

who have celebrated their 25th anniversary. The Kyabram Italian Ladies group was originally formed in 1986. Its members meet every Wednesday at the community centre. It is a terrific group which has done a lot not only to support Italians within the community but also the broader community generally. Congratulations on 25 — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! The member's time has expired.

Members: division pairs

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I rise to make some response to the commentary made by the Leader of the Opposition.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! I hope Mr Davis is making a member's statement.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am making a member's statement. I am rising, as I indicated, to respond to some comments made by the Leader of the Opposition just before and to point out that it is in the interests of Victorians that the Treasurer be able to go to ministerial council meetings. I have to say that for Labor to seek to take tactical advantage — —

Mr Lenders interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pennicuik) — Order! I make the same comment I made when Mr Lenders was making his statement: that Mr Davis should be able to make his member's statement through the Chair and without pointing at the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — Acting President, I will seek not to point at the Leader of the Opposition on this occasion. I make the point that it is in the interest of Victorians that the Treasurer be able to go without Labor in the lower house seeking to take tactical advantage from the fact that Victoria needs to be represented.

My point earlier in the day was that in this chamber we, when in opposition, worked on the principle that we would provide pairs for ministers who had to attend genuine ministerial activities interstate where Victoria needed to be represented. We did that as a matter of principle, and we did it in the interests of Victorians. My encouragement to opposition members is that they look at these things in the same manner. I do not want them to be seen as Labor first and Victorians second. It would be wrong to deny that representation.

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Reference

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That this house requires the Environment and Planning References Committee to inquire into, consider and report on the contribution of environmental design to prevention and public health in Victoria, and in particular:

- (1) review the evidence of the contribution of the natural and built environments to the promotion of health and wellbeing;
- (2) identify and report on those elements of environmental planning and design which provide the most promising opportunities for improving health outcomes in Victoria;
- (3) assess the extent to which these factors are currently taken into account in environmental planning and design in both the public and private sectors, and their effectiveness, with particular reference to new growth areas;
- (4) determine opportunities to influence environmental planning and design for health, including consideration of the role of legislation, guidelines and public-private partnerships, and the costs and benefits of various options; and
- (5) provide recommendations for future planning and investment; and that the committee will consider:
 - (a) the effectiveness of the environments for health municipal public health planning framework;
 - (b) the state Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, the Transport Integration Act 2010 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987;
 - (c) international experience such as the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities initiative;
 - (d) the consistency of policy approaches across the Victorian government to promote health through evidence-based environmental planning and design measures; and
 - (e) the role of public open space in promoting health

and that the committee present its final report to Parliament no later than 12 months after this reference is given to the committee.

This is an important reference. In one sense it is not a party-political reference; it is a reference designed to use the Parliament's good offices — in this instance, the bipartisan character of upper house committees — to inquire into and report on matters surrounding environmental planning initiatives. It is a reference that provides the opportunity to give long-term recommendations to government and can extend more

broadly than government. There is a wealth of international literature about city design and arrangements that can be put in place to lead to healthier outcomes in terms of town and country planning, in the old parlance.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, which was introduced by the former government, provides a unique framework in Victoria. I understand many of the principles in that act, and whilst there were some parts that were controversial, there were other broad concepts supported by the opposition at the time, now the government. The focus of that act on promoting health is one of those.

Equally, there is a close tie-up between the planning and transport arrangements that apply to particular communities, public transport in particular. It is clear that planning arrangements that are put in place impact on the health and wellbeing of local communities. When a new town or new development is planned, the shape of that development will impact on the health of that community for decades and longer into the future.

We all have an interest in getting better outcomes. Again, this is not to point the finger at any particular government or any particular approach, but it is just to say there is a wealth of international literature that enables us as a community to do much better in how we plan developments. I know the Minister for Planning sees the potential for these issues, and I also know that groups like the Planning Institute of Australia are aware of the options and the capacity of a reference such as this to lead to better outcomes for the Victorian community in the longer term.

As I have said, there is significant international literature that relates life expectancy in some cities to better planning arrangements and environmental design. I would very much encourage the committee to explore such evidence and how it could be adapted successfully to guide the developments in Victoria.

The key thing here is that this is a reference for the future. It is a reference that is not designed to be partisan. It is a reference that offers an opportunity for all parties to contribute to the future, to bring in information from both international literature and international arrangements and to learn from other jurisdictions, at the same time as consulting those relevant planning groups which understand these matters at a community level in our state. I commend this reference to the house and seek support for it.

