

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

THURSDAY, 4 MARCH 2021

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

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

Legislative Council committees

Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee

Mr Barton, Mr Erdogan, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Mrs McArthur, Mr Quilty and Mr Tarlamis.
Participating members: Dr Bach, Ms Bath, Dr Cumming, Mr Davis, Mr Limbrick, Ms Lovell, Mr Meddick, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Watt.

Environment and Planning Standing Committee

Dr Bach, Ms Bath, Dr Cumming, Mr Grimley, Mr Hayes, Mr Meddick, Mr Melhem, Dr Ratnam, Ms Taylor and Ms Terpstra.
Participating members: Ms Crozier, Mr Davis, Dr Kieu, Mrs McArthur and Mr Quilty.

Legal and Social Issues Standing Committee

Ms Garrett, Dr Kieu, Ms Lovell, Ms Maxwell, Mr Ondarchie, Ms Patten, Dr Ratnam and Ms Vaghela.
Participating members: Dr Bach, Mr Barton, Ms Bath, Ms Crozier, Dr Cumming, Mr Erdogan, Mr Grimley, Mr Limbrick, Mr O'Donohue, Mr Quilty, Ms Shing, Mr Tarlamis and Ms Watt.

Privileges Committee

Mr Atkinson, Mr Bourman, Ms Crozier, Mr Grimley, Mr Leane, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing, Ms Symes and Ms Tierney.

Procedure Committee

The President, the Deputy President, Ms Crozier, Mr Davis, Mr Grimley, Dr Kieu, Ms Patten, Ms Pulford and Ms Symes.

Joint committees

Dispute Resolution Committee

Council: Mr Bourman, Ms Crozier, Mr Davis, Ms Symes and Ms Tierney.
Assembly: Ms Allan, Ms Hennessy, Mr Merlino, Mr Pakula, Mr R Smith, Mr Walsh and Mr Wells.

Electoral Matters Committee

Council: Mr Erdogan, Mrs McArthur, Mr Meddick, Mr Melhem, Ms Lovell, Mr Quilty and Mr Tarlamis.
Assembly: Mr Guy, Ms Hall and Dr Read.

House Committee

Council: The President (*ex officio*), Mr Bourman, Mr Davis, Mr Leane, Ms Lovell and Ms Stitt.
Assembly: The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr T Bull, Ms Crugnale, Ms Edwards, Mr Fregon, Ms Sandell and Ms Staley.

Integrity and Oversight Committee

Council: Mr Grimley and Ms Shing.
Assembly: Mr Halse, Mr McGhie, Mr Rowswell, Mr Taylor and Mr Wells.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Council: Mr Limbrick and Ms Taylor.
Assembly: Ms Blandthorn, Mr Hibbins, Mr Maas, Mr D O'Brien, Ms Richards, Mr Richardson, Mr Riordan and Ms Vallence.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

Council: Mr Gepp, Mrs McArthur, Ms Patten, Ms Terpstra and Ms Watt.
Assembly: Mr Burgess and Ms Connolly.

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: Mr P Lochert

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

President

The Hon. N ELASMAR (from 18 June 2020)

The Hon. SL LEANE (to 18 June 2020)

Deputy President

The Hon. WA LOVELL

Acting Presidents

Mr Bourman, Mr Gepp, Mr Melhem and Ms Patten

Leader of the Government

The Hon. J SYMES

Deputy Leader of the Government

The Hon. GA TIERNEY

Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. DM DAVIS

Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Ms G CROZIER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Maxwell, Ms Tania Maree	Northern Victoria	DHJP
Bach, Dr Matthew ¹	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Meddick, Mr Andy	Western Victoria	AJP
Barton, Mr Rodney Brian	Eastern Metropolitan	TMP	Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Bath, Ms Melina Gaye	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mikakos, Ms Jenny ⁵	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Cumming, Dr Catherine Rebecca	Western Metropolitan	Ind	Patten, Ms Fiona Heather	Northern Metropolitan	FPRP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip ²	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Quilty, Mr Timothy	Northern Victoria	LDP
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Erdogan, Mr Enver ³	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas Christopher	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Eastern Victoria	ALP	Somyurek, Mr Adem ⁶	South Eastern Metropolitan	Ind
Gepp, Mr Mark	Northern Victoria	ALP	Stitt, Ms Ingrid	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Grimley, Mr Stuart James	Western Victoria	DHJP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Hayes, Mr Clifford	Southern Metropolitan	SAP	Tarlamis, Mr Lee ⁷	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne ⁴	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Taylor, Ms Nina	Southern Metropolitan	ALP
Kieu, Dr Tien Dung	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Terpstra, Ms Sonja	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Limbrick, Mr David	South Eastern Metropolitan	LDP	Vaghela, Ms Kaushaliya Virjibhai	Western Metropolitan	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Watt, Ms Sheena ⁸	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
McArthur, Mrs Beverley	Western Victoria	LP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling ⁹	Eastern Metropolitan	LP

