

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

Book 1

Tuesday, 23 December 2014

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable ALEX CHERNOV, AC, QC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

The ministry

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Employment	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Industry and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. L. D' Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports.	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation	The Hon. J. F. Garrett, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Training and Skills	The Hon. S. R. Herbert, MLC
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister for Industrial Relations	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Families and Children, and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Minister for Police and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. W. M. Noonan, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. F. Richardson, MP
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. A. Somyurek, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

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

Speaker:

The Hon. TELMO LANGUILLER

Deputy Speaker:

Mr D. A. NARDELLA

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. D. M. ANDREWS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party:

The Hon. J. A. MERLINO

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. J. GUY

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. D. J. HODGETT

Leader of The Nationals:

The Hon. P. L. WALSH

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Ms S. RYAN

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

Council — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. Young

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	McGuire, Mr Frank	Broadmeadows	ALP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	McLeish, Ms Lucinda Gaye	Eildon	LP
Angus, Mr Neil Andrew Warwick	Forest Hill	LP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
Battin, Mr Bradley William	Gembrook	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn	Polwarth	LP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent	South-West Coast	LP
Blandthorn, Ms Elizabeth Anne	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Brooks, Mr Colin William	Bundoora	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Bull, Mr Joshua Michael	Sunbury	ALP	Noonan, Mr Wade Matthew	Williamstown	ALP
Bull, Mr Timothy Owen	Gippsland East	Nats	Northe, Mr Russell John	Morwell	Nats
Burgess, Mr Neale Ronald	Hastings	LP	O'Brien, Mr Michael Anthony	Malvern	LP
Carbines, Mr Anthony Richard	Ivanhoe	ALP	Pakula, Mr Martin Philip	Keysborough	ALP
Carroll, Mr Benjamin Alan	Niddrie	ALP	Pallas, Mr Timothy Hugh	Werribee	ALP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Paynter, Mr Brian Francis	Bass	LP
Couzens, Ms Christine Anne	Geelong	ALP	Pearson, Mr Daniel James	Essendon	ALP
Crisp, Mr Peter Laurence	Mildura	Nats	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Pesutto, Mr John	Hawthorn	LP
Dimopoulos, Mr Stephen	Oakleigh	ALP	Richardson, Mr Timothy Noel	Mordialloc	ALP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Richardson, Ms Fiona Catherine Alison	Northcote	ALP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Ryall, Ms Deanne Sharon	Ringwood	LP
Edbrooke, Mr Paul Andrew	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian	Gippsland South	Nats
Edwards, Ms Janice Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Ryan, Ms Stephanie Maureen	Euroa	Nats
Eren, Mr John Hamdi	Lara	ALP	Sandell, Ms Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Foley, Mr Martin Peter	Albert Park	ALP	Scott, Mr Robin David	Preston	ALP
Fyffe, Mrs Christine Anne	Evelyn	LP	Sheed, Ms Suzanna	Shepparton	Ind
Garrett, Ms Jane Furneaux	Brunswick	ALP	Smith, Mr Ryan	Warrandyte	LP
Gidley, Mr Michael Xavier Charles	Mount Waverley	LP	Smith, Mr Timothy Colin	Kew	LP
Graley, Ms Judith Ann	Narre Warren South	ALP	Southwick, Mr David James	Caulfield	LP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Spence, Ms Rosalind Louise	Yuroke	ALP
Guy, Mr Matthew Jason	Bulleen	LP	Staikos, Mr Nicholas	Bentleigh	ALP
Halfpenny, Ms Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Staley, Ms Louise Eileen	Ripon	LP
Hennessy, Ms Jill	Altona	ALP	Suleyman, Ms Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Hibbins, Mr Samuel Peter	Prahran	Greens	Thomas, Ms Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Hodgett, Mr David John	Croydon	LP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Buninyong	ALP	Thomson, Ms Marsha Rose	Footscray	ALP
Hutchins, Ms Natalie Maree Sykes	Sydenham	ALP	Tilley, Mr William John	Benambra	LP
Kairouz, Ms Marlene	Kororoit	ALP	Victoria, Ms Heidi	Bayswater	LP
Katos, Mr Andrew	South Barwon	LP	Wakeling, Mr Nicholas	Ferntree Gully	LP
Kealy, Ms Emma Jayne	Lowan	Nats	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Murray Plains	Nats
Kilkenny, Ms Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Ward, Ms Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Knight, Ms Sharon Patricia	Wendouree	ALP	Watt, Mr Graham Travis	Burwood	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Tarneit	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Rowville	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clarinda	ALP	Williams, Ms Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
McCurdy, Mr Timothy Logan	Ovens Valley	Nats	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; Greens — The Greens;
Ind — Independent; LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals.

Joint committees

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Battin, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson and Ms Ward. (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kealy, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto. (*Council*): Mr Dalla-Riva.

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Tuesday, 23 December 2014

**OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY
COMMISSION**

Proceedings commenced at 10.04 a.m. by the Clerk reading the Governor's proclamation convening Parliament.

The Commissioner, the Honourable Justice Christopher Maxwell, entered chamber and was conducted to chair by the Serjeant-at-Arms.

Commission authorising commissioners to open Parliament read by the Clerk.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Commission appointing the Honourable Justice Christopher Maxwell to administer oath or affirmation of allegiance to members of the Legislative Assembly read by the Clerk.

The Clerk announced receipt of return of writ issued by the Governor for election of 88 members to serve for electoral districts set out below and endorsed to show election of following members:

District	Member
Albert Park	Martin Foley
Altona	Jill Hennessy
Bass	Brian Paynter
Bayswater	Heidi Victoria
Bellarine	Lisa Neville
Benambra	Bill Tilley
Bendigo East	Jacinta Allan
Bendigo West	Maree Edwards
Bentleigh	Nick Staikos
Box Hill	Robert Clark
Brighton	Louise Asher
Broadmeadows	Frank McGuire
Brunswick	Jane Garrett
Bulleen	Matthew Guy
Bundoora	Colin Brooks
Buninyong	Geoff Howard
Burwood	Graham Watt
Carrum	Sonya Kilkenny
Caulfield	David Southwick
Clarinda	Hong Lim
Cranbourne	Jude Perera
Croydon	David Hodgett
Dandenong	Gabrielle Williams
Eildon	Cindy McLeish

District	Member
Eltham	Vicki Ward
Essendon	Danny Pearson
Euroa	Steph Ryan
Evelyn	Christine Fyffe
Ferntree Gully	Nick Wakeling
Footscray	Marsha Thomson
Forest Hill	Neil Angus
Frankston	Paul Edbrooke
Geelong	Christine Couzens
Gembrook	Brad Battin
Gippsland East	Tim Bull
Gippsland South	Peter Ryan
Hastings	Neale Burgess
Hawthorn	John Pesutto
Ivanhoe	Anthony Carbines
Kew	Tim Smith
Keysborough	Martin Pakula
Kororoit	Marlene Kairouz
Lara	John Eren
Lowan	Emma Kealy
Macedon	Mary-Anne Thomas
Malvern	Michael O'Brien
Melbourne	Ellen Sandell
Melton	Don Nardella
Mildura	Peter Crisp
Mill Park	Lily D'Ambrosio
Monbulk	James Merlino
Mordialloc	Tim Richardson
Mornington	David Morris
Morwell	Russell Northe
Mount Waverley	Michael Gidley
Mulgrave	Daniel Andrews
Murray Plains	Peter Walsh
Narracan	Gary Blackwood
Narre Warren North	Luke Donnellan
Narre Warren South	Judith Graley
Nepean	Martin Dixon
Niddrie	Ben Carroll
Northcote	Fiona Richardson
Oakleigh	Steve Dimopoulos
Ovens Valley	Tim McCurdy
Pascoe Vale	Lizzie Blandthorn
Polwarth	Terry Mulder
Prahran	Sam Hibbins
Preston	Robin Scott
Richmond	Richard Wynne
Ringwood	Dee Ryall
Ripon	Louise Staley
Rowville	Kim Wells

District	Member
Sandringham	Murray Thompson
Shepparton	Suzanna Sheed
South Barwon	Andrew Katos
South-West Coast	Denis Napthine
St Albans	Natalie Suleyman
Sunbury	Josh Bull
Sydenham	Natalie Hutchins
Tarneit	Telmo Languiller
Thomastown	Bronwyn Halfpenny
Warrandyte	Ryan Smith
Wendouree	Sharon Knight
Werribee	Tim Pallas
Williamstown	Wade Noonan
Yan Yean	Danielle Green
Yuroke	Ros Spence

Members, except the honourable member for Richmond, who was not present, took and subscribed oath or affirmation as required by law.

The Commissioner withdrew.

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Ms THOMSON (Footscray) — I propose the member for Tarneit, Telmo Languiller, as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. In so doing I would like to acknowledge that for the member for Tarneit the road to this place has been a difficult one, his having come from a country that did not know democracy — that fought for democracy. He comes to this place valuing that democracy and respecting our parliamentary procedures. He will make an excellent Speaker and will serve with great dignity. I move:

That the member for Tarneit take the chair of this house as Speaker.

Ms GREEN (Yan Yean) — I wholeheartedly second the motion.

Mr LANGUILLER (Tarneit) — I am honoured to accept the nomination.

Motion agreed to.

The Clerk declared the honourable member for Tarneit duly elected as Speaker.

Mr Languiller conducted to chair by proposer and seconder.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Telmo Languiller) — I express my sincere thanks to the house for the great honour conferred on me by electing me as Speaker.

Allow me to make a few remarks. I am honoured to accept this nomination, and I wish to pay tribute to this house, its members, the clerks, the parliamentary staff and especially the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I accept this nomination as a celebration of multiculturalism, bipartisanship and democracy. Allow me to say this in Spanish: hoy celebramos el multiculturalismo, bipartidismo y democracia.

My special gratitude goes to the people of Tarneit, who elected me to this Parliament. I express my immense gratitude to this great nation, its Indigenous peoples and the people of Victoria for giving a former asylum seeker and refugee — a migrant and a public housing kid — the honour of serving as Speaker of the 58th Parliament of Victoria.

I began as a young student and trade union activist at the age of 13 in Uruguay, and the loss of its democratic institutions in 1973 defined who I have been since. I believe that all persons, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability, income or political affiliation, should be equal before the law and indeed before our institutions.

I am passionate about this Parliament and about democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as I have experienced losing them. This is why in accepting the role of Speaker I pay tribute to the late Héctor Gutiérrez Ruiz, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies in 1973, who was later assassinated by the then Uruguayan dictatorship. I acknowledge the legacies of President Salvador Allende of Chile and Senator Zelmar Michelini of Uruguay, who were also assassinated because of their commitments to their parliaments, democracy and human rights. I pay tribute to the late Gough Whitlam, who as Prime Minister gave me and my family a safe haven, shelter, employment and, most importantly, education. The Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme first taught me English in my early 20s and then allowed me to become the first in my family to graduate from university. I quote Nelson Mandela:

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

Finally, I thank my wife, Constantina; my children, Natasha, Sebastian, Liam and Simon; my extended family and friends; the Australian Labor Party; and Premier Daniel Andrews. Special gratitude to my mother and father, without whom I would never have survived the tumultuous political journey that began when I was 13. Thank you.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — In English tradition it was the Speaker's role to defend the independence of

the Parliament from the instincts of a tyrant. Of course this was fraught with considerable occupational hazard, so the newly elected Speaker had to be dragged to the chair. We have mimicked that ceremony today, but I say to every honourable member of this house that we will never have to drag this Speaker to defend our democratic values, no matter how dangerous the terrain might be.

In 1973 Juan María Bordaberry shut down the Uruguayan parliament and, with martial ferocity, assumed his decade of undemocratic rule. In the uprising that followed, our Speaker — then a teenager active in the underground movement — was harangued by the secret police and shot. His life was at risk. He sought asylum, joining the great Australian family as a political refugee and moving into the Midway Migrant Hostel in Maribyrnong. He did not speak a word of English. Twenty-five years later he became the first Uruguayan-born person elected to a Parliament outside Uruguay. In his inaugural speech he said:

I salute the Australian people, the Latin American solidarity movement and particularly the fighters for democracy on the continent of Artigas and Bolivar.

But he said it in his mother tongue, inscribing the Spanish language in *Hansard* for the first time.

The Speaker has served families in the western suburbs as a member of Parliament since 1999. He has served two Labor governments and the people of Victoria as a parliamentary secretary. Today he serves our Parliament as Speaker, and I cannot think of anyone to whom I would rather entrust the defence of this institution. We may talk about the struggle for freedom and fairness, but he has lived it, and every time he tells his story it makes ours so much stronger.

In his remarks the Speaker expressed his gratitude to former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. I want to quote a note written by Dr Giovanni Andreoni to his mother back in Italy. It was penned in 1974, the same time the Languillers fled to Australia, and it says:

Mother, I have decided to become an Australian citizen. Time flees, and I don't want to miss the chance of participating in the rebirth of this vast and beautiful land.

A huge man stood up in Parliament, his name is Gough Whitlam, and behind him there is an unruly mob of dreamers and reformers. Down with assimilation — they shout — let us accept and respect each other for what we are, let's build the new Australia together.

Thank you, Speaker, for your service to our state. Thank you for helping us build that new Australia. Thank you for telling your story and in so doing helping us to tell ours. I am not confident that I can do

justice to the great Spanish language. That disclaimer provided, I say to you, Speaker: Señor Speaker, felicitaciones.

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Felicitaciones, Señor Speaker, and from Ukrainian (greeting extended in Ukrainian). Congratulations to you, Speaker, on your appointment as the Presiding Officer of this magnificent chamber. Your story is one of many Victorians. That you were born on the other side of the world, chose Australia as a place where you wanted to live, raised your family and indeed became a part of this society is something we should be proud of. It is a story, as I said, of many Victorians and of many people in this Parliament — a story in which you found you could build a new life in peace, in freedom and of course with democracy.

Whether our families came to this country 40 000 years ago; came during the gold rush of the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s; came post World War II, as did many members of my family and many others; or came recently, this is a story that is endearing and one that typifies Victoria. To be that boy from Uruguay, born, I understand, in 1957, seven years after Uruguay last won the World Cup — there may be another one in the future, when they play Australia — is a great story and a great symbol representing what this country offers to those who work, who contribute and who put in.

This is a magnificent Parliament. It is steeped in history. As we look around this wonderful building and this wonderful chamber, we can see the gold from the gold rush that so many Victorians, who were new to Victoria at that time, toiled to unearth. Whether they came with the first Chinese who were here in 1818, who at that stage made up one in six of our population, or whether they came with the first South American migrants in the early 20th century, it is an amazing symbol to reflect the fact that people came from the other side of the world, founded their lives in Australia, and more particularly in Victoria, went on to be elected representatives of whatever party and indeed rose to be presiding officers of this magnificent chamber.

In closing, Speaker, I will say, and no doubt you will agree, that the things that unite Australians will always be infinitely stronger than anything or anyone that seeks to divide us, and your appointment as a symbol of multiculturalism is one we are all very respectful and proud of. On behalf of the coalition parties, I congratulate you on your appointment as Speaker for the Parliament ahead.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I propose the member for Melton, Don Nardella, as Deputy Speaker, and I move:

That the member for Melton be appointed Deputy Speaker of this house.

The member for Melton has served this Parliament for 22 years, and he has served it across two chambers. He has seen governments come and governments go. He brings to this position a vast wealth of experience and knowledge and a proud respect for our democratic institution. I am absolutely confident he will serve in the role of Deputy Speaker with great distinction and honour. He is a powerful and strong advocate for his electorate to the west of Melbourne extending into regional areas. He will bring that passion and experience to the role of Deputy Speaker, and I am very pleased to nominate him for this role.

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — I second the motion.

The SPEAKER — Order! Does the member for Melton accept the nomination?

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — Yes, I do.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker declared the honourable member for Melton duly elected as Deputy Speaker.

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I have to inform the house that I have already ascertained that the Governor will be pleased to receive the Speaker and the President only in the library of Parliament House today at 11.45 a.m.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 2(8), relating to the presentation of the Speaker to the Governor, and in particular I draw your attention to the provision that other members may accompany the Speaker to the presentation. The Premier in his announcement to the house confirmed what had been foreshadowed — that is, there was a proposal that this provision of the standing orders be dispensed with.

While in a sense it is not a major matter, it is a reflection of the fact that the presentation of the Speaker to the Governor is a matter for the Parliament, not for the executive government, and it is fitting that members from across the house have the opportunity to join with you, Speaker, in being presented to the Governor. I do not suggest that every member will want to take up that opportunity, but it seems fitting that those new

members and senior members from all sides of the house who wish to may accompany you to be presented to the Governor. I think it would be unfortunate if, in this early stage after the fine and appropriate words that were said about this institution and about your election, there were any suggestion that that should be dispensed with.

The SPEAKER — Order! I accept the advice of the member. If members wish to accompany us, they will be welcome.

Sitting suspended 10.52 a.m. until 12.08 p.m.

The SPEAKER resumed the chair and read the prayer.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER TO GOVERNOR

The SPEAKER — Order! I wish to advise that today I presented myself to the Governor as the choice of this Assembly and that he was pleased to address me in the following terms:

Speaker,

I have pleasure in congratulating you on your election to the high and important office of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The able manner in which you have discharged the duties you have undertaken during your parliamentary career is recognised by the members of the Legislative Assembly who in their wisdom have selected you as their Speaker.

I have confidence that you will fulfil the duties of this distinguished office and hold fast to its traditions and customs.

Alex Chernov
Governor of Victoria

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

The Usher of the Black Rod brought a message from the Governor desiring the attendance of honourable members in the Legislative Council chamber.

Members, led by the Speaker, proceeded to the Legislative Council chamber.

Sitting suspended 12.15 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER OATH OR AFFIRMATION TO MEMBERS

The SPEAKER announced receipt from the Governor of commission authorising him to

administer prescribed oath or affirmation of allegiance to any member of the Legislative Assembly who has not already taken and subscribed the same since his or her election to the Legislative Assembly.

MINISTRY

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I wish to inform the house of the responsibilities that will be undertaken by ministers in this Parliament. In the Legislative Assembly, I am responsible for the role of Premier. The honourable member for Monbulk is the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Education. He will answer on behalf of the Minister for Training and Skills in the other place. The honourable member for Werribee is the Treasurer. The honourable member for Bendigo East is the Minister for Public Transport and the Minister for Employment. She will answer for the Special Minister of State, the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade in the other place.

The honourable member for Mill Park is the Minister for Industry and the Minister for Energy and Resources. The honourable member for Narre Warren North is the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the Minister for Ports. The honourable member for Lara is the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Minister for Sport and the Minister for Veterans. The honourable member for Albert Park is the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, the Minister for Mental Health, the Minister for Equality and the Minister for Creative Industries.

The honourable member for Brunswick is the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. The honourable member for Altona is the Minister for Health and the Minister for Ambulance Services. The honourable member for Sydenham is the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Minister for Industrial Relations. The honourable member for Bellarine is the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. The honourable member for Williamstown is the Minister for Police and the Minister for Corrections.

The honourable member for Keysborough is the Attorney-General and the Minister for Racing. The honourable member for Northcote is the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. The honourable member for Preston is the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. The honourable member for Richmond is the

Minister for Planning. The member for Kororoit is the cabinet secretary. The member for Yuroke is the Government Whip. The member for Sunbury is the secretary to the parliamentary Labor Party.

In the Legislative Council, the Honourable Gavin Jennings is the Leader of the Government and the Special Minister of State; the Minister for Public Transport will answer questions on behalf of the minister in the Legislative Assembly. The Honourable Jaala Pulford is the Deputy Leader of the Government, the Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Regional Development; the Minister for Public Transport will answer questions on behalf of the minister in this place. The Honourable Steve Herbert is the Minister for Training and Skills; the Minister for Education will answer questions on behalf of the minister in this place.

The Honourable Jenny Mikakos is the Minister for Families and Children, and the Minister for Youth Affairs; the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing will answer questions on behalf of the minister in this chamber. The Honourable Adem Somyurek is the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade; the Minister for Public Transport will answer questions on behalf of the minister in this chamber. Cesar Melhem is the Government Whip in the Legislative Council. I wish to make available to the house a document outlining ministerial responsibilities and the ministers in this chamber who will be representing ministers from the Legislative Council.

Further to those arrangements I advise the house that the member for Bundoora is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier. The member for Narre Warren South is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier. Mr Daniel Mulino is the Parliamentary Secretary for Treasury and Finance. The member for Ivanhoe is the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment. The member for Niddrie is the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice. The member for Yan Yean is the Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, Major Events and Regional Victoria. The member for Wendouree is the Parliamentary Secretary for Human Services. Mr Shaun Leane is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Special Minister of State and the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport. The member for Clarinda is the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Asia Engagement. The member for Broadmeadows is the Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research. The member for Macedon is the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, and the member for Dandenong is the Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers.

Finally, I advise the Speaker and all honourable members that in the absence of the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Finance will answer all questions on his behalf.

SHADOW MINISTRY

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — I am pleased to inform the house of the responsibilities and portfolio allocations for the coalition in this house and in the Legislative Council. I will have responsibility as leader of the coalition and Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. The honourable member for Murray Plains is the deputy leader of the coalition, the shadow Minister for Agriculture and the shadow minister for water. The member for Croydon is the Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party, the shadow Minister for Public Transport and the shadow Minister for Ports.

The member for Euroa is the Deputy Leader of The Nationals and the shadow minister for training, skills and apprenticeships. She is also the shadow minister for young Victorians. The honourable member for Malvern is the shadow Treasurer. The member for Gembrook is the shadow minister for environment and shadow Minister for Emergency Services. The honourable member for Gippsland East is the shadow minister for disability, the shadow minister for senior Victorians, the shadow Minister for Mental Health, the shadow minister for housing and the shadow Minister for Racing.

The member for Hastings is the shadow minister for small and medium enterprises. The honourable member for Box Hill is the shadow Minister for Industrial Relations and the manager of opposition business. The member for Mornington is the shadow Minister for Finance. The honourable member for Morwell is the shadow minister for consumer affairs and the shadow minister for liquor and gaming regulation. The member for Hawthorn is the shadow Attorney-General. The honourable member for Warrandyte is the shadow minister for roads and infrastructure, and the shadow Minister for Industry. The member for Caulfield is the shadow minister for innovation, the shadow Minister for Energy and Resources, and the shadow minister for renewables.

The honourable member for Bayswater is the shadow Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the shadow minister for arts and culture, and the shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The honourable member for Ferntree Gully is the shadow Minister for Education.