Mr LENDERS (Southern Metropolitan) — Having listened to Mr Davis's remarkably conciliatory and

bipartisan comments, I can certainly say that the committee reference he proposes is something that the opposition has no issue with, but I will move an amendment to his motion. I move:

That the words 'Environment and Planning References' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place 'Family and Community Development'.

I will confine my remarks to why the reference should be to the joint Family and Community Development Committee rather than the Legislative Council Environment and Planning References Committee. Mr Tee will comment on the merits of the reference. I do not have any issue with the reference Mr David Davis is proposing.

We have before us a fairly fundamental issue that this motion from the executive government — and it comes from the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council — is referring a matter to a Legislative Council committee. Everybody who is involved in the Standing Orders Committee, which includes Mr David Davis, well knows that reference to committees was designed as a bipartisan position for this house to exercise scrutiny of the executive government.

This reference to committee is a worthy one, and if the government wished, it could have it referred to any government department or to the Family and Community Development Committee when it is formed. This government has itself referred matters to committees that have not been formed yet. This is an important issue because it goes to a fundamental report that had quad-partisan — if that is the way to describe it — support and came from the Standing Orders Committee in the last Parliament. The committee included present government members Mr David Davis and Mr Dalla-Riva. Mr Hall was also a member of that committee, but he did not go on the visits we made to the New South Wales Legislative Council and to the Australian Senate.

The Standing Orders Committee specifically looked at the history of the joint investigative committees. On both sides of politics the executive government has frequently referred matters to those committees, and both houses of Parliament have frequently referred matters to those committees. In the 54th Parliament the Labor Party had a majority with the support of Independents and referred things from the Assembly to those committees, and the Legislative Council, where the opposition parties had a majority, also referred matters. In the 55th Parliament both Labor-controlled houses referred matters. In the 56th Parliament the Assembly was Labor controlled, the Council was

controlled by three other parties and an Independent, and both houses referred things to committees.

The Standing Orders Committee looked at all this and said, 'This is fine. Where no party controls a house or both houses, you do things by negotiation'. The establishment of the committees of the 54th Parliament was done by agreement. The make-up of the committees of the 56th Parliament was done by agreement. My concern and the reason I am moving an amendment to this motion is that as soon as the Baillieu government — —

Hon. G. K. Rich-Phillips — The 56th Parliament?

Mr LENDERS — They were done by agreement, Mr Rich-Phillips. The Labor Party and The Nationals reached an agreement in the 56th Parliament. At the end of that Parliament the unanimous vote of the Standing Orders Committee — which had three Labor members, two Liberal members, one Nationals member and one Green — was to recommend to this house that it set up the new committee system like the Senate system.

The bipartisan bona fides of Mr David Davis can be addressed in his reply to this matter. We have no issue with the reference at all. The issue is why it is being made to a Legislative Council references committee when the whole point of the Standing Orders Committee review — the reflection of what the Australian Senate does — was that the references committee would be aware that the Legislative Council could have a review of the executive government.

I will be charitable to Mr David Davis. If he agrees with the amendment, I will eat humble pie and say with sincerity what a great, wise man he is. But my expectation is that at the end of this debate there will be 21 government members, 16 opposition members and the Greens members, I suspect, supporting the opposition on this matter, all voting along party lines as to whether the executive government determines what the Legislative Council references committee looks at. If that is the case, then that is unfortunate, not because of the merit of this reference but because there was a four-party agreement that this would be different.

Forget the history of Victoria. I am sure Mrs Peulich will go through what happened in the 2002–06 Parliament, and I could go through what happened in the 1992–96 and 1996–99 parliaments. Those are valid points; that has happened. But what has happened in the meantime is that in 2007 there was an across-the-aisle agreement between the Labor Party and The Nationals which saw some sharing of committee chairs. At the

end of that Parliament there was an agreement by all parties that these references committees of the Legislative Council would be different. We spent time talking to the Reverend Fred Nile and to various Labor, Liberal and Nationals members in the New South Wales Legislative Council. We talked to the President of the Australian Senate and various Senate committee chairs about how we could make the review of this place work.

