, for their professionalism and expert advice and to the entire Assembly team, especially the attendants for looking after us in this chamber and the amazing work they do in their tours and school programs. Congratulations, Bridget, on your new role as Clerk of the Parliaments.

Thank you to Andrew Young and his team in the Council for their support. I wish Andrew all the best on his next journey. Despite all of our efforts he is still leaving us.

To James Scott and the Hansard team, for the many hours of work making our speeches make sense. To John Fothergill and the buildings and grounds staff, who deal with the many challenges presented by this historic building. To Trish Burrows and the various teams in the Department of Parliamentary Services, who support us both in this place and in our electorates. To the security team and the PSOs, who have done a remarkable job during an extremely challenging time. To the catering team for their endless supply of coffee, tea and other beverages and for their ingenuity in keeping our kitchens going during lockdowns to help feed those doing it tough in our city. To the committee staff, who often have to deal with tight time lines and have been asked to journey through a number of highly emotional inquiries in this term of Parliament. To the community engagement team, who help make Parliament understandable and accessible to many people who would not normally engage in the democratic process.

On a personal note, I would like to pay a special thanks in particular to the former Speaker, the member for Bundoora, whose friendship, guidance and support I value highly. Thank you too to the Deputy Speaker and the acting chairs—your help in sharing the load of chairing this chamber is invaluable. To the party whips, who help with the smooth operation of this chamber, thank you. To the President of the Legislative Council, the Honourable Nazih Elasmr, and former President Shaun Leane, thank you for your support and guidance in my role as Speaker, and I wish Nazih all the best for his next chapter. And a special shout-out to Jason McDonald in my office, who has worked closely with both the former Speaker and me—thank you for your invaluable assistance. Your knowledge of the Parliament is quite extraordinary, your work ethic remarkable and your advice much valued. Thank you so much.

And finally, to all members, whether retiring or contesting at this election, I wish you all the very best for whatever the future holds.

Adjournment

The SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr BATTIN (Gembrook) (19:22): (6546) I rise with my adjournment matter for the Minister for Emergency Services. It is in relation to Jon Hillis, who is a local Cockatoo resident in the bush search and rescue volunteer sector. He was at training exercise that was a joint operation with Victoria Police in the Alpine National Park when he sustained an injury to his foot and was airlifted by Ambulance Victoria to Essendon Airport and then transferred by AV to the hospital. As a result of the injury, Jon

has not been able to work and has had to have surgery on his foot, leaving him out of pocket in excess of \$9000. Jon submitted an insurance claim through workers compensation, which was denied on the basis that he is a volunteer and not a worker. Jon has contacted the minister on multiple occasions only to be ignored, the minister not even having the decency to write a reply or acknowledge the emails were received. After much follow-up and debate, Jon is still told that he is not covered by the current insurance. Bush Search and Rescue Victoria and the Emergency Management Act 2013 clearly state that he is covered by the insurance as a volunteer. To quote Jon directly, ‘At this point the Minister for Emergency Services has still not yet provided me with a response beyond the fact they received my email. This, including the poor/non-existence Government response to the June storms, and the two weeks worth ... of power outages’ that they have had to suffer as well, him and his family.

And finally, just on the thank-yous, can I just quickly add a thank-you to Paul McConville as well in the catering department, who not only did the extra work of supporting people in the community who needed it the most but at the same time lost a very close friend in Michael, who was a chef here for a long period of time and an amazing person. I think it is really important that we do note in *Hansard* the work that Michael did and the support that he gave us. I actually say Michael was a friend to many in this place, not just because of his culinary skills but as a magnificent person and a person for the Victorian Parliament.

ST ALBANS ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

Ms SULEYMAN (St Albans) (19:24): (6547) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Mental Health, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me in visiting the construction sites of the new mental health beds expansion program at Sunshine Hospital in my electorate. We know of the incredible contribution of the Andrews Labor government in making health and mental health across Victoria but in particular in my electorate an absolute priority. When it comes to delivering for health in St Albans, we certainly have done that. The newly opened women’s prevention and recovery care centre, where I joined the Minister Mental for Health recently—the \$8.4 million facility—delivers around-the-clock care and support for those who need it most. And of course there is the new Joan Kirner Women’s and Children’s Hospital. We have seen just recently the new multilevel emergency department (ED) built at Sunshine Hospital.