In the Legislative Council, I can announce that the Honourable Mary Wooldridge, MLC, is the leader of

the coalition in the Legislative Council and the shadow Minister for Health. The Honourable Damian Drum, MLC, is the Leader of The Nationals in the Legislative Council, the shadow Minister for Regional Development, the shadow Minister for Veterans and the shadow Minister for Sport. The Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips, MLC, is the deputy leader of the coalition and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the Legislative Council. He is also the shadow Special Minister of State and the shadow assistant treasurer.

The Honourable David Davis is shadow Minister for Planning, shadow Minister for Local Government and shadow Minister for Equality. The Honourable Edward O'Donohue is shadow Minister for Police, shadow minister for community safety and shadow Minister for Corrections. Craig Ondarchie is shadow minister for investment and jobs and shadow minister for trade. Inga Peulich is shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs and shadow minister for scrutiny of government. Georgie Crozier, MLC, is shadow Minister for Families and Children, shadow Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, shadow Minister for Women and secretary to shadow cabinet.

I can also inform the house that the member for South Barwon is the Liberal Party Whip in the Legislative Assembly and the member for Forest Hill will be the Secretary of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. I announce also that the Honourable Wendy Lovell is the Liberal Party Whip in the Legislative Council.

THE NATIONALS LEADERSHIP

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — I add my congratulations to you, Speaker, on the role you will be undertaking over the next four years. I look forward to working with you and making sure that over that time you do not blot my copybook of never having been thrown out of the chamber.

I inform the house that I have the honour of having been elected the Leader of The Nationals and that the member for Euroa has the honour of having been elected the Deputy Leader of The Nationals. The member for Mildura will be The Nationals Whip and the member for Ovens Valley will be the party secretary.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling for questions, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the Honourable Richard Marles, MP, the federal member for Corio; the Honourable Senator Stephen Conroy; the Honourable Theo

Theophanous, a former member for Jika Jika Province and Northern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council; Jean McLean, a former member for Melbourne West Province in the Council; the Honourable Mark Dreyfus, MP, the federal member for Isaacs; and Bob Smith, a former President of the Legislative Council and a former member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling the Leader of the Opposition, I welcome him to the people's house, where governments are elected. I am sure that the Leader of the Opposition will blend into the culture of this very important house, away from the safety and comfort of the Legislative Council.

Election commitments

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — Yes, Speaker, it is a sweet-tempered and tolerant chamber, I am sure.

My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier now release all departmental red books so that, in his words, all Victorians can have confidence in the delivery of each of his election commitments — yes or no?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the leader of the coalition or the opposition, whichever it is, for his question. Every Victorian can have complete confidence that each and every one of the commitments made by this government will be honoured in full, as is outlined in a positive plan for our state's future.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, the Premier was asked a very straightforward question: will he release the departmental advice, the red books, yes or no? All we are looking for is one word.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, I think it is appropriate that the Premier be allowed to answer the question, that he be allowed to provide — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Points of order will be heard in silence.

Ms Allan — It is appropriate also, obviously, that I be allowed to raise a point of order. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition does not understand the forms of this house; I can understand that. The Premier was clearly responding to the question. He should be allowed to continue to do so without interruption from the opposition.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Points of order will be heard in silence on both sides.

Mr ANDREWS — I am very pleased to continue, making it very clear to the honourable member who asked the question that every single Victorian can be completely certain that this strong, stable, majority Labor government, elected because of a positive plan for our state's future, will deliver on each and every element of that plan in full over the next four years.

Royal Commission into Family Violence

Ms KNIGHT (Wendouree) — My question is to the Premier.

Mr Clark — On a point of order, Speaker, I draw your attention to standing order 103, which indicates, among other things, that the call will normally alternate between speakers on each side of the house. I also draw your attention to the fact that the incoming government committed that it would end Dorothy Dixers and what it refers to as the stage-managed practice whereby ministers brief — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I can understand that the opposition may wish to silence the now government, and I can also understand that the now government may wish to silence the opposition, but I cannot understand nor will I tolerate that both government and opposition members wish to silence the Chair. I ask the house to come to order.

Mr Clark — I submit to you, Speaker, that in those circumstances you should depart from the normal practice of alternating the call between speakers on either side of the house and allow the next call to this side of the house in accordance with the incoming government's commitments.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, I can assure the member for Box Hill that we have every intention — —

Mr Guy interjected.

Ms Allan — We appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition is a bit impatient.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition has blended into the culture of this chamber, but I do ask him to remain silent when a point of order is raised.

Ms Allan — The member for Box Hill has been here for a very long time. He knows that the appropriate way to change the practices of this house is by putting into place sessional orders. The appropriate time for that will be immediately after question time, when I will be delighted to move sessional orders that will give full effect to the election commitments that we have made. I look forward to full support from the opposition for the sessional orders that we will bring forward in a short while, as is allowed for by the house, at the earliest possible opportunity. We will be reforming the practices of this house, and the member for Box Hill knows full well that the earliest opportunity to do so will be immediately after question time.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have heard enough on the point of order. I call the member for Wendouree.

Ms KNIGHT — My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier advise the house what action the government is taking to combat the scourge of family violence?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the member for Wendouree for her question and for her commitment throughout her working life towards protecting the vulnerable, many of whom were victims of family violence in her local community. Family violence is the single greatest law and order challenge in our community today. The time has come for us to take real action and to not settle for a broken system and to not settle for a system that neither punishes the guilty nor protects the vulnerable and innocent. We must all do more, and we must never settle for a system that is failing so many women and their children every hour of every day in every part of our great state.

That is why some months ago I committed a Labor government, if Labor was given the great honour of forming government, to establishing Australia's first royal commission into family violence, involving a full review of our legal system and our custodial system, the resources applied to Victoria Police and the resources and supports provided to the sector which advocates for women and their children and protects them when they are at their most vulnerable. It will be a full and frank examination of a broken system that is failing our community each and every day.

We have wasted no time in getting on with delivering this — Australia's first royal commission on family violence. I am very pleased to announce that in the budget update, which will be presented to the house shortly, \$40 million has been allocated towards running this Australian first — a royal commission on family

violence. Terms of reference will be released in January, and the work of the commission will begin in February.

Can I also with great pride report to you, Speaker, to the house and to all Victorians that Justice Marcia Neave, AO, will lead the royal commission. Justice Neave is a judge of the Court of Appeal and has been since 2006. She is a proven reformer, somebody with a track record that is well known and well understood right across both the legal community and the broader Victorian community. She is a first-rate jurist and a first-rate reformer. She is somebody who will do this job so well in the interests of fighting crime, saving lives and making our community much, much safer. Her background as a reformer and inaugural chair of the Victorian Law Reform Commission is well known, and of course her work on the court is well known also.

Justice Neave will be assisted by two deputy commissioners. Firstly, Patricia Faulkner, AO, someone whose knowledge of the public sector and service delivery is without peer, has graciously agreed to provide that service for the duration of the royal commission. There will be a second assistant commissioner. Tony Nicholson, the executive director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, is again someone who is well known for a working life of support and advocacy for people who are often the most vulnerable in our community.

Make no mistake; we are wasting no time in delivering on our commitment. This is the no. 1 crisis in law and order in our state. It is the biggest issue. Women and children should be at their safest in their homes, but instead so many are at their most vulnerable. I know, and this government understands, that more of the same policy will mean more of the same tragedy. That is why this royal commission is so important. The reforms it drives will save lives.

Questions interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! I wish to acknowledge the presence in the gallery also of a former senator, Mehmet Tillem. Welcome.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Questions resumed.

Election commitments

Mr GUY (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. Does the government stand

by its pre-election promise that, apart from CPI indexation, there will be no increase in taxes, fees, charges or levies and no increase in debt under this Labor government — yes or no?

Mr ANDREWS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I again make it very clear to him, to his colleagues, to all members of this house and to all Victorians that we intend to honour each and every one of the commitments we have made. That is why we have been elected. That is why we have been given, as the Parliamentary Labor Party, the greatest gift the Victorian community can give to any political party — that is, the responsibility to deliver in full on our positive and optimistic plan for a stronger and better Victoria. That is in stark contrast, of course, to the leadership — if you could call it that — that was so clearly rejected by the Victorian community on 29 November and that had been offered by those opposite.

Education

Ms GRALEY (Narre Warren South) — My question is to the Minister for Education. What action is the government taking to fulfil its election commitment to make Victoria the education state?

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — I thank the member for Narre Warren South for her question. I also congratulate both you, Speaker, on being elected Speaker, and the member for Narre Warren South on her appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Premier. The Andrews Labor government is committed to making Victoria the education state.

Our task is not simply to repair the damage caused by cuts to education of around \$1 billion, and it is not just to rebuild schools that have been left to rot or even to get TAFE off its knees. Our plan to make Victoria the education state is greater than simply a mopping-up exercise after four years of destruction. The task is great because it needs to be. Under the previous government youth unemployment affected as many as one in five young people in some parts of our state.

We will deliver a positive, ambitious agenda to return education to the centre of what we do in government. It is proudly a Labor agenda. We will address disadvantage, and we will support our schools and our teachers to excel. We will build new schools and upgrade existing ones, and we will ensure that our education services provide real pathways to further education, skills and work.

The responsibility of educating a child is beyond measure. We believe governments should be there to help with that responsibility, not to hinder it. That means supporting students who have difficulties at school, supporting parents who struggle with the costs of education and supporting our principals and teachers. The days of abandoning our educators are over. A government must do these things because all children deserve the opportunity to learn.

The previous government scrapped the education maintenance allowance, a payment designed to help our most vulnerable families meet the very basic costs of sending their kids to school — books, uniforms, camps and excursions. The Andrews Labor government will ensure that all students, no matter where they live, have the right and the ability to be involved in all aspects of school life. That is why it will deliver the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund. The fund will provide direct support for eligible students towards these costs. We will establish breakfast clubs in 500 schools, feeding 25 000 kids. We will deliver our Glasses for Kids program, with the State Schools Relief policy, and an affordable uniforms program, again with State Schools Relief. We are expanding its program to include books, stationery and software.

Over the last four years investment in school buildings was cut in half. Schools that are desperately needed in growth corridors were simply not built. This is the legacy of those opposite. Their woeful underinvestment in schools ensured that not one new school will be built in 2016. We have very different priorities. As part of our initial government school capital program we will deliver \$510 million. We will build 11 new schools. For example, Bannockburn will finally get a secondary school in its community. In addition, we have committed \$100 million to removing asbestos from our schools.

I am also excited about our rollout of new tech schools. We understand the importance of education pathways, and we will fund — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MERLINO — The wreckers of TAFE are talking.

We will fund the construction and operation of 10 new tech colleges across the state, including in Yarra Ranges. Importantly we will provide \$120 million to our Catholic and independent schools for capital upgrades.

Our TAFE system has been decimated. As an immediate step to save TAFE we will implement a

\$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund to repair the damage and get our TAFEs back on their feet. Under Labor, campuses like Swinburne Lilydale will be reopened. I have been waiting a long time to get onto this side of the chamber to say that. Swinburne Lilydale will reopen. Those opposite closed it, and we will reopen it. These are just some of our education priorities.

Victoria has a strong and vibrant education system across all sectors, but a government that values education is critical, now more than ever before. We had four years of a government that did not value and did not protect our education system. Our commitments are a pathway to lifting Victoria's educational performance and delivering fairness, equity and opportunity. Working together — not against, but together — with our teachers, our principals, our parents and our students we will make Victoria the education state.

East–west link

Mr O'BRIEN (Malvern) — My question is to the Treasurer.

Mr Merlino interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Deputy Premier!

Mr O'BRIEN — It is very exciting. He was not used to hearing questions to the Treasurer during the last two years.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Government members!

Mr O'BRIEN — My question is to the Treasurer. Before the election both the Treasurer and the Premier claimed that the east–west link contract was not worth the paper it was written on and that no compensation is payable for ripping it up. Does the Treasurer stand by that claim — yes or no?

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for Malvern for his question, but what audacity we are seeing here today. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Guy — On a point of order, Speaker, to quote the member for Bendigo East from the previous Parliament, question time is not a time to attack the opposition; it is about the government answering questions. It is a one-word answer, yes or no, and the Treasurer needs to answer the question with just one word — yes or no.

Ms Allan — On the point of order, Speaker, I am delighted that the Leader of the Opposition has been spending his time reviewing what we did in the former Parliament. But the Treasurer had been on his feet for barely 10 seconds, and with the cacophony of noise from those opposite it was impossible for him to get very much out by way of an answer. I encourage you to allow the Treasurer to continue answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I say to the Treasurer that question time is not an opportunity to attack the opposition or opposition policy.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Chair does not require advice from members of the government or the opposition.

Mr PALLAS — The question referred to the purported contracts the previous government entered into — purported. Might I say that perhaps the people of Victoria should receive a full illumination of what those opposite did, the fraud those opposite perpetuated upon the Victorian people.

Mr O'Brien — On a point of order, Speaker, the standing orders do not provide for the Treasurer to debate the question; they require him to answer the question. It is pretty simple. Does he stand by the claims made before the election — yes or no?

The SPEAKER — Order! The question related to contracts for the east–west link and whether the Treasurer stood by the commitments made. I cannot direct the Treasurer to answer in any particular way. The Treasurer is being relevant and will resume answering the question.

Mr PALLAS — When the previous government entered into these purported contracts it also indicated to the people of Victoria that there was a business case underpinning it. I have, and I seek leave to table, the 11 000 pages of so-called business case. I am sure those opposite would be more than happy to have that case tabled in this place.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS — I take it leave is granted. Is leave granted? Leave is not granted?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Is leave being sought? Is leave being granted?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer can make it available to members.

Mr PALLAS — In answer to the question about the contract, which of course Victorians will get to see in all its glory, together with the business case, which they have already seen, let me be very clear that we will not be lectured by those opposite about how to conduct the business of government, given that they botched it and put an albatross around Victoria's neck. They should hang their heads in shame.

Mr Hodgett — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is now debating the question. It was a very narrow question requiring a yes or no answer. I ask you to draw the minister back to answering the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer has concluded his answer.

Health and ambulance services

Ms THOMSON (Footscray) — My question is to the Minister for Health. The question I seek an answer to is: what action is the government taking to end the ambulance crisis and improve Victoria's health system?

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I thank the member for her question. She is a person with a very strong passion for better health and ambulance services, particularly in Melbourne's west, and I am very grateful for her question.

For four years our health system and our ambulance services were under relentless attack from the previous government. I am very pleased to advise the house that those times are over. As a new government we have very different priorities, and since taking office a bit over two weeks ago we have set about implementing a positive agenda and delivering on our election commitments.

On day one the Premier referred the work value case of Victorian paramedics to Fair Work Australia to ensure that paramedics can get an assessment of their value that is commensurate with their work. We respectfully sought the resignation of all members of the board of Ambulance Victoria. We have appointed an administrator to ensure that we can start to bring important cultural change to the ambulance services sector.

In another move that may have been surprising to the opposition, the new government did what it said it would do and released ambulance data — ambulance data that was hidden for four years by the previous

government. What did this data show? It showed that our ambulance services are in far worse shape than we ever expected. The response times are worse in every local government area in this state.

I am delighted to also advise the house that an Andrews Labor government has ended the war on paramedics and has come to an agreement with ambulance paramedics on their enterprise bargaining agreement. What this mob could not do in two and a half years, we managed to do in two weeks. We managed to do it in two weeks because we respect paramedics. We understand that these are people who save lives.

We did not take out full-page advertisements attacking, denigrating and declaring war on our paramedics. We sat down and respectfully worked through very important issues to ensure that Victoria has the best ambulance service in Australia. On top of that we are now setting up a process with Ambulance Victoria and paramedics to work through what we can do to improve response times. We know that response times are a very challenging issue after four years of what the previous government did. We are going to sit down and work out where we can save seconds, because seconds save lives. It will be a Labor government that does that.

On top of that we have appointed Dr Doug Travis, a former head of the Australian Medical Association. We know the former government promised to deliver 800 hospital beds, but those beds could never be found. We know we have significant capacity issues in our hospital system. Dr Doug Travis is conducting an audit of our hospital beds and our theatre capacity to ensure that we build better capacity in our health system.

This is after two and a half weeks of a new government. I must say that after four years of relentless attacks on our ambulance service, of data being hidden and of a war being declared on our paramedics we have much work to do. A Labor government will work to deliver better health outcomes collaboratively, fairly and with purpose.

East–west link

Mr O'BRIEN (Malvern) — My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer advise the house exactly how many Victorians will lose their jobs as a result of his government's decision to tear up the east–west link contracts?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — I thank the member for Malvern for his question. The issue of employment and job creation in this state is a serious one, and that is why

this government is in the business of moving quickly to introduce its Back to Work incentives in the first bill that comes before the Parliament. However, we will not be lectured by members of a government that destroyed jobs and took unemployment from 4.9 per cent to 6.8 per cent. That is their legacy to the people of Victoria.

Mr Guy interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr PALLAS — That job-destroying government has been replaced by a government that puts jobs at the heart and centre of everything it does. Those opposite should recognise — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Interjections from the Leader of the Opposition preclude the Chair from being able to hear the answer.

Mr PALLAS — This government has a very clear infrastructure strategy, which, I might say, the people of Victoria voted for. They voted for it. We put it to them, we sought a mandate and we got it, unlike those opposite, who were afraid of their signature project, who hid it from the people of Victoria and who hid it even from this Parliament. This is an opposition that when previously occupying the Treasury bench demonstrated — —

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, standing order 58(1)(a) calls for answers to be direct, factual and succinct. The answer that would be required would be a simple number. I call on the Treasurer to answer the question in accordance with the standing order. If the Treasurer were being direct, he would answer the question with a number. If he were being succinct, he would answer with a number instead of with the diatribe he is going on with.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. I call on the Treasurer to continue answering the question.

Mr PALLAS — If those opposite want a number, I will give them a number. When Labor was last in government — 252 000 jobs compared to the pathetic performance of those opposite, less — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr O'Brien — On a point of order, Speaker, my point relates to relevance. The Treasurer is now telling

us about the former Labor government — two governments ago. You would think that if he wanted to gloat about tearing up contracts, he would have the courage to come out and say what the consequences are just before Christmas. There are families being thrown out of work just before Christmas because of this government's action. All we want is for the government members to show some courage and to admit what they are doing.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer was being relevant. I call on the Treasurer to answer the question.

Mr Guy — What about the ruling?

The SPEAKER — Order! I rule the point of order out of order. I call the Treasurer.

Mr PALLAS — We are about delivering real infrastructure projects that will make a tangible difference to people's lives: ones that have gone through a serious business case, ones that have had a benefit-cost analysis and ones that we actually engage the Victorian people around — not the sort of nonsense that went on with the previous government when it talked about pretend jobs that have not actually happened. It was a pretend government, it was an opposition in waiting and it is where it should be.

East–west link

Ms HALFPENNY (Thomastown) — Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations.

My question is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the house on the details of the east–west link project?

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have not called the Treasurer yet. Answers will be heard in silence. I now call the Treasurer.

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) — Thank you, Speaker, and perhaps belatedly I should congratulate you on your election. I hope that that will give me a bit more flexibility in my response.

The east–west business case really demonstrates how those opposite do not get how to deliver infrastructure projects. They really do not get it. This was a project that had no viability. Not since Lyle Lanley sang his *Monorail Song* have we seen a more pathetic attempt at an infrastructure project.

The east–west project is a loss-making project. When you actually sit down and think it through, you realise that if you are only getting 45 cents back in the dollar, you are losing money. But do you know who ‘you’ is? It is the Victorian taxpayer who is losing money. When you are getting 45 cents in the dollar, what you have to do is hide it from the Victorian public. You have to hide it from your friends in Canberra because what would happen if they actually got to know how pathetic this project was?

That was part and parcel of the fraud perpetrated by those opposite. They were afraid of their signature project, and so much so that they conspired to hide the economic case from their friends in Canberra for fear that it would be used as ‘justification’ for not funding the project. That is how pathetic this project was.

But to understand how bad it was, let us look at that business case. When it revealed the \$2.1 billion funding gap, the then government had to look through ways that it could pay for it. What did it look at? It basically looked at funding every freeway by way of tolls in the inner city area so that people using the West Gate Freeway, using the West Gate Bridge and using the Eastern Freeway — this was going to be Tollmageddon from those opposite. But they were afraid to tell Victorians.

What do the contracts reveal? They reveal that there is \$7.8 billion in availability payments during the life of this arrangement — get this! — to pay for \$3.3 billion of private sector money. There is \$7.8 billion that the taxpayer has to pay for in lost availability charges. That is an opportunity cost that all Victorians lose. That comes out of education. That comes out of health. But when asked about it, the failed former Treasurer, the bloke who could not hold his job as long as the member for Box Hill could, said, ‘We’re going to pay for it out of surpluses’.

Surpluses are recurrent opportunities that can go into health. They can go into education. But no, they will not, because those opposite were much more intent on driving down service delivery, basically turning their backs on the services that Victorians depend upon, to fund their boondoggle of a project. This was a disaster for Victoria, and we escaped the bullet largely because the Victorian people had enough sense to know not to follow the way that those opposite were advocating.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS — Quite frankly at the last election, if you listened to those opposite, if you listened to all their advertising, it was about one thing. They said it was a

referendum on whether or not this road should proceed. The people of Victoria have spoken. They have spoken clearly and unambiguously. Those opposite should take their medicine and should hear the message from the people of Victoria.

Effectively what we had here was a project that was conspired by those opposite in darkness and hidden from the Victorian people. It was going to be an albatross around the necks of Victorian taxpayers for decades to come.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PALLAS — That is a demonstration of the efforts of those opposite to perpetuate a fraud and deceit upon the Victorian people. I am proud to be part of a government that will demonstrate that its projects can deliver jobs and economic growth, rather than simply the blind profession of faith those opposite advocated for.

Mr R. Smith — On a point of order, Speaker, it is shameful that the Treasurer is standing up here saying they are delivering jobs when Lend Lease has let go 250 people and Hyder Consulting and Parsons Brinckerhoff have let go 100 people.

Ms Allan — In responding to the point of order raised, Speaker, there has been repeated abuse from opposition members in the use of points of order. They are not conforming with — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Allan — At least I knew how to deliver a point of order. There is a way to deliver points of order, and I encourage the opposition — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Points of order will be heard in silence.

Ms Allan — I appreciate that it is terribly embarrassing for opposition members to not be able to articulate their points of order appropriately. The Treasurer was being entirely consistent with standing orders in responding to the question that was asked. The point of order raised by the member for Warrandyte should be roundly ignored.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Treasurer has concluded his answer.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Questions will be heard in silence.

Regional and rural employment

Mr WALSH (Murray Plains) — My question is to the Minister for Employment. How many of the 100 000 new jobs Labor has promised to deliver will be created in rural and regional Victoria in 2015?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Employment) — In answering the question, I join with my colleagues in congratulating you, Speaker, on your election to that role.