The government is choosing to use its numbers to decide what the Legislative Council references committee is going to do. So be it — 21 always beats 19. However, Mr Davis is rapidly getting the debate going about how, somehow or other, this naked grab for power by the executive government is different and justifiable. The review he wants to refer can easily be done by accepting the amendment. The Family and Community Development Committee will address it and will address all the issues that he suggests. The Legislative Council references committees can then deal with scrutiny of the executive government, rather than being kept busy on a task that the executive wishes them to keep busy on so that they cannot scrutinise the executive.

There is a lot more that I could talk about, but I am sure I will have the opportunity in reply to do so on the next reference, if need be. However, I think this is an opportunity for Mr David Davis to convince the house that his words of bipartisanship actually mean something and that this can be reviewed. There are no references for the Family and Community Development Committee to date. That committee will be controlled by the government, because I know how the 45:43 rule and the 21:19 rule work. The government can refer it there, and that committee can report back on all those matters that are important to Mr David Davis. For those reasons I would urge the house to support the amendment in order to keep the house in control of its own destiny, so that the house rather than the executive government determines what matters are referred to the references committees of this house.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — The Greens will support Mr Lenders's amendment and the motion from Mr David Davis, in that order. Mr Lenders predicted that the first act of the government would be to jam this reference into the committee. It is not actually the government's first act; last week the government voted down a reference put up by Mr Tee that was intended to scrutinise the government's proposed planning scheme amendment. So we already know something of what the government intends to do with these committees so far. We are 1 for 0 at the moment — the government has opposed one proposal

from the non-government parties and has put up one of its own — and we will be debating another one shortly after this motion has been dealt with.

There is one further issue I would raise to add to the contribution of Mr Lenders — that is, the resourcing for these committees. I was not a member of the Standing Orders Committee, but it was a clear observation of that committee, as it travelled around and looked at the different parliaments, that joint committees no longer held a lot of sway in the various parliaments they visited. Once committees began to be split up in this way it resulted in a series of lower house committees and a series of upper house committees, and in my view that fits with the different roles and destinies of the two houses.

However, this government has chosen to do something a bit different. It has proposed to continue the joint committees but to make some changes to them, which we will see in a bill that we will debate a bit later this week. As Mr Lenders says, the government also now wants to treat the Legislative Council committees in the same way as joint committees, using them for things that are usually uncontroversial and would certainly be the sort of thing that a minister could order up from their own department or run as their own review if they so wished.

I think the topics of the two motions proposed by Mr Davis are important. This one in particular notes the relationship between the environment — the environment in which humans live — and human health. This is something that the Greens spend a lot of time trying to promote. In fact if we were to get into this reference we would be looking at three different acts: the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, the Transport Integration Act 2010 and the Planning and Environment Act 1987. These are all acts under which the government regularly makes decisions that set us up for future health outcomes.

There is no question that over the coming four years we will be asking a series of questions of the ministers responsible for those acts — though unfortunately we do not have the transport minister in this house — to try to elucidate from them what their direction is in ensuring that the environments we build up, particularly in closely settled areas, determine the good health of the people who will then live in those areas. As it is, it appears obvious that the government will vote for its own motion, so it appears that we will go ahead and consider this matter. I would expect that the relevant government departments — that is, the Department of Transport, the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Department of Health — would

be able to provide a high level of cooperation and assistance to the committee as it goes about considering this reference. In fact I would love it if those departments seconded a person to our committee to help us give this reference its due consideration.

Mr Davis predicted that this would be a non-political reference — I do not know whether he anticipates that any findings made by the committee will be non-political — so the question of resourcing for committees becomes quite important. When we debate the committees bill, possibly tonight or this week, there will be an opportunity to again ask about the resources available to the various committees, because the budgets for committees and the Parliament as a whole are interlinked. They relate specifically to the joint committees and also to our own upper house committees. However, having said that, I have indicated the position of the Greens on this motion, and I will not take up any further time.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I rise to speak briefly on the matter before the house as the deputy chair of the Environment and Planning References Committee to which this motion is directing this work.

I have had nearly 15 years of parliamentary experience across a range of committees, including 10 years of service on the all-party Family and Community Development Committee to which Mr Lenders would rather see this reference directed. Having had the benefit of that experience, I understand that the Family and Community Development Committee has undertaken work on a broad range of issues. Its predecessor, the Social Development Committee, often undertook work in areas where there is not a lot of political agreement. It worked on very difficult issues as a way of finding some common ground, engaging with the community and trying to map a blueprint for advancement.