¹ Appointed 5 March 2020

² Resigned 17 June 2019

³ Appointed 15 August 2019

⁴ Resigned 23 March 2020

⁵ Resigned 26 September 2020

⁶ ALP until 15 June 2020

⁷ Appointed 23 April 2020

⁸ Appointed 13 October 2020

⁹ Resigned 28 February 2020

Party abbreviations

AJP—Animal Justice Party; ALP—Labor Party; DHJP—Derryn Hinch's Justice Party;

FPRP—Fiona Patten's Reason Party; Greens—Australian Greens; Ind—Independent;

LDP—Liberal Democratic Party; LP—Liberal Party; Nats—The Nationals;

SAP—Sustainable Australia Party; SFFP—Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; TMP—Transport Matters Party

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lot of time with people that are homeless and having conversations. It is a complete myth if people think homelessness knows class. People from all backgrounds, all walks of life—there will be something in their life that can trigger them to become homeless. As I said, I really look forward to reading this report. I commend everyone involved in this work, and I agree that in the society we live in we need to work together to get to a point where people do not feel that is their last option.

Motion agreed to.

Papers

PAPERS

Tabled by Acting Clerk:

Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust—Minister's report of receipt of the 2019–20 report.

Production of documents

COVID-19

The Acting Clerk: I lay on the table a letter from the Attorney-General dated 3 March 2021 in response to the resolution of the Council of 18 February 2021 relating to auditing of hotels used in the hotel quarantine program. The letter states that there was insufficient time to respond and that a final response to the order will be provided as soon as possible.

Business of the house

NOTICES

Notices of motion given.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria—Leader of the Government, Attorney-General, Minister for Resources) (10:26): I move:

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 16 March.

Motion agreed to.

Members statements

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs McARTHUR (Western Victoria) (10:27): March the eighth is International Women's Day, and while I do not normally subscribe to identity labels for the sake of it, I do want to take the opportunity to pay tribute to those women who are suffering breast cancer and in particular a dear young friend of mine who was diagnosed with this dreadful disease while breastfeeding her youngest son. Of course men also get breast cancer—by the way, as far as I know, nobody gets chest cancer. I am proud to be a woman and mother who breastfed my daughter and twin sons. My husband, by the way, was occasionally on hand but of little help. Those boys, one of whom of course is no longer with us, and my darling daughter grew up to be wonderful young men and women. James is now a proud dad himself. I am also proud to be a grandmother, wife and supporter of men and women living whatever life and identity they choose. So I celebrate International Women's Day, and I look forward to celebrating International Men's Day. I am of course presuming there is such an occasion.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (10:28): I am rising today to speak ahead of International Women's Day, and I am doing so with a rage, a dismay, a frustration and a grief that I think is being channelled not just around Australia but around the world. We continue to see the exploitation of women, the violence, the discrimination, the harassment, the rape and the murder of women, every day. We

continue to see exploitation and trafficking. We continue to see systems that refuse to acknowledge the complaints that are made by women and instead enable men to close ranks around each other to persist with a status quo that undermines us.

I stand here today on behalf of the women who suffer gender inequality, wage discrepancies, poverty in old age, a lack of access to care and services and a lack of recognition of our intersectionality. I stand here today to continue to represent women and to argue for change that encompasses our diversity, that does not seek to exclude us from decision-making and that in fact does not seek to diminish our contributions or to make a mockery of the complaints which we consistently raise around our treatment at the hands of those who would much prefer to maintain a status quo.

I stand here with my colleagues, not just from the government benches but around the chamber, to say that it is not good enough that violence persists, that inequality persists and that systems, language and decision-making persist which enable and perpetuate discrimination against women. That must change. International Women's Day must do more work, and we must continue to follow this through every single day of every single year.

ANIMAL SHELTERS

Mr MEDDICK (Western Victoria) (10:30): Last year we passed in this place a motion to reform the animal pound and shelter systems in Victoria. I was very pleased to be asked to lead a task force to work out the details of how best we can improve the welfare and survival of cats and dogs requiring rehoming. As well as animals being released from research, this task force will consider the new regulatory frameworks required, processes, systems and reporting methods. Despite the difficulties and delays in the state due to the Christmas holidays, the situation with the current pandemic and a change of ministers, I am pleased to update the house that this effort is progressing apace. The terms of reference of the task force are being finalised now, and I look forward to consulting widely with stakeholders, including shelters, rehoming groups, vets, charities, local governments, research bodies and others. I look forward to the work of the task force commencing and will keep the house updated on its progress.