Speaker, I can tell you what we will not be doing as the Andrews government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Ms ALLAN — Do not anticipate the answer.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister is hardly into the question — a few seconds — and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will concede that and will hear the answer in silence.

Ms ALLAN — We will not be sitting on our hands and watching unemployment queues in regional Victoria grow and doing absolutely nothing about them. This government has been elected with an agenda to create jobs in regional Victoria. We have our regional jobs program, a \$200 million regional jobs plan that will help stimulate the economy in regional Victoria. It will support vital regional and rural industries.

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, the question was very simple as to how many jobs will be created in rural and regional Victoria in 2015. It is not about what the minister may or may not do; it is about how many jobs will be created. It is a very simple question, and we would like an answer to the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The question related to job losses and employment. The minister is being relevant and will continue answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — I was talking about our \$200 million Regional Jobs Fund. That fund will be able to support regional industries. In examples like SPC, where the Andrews opposition was a stronger supporter of SPC staying in Shepparton and had to embarrass the former government into providing support for SPC —

Ms Ryall — On a point of order, Speaker, the question was very specific on how many jobs would be created, and I ask, on a point of relevance, that you direct the minister back to the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do rule. I call on the minister to continue answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — I can understand that the opposition does not want to hear the answer because we have an agenda that is all about creating every single job we possibly can for regional Victoria. I do not want to put a limit on the number of jobs we want to create for regional and rural Victoria. We will not sit on our hands.

I know the member for Murray Plains is embarrassed when we talk about SPC because he actively opposed the former government doing anything or spending one cent on supporting SPC to stay in Shepparton. We will not be repeating — we will not want to see — instances such as existed where the former government did not have a regional jobs plan. It demolished Regional Development Victoria and stripped it of its economic role. It gutted TAFE — gutted the very institution that regional Victorians rely on to help give them the skills they need to get the jobs they want.

I tell the house now that we have a very big job ahead of us because unemployment rates today in regional Victoria are unacceptably high. They are worryingly high.

Mr Wakeling — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister was asked a very simple question. She asked about how many jobs will be created next year. If she does not know the answer, she should just tell the house that she simply does not know the answer to the question.

The SPEAKER — Order! The minister will come back to answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — Perhaps the embattled former minister for TAFE, who oversaw part of the demise of TAFE, did not hear me say that I do not want to limit the number of jobs we are going to create in regional Victoria. We want to create the maximum number of jobs we possibly can through a strong program that is backed by funding and by policies like our Back to Work program. As I was saying, we have a very big job to do, which is why I do not want to limit the efforts on this side of the house to an artificial number that the opposition is calling for.

The unemployment rate in Bendigo is 8 per cent. The unemployment rate in Geelong is 8.2 per cent. In

Shepparton it is 7.4 per cent. In Warrnambool and the south-west it is 6.7 per cent. These are levels of unemployment that we have not seen for over a decade. They are the legacy of an administration that did not have a regional jobs plan, that allowed unemployment queues in regional Victoria to grow, that sacked 600 people from the former Department of Environment and Primary Industries, and that sat on its hands while companies like SPC were begging for support. We resoundingly reject that approach.

We will be working hard each and every day to create every single job we possibly can for regional Victoria, and we will not be limited by the opposition in these efforts. We will push on and create more jobs for regional Victoria.

Public transport and employment

Mr HOWARD (Buninyong) — I too congratulate you, Speaker, on your election to the role of Speaker.

My question is to the Minister for Public Transport, who is also Minister for Employment. What action is the government taking to improve public transport, passenger services and to create jobs for all Victorians?

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I thank the member for Buninyong for his question. I am very pleased to advise the house that the Andrews Labor government has an exciting program of public transport infrastructure projects for this state. These are projects that we will see over time will boost services and improve services for passengers in Melbourne and across regional and rural Victoria. We have projects like removing the 50 most dangerous and congested level crossings that are locking up our streets and putting lives at risk.

There are projects like Melbourne Metro — the real Melbourne Metro — which will double the capacity of the city loop. We have the Mernda rail extension, which is a project that the member for Yan Yean has championed and which we will be delivering in government. We will also be purchasing —

Mr Watt — On a point of order, Speaker, standing order 58(1)(a) says that answers to questions must be direct, factual and succinct. The point I raise relates to the factual aspect of this. The answer is not factual when the Treasurer has already said that the Melbourne Metro rail link will not be able to go ahead. Therefore the answer is not factual in response to the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Burwood understands that I

cannot direct the minister to respond in any particular way. The minister should continue answering the question.

Ms ALLAN — I am delighted to inform the house that we will be purchasing 30 new metropolitan trains and 20 new V/Locity carriages to help boost capacity across the network. This is in stark contrast to the previous government, which dithered and dallied. It spent millions and millions on taxpayer-funded advertising but failed to get Melbourne and Victoria moving.

I can say that the Andrews Labor government will be wasting no time in pushing ahead on these key projects. We are already working to accelerate plans for our level crossing program and the Melbourne Metro project. Our investment in public transport is aimed at improving services for passengers, but we also want to use every single opportunity we can to create jobs. Every dollar spent on public transport infrastructure brings with it the chance to create jobs — jobs that Victorians desperately need after four years of seeing job queues grow longer and longer.

At the very same time that Victorians were losing their jobs, the former government cut Ballarat-based manufacturer Alstom from the opportunity to build new trains for this state. The Andrews Labor government rejects this approach. We will be buying more trains, and we want them to be built right here in Victoria. In making orders for new rolling stock, we will have local content requirements of a minimum of 50 per cent, meaning that Victorian rolling stock will be built locally. Removing the 50 most dangerous level crossings will also be an enormous jobs boost, as those level crossings are removed.

On top of that, the Andrews Labor government has a plan to get Victorians back to work. We will be supporting retrenched workers and unemployed young people, we will be using the expertise of the private sector and we will be establishing key funds, like the Future Industries Fund and the Regional Jobs Fund, to support job expansion right across Victoria. We are already very hard at work in delivering on these commitments to improve the public transport network. We are also taking each and every opportunity to create more jobs every single day for Victorians.

BACK TO WORK BILL 2014

Introduction and first reading

Mr PALLAS (Treasurer) introduced a bill for an act to establish a Back to Work scheme for the

purpose of providing relief to employers in respect of the costs associated with hiring certain unemployed or retrenched workers and to make consequential amendments to the Taxation Administration Act 1997 and for other purposes.

Read first time.

Leave refused for bill to be read second time immediately.

Ordered that second reading be made order of the day for next day.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING
REFORM AMENDMENT (FUNDING
OF NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS)
BILL 2014**

Introduction and first reading

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in a bill for an act to amend the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 to establish a transparent mechanism for state funding of non-government schools and for other purposes.

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — I ask the minister for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — This bill implements one of the key election commitments we made in the education space in regard to a recurrent funding commitment for non-government schools, with a minimum of 25 per cent for Catholic and independent schools. We will also be establishing an advisory council that will be made up of all three sectors of the education system in Victoria.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

Leave refused for bill to be read second time immediately.

Ordered that second reading be made order of the day for next day.

**WRONGS AMENDMENT (ASBESTOS
RELATED CLAIMS) BILL 2014**

Introduction and first reading

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I move:

That I have leave to bring in bill for an act to amend part VBA of the Wrongs Act 1958 and for other purposes.

Mr R. SMITH (Warrandyte) — I ask the Attorney-General for a brief explanation of the bill.

Mr PAKULA (Attorney-General) — I am happy to provide the shadow minister with a brief explanation of the bill. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that victims of asbestos-related disease do not have to jump through hoops to prove that they have a significant injury. That matter has been fixed prospectively by regulation, and the purpose of this bill is to fix retrospectively the situation for those asbestos victims who fell through the cracks between June and November this year.

Motion agreed to.

Read first time.

Leave refused for bill to be read second time immediately.

Ordered that second reading be made order of the day for next day.

STATUTE LAW REPEALS BILL 2014

Introduction and first reading

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) introduced a bill for an act to repeal certain spent acts.

Read first time.

Leave refused for bill to be read second time immediately.

Ordered that second reading be made order of the day for next day.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority — Report 2013–14

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 — Order under s 17D granting leases over Park Lake Reserve

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 — Documents under s 12H:

Poisons Code

Notice regarding amendment, commencement and availability of the Poisons Code

Parts of the Commonwealth standard that the Poisons Code incorporates by reference

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 — Report 2013–14 of the Education and Care Services

Ombudsman, National Education and Care Services Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners

Financial Management Act 1994:

Budget Update 2014–15 incorporating Quarterly Financial Report No 1

Report from the Acting Minister for Planning that he had received the Report 2013–14 of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission — Operation Fitzroy: An investigation into the conduct of former employees of the Department of Transport/Public Transport Victoria, Barry John Wells and Hoe Ghee (Albert) Ooi, and others — Ordered to be printed

Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984:

Notices under s 32(3)(a)(iii) in relation to:

Alcohol Interlock Guidelines (*Gazette S446, 18 December 2014*)

Statutory Rules 144 (*Gazette S398, 29 October 2014*), 165 (*Gazette S369, 16 October 2014*), 173 (*Gazette G44, 30 October 2014*)

Notices under s 32(4)(a)(iii) in relation to:

Waste Management Policy (Siting, Design and Management of Landfills) (*Gazette G43, 23 October 2014*)

Statutory Rules 166/2008, 37/2011 and 132/2012 (*Gazette G44, 30 October 2014*)

Major Sporting Events Act 2009 — Major Sporting Event Orders under s 22 (two documents)

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

Ararat — C25, C30

Ballarat — C160, C167, C168, C176, C180, C181, C190

Banyule — C94 Part 2

Bass Coast — C135, C145

Baw Baw — C104 Part 1, C108

Bayside — C133

Boroondara — C153, C240

Brimbank — C142, C158, C165

Campaspe — C98

Cardinia — C178, C197, C200, C202, C203, GC15

Casey — C185, C186, C187, C188, C193 Part 1, C201, GC15

Colac Otway — C77, C80

Darebin — C144, C146

East Gippsland — C93, C108, C120

Glenelg — C52 Part 1, C74

Glen Eira — C128, GC15

Golden Plains — C61, C65

Greater Bendigo — C160, C209, C211

Greater Dandenong — C149, C184, GC15

Greater Geelong — C199, C259, C266 Part 1, C267, C270, C282, C283, C288, C296, C299, C300, C303, C311, C314, C319, C322

Greater Shepparton — C174

Hume — C143, C154 Part 2, C164, C179, C181, GC21, GC22

Indigo — C56, C67

Kingston — C160, GC15

Knox — C114, C129, C130

Latrobe — C88

Macedon Ranges — C74, C97

Manningham — C95, C101, C102

Mansfield — C34

Maribymong — C138

Maroondah — C85

Melbourne — C179, C248, GC15

Melton — C122, GC22

Mitchell — C90, GC21, GC22

Moira — C80

Monash — GC15

Moonee Valley — C141

Mornington Peninsula — C176 Part 1, C180

Moyne — C54, C58

Murrindindi — C43 Part 1

Northern Grampians — C45

South Gippsland — C92, C93, C101

Stonnington — C153, C220, GC15

Strathbogie — C69

Surf Coast — C91

Victoria Planning Provisions — VC123

Wangaratta — C44, C58

- Warmambool — C88, C91
- Wellington — C72, C82, C89
- Whitehorse — C160, C200
- Whittlesea — C154, C184, C185, C193, GC21, GC22
- Wodonga — C97, C110, C112, C114, C115, C116, C117
- Wyndham — C174, C175, C176, C177, C188, C196, GC22
- Yarra — C177, GC15
- Yarra Ranges — C139
- Professional Standards Council — Report 2013–14 (two documents)
- Statutory Rules under the following Acts:
- Accident Towing Services Act 2007* — SR 175
- Administration and Probate Act 1958* — SR 208
- Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 1992* — SR 183
- Assisted Reproductive Treatment Act 2008* — SR 192
- Building Act 1993* — SRs 162, 173, 196, 197
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* — SR 160
- Confiscation Land Act 1997* — SR 187
- Commercial Arbitration Act 2011* — SR 205
- Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987* — SRs 185, 191
- Coroners Act 2008* — SRs 159, 202
- Country Fire Authority Act 1958* — SR 165
- County Court Act 1958* — SRs 157, 176, 177, 178
- Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* — SRs 193, 194, 195
- EastLink Project Act 2004* — SR 167
- Estate Agents Act 1980* — SR 189
- Financial Management Act 1994* — SR 161
- Gambling Regulation Act 2003* — SR 172
- Heritage Act 1995* — SR 174
- Magistrates' Court Act 1989* — SRs 158, 179, 180, 203
- Melbourne City Link Act 1995* — SR 168
- Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990* — SR 169
- Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968* — SR 166
- Planning and Environment Act 1987* — SR 163
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* — SR 184
- Road Safety Act 1986* — SRs 199, 200, 201
- Royal Botanic Gardens Act 1991* — SR 170
- Status of Children Act 1974* — SR 186
- Subdivision Act 1988* — SR 164
- Supreme Court Act 1986* — SRs 156, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209
- Tourist and Heritage Railways Act 2010* — SR 198
- Vexatious Proceedings Act 2014* — SRs 177, 182, 206
- Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998* — SRs 181, 182
- Water Industry Act 1994* — SR 171
- Wildlife Act 1975* — SR 190
- Wrongs Act 1958* — SR 188
- Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:*
- Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 135, 147, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209
- Documents under s 16B in relation to:
- Building Act 1993* — Amendment to the Determination that Specified Areas are Designated Bushfire Prone Areas
- City of Greater Geelong Act 1993* — Greater Geelong City Council — Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances — Alteration
- City of Melbourne Act 2001* — Melbourne City Council — Lord Mayoral, Deputy Lord Mayoral and Councillor Allowances — Alteration
- Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987* — Code of Practice for Timber Production 2014
- Domestic Animals Act 1994* — Code of practice for the operation of breeding and rearing businesses 2014
- Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* — Amending Order Flora and Fauna Guarantee (Taking, Trading In or Keeping of Listed Fish) No 1/2009
- Gambling Regulation Act 2003* — Ministerial Orders under s 3.4A.5(3) and s 3.4A.20K (two documents)
- Local Government Act 1989:*
- Mayoral and Councillor Allowances Adjustment

Senior Officer Remuneration Threshold Increase

Racing Act 1958:

Greyhound Racing Victoria — Rule Amendments

Notice of amendments to Australian Rules of Harness Racing

Notice of amendments to Australian Rules of Harness Racing, Australian Trotting Stud Book Regulations and Australian Handicapping Rules

Road Safety Act 1986 — Alcohol Interlock Guidelines

Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 — Driver Accreditation (Metropolitan Hire-Car) Amending Instrument

Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007 — Declaration of discount factor under s 19

Water Act 1989 — East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority By-law No 2014-1 Waterways Protection

Water Act 1989:

Abolition of Nullawarre Groundwater Supply Protection Area Order 2014

Abolition of Yangery Groundwater Supply Protection Area Order 2014.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Membership

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — By leave, I move:

That —

- (1) Mr Battin, Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Tim Richardson and Ms Ward be members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and
- (2) Mr Josh Bull, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dimopoulos, Ms Kealy, Ms Kilkenny and Mr Pesutto be members of the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee.

Motion agreed to.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Reference

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — By leave, I move:

That, under section 33 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, an inquiry into the CFA training college at Fiskville be referred to the Environment and Natural Resources Committee for consideration, inquiry and completion of an interim report no later than 30 June 2015 and a final report no later than 1 December 2015 and, in particular, the inquiry will include, but not be limited to the following —

- (1) a comprehensive historical study of pollution, contamination and unsafe activities at Fiskville between 1970 and the present day;
- (2) a study of the health impacts on employees, residents and visitors between 1970 and the present day;
- (3) a study of the role of past and present executive management at Fiskville;
- (4) an assessment of the feasibility of decontamination/rectification of the training site; and
- (5) recommendations as necessary to mitigate ongoing harm and to provide justice to victims and their families.

Motion agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until Tuesday, 10 February 2015, at 2.00 p.m.

I will just make a couple of brief comments on this matter. It is disappointing that the opposition blocked the government from moving immediately to the second-reading stages of the bills we introduced today. We wanted to do that to enable the community to see the details of the bills, and of course for the opposition to see them as well.

We are quite serious about getting back to work. The Premier has detailed a number of actions we have taken, and we wanted to move quickly to give legislative effect to some of our key election commitments, particularly around the Back to Work Bill 2014 and education. It is disappointing that the opposition blocked this attempt. I indicate to the opposition and the Victorian community that the bills that were prevented from being second read today, and

therefore provided to the public, will be placed on the Premier's website as exposure drafts before Christmas so the community and the opposition can see the detail of them. We should remember that we have Independent and Greens members of Parliament who would also like to see details of these bills. The Parliament is not all about the Liberal-Nationals coalition; it is a much broader place than that. We will be putting these bills on the Premier's website, and we will be expediting their passage when Parliament returns in February.

In considering the options before us, government members seriously considered — as people may be aware, we had a motion drafted — sitting tomorrow. We were very serious about that. However, we had three things to consider in sitting tomorrow, which is of course Christmas Eve. The first was the cost. Adding an extra, unscheduled sitting day would have cost the people of Victoria, across the Parliament and the government more broadly, at least \$250 000. We thought that was an unreasonable cost to bear simply because the opposition refused to allow us to progress four very straightforward bills that it was briefed on. Its members know broadly what these bills are about.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms ALLAN — Hang on, I have not finished yet! The second point that was important to consider — —

Mr Walsh — On a point of order, Speaker, on clarification, the honourable member said that opposition members were briefed on the bills, and then she said that we knew broadly what is in them because they relate to election commitments. I think there is a significant distinction between being briefed on a bill and reading a media release. The point I bring before the house is that opposition members were not briefed on those bills.

Ms ALLAN — I am happy to clarify that my intention was to indicate that opposition members were aware broadly of the content of the bills, and I am happy to acknowledge that. However, that provides no excuse for opposition members to block the details of the bills being made public. As I said, sitting tomorrow would have meant a cost of at least \$250 000 for the people of Victoria, which is unreasonable. I have been advised also that the staff of Parliament may possibly have had to cancel their Christmas lunch and miss out on their Christmas break-up, which would have been very unfair on the hardworking parliamentary staff who support us. Thirdly, an important matter to consider also is that many people — members of Parliament and their families and the staff of this place and people

associated with them — would have prearranged religious activities associated with Christmas already scheduled for tomorrow. It is entirely appropriate that we recognise the unique circumstances we are in.

As I said, we would not be in this situation if opposition members had behaved just a little bit more maturely and sensibly and recognised that second reading the bills would not mean the end of the world but would be a sensible and mature response in a one-day sitting of Parliament. It would have meant that opposition members had the information in their hands and that members of the public would have had that the information on the bills. Sadly those opposite chose a different path, which means that the government will be expediting those bills as soon as possible when Parliament resumes.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — This is yet another act of an arrogant and lazy government. The Leader of the House posed to opposition members two possible courses of action. The first was that we would give leave for the second-reading speeches of these bills to be given today. The second was that if that leave were not granted, the house would sit tomorrow. The view of opposition members was that of those two choices the more appropriate one was for the house to sit tomorrow. This was an option provided to us by the government. The government told opposition members that if we did not give leave for the second reading of these bills today, that was what would happen. We believed that of those two choices provided by the government the second was the more appropriate course. It is the more appropriate course because it provides for the conduct of the business of this Parliament in accordance with the standing orders of the Parliament.

The Leader of the House made a revealing slip of the tongue when she said that members of the opposition parties had been briefed on the bill. She is very familiar with that procedure because she and the now Deputy Premier sought to invoke it in the last Parliament. She will be very familiar with the fact that standing order 61 provides a process if the second reading is to be moved immediately after a bill has been read a first time. That procedure was not followed. For the Leader of the House to criticise the opposition in relation to what is happening is thus the height of arrogance.

What is clear is that members on the government side of the house are not prepared to do the hard work. They want the good feeling of saying, 'We are a dynamic government, we are getting on with things, we are bringing legislation to the Parliament', but when it comes to the crunch — when it comes to doing the

work and doing the work properly — they are not prepared to do it. They are not even prepared to carry through on the course of action they were proposing this morning. They can do as they see fit. They are the government. They can put this legislation up on the Premier's website. There will be an opportunity for consultation, and those bills can be debated when the Parliament resumes on basically the same time lines as could have applied had the Parliament resumed tomorrow.

In essence what we have seen is government members saying one thing and then doing another, believing that since they have been elected they can steamroll through this Parliament whatever they like in whatever way they like, revealing their arrogance. However, they are also revealing their laziness because when it comes to the crunch, they are putting their personal priorities and their previous commitments ahead of their responsibilities to this Parliament. They are prepared to turn their backs on the course of action that the Leader of the House was proposing to follow only this morning.

As I say, government members can set down the course of business as they like, but I put on the record that we as an opposition were prepared to come back here tomorrow to put the interests of the community of Victoria and the interests of the proper process and proper conduct of this Parliament ahead of expedient personal interests and to do things properly in a way that would be in accordance with all the fine sentiments that were expressed in this house earlier on in the day. That is not to be the course of action. Government members can do as they see fit, but the opposition was prepared to do things properly — prepared to do the hard work — in order to see this Parliament function as it should in the best interests of the community of Victoria.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-reply

The SPEAKER — Order! I report that today the house attended the Legislative Council chamber, where the Governor was pleased to make a speech to both houses of Parliament. I have obtained a copy for accuracy. The Clerk has emailed a copy to each member.

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — I move:

That the following address, in reply to the speech of the Governor to both houses of Parliament, be agreed to by the house:

Governor:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria assembled in Parliament, wish to express our loyalty to our Sovereign and to thank you for the speech which you have made to the Parliament.

It is an honour to be elected to represent the Mordialloc district in the Victorian Parliament. I wish to first acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I would like to thank the electors of Mordialloc for entrusting me to be their representative. I am determined to be a strong local advocate for my community.

I congratulate you, Speaker, on your election to the Legislative Assembly and congratulate also all members who have been elected to the 58th Parliament and wish them well for the coming years.

I am also deeply honoured to be a representative of the Australian Labor Party and part of an Andrews Labor government. Labor's slogan through the campaign was 'Putting people first', and it goes to the heart of what Labor stands for as a movement. Labor at its core underpins the notions of equality, fairness, compassion and establishing a fair go for all, regardless of their circumstances. These values have guided us as members of the oldest political party and will guide us through this parliamentary term and into the future.

Today is an opportunity for members to reflect on their pathway to this place and to consider how they want to contribute to this Parliament and help shape the policies that will further advance Victoria into the future. The starting point of such a proposition requires us to consider our values. My upbringing and my time serving as an adviser in state and federal Labor governments were pivotal to my reaching this point. I was at a young age when my mother and father separated. While this is nothing out of the ordinary these days, the determination of my mother to get on with things and give my sister and me the best opportunities were certainly part of a defining period in my life. Mum worked two jobs to support our family, and she was determined that we would never go without. It was her fierce determination to work hard and to encourage us to strive to do our best that was significant to me.