There is no doubt that St Albans has become a priority and a centre for health and wellbeing. Not only do we have the Sunshine Hospital but also the Joan Kirner Women’s and Children’s Hospital, a new ED, mental health beds and also, as I just spoke about, the new women’s prevention and recovery care centre. But also there is this confidence in the local community, and we are now seeing a new private hospital being built across from Sunshine Hospital. They will work hand in hand in providing health and support services when needed most in my community. So there really is, as I call it, a triangle in St Albans of health and wellbeing, a priority centre that delivers and provides vital care, not only for St Albans but also for the people of the west.

When it comes to mental health bed expansions, we will see over 52 acute mental health beds delivered at the site of Sunshine Hospital. This will also provide some way of easing the pressure at Sunshine Hospital’s emergency department. As I said, not only are these projects providing vital jobs but also, as we know, Joan Kirner Women’s and Children’s Hospital is the home of the first neonatal intensive care unit in the west, and it will continue to deliver the health needs for the west. I look forward to joining the minister in seeing firsthand the progress of the new mental health hub in St Albans.

I also take this opportunity to wish everybody the very best during the next couple of weeks. Thank you to you, Speaker, to the clerks for their support and guidance and to all the team in Parliament—thank you so much.

OVENS VALLEY FLOOD MITIGATION

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (19:27): (6548) My adjournment tonight is to the Minister for Water in the other place. My adjournment concerns the levee banks along the Murray River, particularly from Yarrawonga to Ulupna Island, near Strathmerton, and I ask: will the minister give a guarantee to my communities that the levee banks have all been thoroughly checked and maintained and are fit for purpose? We know the levee banks are a political hot potato, and there are grey areas about who is responsible for the maintenance of those levee banks. We know that local government authorities like the Moira shire are responsible for the levees that protect the town, but certainly out in the rural areas there are varying degrees as to who is responsible for that maintenance. I have been approached by farmers who are not directly adjacent to the current levee bank, so they cannot do maintenance on the bank themselves. They do not reside next to it—they might be a farm or two away—but they are direct beneficiaries of a stable and well-maintained levee bank to protect their home and their land.

The Cobram SES had a community briefing on Sunday just gone to educate people about the potential outlook and possibility of flooding. Let me say to the minister: as night follows day, I can guarantee that the levee banks will be tested this year, with Dartmouth—I was going to say about to spill, but it has actually started to spill today. Just a trickle has gone over. I do not know whether that is actually identified as a complete spill, but it is trickling over, and I suspect that trickle will turn into a roar in the coming days and weeks. All the floods we have had in the 30 years I have lived in the region have been in October, so we know water is on its way. We need a guarantee that the levee banks are ready for the floods that are coming our way. Keeping the water within the levee banks is vital for the long-term protection of our communities, and it is vital that the levee banks are ready to do their job.

WENDOUREE ELECTORATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms ADDISON (Wendouree) (19:29): (6549) My adjournment matter is for the Treasurer, and the action I seek is for him to update me on how significant investment made by the Andrews Labor government in Ballarat between 2018 and 2022 has created jobs and supported the local economy.

I am proudly Ballarat born and bred, and I love my community. It is such an honour to represent the electorate of Wendouree, where I spent my childhood and worked as a schoolteacher and where my husband and I choose to raise our daughters, Johanna and Sophia, who are with us in the gallery tonight. By building the projects that matter to my community, our government is making Ballarat an even better place to work and live. We are investing in the health of our community with the \$541 million redevelopment of the Ballarat Base Hospital, which will deliver a new emergency department, a women's and children's hub, a state-of-the-art theatre suite and an extra 100 inpatient short-stay beds.

We are supporting local manufacturing by building Victorian trains at Alstom in my electorate. This \$986 million investment will deliver a new fleet of 25 X'Trapolis 2.0 trains and create hundreds of jobs in manufacturing and the supply chain, with many of those jobs being in my community.

I was able to visit the award-winning \$6.5 million Delacombe Primary School gym at various stages throughout its construction. Not only were the builders local and the concreter local but both a parent with children at the school and a former student were working on site.

Ballarat's population continues to grow as more people choose to make the best part of Victoria home. As a part of our Keeping Ballarat Moving initiative we are upgrading several of our busiest intersections across the city to keep traffic flowing and make sure that people get home safely.

The Andrews Labor government understands the benefits of grassroots sport and the way it supports the health and wellbeing and social cohesion of our community. The \$3.7 million investment in the Alfredton Recreation Reserve has transformed the reserve with new amenities, female-friendly change rooms, a fit-for-purpose kitchen and kiosk, cricket nets, scoreboards and new toilets. The fantastic new

facilities at Alfredton now open more opportunities for participation, particularly for women and girls. It is not only community sport that is receiving record investment, with both Mars and Selkirk stadiums receiving transformative upgrades to attract professional sports and events from around the country.