RENEE MCLENNAN

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (10:31): On the eve of International Women's Day on 8 March, I pay tribute to our women around the nation. In particular I would like to pay tribute to a strong, dynamic constituent of mine—a fighter, a champion and a lovely person to boot. Eight years ago Renee McLennan was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer—an extremely serious prognosis requiring aggressive and sustained treatment. While Renee had tremendous support from family and friends, ultimately she had her own personal battle to contend with. Renee focused on the elements that she could control: mental positivity, keeping fit and eating well. Exercise and cycling became one of her drivers for wellness—a success story we can celebrate. In 2018 Renee completed the Tour de Cure in Far North Queensland, raising funds for cancer research. This week she just completed the VIC Discovery Tour. Together with other participants, collectively they raised half a million dollars for the Olivia Newton-John Foundation. With the support of many donors, Renee smashed her own personal target again. An inspiration for others, Renee is also caringly remembering and honouring those who have not won this terrible battle. With International Women's Day just around the corner, let us all applaud women and reflect on our personal challenges, our successes and our battles to come.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms WATT (Northern Metropolitan) (10:33): Last week I had the privilege of attending the launch of the hospital outreach post-suicidal engagement, or HOPE, service at the Royal Melbourne Hospital with the Minister for Mental Health. The HOPE service provides vital follow-up and after-care services for those who attend hospital emergency departments in crisis or following a suicide attempt. The service provides a 12-week program of holistic care to support individuals and their personal support networks. Over the next 12 months the HOPE program will grow from 12 to 21 service

locations, fulfilling a key interim report recommendation from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. The HOPE program's focus on home and community-based recovery generates positive outcomes in a high-risk group of individuals, with 96 per cent of respondents surveyed in an independent evaluation of the program feeling extremely or very supported through the program.

As we heard on Tuesday in the final report of the royal commission, too many vulnerable Victorians fall through the cracks of the mental health system. Any Victorian falling through the cracks is too many. We need to overhaul our mental health system to meet the needs of those in crisis and to prevent them from reaching crisis point. That is why the Andrews Labor government committed to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and committed to implementing every single recommendation from its final report. The recommendations include that mental health emergencies should be responded to by ambulances rather than by police. We have got to get it right.

NORTHERN VICTORIA REGION VOLUNTEERS

Ms MAXWELL (Northern Victoria) (10:34): I rise today to speak to the fact that north-east Victoria is still recovering from the 2019–20 bushfires which devastated many farming properties and is still having an impact on these farming communities' livelihoods. Volunteer organisations, who are still working tirelessly to help with the recovery, are the unsung heroes here. I recently became aware of a member of the Benalla Rotary group, Mr Alan Stafford, who led a team of Rotarians into the Corryong region over the previous winter months, working on refencing many properties impacted by these horrendous bushfires. Alan has been volunteering for many years, including after the 2009 Black Saturday fires and the 2013 fires around Boho and Warrenbayne.

Thousands of dollars have been raised by local Benalla volunteer groups and individuals to purchase equipment, including a large tractor equipped with a post rammer, an ATV, four fencing-equipped trailers and a troop carrier to transport the volunteers to and from these fencing jobs. I would like to thank the Benalla volunteer groups, Rotary, the Uniting Church and the CWA for all the work they have done in helping farmers in the Corryong area get back on their feet and also all the volunteer organisations across my electorate for the wonderful work they do time and time again.

SHEPPARTON EDUCATION PLAN

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (10:36): On 4 February I raised with the Minister for Education the failure of the Andrews Labor government to meet designated time lines for the completion of the *Shepparton Education Plan*. The plan was originally divided into four stages—early years, primary, secondary and tertiary education—but later became three stages with the combining of early years and primary education together. Planning for the secondary stage has resulted in the closing of four public secondary schools and the creation of the largest single-campus secondary school in Australia. The other two stages of the plan are still incomplete, with the minister failing to meet his original time line for completion of the early childhood and primary stage of December 2018 and completion of the tertiary stage of June 2019.