My mum, Deb, and my grandparents, Noel and Lorraine, along with my stepdad, Steve, who came into our lives as I was starting high school, always stressed the importance of doing well at school and creating your own opportunities. I was fortunate enough to complete high school and get a place at Deakin University. I became the first in my family to attend university, where I studied law and commerce. It was this sequence of events that defined my politics. It was these events and values that led me to the Australian Labor Party.

I believe every person has the right to a quality education regardless of their individual circumstances. Education is not only the pillar of equality and fairness, but an economic prosperity issue. It was former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam who said:

Poverty is a national waste as well as an individual waste. We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer — a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.

We still have a lot of work to do to ensure our education system is fairer and more equitable to help overcome social disadvantage. A vehicle for progression and change was the 2011 Gonski review, which provided the first substantial audit of the education system in almost 40 years. This comprehensive investigation identified that the current funding model for our schools was inequitable and that our numeracy and literacy skills were slipping when contrasted with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It is disappointing that the Gonski education funding reforms have only been agreed to up until the fourth year and that many of the principals, teachers and parents I have spoken to over the past 12 months have not seen the benefits of this investment. We must do better. This is not only a political imperative for any government that is serious about education but is also a social and economic imperative.

Another key element of the Gonski education funding reforms was the support for children with disabilities. As many would know, the Gonski funding reforms provided a base level funding for each student and apply additional loadings for students from low socio-economic backgrounds or for children with disabilities.

During my time working as an electorate officer at a state level I was amazed at the number of parents who were seeking additional government support for their children with autism. I believe that we need to do better for these kids and their families, who work so hard to ensure that their children have every opportunity to make the most of their education. It would be a great

shame if they were curtailed by the lack of implementation and delivery of additional resources. I am proud of the determination of the Premier and Deputy Premier to put education at the forefront of Labor's agenda, whether it is committing to better funding for our kinders and preschools, increasing capital works improvements for our primary and secondary schools or supporting children with disabilities.

My employment to date has had a significant impact on the person I am today. I have been fortunate enough to work as an electorate officer and adviser for Labor representatives over the years. However, prior to entering politics I used to be a labourer and a line marker, which involved painting lines on roads, and wording and stencilling in warehouses and on sporting courts. My time at Road Signs Australia, which is the company I worked for, was very positive. It gave me an understanding of the value of a good day's work and helped me to be more practical as a person. I remember my first day vividly, which could easily have been my last. When assisting a work colleague to change over the colours in a car park in Altona, I was asked to put the paint gun into the paint tin and open the gun to empty the paint out — it seems pretty complicated. Unfortunately all I heard was, 'put the gun in the paint', and before I knew it I had literally thrown the whole gun into 20 litres of paint, which ruined the \$2000 spray-painting gun. Needless to say I went on to be a little more practical than I was at that moment and I worked there for a number of years.

While I always had an interest in politics, it was through my work for the former member for Gembrook, Tammy Lobato, that I got an appreciation of how a local representative can positively impact on a community. I joined the team not long after the Black Saturday bushfires. While the communities within the electorate were not directly affected, residents were understandably anxious to know what steps all levels of government were taking to prevent future disasters. It was the process of convening community forums, establishing bushfire reference groups and ongoing community consultation that demonstrated to me the impact a local representative can have on their region. I felt the work undertaken within the community made a difference and I gained an appreciation of the importance of always consulting and engaging with the community.

Following my time as a state electorate officer, I had the opportunity to work for the federal member for Isaacs, Mark Dreyfus, in the local community and as an adviser during his time as Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency and

Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation. These were difficult policy areas, but my strongest lesson was the crucial role our environment plays in our community and our society. I consider that our natural environment should be viewed not only through the prism of conservation and preservation but also as an economic issue. There are significant opportunities in renewable energy and technological advancement when we consider ways to address a changing and volatile climate. I hope that in time we can strip away the partisan rhetoric that defines this debate and work together to find solutions to these problems.

Turning our attention to this Parliament, there is no doubt we are facing significant challenges in Victoria, but this time also brings opportunity. We are facing increased unemployment and a cessation of traditional industries. There is no disputing that we are facing a jobs crisis, with youth unemployment tracking at 15 per cent and 67 000 people losing their jobs over the past few years. We have seen the demise of the automotive industry, with the likes of Holden, Ford, Toyota ceasing operations in Australia in the coming years. In the automotive industry alone, the livelihoods of around 100 000 workers are at risk, which will undoubtedly have a flow-on effect in the Victorian economy. One can only imagine the stresses upon these families as they head into Christmas. I hope that Labor's Back to Work policy to encourage unemployed youth, the long-term unemployed and retrenched workers back into the workforce while working in conjunction with industry helps to address some of these issues.

I am eager to see how Victorian industry can position itself to benefit from potential growth areas in pharmaceuticals, new energy, food and fibre and international education while continuing to solidify further opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region. Now is an important time to be investing in skills and training of our people. Reducing funding for TAFE and university only stifles opportunity and deprives our community of hope and aspiration. It would be a great shame if the next innovation or medical breakthrough was shackled as the result of a student not being afforded a quality education. I am thrilled with Labor's policies on TAFE, with the \$320 million TAFE rescue fund and the restoration of community service obligations. I hope the federal government reflects on some of its changes to funding for universities and deregulation of fees, which will put tertiary education out of the reach of many Victorians.

Another key challenge over the coming years is the next major infrastructure project for Victoria. Long-term infrastructure planning must be underpinned by transparency and accountability. The appropriate

mechanisms are through Infrastructure Australia, which can only strengthen the community's confidence in what governments are seeking to achieve. We must seek to strip away the short-term politicking and look longer term to the needs of the state and what delivers the best outcomes and return on investment. After all, the city loop project spanned two decades — from its inception prior to 1971 to its completion with the opening of Flagstaff station in May 1985. This would be the equivalent of going through a Kennett, Bracks, Brumby, Baillieu, Napthine and now — hopefully long-term — Andrews government.

For a number of years the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel has been listed as the no. 1 priority for Victoria by the independent federal body Infrastructure Australia. With recent analysis suggesting a significant return on every dollar invested, we need to find ways to begin this transformational infrastructure project and continue to pressure the federal government to support these major projects for Victorians.

Now I would like to make a few remarks about the electorate I am honoured to represent. The Mordialloc electorate has significantly changed as a result of the recent redistribution, now incorporating half of the previous electorates of Mordialloc and Carrum. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions made to our community by the former member for Carrum, Donna Bauer, and the former member for Mordialloc, Lorraine Wreford, over the last four years. I would also like to pay tribute to the former Labor member for Carrum, Jenny Lindell, who served the community from 1999 through to 2010, and the former Labor member for Mordialloc, Janice Munt, who served the community from 2002 to 2010. Both are frequently referenced and reflected upon in our community for their contributions.

The electorate now incorporates the suburbs of Chelsea, Chelsea Heights, Edithvale, Aspendale, Aspendale Gardens, Bangholme, Mordialloc and Parkdale and parts of Mentone and Cheltenham. Within a 38-square-kilometre region there are over 60 000 people who call the Mordialloc electorate home. The name Mordialloc is said to be a combination of a couple of Indigenous words which could be interpreted as 'flat water', 'swampy water' or perhaps 'near the little sea.' The Mordialloc district takes in the Mordialloc Creek along with the Carrum Carrum Swamp, which were invaluable resources for the Bunurong people, who are the traditional owners of the land, delivering a consistent source of food across the plains.

Following early settlement in the early 1800s, Mordialloc became a fishing village, and it would go on to become a renowned spot for picnics right up until the train line came through in the 1880s. Despite the drastic transformation and development of the region, Mordialloc district is still renowned for its boating and fishing communities, and its suburbs, from Chelsea through to Mentone, maintain the electorate's family-friendly picnic appeal throughout the year.

The City of Kingston, which almost entirely encapsulates the Mordialloc electorate, will grow by approximately 11 per cent over the coming 15 years. We are seeing more first home buyers and renters coming into the region, with an increase in unit developments and apartment living, yet we are also a community with a median age older than the Victorian median age, illustrating the changing demographics of our region. We are not immune from the challenges of an ageing population, with increasing pressures upon public and community health services. We must continue to provide the necessary services and infrastructure to manage these challenges into the future, while maintaining the quality of community we all cherish.

During the past 12 months I, along with my team of volunteers, have met thousands of residents on their doorsteps, on shopping strips and while talking on phones. A striking consistency in our conversations, regardless of people's political thoughts and views, has been an appreciation for the region that we live in and the spirit of community which underpins what we do locally. This is evident when you see local residents supporting local emergency services, participating in their local school fetes or supporting vulnerable individuals through their community service groups. There is a rich sense of pride in our community. I would like to thank the residents of Mordialloc for sharing their thoughts, ideas and concerns with us over the past year. I am determined to continue to consult with as many people as I can over the next four years about what is most important to them and best reflects their needs and ambitions.

As every member here can attest, while we stand here as individuals, nothing would be possible without the support of our family, friends and volunteers. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of our hundreds of volunteers — and some of them have joined us here today. There are not enough hours in this day or the next to reflect on each of their wonderful personalities and the contributions they made to the campaign. Our campaign mantra was 'everyone plays a role', and whether it was doorknocking, phoning, letterboxing, street stalling or volunteering at train

stations, each and every one of them shares in this moment today. I hope I can repay their loyalty, trust and commitment by living up to the values of the Australian Labor Party and achieving what we put forward to our community.

I would like to thank Tammy Lobato and Mark Dreyfus for giving me the opportunity to work in their offices. I would like to acknowledge the support of Michael Donovan; Ben Davis; Anthony Byrne; Luke Donnellan, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety; Marlene Kairouz, the member for Kororoit; Robin Scott, the Minister for Finance; and Jacinta Collins.

I would particularly like to thank Lee Tarlamis, a former member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the upper house, and Adem Somyurek, a member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the upper house, as members representing our region. Lee and Adem have been a constant support, and I thank them for their time, patience, tutelage and guidance over the past 12 months. I am saddened that Lee will not be joining us in this parliament this term, but I look forward to continuing to work closely with him over the coming years.

Thank you to my field organiser, Megan Johnston, who worked tirelessly alongside our volunteers and ran the engine room of our grassroots campaign. I would like to acknowledge my campaign manager, Nick McLennan, who has dedicated every waking moment to the Mordialloc campaign throughout this year. I thank you for your expertise, friendship, leadership and dedication.

I thank my wonderful family for all their care and support. To my parents, Deb and Steve, who are here today, and to my wife Lauren's parents, Brian and Hazel, thank you for caring for and nurturing Lauren and me throughout our lives and during this busy and eventful year. We would not be in this position if it were not for all your unconditional love, guidance and support. I want to also thank my beautiful wife, Lauren, who is currently on her way back from England after visiting family. You are my inspiration and my best friend. I know that going through a campaign in our first year of marriage has been a strange idea of a honeymoon, but I look forward to the next chapter in our lives together. Finally, I once again thank the people of the Mordialloc electorate for trusting me to be your representative. I hope to repay the faith you have put in me over the coming years, and I look forward to working with you.

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — I am pleased to second the motion. In commencing my

address-in-reply, I wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to elders past and present. I also wish to congratulate the Speaker and Deputy Speaker on their election, our new ministers and shadow ministers, and all other newly elected members.

My presence in this chamber is the product of much hard work, not just by me but by a large number of others who worked tirelessly to ensure that a value set they hold dear has a voice in Parliament. It is an incredible honour to be charged with giving voice to an ideology and a set of values as important as those embodied by the Labor Party and the broader labour movement. It is an incredible honour to be one of so many who have stood in this place defending the rights of working people and unashamedly espoused, and at times demanded, equity, fairness and opportunity, particularly for the most marginalised in our community.

I have had a lot of support on this journey and a number of mentors, each of whom has left an indelible mark on me. For now I will start with those who most directly supported my recent political journey. They are Alan Griffin, the federal member for Bruce, and Lee Tarlamis, a former member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council. They have been my rocks, and I often refer to them as good cop and bad cop. Lee nurtures, and Alan tells it how it is but is always constructive. These two men have listened to me, guided and counselled me and demonstrated enormous confidence in my abilities even when I did not. I have grown so much as a consequence of their support.

I also owe great thanks to my parliamentary colleague, friend and mentor, Lily D'Ambrosio, the member for Mill Park. She is proof that politicians can be both tough and compassionate. I would also like to acknowledge my campaign manager and friend, Matt Broderick, who is always cool under pressure, and my broader support team, including Mat Hilakari, Pat Gibson and the inimitable Ray De Witt. I must also pay tribute to the incredible team of volunteers: over 150 at my last count. Over the course of the past year they have dedicated their time and energy to the Dandenong electorate campaign and to the election of an Andrews Labor government.

Perhaps most importantly I owe great thanks to the people of Dandenong, who are the true reason I am here today. Dandenong covers approximately 62 square kilometres in Melbourne's south-east and is home to 156 different nationalities. It is the most multicultural electorate in the state and the second-most multicultural

electorate in Australia. We are a proudly multicultural community, where diversity is not just tolerated, it is embraced. Dandenong's diversity is its best asset, and in the years ahead I would like to ensure that we do even more to make it Victoria's premier multicultural hub and a leader in multicultural cuisine, festivals and related tourism opportunities.

Dandenong is already home to some vibrant cultural hubs, including Little India, the Afghan Bazaar and the Dandenong Market, but we can make these even better, and we can do even more to showcase and celebrate our diversity. In some ways this has never been so important. The change of government federally has brought with it some worrying attempts to dismantle Australia's rich multicultural fabric — attempts to create needless divisions with an 'us' and 'them' approach.

Earlier this year the federal government sought to withdraw the protections afforded by the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. It essentially sought to condone behaviour that humiliated, offended or insulted on the basis of race. In my community, this move was met with great fear. When governments seek to make changes like the ones that were proposed, they are sending a message to the Australian public that it is okay to be racist, and those who may have thought racist thoughts begin to articulate them, those who might have articulated them start acting on them and so we see an escalation of unacceptable behaviour and the degradation of respect within our community.

I have never been spat on because of my race, nor have I been called names. My parents were not harassed when they dropped me off at school, and I have never been racially taunted or threatened. But when politicians start putting forward regressive measures like those recently pushed by the Abbott government, and One Nation before that, many in Dandenong do experience these things. I have heard their stories, and I will stand up for them always.

It is a source of great pride to me that in Victoria both sides of politics stood in opposition to the federal government's proposed changes. Both major parties reiterated their support for diversity and social inclusion. I was extremely proud when as then opposition leader Daniel Andrews promised to reinstate the section 18C protections in the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 at a state level should the Abbot government be successful in abolishing them. Thankfully it did not come to that.

In addition to its multiculturalism, Dandenong is characterised by its significant manufacturing industry.

We hear a lot about hardship in Geelong. I do not seek to downplay that in any way, but I want to point out that the loss of the automotive industry is hurting Dandenong too. Dandenong is home to a large number of car component manufacturers and related industries. We have lost some businesses already, taking with them hundreds of jobs. There are predictions that a further 3000 jobs will be lost in the Dandenong area over the next three years. That is 3000 families under stress — 3000 families who do not know what the future holds. These people deserve our attention. They need to know that we take their stress seriously and that we will work to help them. I promise to be an advocate for these people and the industries that support them.

I said earlier that I would not be here but for the people of Dandenong, and this is undeniably true. I would also not be standing in this chamber but for the profound influence of my family. I am the youngest of four girls. My father is an electronics technician, and for most of my life he and my mum have run a small business repairing household electrical goods. Both came from humble beginnings, and they worked incredibly hard to support our family and create for us opportunities they never had. Growing up, I remember a household that was very engaged in the issues of the day. I remember conversations about politics and current affairs, particularly among my mum's family.

When I think of Mum's clan, I think of the docks. My grandfather, Frank Mulholland — Poppa, as I called him — worked as a wharfie and then later a clerk on the waterfront. My nan's brother, Ted McCormick, was also on the waterfront and served as Victorian president of the Waterside Workers Federation. Many other family members, including my father, worked on the waterfront at different points in time too. I doubt any of them would imagine how important this history is to me. Ted McCormick died when I was a teenager. Although I remember him, I never had an adult conversation with him, but I am immensely proud to have come from stock who embraced the labour movement and its values, just as I have.

As for my Pop, I remember a thoroughly decent and honest man and a man of great integrity and generosity — all attributes I want to bring to political life. Nan and Pop did not have it easy. Nan was a primary carer to my Auntie Kathleen, who at five years old was struck down by encephalitis. She emerged from a prolonged coma with severe disabilities. Together, Nan and Pop had to deal with the heartache of this tragedy, as well as the daily grind of meeting Auntie Kate's needs and the needs of their six other children, including two children with special needs. I would have loved for Nan and Pop to be here to see this. Sadly, Pop

passed away many years ago, and Nan is in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's. Nan's sister, Auntie Pat, only just missed out, passing shortly before last year's federal election. I am not sure she would have coped with an Abbott government, but she would have loved to have seen this. There has not been a single day since my preselection when I have not thought of these people and quietly hoped that they would be proud, wherever they are.

Thankfully the McCormicks were still well represented on polling day. Auntie Margot McCormick has been an enthusiastic supporter, along with her son, Bryan, daughter, Jan, and grandchildren Georgia and Molly. Thanks also to Annette and Nic Campbell, fairy godmother Terri Ryan, Steph and Gerry Giampiccolo, and John and Jenny Tresidder, whose presence on the campaign trail kept alive the memory of those who could not be there.

This brings me to my parents. It is not easy watching someone you love put themselves up for public criticism. For this reason my mum and dad have watched and supported my journey with some trepidation. A parent's job is to nurture and protect, and it must be terrible to realise that there are times when you cannot do that. For my parents and big sisters, this is one of those times. In saying that, I am blessed to have my family by my side in all that I do. I owe a big thankyou to Mum and Dad and to my sisters, Kirrily, Angie and Marnie, and their partners. Their love makes me strong, and I hope I can make them proud.

While family history is influential, it is not definitive. In my case the lessons from previous generations have been reinforced by my own life experience. My core belief is simple: you can fairly judge a society by how it treats its most vulnerable, and you can reasonably judge our political leadership on this too. While studying at Monash University I was fortunate to spend some time in Belfast, researching motivational factors for individual involvement in political violence. After countless conversations and formal interviews with ex-prisoners, I was struck by the recurrence of an underlying theme: disillusionment with political leadership — indeed distrust of an entire state system — and a sense of abandonment. The consequences of a breakdown in trust between the people and the political system are profound; they can be tragic and long lasting. I walked away from this experience in Ireland feeling very grateful to be Australian and very interested in being a part of a positive culture in Australian politics. To this day I still feel very strongly that one of government's main objectives should be to be inclusive and accessible.

Years later, when I was working as a solicitor, I was again reminded of the importance of ensuring that our most vulnerable are not forgotten. As most young lawyers do, I regularly took on pro bono matters through the Homeless Persons Legal Clinic and the Public Interest Law Clearing House. For many sitting in shiny, comfortable offices overlooking the city, there is not often cause to think of how many people in our community are homeless and how many of them are pulled deeper into a cycle of desperation as they unavoidably intrude upon rules and regulations that were not necessarily designed with their circumstances in mind.

Every week we would work to take some of the pressure off by seeking clemency on public transport infringements and other penalties accumulated in the daily struggle to just survive. The sheer volume of these matters was alarming. Every matter may have been little more than basic legal work for the solicitors working on it, but when you scratched the surface it was far more than that. Every matter marked a person drowning. It is incumbent upon all of us to never accept as inevitable conditions like those. As political leaders we must work to eradicate the kind of hardship that sees people without food and sleeping rough.

During my time as a solicitor I also took on a position as director of a not-for-profit disability health organisation. Disability Sport and Recreation (DSR) provides and promotes sport and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities throughout Victoria. Involvement in physical activity not only greatly improves the mental and physical health outcomes for people with disability, it also facilitates greater independence and provides respite for carers.

My time with the organisation changed my perspective on the limitations of disability. I met people who have achieved more than many of us ever could — people like Sam Bramham, OAM, Shelley Chaplin and Leanne Del Toso, all Paralympians. They, like so many others, are not defined by their disability, and the organisational support they received from community groups like DSR empowered them to overcome barriers to participation in our society.

From a policy perspective, it is not only about the provision of care but more often about empowerment. In 2013 I participated in a DSR fundraiser that involved cycling around Fiji with a group of both disabled and able-bodied cyclists. When I think of that trip I think of Pete and Meran Hyden. Pete was rendered paraplegic in a car accident about 18 months prior to the trip. He and Meran were still adjusting to the substantial impact this accident had on their lives. Watching them both

complete the tour and having the opportunity to ride with them was one of the most powerful experiences of my life. Both were determined to prove to themselves that they could meet the challenge, and they were determined to take the journey — physically and emotionally — together. I remain very passionate about the disability health sector and about the role of community organisations and volunteers across the state. This, in addition to my family's experience of disability care, is why it is such an honour to have been appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Volunteers and Carers. It is a responsibility I take very seriously.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to my predecessor, the Honourable John Pandazopoulos. John's story is a great one, and a great one for Dandenong. A proud Doveton boy whose parents migrated to Australia from Greece in the 1950s, he was 29 years old when he was elected in 1992, and by that time had already accumulated several years of service to the community as a City of Berwick councillor and mayor. He served the people of Dandenong for 22 years as the local member and achieved great success as a minister in the Bracks government. There are plenty of reminders of John's legacy across the Dandenong electorate, including the aptly named John Pandazopoulos Hall in Doveton. There is also the state-of-the-art Dandenong High School campus, and the redevelopment of central Dandenong. I wish John all the best and hope he gets a much-needed break before embarking on his next adventure.

I am enormously proud to be the first woman to represent Dandenong, and being the first allows you to lay claim to all manner of things. On that basis I can lay claim to being the smartest, the tallest, the funniest and the best looking woman ever to represent Dandenong — until the next one, anyway. On that score I sincerely hope there is no shortage of women seeking to follow this path after I am gone. I would like to be the first of many strong women to take up this mantle in Dandenong. I thank the chamber for extending this courtesy to me.

Ms RYAN (Euroa) — I am honoured to stand in this place as the first member to represent the beautiful electorate of Euroa. I am mindful of the enormity of the task before me and grateful for the faith that the people of Euroa have placed in me. I would like to take this opportunity, Speaker, to congratulate you on your appointment and to wish you all the very best in your new role. I also wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of my electorate, which is home to the Taungurung people, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Euroa has a very bright future — great natural beauty, a growing reputation for world-class produce and abundant water and land. At 11 634 square kilometres, the electorate's land mass is about five times greater than that of the Australian Capital Territory. My challenge lies in ensuring my communities are as well represented as those of city electorates, despite the distances that lie between them. The region is characterised by magnificent landscapes, from the dramatic panoramas and forests of the Great Dividing Range in the south to the rolling hills and fertile river flats of the north.