I thank the Treasurer for his support of Ballarat, and I look forward to him updating me on how the significant investments across my electorate have created jobs and supported the local economy.

EILDON ELECTORATE COMMUNITY SPORT FUNDING

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) (19:32): (6550) My matter tonight is for the Minister for Community Sport, and the action I seek is for the minister to provide funding to the Yea Football Netball Club so that the football oval can be repaired and resurfaced. It is actually in a very sad state at the moment, and the repair will include the installation of new drainage and irrigation systems. It needs to be lasered, resurfaced and then re-turfed. The council has estimated, very roughly, that this could be around \$300 000. This is beyond the scope of the football netball club at the moment in Yea. They have had a really tough year. They had a forced amalgamation for the footballers early on with Broadford, who were also struggling for numbers. It meant they only had three home games, which impacted very much on their finances. They have got stronger netball teams and, despite all the doom and gloom, the under-15s and under-11s netballers were premiers. As the finals came along they were going to be hosting a preliminary final—I think it was a preliminary final—for the outer eastern AFL, and the ground was unplayable, so they lost that. That was a loss of another \$7000 or \$8000 to the club, and it was something that they could not afford. The club have been around for a very long time—over 120 years—and are very proud. They are very worried about the future because if the ground is unplayable, it means their recruiting is extremely difficult.

Whilst Yea had a struggle for their season, some other local clubs did quite well. We had Bonnie Doon, for example, in the maiden grand final. They did not quite cut the mustard, but for the under-15s and under-17s netballers, the under-15s won and the under-17s went down in overtime. The B reserve were premiers and B grade just went down. We have had Powelltown win the division 2 grand final for the first time in 33 years over Kinglake, and that was a great game. They also had the B-grade netballers win. They had been undefeated all season. The D and C grades at Powelly made the grand final but did not quite pull through. Warburton Millgrove Football Netball Club won division 2 A-grade reserves, C grade, D grade and under-17s premierships. So it was a mixed bag. We had some great results. Some clubs did really well. I know the celebrations at Powelltown were going on because they did very well also in the best and fairest for the league and the goal kicking. They had a great season. So congratulations to Powelly and congratulations to Bonnie Doon and Warburton for their successes.

NEPEAN ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Mr BRAYNE (Nepean) (19:34): (6551) My adjournment is for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is for the minister to provide my community with an update on the usage of the newly upgraded Mornington Peninsula bus services undertaken by this government to the 788 bus service, the 887 express service, the 781 bus service and the FlexiRide bus service. All upgrades have been incredibly popular in my community, and I have received so much positive feedback on the street, in the office and in emails about how many people are utilising the services.

For me, these upgraded bus services are a source of pride. I caught those buses for most of my life. I complained about those buses. I wrote to my predecessor asking for the buses to be improved but received a standard response saying there were no plans for the buses to be increased in frequency. The express bus to Frankston has been a big game changer because one frequent criticism of our buses has been the sheer length of time it takes to get to Frankston, and with the other bus, the 788, going every half an hour, it addresses the common concern of missing the bus and having to wait for hours. Once again, the action I seek is for the minister to provide my community with an update on these services, services that I am proud to have been the member of Parliament to deliver.

I take this opportunity to wish all members of this place all the best for the next few months. I also want to thank all Department of Parliamentary Services staff and all staff of the Parliament, alongside Bridget and all other people who ensured this place ran smoothly over the past term alongside you, Speaker, so thank you.

The SPEAKER: The member for Melbourne—plus one.

PUBLIC HOUSING SERVICES

Ms SANDELL (Melbourne) (19:36): (6552) Thank you, Speaker. I hope this little one lets me get through this adjournment question. I want to start this adjournment question by paying tribute to people who live in public housing in my electorate. It is a group of people that I have felt really privileged to represent and get to know over the last eight years. They have been through a really tough time during the pandemic, so I think it is appropriate that I use my last adjournment to raise a matter that they would like me to raise with the minister.

During the pandemic many high-rise public housing residents in my electorate were employed by the government through Cohealth to help their communities stay safe, to encourage them to get vaccinated and to give them health information. This was called the high-risk accommodation response program. It was highly effective not just as a health measure but also in bridging that gap between residents and the government, which had been a huge issue over many years. It also gave residents much-needed work experience, and employment for public housing residents in that community has been a huge issue that so many residents have raised with me over many years.