Recommendations for legislation do not necessarily emerge out of that kind of all-party work — legislation comes out of the response of the government of the day — but you can take some small steps in causing shifts in attitudes, improving knowledge and sharing information, and then the government of the day will pick up the challenge set by the all-party committee, especially if it is unanimously supported.

We know that the worth of any all-party report is substantially compromised if it is not supported by both sides of the house and even the minor players; unfortunately it often ends up collecting dust on a shelf for a very long period of time. Having a report and

recommendations that are supported by all the political parties is something that is very important to the parliamentary committee process.

I had the pleasure of being involved in some very significant inquiries in the 1990s at a time when Caroline Hogg, a former Minister for Health, also served on the Family and Community Development Committee. She was an outstanding and well-respected member of the committee and brought a wealth of ministerial experience to it. It was an enormous pleasure to work with her because our basic principles and approach to the committee were to try to divest it of political rhetoric. We would leave the political rhetoric at the door, and we would focus on the problems and try to generate some options and solutions. If we came to an agreement, we could often be fairly confident that we could carry the rest of the committee with us.

The committee had a very comprehensive agenda with lots of public hearings, and we came out with two significant reports. One was the review of family and children's services back in 1994, I think. That was the basis of a lot of the reforms that have taken place in the intervening period. It was well overdue, but some of those reforms have lost direction since then. Another very important review related to positive planning for ageing. That really did break new ground. It was a very significant report and blueprint; it did not provide the machinery of translating these objectives and goals into action. It was very well received internationally and by all of the key stakeholders, and much of the government's policy and legislation to do with positive planning was based on that report.

From experience, I know that the level of work that is required on these committees is detailed, but it is not at the level of crunching what is already happening in terms of policies, legislation, strategies and so forth in various portfolios that somehow may not have the synergy to deliver the outcomes that perhaps we might all share a view on. We may even agree on them but have differences of opinion as to how those important pieces of machinery should be aligned to deliver those outcomes. I have seen a lot of legislation over recent years — certainly since my return to the Parliament and certainly in this house — which makes me think, 'How in the hell does this integrate?' or 'The left hand does not quite know what the right hand is doing'.

For a house of review this particular reference is a very good test case to break in the workings of this new Legislative Council committee system. The Environment and Planning References Committee is in an excellent position to break some new ground, to review some of these significant documents, strategies,

legislation guidelines and so forth in the areas of planning and health — two things that are very high priorities in the community — and to see how we can align those better to achieve better outcomes in terms of objectives, better value for money and better synergy in implementing government programs and objectives.

I see it as very different work to that of the other committees. I think it can fulfil a more high-level strategic function. Although 12 months is a fairly substantial time commitment in terms of work, we all know it is not necessarily going to allow the depth of work that some of the all-party committee inquiries of the past required. There have been some on euthanasia and on other fairly contentious pieces of legislation. It can be work that we can do more quickly because the documentation, guidelines and literature are there. With the professional assistance of those who support the committees — whether or not they are coopted or they are from the department, there are now resources in place — I believe we can fast-track things and make sure that there is an alignment of the stars, so to speak, when it comes to these key strategic documents and legislation so that we can make sure we have legislation and key initiatives that facilitate outcomes and pull in the same direction and are not counterintuitive or counterproductive.

I see this as an exciting opportunity. There has been too much of a silo approach to legislation and policy-making. This invites a more holistic, cross-portfolio approach and is an opportunity for members of this chamber to tease out the implications and review the legislation and guidelines to see how they are functioning, which I think is very exciting. I look forward to having the opportunity of doing that.

I was pleased to hear that Mr Barber was going to support the reasoned amendment and that if that failed, he would then support the motion. I welcome that. It is very important that the Greens are involved in this. We know they have made a decision not to involve themselves in certain committees, such as the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee and the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I understand that, obviously because of the numbers, they have some difficulty providing members to serve on all the committees. Because all the Greens members are in the upper house, I would have thought the Legislative Council committees would be an ideal forum to try to make progress in areas that can be politically divisive and get the improvements that the Victorian community wants and expects us to make.

This chamber is a house of review. It is not just a review of executive government; it is a house of

review. It has a broader function. By giving this reference to the Environment and Planning References Committee, in which the Greens are participants, we can make sure that all the key players are involved, and I certainly welcome that. Many of us can think of lots of examples where the intent of particular reforms, whether they were state or federal, have cut across other outcomes that we value.