Water is and always has been the lifeblood of the region. The region has been built on the back of its rivers — the Goulburn, the Broken and the Campaspe. For generations those rivers and their tributaries have given life to industry and agriculture. Major industries in the region include tourism, manufacturing and education, but it is primary production that is the mainstay of the region's economy, from the wool and cropping regions around Benalla and Euroa to the dairy farms that surround Stanhope, Dhurringile and Girgarre. Further west, Heathcote's reputation as a wine-growing district is being noted throughout the world, while the rich volcanic soils of the Mount Camel Range around Colbinabbin and Corop continue to grow some of Australia's finest cereal crops. It is our role, I believe, to reduce the regulatory burden on these industries and to support their continued development and expansion through research and development and the search for new international and domestic markets.

The racing industry is also an important contributor to the electorate, providing thousands of jobs and millions of dollars to the local economy. The presence of world-renowned studs such as Darley and Swettenham have put towns like Nagambie and Seymour on the map. But the winds of change can also be felt. To the south of the electorate Melbourne is growing rapidly. The number of people commuting to Melbourne to work each day from towns including Seymour, Broadford, Kilmore, Wandong and Heathcote Junction is growing, and more people are seeking a lifestyle change. In the southern end of the electorate this rapidly growing population is placing additional pressure on infrastructure and services. Uncertainty lingers over the status of the Kilmore-Wallan bypass, on which the new government's position remains unclear, and additional public transport services are desperately needed. Under the coalition Kilmore's hospital underwent a \$20 million capital redevelopment, but in coming years it will require additional recurrent funding to help it cope with the growing demand for health services. In Broadford the local Country Fire Authority brigade has

outgrown its home, and more space is needed for local sporting clubs.

The northern end of the electorate faces the issue of an ageing population and the pressures associated with that, a challenge that is all too familiar in rural areas. Seymour, just over an hour north of Melbourne, is bordered by the Goulburn River and is located on both the Hume Freeway and the Melbourne–Sydney rail corridor, yet the town has ongoing challenges. In the past 30 years Seymour's population has changed very little, and it continues to face entrenched disadvantage, skill shortages and a lack of industry. The Nationals' plan for a dedicated industry and jobs fund for Seymour would have created new economic prosperity for the town and provided new employment opportunities. I respectfully urge the government to adopt it.

Similarly I ask the government to honour the coalition's commitment to invest \$35 million to rebuild schools in Seymour and Benalla that are crumbling and beset by the presence of asbestos and mould. A bricks-and-mortar investment is needed in those schools to create a modern learning environment. If we want young people to care about their education and if we want to lift aspirations and educational attainment rates, we need to show them our commitment.

Health care too requires investment across the electorate. Despite the presence of Euroa Health, residents of the Strathbogie shire cannot currently access publicly funded hospital beds in their region. This inequality needs to be rectified. In Nagambie, a permanent ambulance presence is needed to address the growing demand for services, while Rushworth's hospital is outdated and exposed to potential bushfire threats. Addressing these needs will ensure that this wonderful region, which has so much potential, has the chance to grow and prosper.

But our biggest resource will always be the passionate and hardworking people who call the electorate home. Their stories — stories of courage, resilience and self-sacrifice — are woven throughout the landscape. Last week bushfires swept through the electorate, destroying homes, livestock and livelihoods and testing the resolve and strength of our community. It is not the first time we have faced fires, and it certainly will not be the last. Nevertheless it was a brutal reminder of the challenges that dominate the landscape in which we live.

In the midst of adversity the community has been buoyed by acts of kindness: like that of Azem and Jehan, who closed their Shepparton kebab shop and relocated to Euroa for four days to cook 900 meals a

day to make sure that the men and women fighting the fires on the front line were fed; like that of the team from Thales, who called an impromptu working bee to help one of their colleagues affected by the Stewarton fire; and like that of the members of the local fire brigades, who worked until they were exhausted, many for 18 to 24 hours at a time, defending their communities. Few of them will ever be on the front page of a newspaper, but these are the people whose dedication and selflessness bind our communities together.

My story, and that of my family, is like that of so many Victorians. In 1939 my father's mother migrated from Italy, having fled Mussolini's fascist regime. After nursing Allied troops during the war, she married my grandfather, and they established a dairy farm, first at Stanhope and then later at Murchison. Throughout the years my nonna has given much to the country that gave her a home. Her story and the stories of thousands just like her form part of the fabric of our communities and are an ever-present reminder of the value of tolerance and diversity.

My family is well acquainted with the challenges that come with life in regional Victoria. When I was young my father worked on his farm at Murchison through the day before doing night shift at the SPC cannery in Mooropna to make ends meet. My teenage years were dominated by the presence of drought. I belong to a generation who aspired to follow in our parents' footsteps but who chose another path, one where our livelihoods were not tied to the vicissitudes of the weather.

In 2007, when our region was in the grip of the millennium drought, the then government announced its plan to build the north-south pipeline to take water from drought-stricken communities in northern Victoria to Melbourne. For me that decision was a critical turning point. As I watched my communities in the grip of that insidious and creeping drought, I was unable to understand how the government could break its promise never to take water over the Great Divide. It was The Nationals who stood up to fight for the rights of rural and regional communities through those long and difficult years. I am proud to stand here today as the Deputy Leader of The Nationals, committed to upholding those values upon which our party was founded 100 years ago — namely, a fair go for rural and regional Victoria.

I wish to pay tribute to the members of this house for whom I have had the great privilege of working in recent years, in particular Peter Ryan, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells and Ted Baillieu. From each I have learnt

different things, but all have demonstrated the importance of integrity and honour and all have used their time here to make Victoria a better place.

My sincere thanks go to my campaign team for the long and gruelling hours they put in — Bill Sykes, Lauren Smith, Sharon Kent, Kerrie Facey, Rachel Tharrat, Simon Kelley, Frank Deane and John Tanner. I also acknowledge the efforts of The Nationals branch members who embraced me as their candidate and those the length and breadth of the electorate — people like Luke Vienet, Sue and Claire Baumber, and Beryl Cross — who gave of their own time to ensure that my campaign was a success. My thanks go to my amazing and loyal friends, who have stood with me through this journey and assisted me in more ways than they will ever know, in particular Lauren. I stand here in the knowledge that it is not through my efforts alone but also those of a greater collective dedicated to strong representation for rural and regional Victoria.

I also wish to pay tribute to the retired members who previously represented the electorate and made such a wonderful contribution in this place. I thank Jeanette Powell and her husband, Ian, who have for so many years devoted their lives to the service of their community. As the first woman to represent The Nationals in the Victorian Parliament, Jeanette broke the glass ceiling, and her work as Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs will long be remembered. I also thank the last member for Rodney, Paul Weller, who, along with Wendy Nolan, was first responsible for drawing me into The Nationals family. I learnt much from Paul. His knowledge of water policy is second to none, and it was through his involvement in these issues that my interest in The Nationals was first conceived. I thank Bill Sykes, whose tireless work in the electorate of Benalla has left me with very big shoes to fill. I have rarely seen someone so loved and so respected by his community. If there is one thing above all else that I admire about Bill, it is the fact that he treated everyone equally and to everyone gave his all.

I wish to thank my family, who are here today — my parents, Paul and Jenny, and my siblings, Luke, Tarsha and David. Their encouragement has kept me going, and I know it will be called upon again in the future. My father taught me always to question and to never be content with the status quo, and for that I will always thank him. My greatest thanks go to my mother, who gave up so much to ensure that I would have the opportunities she never had and whose enduring convictions and unspoken kindness I will always admire.

Love, like football, is beyond the realm of politics. I am and will always be eternally grateful for the love and support of my partner, Simon, whose patience and understanding know no bounds. My deep appreciation also goes to Philip, Liz, Tim, Nick, Lara, and of course Betty, for their ongoing support.

In closing, it is my hope that by the time I leave this place it will reflect the true diversity of the community — that those seeking to enter Parliament will no longer be pioneers simply because of gender, age, sexuality, race or religion. To stand in this chamber, where the history of our state has been forged, is an immense privilege, the weight of which rests heavily on my shoulders.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling on the member for Bentleigh I wish to acknowledge the former member for Bentleigh, Rob Hudson, who is in the gallery. I now call on the member for Bentleigh.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-reply

Debate resumed.

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to their elders. I acknowledge the previous member for Bentleigh, Elizabeth Miller, and wish her well for the future.

I rise today humbled by the faith and trust the people of Bentleigh have shown in me by electing me as their representative in this place. This is an honour not to be taken lightly and a role to be taken seriously for its potential to improve people's lives. The Bentleigh electorate has a rich history. Moorabbin and Bentleigh were home to the first large-scale market gardens outside the city and supplied Victoria with produce for many years. Members of the Mariott and Brady families were just some of the market gardeners in our local area, and like other gardeners in the area, on one or two days a week they would load their carts with their produce and make the 2-to-4-hour journey along what is now the Nepean Highway to the markets of Melbourne — a journey which today takes 30 to 40 minutes.

It has been an amazing experience to grow up in the area and think about its former semirural landscape: McKinnon with its vast expanse of onion crops and its biggest animal management issue being wandering horses; Bentleigh with the excitement of its racecourse, which today is the Hodgson Reserve, a beautiful park enjoyed by local families; and Moorabbin, which hosted a wireless receiving station in the middle of a paddock during the Second World War and intercepted transmissions critical to the success of the Allied forces. It is a local area steeped in history.

Bentleigh gets its name from Sir Thomas Bent, a local market gardener who served as a local councillor and a local MP and then went on to become the 22nd Premier of Victoria. Sir Thomas was known to make decisions as a minister to benefit his vast property portfolio. As minister for railways he approved rail lines in areas that would boost the value of his properties. He even offered this to other MPs in exchange for votes in the party leadership. Sir Thomas is one predecessor in the local area that I will not be using as inspiration for my work as a member of Parliament!

However, I am inspired by the Labor members for Bentleigh who have come before me. I am the fourth Labor MP for Bentleigh and pay tribute to Gordon Hockley, Ann Barker and Rob Hudson. They were three local members totally committed to our local community. I recently took some time to read the inaugural speeches they delivered in the house. Gordon Hockley was the first Labor MP for Bentleigh. He was elected in 1979 by a mere 95 votes, yet he served in Bentleigh undefeated. He spoke of important issues that people face on a day-to-day basis, like dilapidated schools and unemployment. He was a great grassroots local member. I never met Gordon but was told, 'If you campaign as well as Gordon Hockley and are engaged in the local community as much as he was, you will win the seat for sure'.

Ann Barker was elected in 1988. She was later elected the member for Oakleigh. I worked in her office for a brief period and got to know Ann for the hardworking local member she was. In her first speech as the member for Bentleigh, she spoke of education, specifically the introduction of the education maintenance allowance and the expansion of the local TAFE campus in Moorabbin — both still topical issues 26 years later. I thank Ann for her continuing friendship.

Rob Hudson was elected in 2002. He guided me through my first local council election campaign and in the campaign for Bentleigh this year. I could never have asked for a better mentor and friend. In his first

speech, he spoke of his lifelong passion for addressing inequality and talked about the growing gap between the poorest and wealthiest sections of our community. In political life, Rob was instrumental in the development of A Fairer Victoria, which was the Bracks government's blueprint to address social exclusion. It was no surprise to me that after politics Rob went back to work for the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Gordon, Ann and Rob were three champions for Bentleigh and I am totally mindful of the big shoes I have to fill.

Nearly 10 years ago I was elected to the Glen Eira City Council. At 19 I was the youngest councillor. This proved to be a daunting experience, but a rewarding one nonetheless. A particular highlight was the decision to build the Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre (GESAC), which was supported with funding from state and federal Labor governments. Today GESAC has 15 000 members and attracts 1.1 million visits each year.

But my most treasured work as a councillor did not involve allocating a multimillion-dollar sum to a major capital works project. One of the biggest public health issues in our local community is social isolation. It is not merely feeling lonely; it is a lot deeper than that. It is a complete disconnect from the world around you. It is not having anyone to turn to in times of need. It is both a trigger for and a symptom of mental illness, and it is usually involuntary. Local government seeks to address this mental health challenge through the provision of community infrastructure like senior citizens centres and community centres, but this endeavour is futile without community groups and the volunteers behind them. Each day I see the enormous power of volunteers and other members of local communities coming together to improve the lives of the people around them. I feel honoured to have been part of local groups that seek to do this, and I would like to talk about some of them just briefly.

The first invitation I received as a local councillor was from the East Bentleigh senior citizens. I later became a life member of this seniors club, but that is another story. It is a group of nearly 500 members who are totally committed to keeping seniors active and improving their quality of life. Any day of the week at the senior citizens centre on Derry Street you will find people playing table tennis and carpet bowls and line dancing. You will find members of the club's concert party singing and dancing and putting on shows for local schools. It is a place where people stay healthy by staying active and connected with other people.

A number of years ago I was introduced to the very important work of neighbourhood houses. Surprisingly, Glen Eira was the only council in the area that did not have a funding agreement with our neighbourhood houses — something I was determined to change. Throughout each year I was a councillor I campaigned for greater funding for our neighbourhood houses so they could serve more people isolated from their communities. It was years before this agreement was put in place due to the time it took to convince other councillors, particularly those who would argue that funding neighbourhood houses was not core council business.

It was not until I left council and joined Godfrey Street Community House as its new chairperson that I developed a proper understanding of the role of neighbourhood houses. Shirley Franklin was Godfrey Street's coordinator for more than 20 years. She once said to me that the aim of a neighbourhood house is to get people through the front door. The computer classes, art groups and exercise sessions on offer are designed to make it easier for people who are isolated to join the neighbourhood house — people like Anne, who is bipolar and finds she is able to deal with this by volunteering at the neighbourhood house, or people like Wendy, who is confronting some terrible issues at home and finds that the only solace she gets is in the 2 hours she spends each week painting with Russell, Godfrey Street's art teacher. When you consider the thousands of people who have joined the neighbourhood house over the last 30 years — many with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues — you get a sense of the value of investing in local community groups.

GriefLine Community and Family Services has a similar aim. It was formed 25 years ago at Bethlehem Hospital when the need for counselling for bereaved families was identified. It has grown over the years to be an organisation with more than 200 volunteers offering a range of services to the community, including telephone counselling. Last year this local community group, which is run out of a modest house in East Bentleigh, received 51 000 phone calls from people who needed to talk to someone.

What these three community groups share is the aim of keeping people healthy and active — the aim of addressing social isolation. They do this with very modest resources and little government funding. I will certainly make it my priority as a member of this place to ensure that groups like these are properly supported.

Like many people in the Bentleigh electorate, my family's life as Australians began 50 years ago at the

docks in Port Melbourne when my grandparents stepped off the boat with two daughters, one of them my mother, to begin a new life. Leaving their home behind and moving to a foreign country was a tough decision, but they wanted their children to have the opportunities that they did not have in Greece.

My grandmother passed away during the election campaign. While the process of grieving was truncated by the need to keep going, I have had the opportunity to reflect on the experience of my grandparents coming to Australia and why I was running for Parliament. My grandparents came to Australia with no money and no English. They came looking for work. The only word my grandmother could say in English was 'job'. Shortly after arriving in Australia she got on a tram not knowing where she was going. She stepped off the tram, walked into a building and was employed that day. When my grandparents came to Australia jobs were plentiful but poor wages and conditions meant it was difficult to get by. Indeed they worked three jobs each in order to afford the rent on one bedroom in a house.

Trade unions fought hard over many years for the workplace conditions we enjoy today, but so many years on, the labour market has new challenges. Many of us have watched in horror as industries have shut down and moved offshore. Over the last four years we have seen the ever-increasing unemployment rate in Victoria become the highest on the Australian mainland and the highest it has been in 13 years.

The departure of the automotive manufacturing industry will have a devastating impact, one that will be felt in my electorate. Throughout the industrial areas of Moorabbin and East Bentleigh various component manufacturers are now at risk. I visited one of these manufacturers during the campaign. I stood on the factory floor, looked around and saw workers predominantly aged in their 50s. They began their careers during a time when it was common for people to live near their workplaces, as many had done at this particular workplace for nearly 90 years. They will be unemployed in two years time. Meeting these workers reminded me of my father, who was made redundant in his 50s after being with his employer for 30 years. It was very difficult for him to find another job.

Thousands of workers will be in a similar position in years to come, which is why it was absolutely critical that Victorians elected a government with a jobs plan. It is easy for a government to respond by saying that the economy is transitioning, but we need to be sure of what we are transitioning to. We need a government with a vision — a vision for jobs that sees companies

engaging with government to transition to the industries that will create the high-skill, high-wage jobs that our state needs. The jobs story, the legacy of the Andrews Labor government, will be in grasping opportunity and building a strong future for Victoria. This is contrasted with the way jobs and skills have been approached in the past.

I spoke of my grandparents' arrival in Australia and of the way things once were for workers like my grandmother and grandfather. The labour market has changed since then. Sixty years ago workers were directly employed and had a certain degree of security in their jobs. Workers had permanent jobs and could plan their future. Workers never really had to shift between industries, and skills never really had to be adaptable — you could have specialised skills and not require constant retraining.

Nowadays jobs that workers can count on have become increasingly rare. Forty per cent of workers are now in insecure work, often engaged under contracting arrangements which give workers no protection but all of the risk involved in an employment relationship. A worker has no capacity to plan a life when their livelihood depends on a text message on the morning they want to work letting them know whether they have employment for the day. Workers are denied their dignity and the opportunity to contribute to the economy. Workers engaged in labour hire contracting arrangements are often caught up in complex webs of sham contracting that see them exploited.

This is a problem that is growing in our country, and it is a problem that only the Andrews government has committed to solve. For the first time in this country a government will seek to address the problem of rogue labour hire agencies which operate across virtually all industries imaginable, from poultry processing to warehouse work and logistics. The Andrews government wants to create a licensing scheme for labour hire firms, and we will hold an inquiry into insecure work in Victoria, including the misuse of visas to avoid Australian workplace laws, which results in the exploitation of many workers. Labor knows that every worker counts and that every job is worth fighting for. I know that with our vision and with our passion this is a fight we can win.

The election campaign proved to be very long and very arduous, but very rewarding. We made some fantastic commitments to the Bentleigh electorate that I look forward to delivering — commitments like the removal of level crossings at Centre Road, McKinnon Road and North Road, and the completion of redevelopments at McKinnon and Bentleigh secondary colleges. But as

we all know, election campaigns require the assistance of many people to get these messages out in the local community. I was fortunate to have a very dedicated campaign team led by our field organiser, Kat Hardy, campaign manager, Jarrod Panther, and campaign treasurer, Robyn Dale. I want to thank them for their hard work and their friendship.

Thank you to the people who have supported me over many years — people like Simon Crean, who recruited me into the Labor Party in my teenage years, and the member for Narre Warren South, who is not only a dear friend but also my greatest mentor. I want to thank the Attorney-General and the Treasurer. Both these men have supported me from preselection to the campaign; I would simply not be here without them. Thank you to the Minister for Agriculture, Jaala Pulford, a very supportive friend who I know has been in the thoughts of members on both sides of the house in recent times.

Thank you to all of my supporters — the National Union of Workers, Philip Dalidakis, the member for Clarinda, the member for Oakleigh, Cr Steve Staikos, John Lenders, Rob Hudson, Clare O'Neil, Betty Appleton, Tim Jackson, Carina Garland, Robbie Williamson, Bruce Wilson and Nick Bantounas.

Thank you to the Premier, who led a strong opposition and is now leading a strong government that has made us all proud to be Labor.

Finally, thank you to my family, especially Mum and Dad. Without them and the values they taught me, I would not be here.

Mr PESUTTO (Hawthorn) — I congratulate His Excellency the Governor on his address earlier today. I extend congratulations to you, Speaker, on your elevation to the chair, with such an inspirational story.

We live, we strive, we aspire, because of hope. Our continuing search to broaden the horizons of human knowledge, to find medical cures for chronic and terminal disease, to make advances in science and technology and to build understanding and social cohesion between different peoples — these are all attainable only because of a belief that a better future is possible. The young and the unemployed hope for an education and training that will lead to a real job, one our economy needs. New migrants hope for opportunity to build a future in a new country, one where they will be accepted. The elderly hope to live in a community that is safe and secure. I believe their aspirations are why we are here: to do everything we can to enable all Victorians to live out their hopes.

For me, I stand here because liberalism has always been the language of hope. Down the ages, from the Magna Carta to the liberal struggles that led to the universal franchise, right through to 20th century economic and democratic advances that lifted millions out of poverty and gave as many freedom, liberal principles have been the sign posts of reform. It is why I joined the Liberal Party at 22.

Personal initiative and responsibility, free enterprise, the rule of law and the family — in all its appearances — are the touchstones of a philosophy that is vital. They are as important to our future as they have been to our past. Liberalism possesses all the power to unite rather than divide, to include rather than exclude. It mediates between strong and weak, between prosperity and social disadvantage, between the enterprising and those who through illness, disability or other misfortune need our support, compassion and generosity.

As legislators I believe we must be able to put ourselves in the shoes of those we represent, whether a person in financial or emotional distress, a child living in fear of domestic violence or a woman who just wants to embark on her own small business, free from unnecessary government interference and regulation. For me liberalism embodies at its core a compact. Government should do all that it can to encourage those to strive for excellence, whether in private business, the arts or any other field of endeavour, while fulfilling common needs for public works, education, health, aged care and other important services. This dynamic is critical, not just to our immediate material need for investment and employment but also to the more profound — to human discovery, knowledge and dignity.

Under this liberal compact, government should be determined to raise from a growing economy only the revenue it needs to fulfil its proper functions, to ensure amongst so many other important responsibilities that every child, regardless of material wellbeing, will receive a quality education, that all can access quality health care from providers of choice, that we can all live in a safer community with tough sentencing, parole and bail laws, and that we can all travel on roads and public transport that cater truly for a growing population. This means building budget capacity so that these important services can be delivered. Responsible management of the Victorian budget, now well over \$50 billion annually, requires constant analysis of ongoing programs to make sure that they are delivering what people need and that they are not continued merely to avoid adverse media, all at the cost of other

potential programs with greater merit. We need to continue our search for this ideal compact.

The last four years saw the Victorian coalition government take great strides in the right direction, and this in the face of all the budget challenges that state governments confront. The ability of the states to meet their growing challenges is hampered by a federal structure which demands that state governments meet greater expectations but deprives them of revenue options to fulfil their social and economic responsibilities. But despite this, it is as important as ever to fight for liberal principles.