When I raised this with the minister in 2019 he created new time lines for the completion of both stages, stating the early childhood and primary stage would be completed and published in early 2020 and the tertiary stage completed and published in mid-2020. This new time line was again missed and my contribution on 4 February again sought an explanation as to why. The minister's excuse was that consultations were impacted by COVID-19 during 2020, and he completely ignored the fact that one of the reports was due before COVID-19 even hit Victoria and the other one should have been largely completed. The minister then put forward a third time line, being early childhood and primary plans released by the end of March 2021 and the tertiary stage plan released by the end of May 2021. The people of Greater Shepparton are anxious about the future of education and what it will look like for their children and grandchildren, and they deserve answers from this minister.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (10:38): 8 March marks two major events which are dear to my heart, International Women's Day and Labour Day. I have not got time in 90 seconds to talk about these two events, but International Women's Day is a day to celebrate the important achievements of women and focus on the goal of accelerating gender equality or parity. This year the theme is Choose to Challenge. This means calling out gender bias and inequality.

I just want to acknowledge Grace Tame for her elevation as Australian of the Year and for her struggle and her advocacy on behalf of women around Australia. Reading her story—it is amazing what she was able to achieve. I want to talk about her great speech—I think it was yesterday. It gave encouragement to women around the country to come out and speak out. Ms Shing spoke very eloquently about the issue we face. As a man I call on all men: it is time—2021. Let us stop this. Women and men are equal. Not because I have got a daughter or a wife does it mean that I actually have to care. No. They are human like us. We do not exist without being a man and a woman. We are equal, and let us make sure we stay that way. Let us call it out. Enough is enough.

FAMILY DRUG SUPPORT AUSTRALIA

Mr LIMBRICK (South Eastern Metropolitan) (10:40): Last Friday I had the honour of being asked to speak at Family Drug Support Day. Family Drug Support is an organisation that helps the people who are often forgotten when people have substance dependence issues, and that is the families themselves. These are the groups of people that often wonder why this is happening to them. I was honoured to hear stories from everyday people who thought of drug issues as something that happens to someone else or is something that they read about in a newspaper, but it happened to their families. They did not know what to do, and organisations like Family Drug Support were able to provide them with some advice and support on how to keep that vital connection to the family member that has these issues with drug dependence. One of the things I heard that I would like to continue on is that one of the barriers to users of drugs is getting a criminal record. I would like in the future this Parliament to work towards families, health professionals and community groups helping people with drug issues rather than police, the court system and the prisons.

TROLLING

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (10:41): I would like to just make a few comments in relation to some of the commentary around the attacks on and trolling of MPs. Whilst we are recognising International Women's Day, which needs to be recognised, I pay tribute to all those women who have gone before me who have led in so many ways. They need to be celebrated and all those issues that members have spoken out about. But I am fortunate that I have had the support of both men and women to get me to this position, for which I am very grateful. I am also very grateful for the support that I have received in relation to the trolling, the abuse and the vile and disgraceful sexist language from anonymous letters and security issues from Victoria Police, who have been particularly supportive in protecting my security.

I want to actually just mention that it is not just one side of politics or any side of politics that is subject to vicious trolling. When my office is being targeted by Trades Hall, when I am being targeted by Trades Hall on Twitter and when I am calling out on Twitter for Trades Hall to stop, they do, which I am grateful for. But with the abuse that I am getting in my office from people and the emails that my staff are getting, I suggest that the Minister for Health, the Premier and members of the Labor Party call out those people too, because that trolling and abuse needs to stop. The anonymous comments that are coming out on this Twitter platform and other social media need to stop. Respect needs to happen and all of this needs to be addressed.

VICTORIAN HEART HOSPITAL

Mr TARLAMIS (South Eastern Metropolitan) (10:43): The Andrews Labor government is getting on with the construction of Australia's first-ever specialist heart hospital. The Victorian Heart Hospital

will be Australia's first state-of-the-art specialist cardiac hospital, providing innovative, holistic and patient-centred care as well as world-leading research and education. Located on the Monash University Clayton campus, the hospital will integrate clinical cardiology services, research and education to create a centre of excellence, raising the profile of cardiovascular research, treatment and training and enabling patients with heart disease to access world-class cardiac care and groundbreaking research all under the one roof. It will bring together Monash Health and Monash University, both leaders in the field of cardiac research, treatment and education, as well as building upon the achievements of Monash Heart, which is now the largest provider of cardiac care in Victoria.

Currently cardiovascular disease is the biggest killer in Australia, accounting for around 30 per cent of all deaths, with recent statistics showing one Australian dies every 12 minutes from cardiovascular disease. When opened, the hospital will have capacity for up to 206 beds to provide up to 2150 cardiac surgeries, 13 500 cardiac laboratory procedures and 108 000 consultations each year. It will play an important role in training our future heart specialists and nursing and allied health professionals. Construction is on track, with the hospital expected to open its doors in 2022. Ninety per cent of the construction materials have been sourced from local suppliers, and more than 1700 construction jobs have been created. Once completed, it will employ more than 850 people across clinical care and research and will be just one of the projects the Labor government has delivered or will deliver as part of its unprecedented \$7 billion health infrastructure build program.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Dr CUMMING (Western Metropolitan) (10:44): Today I dedicate my members statement to my beautiful daughters, Violet and Zara. Today is my daughter Zara's 18th birthday.