This program was great, but in July this year, with very little notice, the funding for the program was cut and these people lost their jobs. Residents were understandably very upset. They had already felt quite neglected and ignored by the government over a long period, and they thought they were finally getting somewhere with the relationship, but then all of a sudden they felt abandoned again. They felt like the government perhaps had not learned anything from the failures highlighted by the hard lockdown of 2020. When I heard of the decision to stop this program I advocated strongly on behalf of residents for it to be continued. Since then the government has announced some funding for a new community connectors program, which is meant to fill the gap, but in reality the new program is quite different from the old one. Previously 100 residents had been employed, but now there are only 15 positions available. It is a big staffing cut, which is bad enough on its own but it also means a cut in the support and services available to the public housing community. I am disappointed with the decision. I think that it will lose a lot of goodwill in these communities. My question today is to ask the minister—this is the Minister for Housing—to fully reinstate the programs, services and jobs that public housing residents in Melbourne need and deserve.

THE ORANGE DOOR

Ms CONNOLLY (Tarnait) (19:38): (6553) My adjournment is for the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence. The action I seek is that the minister come out and join me to open the Orange Door network in Wyndham. As the minister knows, the Orange Door network has been rolling out across the state over the last four years. The Orange Door is a free service for adults, children and young people experiencing family violence or in need of support for their wellbeing. It brings together family violence, Aboriginal and child and family services in one place, providing coordinated support. The Orange Door network was a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Victoria is leading the nation in family violence reform, investing more than \$3.7 billion and implementing all 227 royal commission recommendations by the end of 2022.

I remember how pleased I was to hear that Wyndham would be home to a major hub for Melbourne's western region. We will soon be joined by outposts across Melbourne's west, including one in Tarnait, with another in Ascot Vale along with two access points in Footscray and the Melbourne CBD. These will all ensure that Melbourne and the western suburbs will be well serviced by this network.

The Orange Door network is set to open in western Melbourne in just a matter of weeks, and it would give me a great deal of pleasure to have the minister join me for the opening of this facility and see firsthand the very important services that it will be providing for families in Melbourne's western suburbs.

POLWARTH ELECTORATE LAND ACQUISITION

Mr RIORDAN (Polwarth) (19:40): (6554) My adjournment this evening is for the Minister for Regional Development in the other place, and the action I seek is for the minister to come down and visit the Port Campbell and Corangamite shire community, and the Nessler family in particular, to explain to them why two weeks ago her department saw fit to send a letter for compulsory acquisition of a parcel of land adjacent to the Twelve Apostles visitor centre.

Regional Victoria, and the Corangamite shire in particular, is desperate for investment by this state government in basic services. We are neglected in our health care. Our roads are universally considered the worst roads in the state of Victoria. Most of the Great Otways National Park is crying out for further investment in tracks. The Timboon rail trail, for example, a great public asset, needs about \$3 million or \$4 million immediately to fix up some of the old trestle bridges. There is huge demand for expenditure on basic government services and government-owned open spaces.

And for some reason, Minister, your department has seen fit to want to compulsorily acquire a parcel of land that has been in one family for a very, very long time—around 50 years or more. The Nessler family have for 10 years tried to do the redevelopment of the visitor centre and the visitor services at the Twelve Apostles on their land. They currently run a very successful tourist business in the Port Campbell helicopter business. They live and breathe that community. They have the resources, the know-how, the skills and the expertise to run what is one of Australia's premier tourist visitor locations. Minister, your department has sent—with no notice, no negotiation, no pricing and no structures in place—a letter demanding the handing over of that land by this family.

The community has not asked for this to happen. The community has not foreseen this happening. The community has a plan that everyone has been working to called the *Shipwreck Coast Master Plan* that clearly outlines the needs and the desires of that community, tourism and the Corangamite shire for government expenditure. It does not say you must go and compulsorily acquire from an unwilling seller and create a business and an enterprise that the private sector is more than happy to invest the money in. This is a terrible misuse of taxpayers money, and at a time when this government's debt levels are skyrocketing greater than in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania, why on earth is your department seeking to spend probably upwards of \$200 million on a project of land acquisition that no-one wants, no-one has asked for and there is no need to do? Instead, spend that money on what the community expects—basic services, open space and public land.