Victoria should be the enterprising state, where we promote business growth and continually explore ways to reduce the regulatory and compliance burdens that our businesses face. Like all law-abiding Victorians I want to see the rule of law upheld and enforced. People will be more inclined to invest, visit and live in our state when they are confident that our laws will be respected.

One of our continuing challenges is the building and construction industry. Our construction sector employs hundreds of thousands of Victorians, yet the task of stamping out the intimidation and criminal influences must continue without any overt or tacit retreat. Ours is a nation of laws, and you cannot respect the law unless you are prepared to uphold the law. The opposition will look to the government to adopt that same approach.

I want Victoria also to be able to accommodate population growth in a way which preserves our rich cultural diversity and harmony, along with the character of our suburbs and neighbourhoods. As a member of this Parliament I hope to play my part in these challenges: to build on Victoria's great strengths, guided by principles that will ensure that all Victorians can benefit from greater opportunity, security and prosperity.

The opportunity that I now have to undertake this challenge has been made possible only by others. To the people of Hawthorn, thank you for placing in me your solemn trust and confidence. The gravity of my obligation as a parliamentarian to all my constituents, no matter whom they supported, is as profound as the obligations I owed the court and my clients when I practised law. The task of representing the interests of others is a duty of trust. For a lawyer the duty exists no less than to serve the administration of justice. For a parliamentarian the duty exists to promote the integrity of Parliament and public confidence in its ancient processes and the outcomes they produce.

I pledge myself to being the strongest possible advocate I can be for the people of Hawthorn. We have much to maintain and protect. Hawthorn is an electorate blessed with unique amenity: its tree-lined corridors, its remarkable heritage architecture and its pre-eminent schools, both government and independent. My wife, Betty, and I have lived locally for nearly 20 years; why would we live anywhere else? There are great shopping strips down Glenferrie and Burke roads, great public transport and local environment, and beautiful parks. But Hawthorn's strengths are producing some of its own challenges: the high standard and popularity of our local schools are fuelling increasing enrolments and signal a pressing need to manage the growth this will entail.

I was particularly proud that prior to the last election the coalition government committed \$17 million in capital funding for local schools. My first action, only minutes after being declared the member for Hawthorn, was to ask the new government to adopt these pledges and the further planning needs of our local schools. Melbourne's population growth is a challenge every part of our great metropolis must face. With the seat of Hawthorn sitting entirely in the municipality of Boroondara, the task of accommodating more people is a delicate one, given the area's unique heritage value.

I share the view of my fellow residents that, where higher density development genuinely combines scale, consistency and design quality, public resistance can turn to support. None of my fellow residents to whom I have spoken about these matters is actually opposed to development. They just want scale, consistency and quality. That is why my second action, moments after being declared the member for Hawthorn, was to call upon the new government to rule out removing or weakening any of the protections that the former Minister for Planning, now Leader of the Opposition, gave to Boroondara. I will pursue that assurance and oppose any attempt to remove or weaken Boroondara's existing protections.

Today I salute my predecessor. The Honourable Ted Baillieu, the previous member for Hawthorn and former Premier, has served the Victorian people, this Parliament and the Liberal Party with distinction. I look forward to his ongoing contribution to the city, the state and the country I know he cherishes. I wish him, Robyn and the children all the best for the future.

I also give thanks to his successor as Premier, the honourable member for South-West Coast. It was a privilege and honour to serve as his legal counsel; I certainly would be grateful for his counsel now as a colleague in this house. I also thank his successor, the

honourable member for Bulleen and Leader of the Opposition. I am grateful for the trust, confidence and responsibility he has given me to serve in the shadow cabinet as shadow Attorney-General. To this end, I recognise the prodigious efforts of the member for Box Hill, the former Attorney-General. After only four years as Attorney-General, he leaves a legacy rich in achievement, but even more, he has earned a reputation widely extolled for all his fine virtues.

My local party supporters were completely committed and devoted to running a Hawthorn electorate campaign we had only weeks to assemble. To my executive team on the Hawthorn electorate conference I say thanks. I say thanks to the outgoing chairman, Dr Tim Pitt; to the incoming chairman, John Stragalinos; to the vice-chairs, Jan Dimmick and Steve Wolf; to the treasurers, Warwick Ball and Barry Shepherd; to the secretary, Kate Beaumont; and to the branch development officer, Chantalle Abou-Haila. Through them, our executive, I say thanks to all our local party members in Hawthorn.

My mum and dad, Antonietta and Luigino, started me off on my way many years ago. For me to be standing here as the member for Hawthorn and shadow Attorney-General would probably have seemed very improbable to my father, when as a young man he stepped off the *Flaminia* in Port Melbourne in 1961, hungry to make the most of his chance for a new life. The *Galileo Galilei* delivered my mother to that same port two years later to join with the love of her life and start a family. That they did, and they achieved it without pretension and with complete modesty. They instilled in me the principles that guide me today.

To my sisters, Maria, Chiarina, Nicki and Kate, and my brothers, George and Anthony, and all the kids, thanks for your love and support. Having grown up in Hastings and then Traralgon in regional Victoria, I have the fondest memories of our childhood and adolescent years. We always looked out for one another, whether it was as BMX bandits, jamming to Creedence Clearwater Revival's *Bad Moon Rising* in a neighbour's garage or fighting in front of the mirror for that last precious bit of hair gel!

Now to my wife, life partner and soulmate, Betty. Political partners often endure the tribulations and triumphs that come in politics without being participants. They feel all our anguish and elation more keenly than we do. They moderate our sense of excitement when we need to settle, and they assuage our disappointment when we need to re-engage. Without Betty I would not be here. I only hope that over the nearly 20 years we have been together I have

been as supportive a partner to her. To Betty I express my complete love, gratitude and admiration. To our three beautiful children, Chiara, Aurelia and Claudia, I say: what joy you bring us both. You are our finest work. Is this as good as a Katie Perry concert or a 5SOS concert?

Why public service? Politics is not easy. Politics is having \$10 to solve a \$20 problem. Priorities are always hard; choices are seldom simple. Good government has some simple dictates: live within your means, support and encourage those who are willing and able to deliver vital services and build our state's infrastructure and businesses — our future — and always look after those in need. The motto I often recite in my mind, as a reminder, is this: politics is not about me, it is about you. Above all else, understand the aspirations, dreams and concerns of those who place their hopes in us. For as long as we in this Parliament aspire to this ideal, we may just be the people's great hope.

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — Speaker, congratulations on your appointment. I also congratulate the Premier and his cabinet on their appointments. To my fellow new members on both sides of the house I say that it has been said before that many are called but few are chosen and we are all so lucky to be here.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge the two immediate past members for Essendon, the Honourable Justin Madden and Judy Maddigan. Justin Madden played an incredibly important role in embracing the Labor Party at a time when few people were prepared to do so. In the 1999 state election campaign, state Labor received only three newspaper banners for the entire campaign. One of the three was about Justin joining the ranks of the state parliamentary Labor Party. Justin went on to hold the record for the equal longest serving Victorian cabinet minister in a Labor government. It is a truly wonderful achievement. Judy Maddigan has also played an incredibly important role in my community. She was one of only three people to win a lower house seat from the Kennett government in the rout of 1996. She became the first female Speaker in this place, and to this day she is enormously respected throughout my electorate.

I would also like to thank my campaign team for the recent election. Darren Arthur was my campaign

manager. He was absolutely brilliant in running a great campaign while simultaneously learning to fly an Airbus A330, which I am pretty sure is a feat no-one has previously accomplished. I thank James Rankin, my deputy campaign manager, who stepped in to help the campaign while Darren was in the flight simulator; Simon Furey, who played a great role in coordinating our volunteers; Glenice Thomas, who was my office manager throughout the course of the campaign; and Frank Dinoto, who did a lot of the leg work with me in the morning, during the day and in the evening. I was ably assisted by a fantastic campaign executive and scores of volunteers who gave up their nights and weekends over the past 12 months for this one moment when I could stand in this chamber as the member for Essendon. To you all can I just say thank you.

I would also like to thank the people of Essendon for placing their trust in me. It is a great honour to represent an electorate like Essendon, which includes the beautiful Victorian terrace homes of Flemington, the Federation architecture of Ascot Vale and Moonee Ponds, sprawling homes in Essendon and Essendon North, and beautiful art deco homes in Travancore, Strathmore Heights and Strathmore. I am really looking forward to our time in government so that we can restore the Strathmore Secondary College school zone, rebuild Strathmore Primary School, remove the Buckley Street level crossing, stop the overdevelopment of the Moonee Valley Racing Club and stop the east–west tunnel.

It is wonderful to have my parents, David and Eileen, here today. Through circumstances beyond their control they both left school at 15, Dad to become a butcher and Mum to work in a factory. Mum and Dad ultimately ran their own small business for 25 years, and there was good money to be made in butchering in the 1970s. My father was the first person in his immediate family to buy a new car. But despite Mum and Dad's success in small business, they remained devoted to the cause of the ALP and the labour movement. The notion that they would embrace conservative politics for self-interest or financial gain was a thought that never entered their heads, and thankfully it was a notion that never entered my childhood home.

I grew up in Wantirna in the 1970s. It was a place and time when, to quote Bruce Springsteen, you were brought up 'to do like your daddy done'. I was fortunate that I was encouraged and supported by my parents to study and explore opportunities that meant that I had options available to me that were not available to my parents. To my parents, today can I just

say on behalf of Ben and me, thank you; I am so grateful for everything that you sacrificed for us both.

While Mum worked with Dad, I spent a fair amount of time with my maternal grandmother. My nan's family had lost everything in the Great Depression. She endured a lifetime of poverty, drudgery and disadvantage. For my nan, the labour movement and the Australian Labor Party were the only institutions that truly protected working people. It was a view she passionately held all her life. In fact her antipathy towards the Liberal Party was only surpassed by her deep-seated hatred of the then Democratic Labor Party and the treachery of Bob Santamaria, aided and abetted by the industrial groups, that betrayed the dreams of generations of working Australians and condemned them to a lifetime of disadvantage and drudgery working in dead-end jobs just because they had lost, as Warren Buffett calls it, 'the ovarian lottery'. For the men, the monotony of this experience was only interspersed by a stint of fighting in the jungles of Malaysia or Vietnam. Growing up, these were powerful forces that shaped my thinking. To quote Marx, 'The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living'.

It was not surprising that I would choose in a partner someone who shared my views. I am so lucky that I met my wife, Nicole Marshall, on the front doorstep of Labor's candidate for the federal seat of Aston for the 1993 election. Nicole was the first woman to introduce herself to me by shaking my hand when we first met. Nicole and I have a wonderful life together. We have four beautiful children — Caitlin, Charlotte, Liam and Juliet — and our fifth child is due at the end of March. Words cannot express how fortunate I have been to have had Nicole as my partner all these years. She has always brought out the best in me and my children. I have been so lucky — thanks, Nic.

I have also been truly fortunate in my career. Julia Gillard recruited me when she was John Brumby's chief of staff. John Brumby employed me, Steve Bracks promoted me and David White, who was a minister in the other place, mentored me. I have had the great privilege of working with the cream of the labour movement that the Victorian branch has produced.

I will always be extremely grateful to have worked with David White for 10½ years at Hawker Britton. David possesses one of the sharpest minds that the labour movement has ever produced. He is a man who was always prepared to take a risk, who never shirked a fight and who retains a passion for the big picture. Over those years David and I would spend every morning having coffee and discussing politics, family, life, the

arts and how to advance the cause of the broader labour movement. Invariably the conversation would always return to two key principles: what do we have to do to win and what do we have to do to govern well? These two questions have always exercised my mind, and they will continue to do so.

From an early age I was drawn to progressive politics because I passionately believed that the state can make profound improvements to the lives of its citizens. I have never wavered in my conviction that the Australian Labor Party possesses the capacity to become the House of Medici that turns Victoria into a modern-day Florence of the South.

Gregory Clark recently wrote a book called *The Son Also Rises — Surnames and the History of Social Mobility*. Clark's central thesis is that genetics are a powerful determinant in the sorts of lives people lead over multiple successive generations. For example, Clark contends that while the Normans conquered England in 1066, by 1800 parliamentary representatives at Westminster were eight times more likely to have a Norman surname. Even today, nearly 1000 years after the Battle of Hastings, those with Norman surnames continue to remain over-represented at Westminster. Clark argues that there is an important role for the state to encourage policies that actively seek to break down social stratification, such as encouraging overseas migration and investing in education to ensure that poorer children have the opportunity to study at university, as well as having a real focus on early childhood development.

In the course of my career I have learnt a great deal about early childhood development as a result of being a former president of Kindergarten Parents Victoria, which is now called the Early Learning Association Australia. Medical research has found that the child's brain develops through stimulation. A case in point is that the child at a very young age will seek out their parent's eyes. If the parent looks away, the child will seek to make eye contact on average five more times. After that they just give up, and when this happens a child's brain will develop at a much slower rate than those children whose parents actively seek out eye contact with their child. The behaviour of those parents who refuse to make eye contact runs across all classes and ethnicities. The daughter of a merchant banker will receive this treatment just as likely as the son of a time-poor nurse or the daughter of a newly arrived migrant. This level of disengagement leads to a high level of dysfunction and a lack of success in school and social relationships, and that is why it is important that these children are not left behind.

I have also been lucky to work with some of Australia's biggest and best advertising companies. Despite what we might think about agencies as a consequence of watching one too many episodes of *Mad Men*, advertising agencies have the power to make people change their behaviour. Fostering and encouraging behavioural change in the individual is a most effective tool of public policy. I will repeat that sentence: fostering and encouraging behavioural change in the individual is a most effective tool of public policy. A case in point is the fact that our road toll has plummeted since the establishment by the Cain government of the Transport Accident Commission. The reality is that despite the increase in our population over the course of the last 25 years, Victoria's road toll has declined in real numbers, and that is before we factor in that Victoria in 2014 is a far bigger place than it was in 1989.

Imagine if we could use advertising to help parent the parents, to teach parents via advertising the importance of engaging with their children and that this messaging was complemented with a proactive campaign of identifying families at risk through maternal and child health visits, which resulted in having 25 monthly visits from a qualified early years educator. Twenty-five 30-minute visits in the first two years of a child's life seems a small price to pay compared to a lifetime of dysfunction and disadvantage.

I also think that advertising can promote other forms of social change. Like many of you, I have been appalled by the number of people who die every year waiting for an organ transplant that never comes. I am proud to say that I have signed up to be an organ donor. However, the real issue is that too few people have made this choice, and the problem with the current scheme is that it is an opt-out scheme. Instead what should happen is that if you are over the age of 18 and you die, then unless you specify otherwise your organs are automatically donated. People who feel strongly about this should be allowed to opt out or to specify what organs they do not want to donate. I am sick and tired of hearing about people dying waiting for perfectly good organs that every day end up in the crematorium or six feet under.

On asylum seekers, I have been concerned by the way in which this debate has played out over the course of the last 13 years. I agree that we must stop people climbing on unseaworthy vessels to come to Australia. That is why I do not support onshore processing of refugees. But rather than looking at Indonesia with suspicion and distrust we should embrace our most important regional neighbour. So many of Victoria's greatest achievements have been as a result of

migration over successive generations. That is why we should work to identify the best and brightest of asylum seekers and we should sponsor them to come to reside here in Victoria. Idleness is the devil's handmaiden, so we should look at encouraging these new Victorians to study and/or acquire new skills while their applications are assessed. A state government should look at sponsoring on-the-ground training as well as online courses for these applicants during this period so that when they arrive they can hit the ground running and make a great contribution to Victoria.

Over the course of the last decade the issues of gay marriage and gay adoption have been a recurring theme in political discourse. I want to say that I am unashamedly in favour of gay and lesbian couples having the right to marry and to adopt. I strongly believe that anything that Labor can do to foster and encourage the rights of gay and lesbian couples to have their unions acknowledged and respected can only advance this state's cause.

Over the course of the last 14 years I have had the opportunity to work with some of Australia's biggest businesses, and the experience has demonstrated to me that from a business perspective there are worse things than paying tax. In many cases what is worse is dealing with multiple overlapping departments and agencies which do not work to time frames and which can provide no certainty if or when an approval will be provided, or who demand that a company fulfil certain arbitrary reporting requirements which are then often forgotten. I have learnt that there are two correct answers in business: 'Yes' and 'No'. You can go broke chasing a 'Maybe'. Of course there is no doubt that compliance is important, but what is the cost to business of adhering to compliance for compliance's sake? What is the cost to the broader economy? Surely as a state and a nation we must have an aspiration beyond becoming a nation of auditors.

Last week I attended the funeral of Sinead Pulford. Sinead was the flower girl at my wedding, her father was my best man and her mother is the Minister for Agriculture. Sinead was just 13 years old when she died, but she embraced everything that life had to offer and made a lasting impression on everyone who met her. In her eulogy it was said that you should measure life not by how many breaths you take but by how many times in your life your breath is taken away.

I do not know how long I will have here as the member for Essendon but, just like Sinead lived her life, I hope that I make the most of every opportunity and that I am a proud standard-bearer for not only the people of

Essendon but the great and mighty Australian Labor Party.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER — Order! Before calling on the next member, I acknowledge in the gallery a former senator and federal Minister for the Arts and Sport, Rod Kemp, and former senator Helen Kroger.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-reply

Debate resumed.

Mr T. SMITH (Kew) — I rise this evening having earned a rare privilege — the privilege of representing the people of Kew in this our state house, the Legislative Assembly of beautiful, bountiful Victoria. I come here as a fifth-generation Victorian, proud of our state's great past, knowing something of our present challenges and with the determination that my time here will in some way make a contribution to the general welfare of our people by unequivocally pursuing the cause of liberalism.

As Victorians we are heirs to a mighty heritage of a free people who created by their own hand a land of vast opportunity. Victoria was not settled by order of an imperial government. Our corner of this great continent was initially settled by those who were young but free, often Australian-born, aspirational individuals who came here to better themselves and their families, and so it was in the area of Melbourne which became Kew.

Kew was first viewed by Europeans in 1803, during Charles Grimes's survey of the Yarra. Forty-eight years later Nicholas Fenwick purchased 122 acres in the parish of Boroondara, an Indigenous word meaning 'a shady place'. Fenwick called his allotment the Kew Estate, as he is believed to have said, 'Kew in England is near Richmond. This place is near Richmond. Why not call it Kew?'. He then subdivided his estate with an accompanying streetscape, naming the avenues after English statesmen — Walpole, Tennyson, Peel and Cobden — and our pretty part of Melbourne started to take its modern form.

One hundred years later Kew's most famous resident and former owner of 10 Howard Street, Sir Robert Menzies, said of Kew:

A quiet corner of Melbourne we may be, but the quietness is one which has nourished thoughtful people, good citizens and

great schools. There is a charm about Kew which nothing can take away from it.

One of my duties is to preserve Kew's distinctive charm. What is left of the original character of Kew, Kew East, Deepdene, Balwyn North and Canterbury must be protected from what Roger Scruton deems 'the modern cult of ugliness'. I will do my best to uphold the legacy of one of my predecessors in Kew, former Premier Sir Rupert Hamer, who did more than any other post-war leader to conserve marvellous Melbourne and our built-form heritage. His planning reforms were far sighted and have contributed greatly to the quality of life we now enjoy in this wonderful city of ours.

In this the 70th anniversary year of the founding of the Liberal Party by Sir Robert Menzies we can reflect on one of his government's significant legacies: the extraordinary expansion of universities and of commonwealth scholarships to attend them, as well as state assistance for Catholic schools. These decisions reflect a deep and abiding Liberal commitment to empowering the individual through education and an education system that enshrines choice and excellence at its core. This has been at the heart of the mission of Australian liberalism from the very start.

It was Liberals in this Parliament who passed the revolutionary Education Act in 1872 — the first of its kind in Australia — to institute a free, secular and compulsory education system for both boys and girls. It was quite correctly argued that amongst other equally important public goods to stem from this reform, educated citizens were essential to the future of an enlightened society and to ensure the preservation of democratic self-government.

The reforming former UK education secretary, Michael Gove, argued:

In an age before structuralism, relativism and postmodernism it seemed a natural and uncomplicated thing, the mark of civilization, to want to spread knowledge, especially the knowledge of great human achievement, to every open mind.

But, over time, that natural and uncomplicated belief has been undermined, over-complicated and all too often twisted out of shape.

If Victoria is to continue to grow and prosper, we have to get serious about maximising our intellectual capacities. How much human capital does Victoria squander every year because of underperforming schools? Why do we blithely accept that there will always be a near-perfect correlation between the socio-economic status of a school's cohort and its academic performance? Equality of opportunity is a

fundamental Liberal principle, and nowhere should it find greater expression than in the delivery of high-quality state education.

Of all the controllable inputs into an education system, by far the greatest determinant of academic performance is the quality of teaching. Teaching is one of the most important jobs in our society, and we need to recognise and reward our best teachers and encourage our best and brightest to take up careers in education. I hope the new government will continue programs such as Teach for Australia, which attracts outstanding graduates from non-teaching backgrounds and places them in disadvantaged schools. This is one program currently supported by the Victorian government, but opposed by the unions, which I hope will continue as a measure to drive excellence within the profession.

Mediocrity should not be accepted in our education system. Most state school principals I speak to privately implore me to make it easier for them to move on underperforming teachers. In my personal opinion, principals really should have the power to hire and fire without overbearing bureaucratic and industrial interference.

Introducing our young people to the best that has been thought and said is a fundamental duty of government, yet a survey by the Lowy Institute for International Policy earlier this year found that just 42 per cent of 18 to 29-year-olds agree with the notion that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. I am the youngest member of this Parliamentary Liberal Party, and it worries me greatly that my generation seems coldly indifferent to the virtues of democratic government. I suspect the cause of this malaise is multifaceted, but the education establishment must bear some responsibility for it.

Our secondary school history curriculum in Victoria is well meaning but fails to inspire much civic devotion or strong adherence to fundamental principles of civilised liberal democratic government. It fails to emphasise through nearly 1000 years of the history of the English-speaking peoples how the struggle between tyrannical government and liberty has defined our society. Foundational events, essential documents and integral principles that underpin our institutions are barely spoken of, such as the Magna Carta, the Petition of Right, the English civil war and the Bill of Rights, which forever enshrined parliamentary supremacy over the Crown — the very basis of our democratic traditions.

On our own continent what happened during the decade 1846–56 period should be better taught. At its beginning no Australian colony had its own government; all were appointed in Britain. By its end all colonies except for Western Australia had achieved what the lawyers called responsible government. The rest of us call it democracy.