A recent example is the BER (Building the Education Revolution) program. We will not get into the merit or otherwise of the program and how it was implemented, but we know that the hasty implementation of BER — the objective of which was on the record as being to sustain and prop up jobs — also cut substantially across a range of other outcomes, including the loss of open space and ovals at our schools. That to me is something that we will not easily replace, and it comes at a time when we have concerns about obesity, about fitness and about young people spending too much time on computers rather than in active play. That is one example of where good intentions cross paths and, unfortunately, cut across what are very legitimate concerns within the community. There are other examples, including housing design and the design of streets. Obviously we need to make sure that our suburbs are designed for the ages and not just for a single age.

I welcome this reference. It is potentially groundbreaking. This new Legislative Council committee system is a new experience for Victoria, and obviously there is much to learn. The committees have had discussions, and we are all feeling our way around. However, given the frustration that we have already felt in trying to establish some of the joint house committees — and the opposition has made it difficult to establish some of those — this is a perfect vehicle to deliver some more highly strategic work in order to deliver better outcomes for Victorians. I welcome the reference.

Mr TEE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I have listened carefully to the remarks of Mr Lenders in support of his amendment. Having read the final report on the establishment of the new standing committees for the Legislative Council, it is clear that his observations are consistent with the objective of the new committees. I also agree with the proposition put forward by the Leader of the Government when he said the shape of a new town will impact on the health of that community for decades. I think that is right. It is hoped that the committee — hopefully it will be a joint committee, but whatever form it takes — will take this as an opportunity to guide development in Victoria, benchmarked against best international practice.

We have an opportunity here to use as guides or as role models the two recent announcements of this government, which has indicated its willingness regarding redevelopment at Fishermans Bend and the Bradmill site in Yarraville. What we have here are two projects which provide a starting point to unpack the challenges that government faces when it wants to make sure that these infill developments have the right infrastructure and the right planning to promote health and wellbeing. They are good examples for the committee to consider in terms of planning for these new communities. I hope the committee will have an opportunity to consider these in detail, but I also hope it will not be limited to consideration of just those sites. The government has flagged a number of inner city sites for urban renewal. The motion again identifies the urban growth areas as areas that the committee would want to consider, and they are clearly within the terms of reference.

There are a couple of clear examples of the types of challenges that this government faces and that this committee can explore. We have an opportunity through this reference to review what actions the government has taken to deliver on those projects. We have an opportunity to consider the appropriateness of those actions. We have an opportunity to recommend other options or actions that need to take place so we can ensure that these sites deliver best practice in terms of planning and design. For example, at Fishermans Bend we need to look on a practical level at the environmental impact when we talk about the removal of contamination, but because it is a broad reference we also need to make sure sufficient planning is undertaken so there is sufficient open space to promote growth — which, again, is a clear part of this reference.

We can see how the Bradmill site intersects with this reference. It is a site that will have a new community — a new town, as the Minister for Health, Mr David Davis, said. It will have 1000 homes and a supermarket, as the Minister for Planning indicated in question time, along with a library and a medical centre. There are obvious issues about how you get that planning right and how you remove pollution from a site that has housed a textile factory for some 80 years. That site has particular issues in relation to access. It is hemmed in by the West Gate Freeway and Francis Street, which is one of the busiest arterial roads for trucks in the country.

When we talk about planning in that context and when we talk about the environment and about health, it is clear that we will need to talk about the health and safety of the residents. As they try to get out of that community to go to schools or to drop their kids off at

sporting venues, we want to make sure that they can go about their business safely. That might mean reviewing how you remove trucks from Francis Street and how you ensure that there is a safe environment. It might mean looking at some of the issues identified in the former government's trucking plan, which identified some opportunities — and they do not come cheaply, but they are important to consider — to get trucks off Francis Street so that the community has a safe environment.

For all those sites the issue of public transport is writ large. There are also issues around bike lanes and of the types of housing available. There is a need to make sure that there is affordable housing that caters for Victorians through their various life stages, whether it is young people, young couples or families with young children or whether it is older Victorians looking for unit-style accommodation.

I am sure that using those examples the committee would want to hear from local councils and other interested community groups, because we have to get this right. Without proper planning, a proper budget and proper infrastructure, what we will end up with at those sites, and elsewhere, will be soulless, park-less, dormitory suburbs, without a blade of grass. This reference is an opportunity to get that planning right. It is an opportunity to ensure that we deliver opportunities that promote health and wellbeing to communities at the Bradmill site.