BURWOOD ELECTORATE LEVEL CROSSING REMOVALS

Mr FOWLES (Burwood) (19:43): (6555) It is my absolute delight to be making what I guess is the penultimate contribution in this, the 59th, Parliament in the great state of Victoria. My adjournment matter this evening is directed to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, the Deputy Premier, and the action that I seek is for the minister to join me in visiting the level crossing removal works at Bedford Road and Dublin Road in Ringwood and Ringwood East. To date the Andrews Labor government has removed 66 dangerous and congested level crossings across the state, and we are well on track to remove 80 ahead of schedule and on budget. The Labor government has already removed some of the state's worst level crossings, including those at Blackburn Road, Blackburn; Heatherdale Road, Mitcham; and Springvale Road, Nunawading. The Level Crossing Removal Project is part of a broader commitment to transport infrastructure in the east. It is a commitment to transport infrastructure that those opposite seem fixated on cutting, but let us be clear: cuts and closures are their *modus operandi*, one that Victorians came to know quite well from the last time they were in office. Now, however, in my submission is a ripper time for Victoria to build and build big, not cut and cancel. Now is a time for bold projects and big ideas. Now is a time to set our state on the right path for the

next generation, and an Andrews Labor government is ready and willing to deliver big projects that Victorians deserve.

Speaker, you will be annoyed to discover that I am not quite done there. I did want to echo the thanks and the gratitude expressed by the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business, and I want to convey a sentiment to all those leaving this place, irrespective of their allegiance and irrespective of their party, and to those staff who are departing as well. And it is this:

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day
Keep shining through
Just like you always do
'Til the blue skies drive those dark clouds far away
So will you please say hello
To the folks that I know
Tell them I won't be long
And they'll be happy to know
That as you saw me go
I was singing this song
We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day

The SPEAKER: I am pretty confident Hansard cannot record the tune, only the words.

RESPONSES

Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale—Leader of the House, Minister for Planning) (19:46): I am known in my family for being tone deaf, so I will not try and compete with that.

Mr Riordan: You're not going to sing a response?

Ms BLANDTHORN: No, I am definitely not going to sing a response, member for Polwarth.

The member for Gembrook raised a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services regarding a Cockatoo resident involved in emergency services who sustained an injury and a question over his insurance claim, and I will refer that matter to the relevant minister.

The member for St Albans raised a matter for the Minister for Mental Health. In particular she would like the Minister for Mental Health to join her on a visit to the construction site of the mental health beds expansion at the Sunshine Hospital, and I know the member for St Albans has been a great advocate for this project. I am sure we all send our very best wishes to the Minister for Mental Health on the journey ahead of her over the next few weeks in relation to the arrival of her own new little one, but I am sure she would be more than happy to attempt to accommodate that.

The member for Ovens Valley raised a matter for the Minister for Water in relation to guaranteeing the checking of levee banks and whether or not they will be tested this year, and I will refer that matter to the Minister for Water.

The member for Wendouree raised a matter for the Treasurer. In particular she was concerned for an update on the levels of investment in Ballarat between the years 2018 and 2022 and whether investment has gone into building community capacity and jobs in her community, and I will refer that matter to the Treasurer.

The member for Eildon raised a matter for the Minister for Community Sport in relation to funding for the Yea Football Netball Club, and I will refer that to the relevant minister.

ADJOURNMENT

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The member for Nepean raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport. In particular he was after an update on the usage of buses 788, 887 and 781 and the FlexiRide services across his local area—buses he knows well because he has used them himself.

The member for Melbourne raised a matter for the Minister for Housing regarding Cohealth and in relation in particular to funding for services and programs and the level of funding, and I will refer that to the minister.

The member for Tarneit raised a matter for the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, and in particular she would like the minister to open the new Orange Door network in Wyndham and to see firsthand the important work of the services that will be part of the Orange Door network.

The member for Polwarth raised a matter for the Minister for Regional Development, in particular in relation to Port Campbell, Corangamite shire and some land acquisition issues. I know from my own portfolio the Twelve Apostles precinct redevelopment project is a joint Victorian and Commonwealth government commitment that will deliver a world-class visitor experience and infrastructure. I know from the member for Polwarth's interest in these issues during our estimates hearings over the past term the infrastructure around tourism on the Shipwreck Coast is something of significance and importance to his community, and I will be sure to pass his concerns on. My understanding is that Development Victoria is commencing the acquisition process for an interest in the property on the Great Ocean Road due to this project delivering significant community benefits.

The member for Burwood raised a matter for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure particularly in relation to the benefits of the level crossing removals in Ringwood. I note that this is something that I think all of us on this side of the house are particularly proud of, and I will look forward to passing that matter on to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure so she can provide an update on those projects to those that you are advocating for in this house.

The SPEAKER: The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 7.51 pm.