I am not suggesting that politicians should be able to dictate the contents of the curriculum, rather that the curriculum should reflect the ideas and the traditions that have stood the test of time. The curriculum should conserve and pass on our shared cultural inheritance. It should distil what the generations who have come before us have deemed to be worth knowing as well as equipping young people with the technical skills and values they need to negotiate a complex economy and an advanced democracy. Setting school-level curriculum was once one of the most important roles of a state government, yet we have ceded most of that power to an unelected federal quango. Regrettably the Victorian government has very little autonomy over what our core curriculum is anymore.

Despite public perceptions to the contrary, there are still clear differences between the major parties over their envisaged role for government. Because of our commitment to the ideals of individual liberty, small government and free markets, the Liberal Party believes in lower taxes and less regulation because a well-working society is best achieved when families and individuals decide what is important to them and can spend their money accordingly. Our opponents think the opposite. The problem with excessive regulation is the same. It replaces the diversity of people's own choices with an enforced uniformity that cannot possibly meet the needs of a diverse community and hence undermines motivation as well as economic and social progress.

What the Liberal Party understands by good government is government in the interests of the people as a whole and hence policies that work in the interests of all. With this philosophy, the Liberal Party has the capacity to rise above pressures from special interests. Our party seeks to provide a voice for the unorganised mainstream of society, what Menzies called the forgotten people. As David Kemp so brilliantly argued earlier this year:

The Labor Party is a stark example of the consequence of the special interest capture of a governing party.

He also said:

... the key flaw in the Labor Party structure was the rule that gave the party organisation outside Parliament the power to

determine policy. This rule offered power without responsibility to external interests —

the faceless men, the union movement, with all their class war attitudes. One wonders how this government will be able to keep the wage expectations of public sector unions and lawlessness on our construction sites under control given their huge investment in Labor's recent election victory.

I firmly believe the states have a vital role in advocating the need for tax reform. As early as 1902 Alfred Deakin correctly observed the future of our federation:

As the power of the purse in Great Britain established by degrees the authority of the Commons, it will ultimately establish in Australia the authority of the commonwealth. The rights of self-government of the states have been fondly supposed to be safeguarded by the constitution. It left them legally free but financially bound to the chariot wheels of the central government.

This, unfortunately, has essentially come to pass, and we have been debating the fundamental question of the state's financial dependency on the commonwealth since the first uniform tax case 72 years ago, when the states' share of taxation revenue fell from 50 per cent to 10 per cent and from which it has never really recovered. State governments can raise virtually any tax they like with parliamentary approval. We need a serious debate at the state level around tax reform because states simply cannot afford to build the infrastructure that our constituents expect us to be able to provide, and they are tiring of the excuse, 'Call your federal MP'. We at the state level need to make the case for real reform of the taxation system, as the future livability of Melbourne depends on it.

I am a strong believer in the two-party system. As Gough Whitlam said:

... anybody who's interested in improving matters ... should join the Labor Party or the Liberal Party and try to do something about it. Because ... the Prime Minister of Australia —

or Premier of a state —

will be a Labor man or a Liberal man, or woman; but otherwise you're just treading water or spouting into thin air if you say that you can change things other than by supporting the Labor or the Liberal Party.

Through you, Speaker, I say this to the government: the coalition will always be your fiercest opponent, but the Greens are a scourge on your proud traditions of democratic socialism and social democracy. Whereas Labor at its best attempts to govern for all Australians, the Greens are committed to global protest movements, divisive identity politics and the niche concerns of a

cosseted urban elite. They do not fight for Australia's national interest. I say to Labor, the Greens are an extremist party, and you should put them last.

We do not get elected to this place on our own, and there are many people I am indebted to over what has been quite a journey to this place. My parents, Colin and Deanne Smith, and my sister, Sarah, as well as my girlfriend, Helen Baxendale, have been very supportive. I must especially thank George and Maureen Swinburne and John and Robyn Booth for all their friendship over the years. I cannot thank enough my electorate chairman, Rob Cameron, and his committee of Ben Jessop, Cr Phillip Healey, Susie Manson, Stephen Spring, Keiron Long, Rob Millar, Caroline Inge, Dick King and Michael Norbury. I must also thank Merv Kiley; the Garwolis; the Wightmans; the Jameses; the Clancys; the Barbers; the Josefbargs; Elisabeth Hall; Jane Hargreaves; my campaign manager, Nick Demiris; his deputy, Peter Catterson; Jess Wilson; and my staff, Annemarie Sandilands, Andrew Hudson, Nick Lamanna and Simon Brown.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Liberal Party federal president Richard Alston; chairman of the Institute of Public Affairs Rod Kemp and its executive director, John Roskam; David Kemp; Michael and Helen Kroger; and my great friend Josh Frydenberg. I must also thank the Leader of the Opposition, Matthew Guy, who will be this state's next Liberal Premier.

I will conclude my contribution to the loyal address-in-reply to His Excellency's speech in the traditional form — by pledging my loyalty and those of the electors of Kew to Her Majesty, the Queen of Australia, in right of the state of Victoria. I thank the house.

Sitting suspended 6.33 p.m. until 8.01 p.m.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Lee Tarlamis, a former member for South Eastern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council. I also acknowledge the Honourable Hugh Delahunty, the former member for Lowan. Welcome.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Address-in-reply

Debate resumed.

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — Congratulations, Deputy Speaker, on your appointment. I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land, and I pay my respects to elders both past and present. I thank the members of the Labor Party, the amazing Frankston campaign team, the Frankston branch of the Labor Party and the Frankston community for bestowing upon me the honour of representing them in Parliament. Thank you also to Lee Tarlamis, Simon Finn, Mat Hilakari, Chris Brain and Josh Sinclair for your tutoring and patience. I would especially like to thank my wife, Kirsten, and my children, Charli, Hunter and Jack, for their patience, love and inspiration. I thank them also for their comedic relief. Jack, who is six, this morning was told he had to dress up to go to Parliament. He ran down the hall and said, 'What do I dress up as?', so we almost had Spider-Man here this morning.

On with business. I am honoured to stand here as the member for Frankston, a beautiful city with a proud working history; a place where Labor members have used their position for the good of the community; a place where movies are filmed and holiday memories are created. Frankston is rightly known as Victoria's friendliest beach and its most sustainable city.

I see the story of me being here today and speaking in your presence as the epitome of a typical Labor story. I was brought up in the town of Churchill in Gippsland, a town of resilient, hardworking people, not unlike Frankston and many other communities in Victoria. Dad was an immigrant, a Vietnam veteran and a taskmaster who worked in the Morwell coalmine, and Mum gave up her career as a nurse to be a stay-at-home mum. Dad, now a corps sergeant major in the Salvation Army, and Mum, also heavily involved with the Salvos, sacrificed many, many things to see that my sister and I were well educated and had every opportunity they could afford.

If I had to think of one defining moment in my upbringing, however, I think it would be the privatisation of the Latrobe Valley power industry in the Kennett years. My community literally died overnight. People moved on, families broke down and unfortunately it was all too much for some people. As a teenager I saw the immense pressure on my family, and looking back I see that that is what defined my career choices.

I think we can all agree that there is no higher calling than serving your community. I therefore completed a teaching and arts degree, majoring in history and politics, and began a career as a teacher in primary, secondary and special developmental schools.

One of the most inspirational achievements I witnessed while working in the education system was the introduction of the Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL), spearheaded by Labor's Lynne Kosky, who of course will be sorely missed. VCAL provides an alternative to the Victorian certificate of education for students who wish to go on to employment or vocational training after school, rather than university. The program caters for disengaged students deemed to be at risk of dropping out. I witnessed the tremendous results of this program firsthand, and I am critical of the previous government's removal of funds from VCAL, which supports some of the state's most disadvantaged students. I will be advocating strongly in the future in support of this program. Lynne's words show that she recognised that:

The successful provision of quality education and training for all is the critical requirement of all modern democracies to enable their citizens to flourish personally and to maximise economic, social and cultural opportunity.

...

It is a fundamental community and social glue, while being a bridge to a more prosperous and harmonious future.

There is no reason to think that anything has changed since Lynne Kosky spoke those words in 2006. Whilst teaching I saw that children become the foundation of successful communities when they are given the best start in an education system funded appropriately by state government. Today it is up to us to make sure that our children have the best opportunities and that we are great role models, as tomorrow they will be the future of our state, and we need smart, well-informed children to take the reins.

Although I loved teaching, and I still do, I decided I still had an itch to help my community that could not be satisfied — until I became a firefighter in 2001. Frankston fire station was my first appointment, and along with Kirsten, my wife, I fell in love with the area for obvious reasons. We moved there soon after. For someone raised hours from the nearest beach, it felt like being in paradise, and it still does. It has always been my job to help people, and I could never imagine being satisfied doing anything else. I am happy working on the tools — 42 metres up in the air on ladder trucks over a fully involved factory fire, defibrillating dying patients or at a car accident using 5-tonne jaws-of-life,

always to the benefit of my community and never stopping until the job is done. Although if I never get another cat out of a tree, I will be happy.

I have now taken to adopting words as my tools for the benefit of my community — a community that has had inadequate representation and a community with many jobs left unfinished. The city of Frankston is about to enter an exciting new era under an Andrews Labor government. Frankston is the gateway to the Mornington Peninsula, where 9 out of 10 of Victoria's most livable suburbs are located. Sadly, though, the Frankston community feels it has not been listened to, and I do not blame it. We have significant hurdles to jump if we are to reach our full potential as a community. In retrospect, the 2014 Labor campaign for the seat of Frankston was the biggest ever advocacy campaign for Frankston. Through countless conversations the Frankston community relayed to me what it thought we needed to accomplish, and I began working on its behalf to achieve these goals months ago as a candidate. Frankston has never needed a Labor government more than now.

Alistair Harkness, a former Labor member for Frankston, had a vision for Frankston, and I am pleased to see that, with Labor government funding, Frankston has just opened the Peninsula Aquatic Recreation Centre that Alistair fought for. My vision for Frankston extends his vision and will involve hard but satisfying work. We will soon be taking the next step and seeing the rejuvenation of one of our city's crucial areas — the train station and the Young Street corridor — under Labor's \$50 million commitment to see Frankston lead the Peninsula into the future. This is the largest commitment to Frankston in many decades and is desperately needed. Any vision for Frankston in the future involves transforming this neglected area first.

Some welfare agencies in Frankston believe the youth unemployment percentage in the area is registering in the high teens. Most of these kids are good kids and just need the opportunities that have been taken from them. The increase in funding for TAFEs and the correct funding for our education system are ways of providing our kids a positive and a constructive future. Under an Andrews Labor government Chisholm TAFE in Frankston will become the flagship of education in the south-east. We can provide hope and direction to our young people, and it is our responsibility to do so.

The drug ice affects Frankston disproportionately, as it does many other communities throughout the state. It has been ignored for years. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that has committed to a task force involving medical experts, police, drug rehabilitation

centres, the youth work sector and government ministers to find answers to dealing with both policing and treating this horrendous addiction. I look forward to seeing my children grow up in a community with an environmental conscience that regards sustainability as the norm rather than the exception. We all know the value of the green wedge that runs through our community and why it is so important that a Labor government has protected it.

I also aim to see my children and today's youth of Frankston become adults supported by a government that knows the satisfaction of having a job, not just for the salary but for the pride of being a contributing member of our community. I am proud to be part of a government that is progressive in its policymaking and knows that creating employment opportunities becomes part of the overall solution to some of our social issues. Most of all I want to help create a city of Frankston that is increasingly the envy of all other coastal cities. At the moment we have a strong community culture, the best geographical location and a strong Labor government making generous commitments to our city. Our challenge in the future is to take all these strengths and turn our vision of Frankston into a reality.

I am a proud member of the Victorian branch of the United Firefighters Union, and I am a former shop steward at Frankston fire station. During my time as a firefighter, the increase in safety standards for firefighters was directly proportional to how hard union members fought for them. As an example, when I started in 2001 we were routinely exposed to asbestos without any training, guidance or reporting, and we wore turn-out gear that adhered to no standard at all. Our union had a hand in fixing all these issues.

On my recruit course in 2001 five people were hospitalised after a 600 degree explosion. Without the union's involvement, I am convinced that nothing would have changed and it would have happened again. When I witnessed people recently trying to denigrate the United Firefighters Union, I saw people who enjoy conditions unions have fought hard for, like annual leave, sick leave and overtime, but do not understand that it is not just firefighter safety that unions fight for — it is the community's safety as well. These unions consist of people just like me with families to provide for and to come safely home to at the end of the day.

I spoke previously of inadequate representation. Nothing speaks of inadequate representation more than letting our community down as it has been let down for the last four years. I find it very difficult to digest some of the actions of the previous government. The harsh

reality of government ignorance hits me as I remember being in a twisted car wreck with a heavily pregnant mother and her eight-year-old son. With no ambulance on scene for a considerable time, imagine for yourself how hard it was to keep that trapped mother calm. She knew she had lost the baby, and she was watching me trying to keep her eight-year-old alive. She did not understand why the paramedics were taking so long, and I could provide no answers that could satisfy her. The people of Victoria deserve better. When people are dying unnecessarily, you are doing it wrong.

With friends in the firefighting industry dying of cancer, it is difficult to process the decisions of a government that rejected presumptive legislation four times in spite of overwhelmingly conclusive evidence and then committed to it in light of bad polling. Firefighters and paramedics deserve better, and they can be assured of receiving it under a Labor government. I truly believe we can judge the success of our state by looking at how we treat the most vulnerable in our community. I know we have a lot of work to do. The cost of living is crushing families in many Victorian communities, and Frankston is feeling that pressure. The commitment to cap council rates at the CPI is a common-sense approach to this issue. A broken health system and cuts to the education system causing schools to crumble and will take more time to repair.

I look forward to being part of a government with integrity that listens to what members of our community need and does not dictate to them what they can have. A lesson my parents gifted to me and one that I will pass on to my three beautiful children is that the only time we should look down on another person is when we are helping them up. I have been guided by this principle my whole life. Only a Labor government that can look at such basic social-fabric issues that affect our most vulnerable and create the plan to fix them is fit to govern Victoria.

Personally I have been humbled to receive chief officer commendations for rescuing people and privileged to work during some of our state's worst disasters with some of the best emergency services crews in the nation. Today, though, those things are somewhat eclipsed by the honour of standing here and representing my community in Parliament.

I realise I may not be the most polished speaker in this Parliament, but as Frankston's representative I bring with me my own set of Labor values, varnished by a unique set of life experiences and an intimate knowledge of what is at stake when we do not get it right. What I also bring to this Parliament is a

commitment to the notion that right is right even if everyone is against it and wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it. In the next four years I will be working tirelessly to put people first and ensure that the right thing is done by Frankston and Victoria. The Frankston community and Victoria deserve no less from their representatives.

I have been proudly serving the Frankston community for 14 years and am passionate about continuing to serve them in the future as Frankston's member of Parliament. Frankston has a wonderfully bright future, and I will bring respect and integrity back to this position through hard work and honouring the commitments we have made. We have a lot of work to do, and I do not intend to waste a day. Thank you for indulging me.

Ms KEALY (Lowan) — I congratulate you, Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to that position.

It is an honour and a privilege to stand before this house to deliver my inaugural speech as the elected Nationals member for Lowan. I would like to acknowledge The Nationals for their ongoing support not only of me but of the people, businesses and communities of Lowan over the past 35 years. The Nationals have guided Lowan through remarkable change over that time and have done so with integrity, common sense and commitment.

The Nationals will celebrate their centenary during this term of Parliament. I am very proud to be part of a political organisation that remains loyal to its founding mission as the Country Party — that is, to ensure that the voice of regional and rural Victoria is heard in Melbourne — a cause just as important today as it was 97 years ago.

I would like to acknowledge the support of my amazing family, most of whom are in the gallery today: my husband, Tim; my parents, Rob and Liz Kealy; my brother, Sam, who could not be here today; and my son, Harvey, who serves as my daily inspiration to make a positive difference in the world. I am very fortunate to follow in the footsteps of a great local member, the Honourable Hugh Delahunty. The commitment of Hugh and his wife, Judie, to the electorate of Lowan has been tireless. It has been a great honour to be mentored by such a fair, productive and caring member. Thank you, Hughie.

In being elected to this role I have achieved three notable firsts. I am the first female member of Parliament for the Lowan electorate, the former Wimmera electoral district. While I have never sought

support on the basis of my gender, it is a privilege to serve as a role model and leader for young women and to add to the diversity of this place. In undertaking this role I hope to give rural and regional women the confidence to follow their passion, to apply for the jobs they want and not just for the jobs they think they will get, to push themselves to be their very best and to always be proud of their achievements and who they are. Another notable point is that I am the first non-footballer, either player or club president, to hold the seat in 70 years. Perhaps most importantly my succession to Hughie means there is one less Essendon supporter in this place and one more Collingwood supporter. Finally, I am the first person from Edenhope to become a member of Parliament at a state or federal level.

I am immensely proud of my family heritage in this beautiful area in far western Victoria, which goes back six generations. I grew up helping Dad on the family farming properties of Ullswater and Jaie Jaie. It is a time I remember fondly — a time that taught me valuable lessons about rural life. I learnt about the importance of respecting the land and local environment for future generations, of helping your neighbours and of supporting your local community, and that no matter how good a businessman or farmer you are, you cannot control everything, especially the weather. This year the exceptionally dry season has taken its toll on a number of farming families with crop yields seen to be so low that it is hardly worth the diesel to move the harvester out of the shed.

The majority of the 57 000 or so people in Lowan live in towns or rural cities. While we may not live on the land, nevertheless we all feel the impact of poor conditions in the agricultural sector. It not only hits farming businesses; the flow-on effect to confidence in the small business sector can be devastating. The social impacts are just as significant. While it is impossible to ensure that all businesses succeed, we must always remember the people and families behind the businesses and ensure that we provide all necessary support to help our people get through tough times.

The Lowan electorate is as vast as it is diverse. At almost 40 000 square kilometres this part of western Victoria encompasses some of the most beautiful landscapes you will ever see, from the Mallee Plains in the north, the Big Desert, the Little Desert, the West Wimmera wetlands and the tourist mecca and world-renowned Grampians National Park to the rolling hills and flowing rivers of the fertile Western District. The beauty of the land is only surpassed by the nature of the people of Lowan. We are hardworking, innovative and practical, always ready and willing to

get on with the task at hand. We care for our environment and each other, showing resilience, generosity and tolerance. With people like this we are assured that the future is in good hands.

Lowan truly is the land of opportunity, and it is my goal to ensure that western Victoria reaches its full potential to make sure that we are not just surviving but are thriving in a land of growth and prosperity where business, health, education, social support and agriculture receive the attention they deserve.

Lowan is now in a prime position to capitalise on its reputation as a centre of excellence in agricultural and pastoral production. Agricultural production in the Wimmera Southern Mallee alone contributes \$921 million to the Victorian economy, representing 9 per cent of the gross state product. We produce over 47 per cent of the state's barley and are leading producers of high-quality wheat, canola, pulses, wool, prime lamb, beef, ducks, pork, turkey, wine, dairy products and many other foods. There is a very good chance that some of Lowan's produce will make it onto your dining table this festive season.

Agricultural producers and researchers from around the world are visiting western Victoria to see how we do business. Ongoing support and a welcoming policy environment are needed to ensure public and private investment in local agricultural innovation, research and development. I am a strong advocate for research conducted under local conditions and shared with local people to further enhance our productivity and therefore profitability.

Our future farmers are well educated and entering the sector with the capacity to adapt to constantly evolving technologies. Longerenong Agricultural College is bucking the national trend with record enrolments, half of which are young women. Perhaps most importantly, this new generation of farmers is pushing the limits, using communications technology to remotely monitor and capture data and then using this evidence to improve their decision-making. They are leading innovation in farming techniques by continually challenging the accepted norm for how we farm. Their reward is higher quality produce, greater yields and therefore higher business returns.

Of course the agricultural sector is much more than just farmers in their paddocks. Agronomists, agribusiness specialists, veterinarians, food processors, logistics companies and every local small business all benefit from strong local agricultural performance.

The future of farming in western Victoria is incredibly exciting. Trade relations with China, Indonesia and the Middle East are strong, and their demand for our premium product is increasing. We are in a prime position to capitalise on lucrative supply agreements that will support our region, the state and Australia well into the future. We must not let this opportunity slip by. We must do all we can to ensure that we build on our strong agricultural foundations with the right policies and resources.

One of the greatest challenges we face in Lowan is providing equitable quantity and quality of services across such a dispersed population. Maintaining good-quality infrastructure that supports service delivery across such a vast area of the state is essential. Our demand on infrastructure renewal and development is significant, simply due to the size of the electorate. Despite our small population, we still need a large number of public buildings including schools, hospitals and police stations, as well as our extensive network of roads, bridges and rail.

Our future will be brighter with infrastructure that is on a par with that available in other rural and regional areas of Victoria. This includes expansion of natural gas lines and even drinking water to our communities and improving our access to mobile phone and broadband networks. Competition means that funding for key infrastructure projects tends to flow to areas of greatest population or highest rate of population growth. However, we must never forget how important these public assets are to smaller rural communities. Likewise, we must never forget how important these rural communities are to Victoria.

The potential for rural and regional communities to grow to ease population pressure on metropolitan areas is clearly within reach. Decentralisation of public services is not simple to implement; however, it is a strategy that will have enormous benefit to the entire state and should be prioritised. In terms of service delivery, we simply cannot utilise the service models that fit metropolitan areas. Fortunately the people of Lowan thrive on a challenge, and because of this we have developed many innovative models of service delivery that are improving the lives of local people. This is most evident in the healthcare sector, where we are leaders in the development of programs that make best use of our resources and are tailored to fit our local communities.

Key innovative health delivery programs have been developed in western Victoria out of necessity and include the world first cardiac rehabilitation telehealth program developed by the Wimmera Southern Mallee

Health Alliance and the stroke rehabilitation telehealth program, virtual visiting program and residential-in-reach service developed by Western District Health Service. All these programs focus on giving local people better access to healthcare services and are enabled by taking a flexible approach to service delivery. Flexible funding models are essential to nurture these new ways to deliver health care. As an experienced manager in both the private and public healthcare sectors, most recently as CEO of Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, I have seen firsthand the critical importance of innovative, well-funded health care.

Across Australia the cost of the delivery of health care is increasing, demand is increasing and community expectations regarding access and quality of healthcare services are increasing. There is ongoing pressure to do more with less; however, most of the efficiency indicators in the health system are structured around activity and cost rather than health outcomes.

Lowan has an older demographic, and our future demand challenge is to ensure that we are equipped to meet the health needs of baby boomers as they age. The shifting model of aged care from bed-based care to home care presents a great opportunity to train and develop staff locally, building an expanded workforce, which will attract a new generation and stimulate population and economic growth. But Lowan's future opportunities go further. Our rich underground resources of copper, mineral sands and even geothermal energy present enormous opportunities for development, growth and prosperity into the future.