I note that the same issues emerge in relation to the Fishermans Bend site. Again I urge the committee to consider those issues. The committee might want to call Mr Phil Lovel from the Victorian Transport Association, who indicated that the Fishermans Bend site is 'a grand scheme with a lot of issues'. We might want to unpack those issues in relation to planning for the site. He also said:

There's a lot of work that needs to be done before any consideration of increasing the urban development down there goes ahead.

Mr Lovel further stated that the current link from Fishermans Bend to the West Gate Freeway is blocked and traffic noise levels are too high for a neighbourhood. One would have thought that those sorts of issues, which very much go to planning and environmental considerations and to ensuring that communities meet the health and wellbeing needs of families, children and individuals who live there, would be paramount. Also, inner urban-style developments are often buttressed by existing communities, and the reference would allow the government to consider the impact on both of the existing communities. What

impact will there be on the amenity of surrounding suburbs? How will health and wellbeing there be affected? What will the impact be in terms of roads? Will they become more congested? What impact will there be on existing public transport in those suburbs? Will they become more crowded? What will happen to schools in the area? How will they cope with the additional demands of an extra 1000 houses or 2000 people in the middle of existing neighbourhoods?

This amendment offers the potential, hopefully, for a joint committee or otherwise for this reference committee to ensure that at those sites — and more broadly, because those sites set up the parameters for a number of these sites identified by the government — we can have a look at the built environment and make sure that we develop a planning scheme that promotes public health. That is a critical outcome and something I am sure everyone in this house seeks to achieve.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I will be brief. I want to thank all parties in the house for supporting the concept of this reference to align environmental factors and planning issues with health issues in a significant way which will look to the future. Apart from welcoming the cooperation of the house in relation to the general principles of the reference, I will make a couple of points in response to parts of the debate. I note that the Select Committee on Public Land Development, of which a number of us were members, looked at some matters that touched on this area, and it certainly gathered material which is relevant to aspects of this reference.

I note in response to the points raised by Mr Lenders — and, in a sense, he left Mr Tee to respond to substantive points about the reference — that he seeks to move an amendment — —

Mr Lenders — You think constitutionality is not substantive?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am not trying to be troublesome; I meant substantive in terms of the internals of the reference — that is, the matters surrounding the concept of the reference. I do not think Mr Lenders opposed the substance of the reference as being worthy, and that is the point I was trying to make: that Mr Tee responded to those matters — —

Mr Lenders interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I stand to be corrected, but Mr Lenders made the point that there were points in the reference that he thought had merit, and he indicated that Mr Tee would respond to a number of those comments. That is the point I was making. I was simply

reiterating what Mr Lenders had said and indicating that Mr Tee had, as Mr Lenders outlined, made those points.

Mr Lenders — You were going to reiterate what you said in the Standing Orders Committee.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am about to come to those points and indicate that Mr Lenders proposed an amendment to send this matter to the Family and Community Development Committee rather than the Environment and Planning References Committee of the upper house. There are a number of reasons why the government does not support that approach. The first is that we think this is appropriately handled in the upper house, and the upper house — —

Mr Lenders — Why?

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — One reason is that the Greens political party is represented in this chamber, and it does not have a member on the Family and Community Development Committee. We think members of the Greens might have some useful points to make with respect to these references.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — No, they had the opportunity to go on that committee but chose not to. They said they want to put their efforts into the committees in this chamber. As I understand it, Ms Pennicuik is a member of — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — That is an incongruity.

Mr Lenders — You are speaking for the Greens as well!

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — No, I am making a significant point: the Greens may have something to contribute. I see Ms Crozier is in the chamber. She is a member of the Family and Community Development Committee, and unless I am otherwise misinformed, the Greens members said they would not take part in the joint committees. They made a decision to concentrate their efforts, and we thought this — —

Mr Viney interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — It is incongruous. Nonetheless, I make the point that Ms Pennicuik may have something to contribute to the work of this committee on this reference. I know she has an interest in these areas, because I served on the Select

Committee on Public Land Development in the last Parliament — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I am pointing to incongruities. Nonetheless, she may well have something to contribute to this issue.

Secondly, the points that Mr Lenders made about the Standing Orders Committee are only partially right. It is true that we looked at a number of other parliaments, including the federal and New South Wales parliaments, and that was worthwhile. A number of upper house committees in New South Wales and the Senate references committees would undertake work precisely of this type.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — There are not as many joint committees, I concede. Nonetheless, there are joint committees, and those upper house committees may well undertake work that is directly relevant to this reference, so I do not accept the point.