8 March is International Women's Day, and it is a day to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their communities. The world has made unprecedented advances, but no country has actually achieved gender equality. International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. In over 20 countries, including China, Russia and Vietnam, it is actually a public holiday. In some countries it is customary for men to give women in their lives—friends, mothers, wives, girlfriends, daughters, colleagues—flowers and a small gift. In some countries it is also observed as an equivalent to Mother's Day, where children give presents to their mothers and grandmothers. In Russia the day has lost all political context through time, becoming simply a day to honour women and feminine beauty. Let us make International Women's Day count for women and girls everywhere. I hope that we remember those that went before us and their fight for our rights and that we celebrate the personal achievements of all women in our lives.

SOUTH YARRA TRAIN STATION

Ms TAYLOR (Southern Metropolitan) (10:46): I would like to say that I am very pleased we are upgrading South Yarra station, certainly one of the busiest stations that we have around, and we are doing this while we prepare for the Metro Tunnel. In March I did pop down there—I popped down there a few times because I love to see works unfold.

Ms Shing: You're a regular.

Ms TAYLOR: I am a regular, exactly. Night works are taking place on stage 2 of this very important upgrade: works to finish the canopy, including installing new lighting and timber panels—I have seen some of those timber panels and they are looking pretty fly, let me tell you; finishing and opening the new booking office and staff amenities area—I can say it is well underway; completing refurbishment works inside the concourse area, including restoring the floor and ceiling; and removing the hoarding at the existing station entrance—the hoarding was still up when I looked at the weekend—allowing a wider entrance to open it, and because it is so busy there, this is a good reason indeed to be able to widen that entrance and allow people to be able to exit and enter in a comfortable manner. There are also tram stop service investigation works. In early March we will continue minor

investigations to inform our design and construction methodology for the tram stop upgrade in 2021. I am really celebrating that. The whole upgrade is really, really important. The tram stop upgrade—I don't know, it just really excites me, because of course we know how important it is to improve accessibility for everyone. So really modernising that tram stop is going to be brilliant. And let me tell you, it is the Labor government delivering this—no-one else.

SANGAM FESTIVAL

Dr KIEU (South Eastern Metropolitan) (10:48): The other day I had the opportunity to represent Minister Ros Spence, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, at the Dandenong Sangam 2021 festival, which celebrated South Asian performing arts. The Sangam at Dandenong Earth Matters Walking Experience was an immersive cultural experience which included performances at Dandenong's Drum Theatre, Harmony Square and Walker Street Gallery. I would like to extend my appreciation to Multicultural Arts Victoria, the City of Greater Dandenong and the event participants for truly spirited, energetic and inspiring performances. Dandenong's celebration of Sangam 2021 was a testament to Victoria's creativity, talent and vibrant multiculturalism.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Dr KIEU: On another matter, I was also able earlier this week to represent the minister to join the Federation of Chinese Associations to celebrate the international day for overseas students. Studying abroad bridges the geographical divide between countries. It is a unique learning experience which enriches not only students' knowledge but their sense and understanding of another's country, culture and history. This is why the Victorian government is so strongly committed to supporting our international students. I hope the Year of the Ox brings everyone good luck and prosperity, including students' studies and future. I am delighted to see life in Melbourne now safely and gradually returning to COVID normal.

SWAN HILL DISTRICT HEALTH

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (10:49): This morning I had the great pleasure to stand with the Minister for Health and make the announcement that the Andrews Labor government was committing \$18.7 million to the redevelopment of the Swan Hill District Health emergency department along with a further contribution from the federal government, bringing it to a total of some \$48 million for the redevelopment of this emergency department. This is a very, very welcome announcement, and I congratulate the hospital, the board and all of the staff on this announcement. They have been advocating for many years for improvements to the hospital, and this morning's is a very, very important announcement. It means that 145 new jobs will be created through the construction phase, which will commence in 2022 and run through until 2024. Most importantly, the Swan Hill district hospital has a very high rate per capita of emergency department presentations, and this funding will go towards the Victorian Labor government delivering a quality, world-class health facility for the people of the Swan Hill district area.

Business of the house

NOTICES OF MOTION

Ms TAYLOR (Southern Metropolitan) (10:51): I move:

That the consideration of notices of motion, government business, 403 to 447, be postponed until later this day.

Motion agreed to.