Mr Barber made points about cooperation from departments. My department, the Department of Health, is supportive of this reference, as I think is Mr Guy's department, the Department of Planning and Community Development, so I have no doubt that there will be some cooperation from departments.

Mr Barber interjected.

Hon. D. M. DAVIS — I cannot speak for departments directly, but Mr Barber makes a point. I have no doubt that departments will make some contribution and will do so, as I understand it, quite willingly.

Whether joint committees hold the sway they used to is a matter for broader judgement, but I am of the view that joint committees have their role, as do the legislation and references committees of this chamber. This chamber, as Mrs Peulich pointed out, has a broader role than simply review of the executive and legislation. It has a role to look at a whole range of relevant public issues. The issues in this reference are important, relevant issues about which all members of Parliament, particularly members of the committee, may have views and may come to points of commonality. There may be points of political difference which can be teased out in the committee, but there may be points of commonality as well. That is precisely how bipartisan or all-party committees should operate.

The three committees in this chamber are all-party committees in the sense that their members represent all the political parties, and I would have thought that it was a very reasonable thing to give this sort of reference to an upper house committee. I think the Environment and Planning References Committee can do worthy work.

With those points, I encourage the chamber to support this reference. It is always a point of debate as to which committee is best placed to handle the work. The Family and Community Development Committee already has two important references — one relating to seniors and one relating to mental health issues — and I do not want in any way to diminish the importance of those two references. As I understand it, the Environment and Planning References Committee currently has no references, and it would be a very worthy place for these matters to be examined.

House divided on amendment:

Ayes, 18

Barber, Mr	Pakula, Mr
Broad, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Darveniza, Ms	Pulford, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Scheffer, Mr
Hartland, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Somyurek, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Tarlamis, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Leane, Mr	Tee, Mr
Lenders, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Mikakos, Ms	Viney, Mr

Noes, 21

Atkinson, Mr	Koch, Mr
Coote, Mrs	Kronberg, Mrs
Crozier, Ms	Lovell, Ms
Dalla-Riva, Mr	O'Brien, Mr
Davis, Mr D.	O'Donohue, Mr
Davis, Mr P.	Ondarchie, Mr
Drum, Mr	Petrovich, Mrs
Elsbury, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Peulich, Mrs
Finn, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Ramsay, Mr
Guy, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Hall, Mr	

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Reference

Hon. D. M. DAVIS (Minister for Health) — I move:

That this house requires the Economy and Infrastructure References Committee to inquire into, consider and report on

the measurement, including budget measures, of primary health and aged-care services and outcomes, and in particular whether —

- (1) Australia, like most other western countries, should mandate the provision of information on the reasons people receive primary-care treatments — that is, epidemiological coding according to the international classification of primary care or similar;
- (2) Australia should mandate the provision of waiting times and waiting lists for primary-care services;
- (3) Australia should mandate the requirement for provision of information about outcome measures, such as appropriate treatment for all patients with diabetes in primary-care settings, appropriate treatments for asthma in those settings and so on;
- (4) conditions for which hospitalisations can be avoided should be considered a surrogate for the adequacy of our primary health-care system;
- (5) actual rates of provision of residential aged care for each community should be provided, as opposed to bed ratios;
- (6) comparable rates of community care alternatives should be provided for these communities;
- (7) quality criteria for residential aged care across a community and for each individual setting should be more clearly available and provided; and
- (8) potentially unnecessary or avoidable hospitalisations of patients in residential care should be used as a surrogate indicator for poor care in these settings;

and that the committee present its final report to Parliament no later than 12 months after this reference is given to the committee.

This is an important reference. The community will be aware of the debate that has taken place about which levels of government ought to be responsible largely for each particular type of service that is provided in our health-care, aged-care and acute-care settings. There has been a broad national debate about whether the states or the commonwealth ought to undertake certain services and how those ought to be reported.

The fact is that those services are mixed. Primary-care services are provided by both the commonwealth and the states. Victoria provides a number of key primary-care services. Whilst aged care is funded and regulated largely — and I emphasise largely — by the commonwealth, Victoria has a number of aged-care settings that are provided by the state government, and they constitute important contributions to the aged-care services in Victoria.

There is significant measurement of and reporting on the acute health sector in Victoria. They are important measures, and the new Baillieu government has