Our network of small business is diverse and strong and includes retail, hospitality, manufacturing, professional services and trades. We need to support these businesses by cutting red and green tape so that our small local businesses can grow and thrive, thereby stimulating the local economy and creating future jobs.

We can build on the excellent education foundations in Lowan, particularly by expanding early learning services, and we can build on our fine reputation in primary, secondary, tertiary and workplace skills training. We must enable our young people to gain a quality education to be smart, skilled and ready to be the leaders of the future.

In closing, I would like to offer my final acknowledgement — the most important acknowledgement — to the people of Lowan who have put their trust in me to represent them. My commitment to the people of Lowan is to never take their support for granted. I will always work hard to do my absolute

utmost to put the people, businesses and communities of Lowan first. I will work with my constituents, listen to their concerns and stories of success, provide support and encouragement and harness their many great ideas to make Lowan a better place. When reviewing all the opportunities we have in Lowan, it is clear we have a bright future ahead of us. Our resources, our land, our people and their can-do attitude all offer the potential for us to achieve great things. I intend to do all I can to support them in their quest to build a strong and secure future for Lowan.

Mr McGuire (Broadmeadows) — In the spirit of reconciliation I would like to acknowledge the original custodians of the land and their elders past and present, and thank them for the great care they have taken of our commonwealth. Deputy Speaker, I would like to acknowledge your long and distinguished career and your elevation to this office and also acknowledge the new Speaker. Given that he has already taken a bullet for democracy, I am sure that he will handle the slings and arrows of enforcing parliamentary democracy with aplomb.

I would like to thank the Premier for a historic victory. Only once before in Victoria's distinguished past has there been a one-term government. That was 60 years ago, and the cause was the great split that kept Labor from power for a generation at a federal and a state level. So this victory is one for the ages. I want to thank the people of Broadmeadows, my heartland, for a 7.8 per cent swing — the highest to any Labor MP. It was a historic victory.

Today there has been much said about opportunities and hope. Life is short, government is shorter and opportunities have to be seized. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, can lead you to opportunity, but if you fail, all your journeys will be spent in shallows and in miseries. Such is life in opposition.

I would particularly like to thank the Australian Labor Party for its support and the Premier for the strategy that puts people first and invests in our greatest asset. This strategy will invest in attitude, education and opportunity — the attributes that largely determine where we all end up in life. This is a plan that is vital for Victoria. I also thank him for offering me a role to play in this plan, particularly as the Parliamentary Secretary for Medical Research, working with the Minister for Health, the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade and the Premier himself.

The Governor's speech today outlined a big-picture plan for Victoria. This government wants Victoria to

lead the world in medical technology, researching cures for chronic diseases and developing devices that change lives. The plan includes a \$60 million investment in the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery at St Vincent's Hospital, Australia's first research and education centre for biomedical engineering. The centre will bring together leading doctors, scientists and researchers, create more than a thousand jobs and assist an industry that will support an estimated 10 000 jobs during the next 15 years.

This is the vision that Labor stands for. This is what we need to develop in the state of Victoria. We need to bring the three tiers of government together, bring business, the philanthropists and the institutions in, work in a cooperative fashion and collaborate for success. This is the strategy under the Andrews Labor government, and this is the way that we will attempt to implement it.

I have always argued that we should not just look at the issues that confront my electorate of Broadmeadows through the prism of Ford. We should also look at the rise of a company such as CSL Behring, which has elegant science. CSL Behring produces lifesaving blood plasma that is exported around the world. As a state and as a nation, we need another half dozen — hopefully a dozen — companies to develop in the way that CSL Behring has developed, because those companies will supply the jobs of the future. That is the issue we are looking at now. Basically we are seeing the end of the Bolte era — the end of the automotive industry and the end of our motowns: Broadmeadows and Geelong for Ford, Dandenong for Holden and Altona for Toyota.

When we talk about opportunity, we have to look at a big-picture strategy and how it evolves and develops. My family arrived in Broadmeadows in 1959, the same year as the Ford Motor Company. At that time Broadmeadows was a raw fringe at the end of the line. The company's plant was opened by Sir Henry Bolte with the accompaniment of an orchestra and dancing girls, but unfortunately that opening was one of the last Liberal or coalition fanfares. This goes to the issue of opportunity.

We have to understand the way Melbourne has developed historically. Twice as many taxpayer dollars were invested in the eastern and southern areas of the city as in the other suburbs, and those dollars were invested in necessary infrastructure — rail and trams networks — which had a multiplier effect on what I call the quality-of-life infrastructure that gave us preschools, schools, Melbourne's version of Ivy League colleges, as well as better care for the elderly and even

more cemeteries. We need to address these historic issues and come up with a better coordinated strategy, and the Australian government will need to be part of that strategy as well. This is how we have to build the future.

Just over a decade ago Broadmeadows got its first public library. That says it all in one line. That shows the degree of neglect there has been in Broadmeadows. I am proud that Labor's vision is for Victoria to become the education state. This government is going to invest in education from the preschool level. We are going to have better primary schools and bring back technical colleges. We will try to connect education with jobs, which is what I am trying to do as the member for Broadmeadows.

Together with Melbourne Airport we have in place a local jobs for local people strategy. This is really important, because Melbourne Airport is the biggest job creator in the area. We are going to link 12 000 to 14 000 jobs at the airport with about a thousand jobs coming online early next year and connect them to new jobs at Epping due to the relocation of the Melbourne wholesale fruit, vegetable and flower market. We are trying to coordinate that project through a local system in order to give local kids the best opportunities.

Unemployment in Broadmeadows is now at 26.4 per cent — higher than in Spain and equal to that in Greece. This is a looming social disaster, and we need to address it, because we are now about to enter the bushfire season. We can see this. On our television screens we will watch the natural disaster of bushfires unfold, and we will be captured by it as we watch it each night. Although unemployment is a less visible and more slowly moving social disaster than a bushfire, it has no fewer consequences, and that is why we cannot just be bystanders or cut our way to prosperity.

Ours is a sophisticated world, and we compete in a global economy, so we have to have a better model to deal with it. Broadmeadows is a flashpoint for the issues of globalisation, the demise of local manufacturing, population growth, multiculturalism, new jobs and the fair go. We should not underestimate how much the proposition of a fair go resonated with the community during the recent election. The concept of a fair go is still held dearly. I have always been sceptical of the isms, because the passage of time generally exposes their flaws, but the Australian Labor Party is still our best bet to increase prosperity and a fair go for all. The Labor Party has proved it, and we all need to rally again. We have got a great strategy about practical idealism — the things that are tested and are evidence based. Do not just take them on a whim, do

not be ideological, but invest in them to make them happen. That is the strategy that we will pursue in this government.

This is the point that has been missed by some members on the conservative side, and the Abbott government has defined it by its first budget. The people in the area most affected in the whole country were families in Broadmeadows; it was found to be the poorest area for average weekly earnings and the area with the highest unemployment. This is the proposition that we have to address as a nation. It is only now that the Abbott government is trying to rearrange the deck chairs and make some superficial reforms. This assessment was made by the University of Canberra. It is not made as a political point, but an academic, researched, rigorous point.

You should not let the ideology take control of what you want to do. You should have something that is evidence based and practical that will deliver. That is what Labor's plan and vision have, and they are critical reasons why we are on the Treasury bench today.

With all elections, wherever we come from there is always a connection to your family. For this election, the pre-poll vote was held at the disused Ericsson factory. I remember as a little boy going up there with my father. He would cook the meal, then we would go and see Mum as she came off the assembly line for dinner, and we would sit in the car and have dinner together. It is a tough life for many women. It is an incredibly lonely, tough life if you grow up in these areas. This was a way for us to spend some time together as a family and to be able to see Mum. She was the great educator. As happens more often than not, your mum is generally your first educator. Mum taught us all to read before we could go to school. She taught us how to get into education and made us understand that this was the way to a better future, the way to enlightenment and aspiration, which some members on the other side of the house would mock.

This is what I want in my second term in this Parliament. In my first term I said we should build a multiversity. Just over a decade ago we did not have a public library in my electorate; now we have a multiversity — an Australian first — where we coordinate the three tiers of government. We get the institutes to come in. We have Kangan Institute; that is the hub for the blue-collar jobs. Then La Trobe University comes and provides pathways courses.

There are people who come from non-English-speaking backgrounds or who do not have anybody in their family who has been to university, and they just need a

pathway. All they need is someone to shepherd them, someone to give them half a chance — a hand up, not a handout. That is all they are after. It is a simple proposition, but that will give them the opportunity to make a greater contribution and have better opportunities in life.

Then we can get university degrees from Victoria University and Deakin University. They have all come to the party. They get it; they support it. We will build on this in this next term of government. We will look at the technical college issues and what is going to happen with TAFE. The former government cut \$25 million out of Kangan Institute and then merged it with Bendigo TAFE — because Broadmeadows and Bendigo are such a natural fit! What would that be about? It would be about marginal seats.

Mr Guy interjected.

Mr McGuire — It was about marginal seats. That was the point. And you know why they do it in safe Labor seats? Because they think they can get away with it. That is it; it is cynicism.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr McGuire — I take up the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He actually made a comment on the radio. He represented the people of Broadmeadows, and what did he do? He did the reverse Robin Hood: he cut the money from the central activity district and then he cut the money from the government services building. There he is. I am glad he came out with that. I say to him: good on you, thanks; come on down, be part of it. You have been exposed. There it is.

Here is the politics of envy and resentment from the Leader of the Liberal Party. He did the reverse Robin Hood. Come on down. It is on the record. It was there in the paper, and it goes to his brand. He has been exposed for that level of unfairness. Does he know what this is? Listen to the member; he has nothing. He is the Leader of the Opposition. Where he is now misery and spoils prevail. I wish him well.

I commend all the inaugural speeches made by members tonight. But we need to get down to reality — long, hard, cold reality. I wish them well, and I wish everybody a happy Christmas and a great new year.

Ms Staley (Ripon) — Deputy Speaker, my congratulations to you on your election to high office.

Winning Ripon took a large group of people a phenomenal effort over many months to achieve. I wish to thank members of the Liberal Party in Ripon,

especially my electorate president, Graeme Sandlant; my treasurer, Jim Cox; and my campaign manager, Neil Chamberlain. My thanks also to the oft-maligned team at 104, and those in the Ballarat office led by the state director, Damien Mantach, without whose professional efforts I would not be standing here today.

My partner, Stephen Heard, has been magnificent. His common-sense response to whatever crisis unfolded never failed. His former practicality also saved the day numerous times on the campaign trail. Thank you for grounding me.

My journey to stand here as the member for Ripon has been some time in the making. It is no secret that I attempted preselection four times before finally securing it. It is no secret that I felt the calling of political life at an early age but struggled to attain it. My mother, Nancy Staley; late father, Bill; and sisters, Jane and Alexandra Staley, kept the faith for 30 years. I am so pleased you have been with me today to share this and so sorry Dad could not be. I know he would be as proud, if not prouder, than you are.

Beyond my birth family is the family of friends who have also been on this long journey with me. You have all believed in my potential, often when I no longer believed in it. And we have laughed and celebrated, cried and comforted each other through the triumphs and tribulations of our lives. For the Honourable David Davis and Margaret Fitzherbert in the other place, Joy Howley, Paul Price, John Roskam, Tony Snell, Marie Thornton and Daryl Williams, may there be much more to come.

Last, but by no means least, I thank and commit to the people of Ripon. To give me the honour of representing you, as the only Liberal to win a seat in 2014 that was formerly held by Labor, is without question the single greatest gift I have received. I promised you I would work for you, and here today as your representative I recommit to that promise. I know you will hold me to account, as is your right and duty.

The previous member for Ripon, the Honourable Joe Helper, described Ripon as 'being the most fantastic group of people anybody has ever drawn an electoral boundary around'. I know Joe retains great affection for the people and the place he served for 15 years. And the boundaries of Ripon have changed substantially over the years; the seat has expanded, shrunk, been renamed, swallowed neighbours and been abolished and reinstated. From 1955 until 1972 the seat was renamed Hampden and held by Sir Henry Bolte, of whom I shall have somewhat more to say. The most recent redistribution concluded that 'the essential character of

Ripon was that it covered the old gold country of central western Victoria, and any changes to boundaries should not destroy this character'.

This month is the 160th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade, a defining moment of Victorian history and a key to the essential development of Victorian democracy. The miners of Ballarat and the Ripon region faced what uprising leader Peter Lalor called a tyrannical government of unreasonable red tape, taxes and no political representation, and they demanded to be heard. After Eureka, miners elected parliamentarians. They had local laws governing the goldfields, and the squattocracy began its inexorable and desirable decline. The lesson to government from Eureka is clear: individuals must have the right to go about their business without excessive tax or red-tape burdens.

We all bring personal credos to this place, and I have often thought I could do worse than to adopt Peter Lalor's words as my motto: 'If democracy means opposition to a tyrannical press, a tyrannical people or a tyrannical government, then I have ever been, I am still, and will ever remain, a democrat'.

Sixty-seven years ago almost to the day the then new MP for the seat of Hampden rose to his feet and began by saying:

I had no desire to make my maiden effort this side of Christmas, but on travelling in the country I find the fire danger is so great this year that those of us who represent country electorates must stress the importance of fire control and prevention.

I can only echo Sir Henry Bolte's lament. Ripon is bone dry this year. The season has generally been poor, and in some parts has failed entirely. Farmers are carting water to stock — some daily, some weekly — at significant cost.

In Ripon, like other parts of rural Victoria, we are dependent on the Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers to fight the fires that come to a greater or lesser extent every year. The previous government opened 250 fire stations in four years, the largest single investment in rural fire brigades in Victoria's history. During the election campaign I was fortunate to meet some of the dedicated volunteers at fire station openings. Some of these volunteers have clocked up 50 years of service — 50 years of turnouts, fundraisers, burnoffs, meetings, training days away on strike teams, time away from family and farm business.

Volunteering is the heart of Victoria; it is our culture of individuals coming together in voluntary associations to undertake social, educational, religious and emergency

services, as well as a myriad of other tasks that otherwise could not be done. Unnecessary regulation, certification and alienation of volunteers not only makes us economically poorer; it makes us culturally poorer by reducing the benefits of free association. I have long believed in the power of choirs, book clubs and churches to break down social, ethnic and political barriers. In these fraught times we need them more than ever.

Returning to Sir Henry's then 'maiden' speech: he lamented that the chief limitation on the brigades was their lack of local control. I warn the new government about its plans to assert union control over the CFA. The effect of this will not be CFA fireys standing in polling booths in made-up costumes; it will be the quiet yet devastating resignation from the CFA of thousands of volunteers. As Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria said in advertisements on 26 November 2014, Labor policy 'has the potential to destroy the CFA'. I call on the government to abandon this flawed attempt to pay off union mates.

I make this speech today as a new member of the opposition. This is the job the people of Victoria have given my party for four years. As a party we will convince the people of Victoria that we are worthy of a different job in four years time — that of government. We must be bold in our thinking for Victoria. We must be forward-thinking and inclusive. We must, as Bolte said, 'prove to the people of Australia that fewer controls will mean greater advancement'. It is not enough to believe; we must explain, persuade, prove.

If we are to offer the people of Victoria the education, health care, environmental protection and infrastructure they need, we will need to both improve the taxation mix and challenge the role of government in service provision. We need to think differently about regulation. Business models are transforming around us with profound disruptive potential, and yet often the response is to protect existing operators through regulation, with recent fines of Uber drivers being an obvious example. Models such as Uber and Airbnb are today's equivalent of Amazon or Foxtel.

Regulators or parliamentarians will rarely, if ever, hear about the benefits consumers gain, but they will be bombarded by existing players highlighting potential risks, however small those risks might be. Many of those models are particularly suited to delivering new services into rural communities such as in Ripon. We never had a Borders bookstore. Airbnb opens up new tourism opportunities, and Foxtel significantly increased entertainment options. I will always stand

with the consumer and will be at the forefront of urging my party to do so too.

Similarly we must be vigilant against business's special pleadings for assistance. Every time government distorts markets through subsidy the losers are unsubsidised export-oriented businesses and consumers. Ripon is a major producer of both wool and grain. Farmers like myself are totally exposed to global grain prices, yet they must pay domestic energy and other costs distorted by hidden subsidies.

I have talked about Bolte a lot, and that is because he represented much of today's Ripon electorate. Ararat, where I live, was the centre of his electorate. However, there is another reason — a question of political style. As Barry Muir summed him up in *Bolte from Bamganie*:

His attitude was that everything in politics was a test of strength, in one form or another. Bolte kept going. He met failure, but it did not defeat him. He took chances. If one idea failed, he tried another. He was not afraid to move. And everything he did was carried out with the knowledge that a large proportion of voters was opposed to everything he did or said.

The people of Ripon have given me a job to do to represent them. The people of Victoria have made me part of the opposition for four years. My party has tasked me to carry its banner. I will take chances. If one idea fails, I will try another. I will keep going.

Mr BROOKS (Bundoora) — It is a great pleasure to rise and speak in the debate on the address-in-reply. For the benefit of members opposite, I should say that this is not my first speech in this place, and hopefully it will not be my last.

At the start I would like to acknowledge the election of the Speaker to his esteemed role. He gave us a very small insight into his journey this morning — his background and his story in coming to this country, his election to this Parliament and then his election to that position. It is a great story. It is one he should be very proud of and one I am sure he will use in the fulfilment of his role in this great institution.

I also wish to acknowledge the election of the Deputy Speaker to his role. The member for Melton has been a mentor to many new members in this place over many years. He has been a great supporter of many members on this side of the house, and he has provided guidance to members of all political persuasions. It is great to see him elected Deputy Speaker.

It is a great honour to have been re-elected recently as the member for Bundoora. This is the 12th time the

people of Bundoora have returned a Labor member to that seat since it was created back in 1976 and won on that occasion by the great John Cain. Then of course after his time in this place another great Labor member, Sherryl Garbutt, served the area with distinction. It is an honour to follow in their footsteps in this house.

There are many people who helped in the election campaign in Bundoora I want to thank. I want to put their names on the record. There are too many to mention, but some of the people who did a great amount of work include my office staff, people who have worked with me over the last four years: Jason McDonald, Sean Ingram, David Kozmevski, Bridget Bourke and Terrie Earl. Then there is my great campaign team, comprising people like Brian and Ellen Smiddy, who are well known in the Labor movement here in Victoria, Vince and Sandra O'Grady, Andrew Lauver and Catherine Redfern.

I also want to mention the support that I am sure many members receive from their families. I want to thank my family — my wife, Melinda, and my three children. Sometimes it is a difficult thing for people to have a family member involved in public life — both from a child's perspective and a spouse's perspective. That has been mentioned in some of the other addresses today. I also want to put on the record my appreciation for the great support of my family.

I also want to commend my Liberal opponent in the recent election, Amita Gill. She conducted herself with great integrity during the election campaign. It was a hard-fought election, but she can be very proud of her campaign and the way she performed. It was a very clean fight, as it were, in political terms, and I wish her all the best for the future.

One of the things I am most proud of in coming to this chamber as part of the Andrews Labor government is our commitment to tackle family violence. We have seen the announcement by the Premier of the royal commission to be headed by Justice Marcia Neave, AO. The work of that commission will be broad ranging, and it will look at the causes of family violence, the services that are provided in the area and the laws that govern it. It is so important for us to make sure we get the response right. I also want to acknowledge the roles that will be played by Patricia Faulkner and Tony Nicholson in the commission — two other esteemed Victorians.

Members of this house may disagree in some ways on how to get to the end result, but we all want to see this issue tackled as quickly and as comprehensively as possible. It is quite sobering to think that in Australia on

average one woman is murdered by her former or current partner every week. That is a sad statistic, but those things are real. It was highlighted last year by a tragic case of family violence in my own electorate involving children. It brings home the importance of us getting our response to this particular issue right.

I also wanted to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his assistance in my recent election campaign! There was a large development of about 11 storeys proposed at the edge of Bundoora Park in my electorate — a large regional park. Around 600 objections were made to the local council in relation to that development. It engendered a lot of community opposition. The Leader of the Opposition, formerly the Minister for Planning and a member for Northern Metropolitan Region in the Legislative Council at that time, did not engage with people or explain the process, and that left a lot of people very angry with the previous government.

It was bad for that government and I must say bad for the local community, but in many respects it was helpful for me because those people campaigned for the Labor Party at the last election. They campaigned against a government whose members did not care about their concern, which was the protection of that very nice piece of open space in Bundoora. I want to thank the member for Bulleen for his excellent work in ignoring my local community, although it was a real shame for my local area. I must say that a good outcome is that the local Darebin City Council has now put planning protections in place in that vicinity, so hopefully we will not see the same sort of poor development outcome in the future.

Today there have been many examples of idealism and bipartisanship in the chamber. Since the election members have seen the Premier lead this state without negative political attacks on the opposition. There has been a very positive attitude from government members. I have to say that tonight I am not able to adhere to that. I think it would be wrong for me to speak in this place without putting on the record the concerns I have about the way the previous government treated the people of Victoria, in particular those of my local community.

At the very forefront of that I want to mention the ambulance crisis and the very poor response times of our ambulance service. I talk to my local ambulance officers and listen to their concerns. I listen to people in my local community telling me about waiting for ambulances. As an example, in the past I mentioned the situation of an elderly woman who lay in her driveway with a broken hip, screaming for well over an hour. Those sorts of outcomes are unacceptable, and any

decent government would have taken swift action to address those problems. Instead what we saw in the shadows of an election was the previous government turn a blind eye and try to hide the ambulance statistics, the response time data, from the Victorian people. That was disgraceful. It needs to be put on the record, and we need to remind people time and again of the behaviour of those opposite when they were in charge of running important services such as the ambulance service.

Then in the past few days, once the Minister for Health and the Premier had announced that the war on our paramedics was over — when we had done in two weeks what the previous government could not do in two years, which was bring the ambulance dispute to an end — the shadow Minister for Health had the temerity to suggest that a secret deal was done with the paramedics. It is really important to put on the record that this is a government that will deal with respect and integrity and negotiate in good faith with workers, particularly our emergency service workers, wherever they are. It is amazing what happens when you treat people with respect and do not attack them and what they do: you are able to get the outcomes that you need. I congratulate both the Minister for Health and the Premier for that great work.

The other issue I want to place on the record and remind people about in the appalling record of the previous government is in relation to nursing home sell-offs. Two nursing homes in my electorate were up for sale. I have mentioned many times in this place the Merv Irvine Nursing Home, a facility where care is provided for the most vulnerable people. They are older age and frail and have psychogeriatric needs. They have severe mental health problems, including severe dementia. The families of the residents of that nursing home were distraught at the privatisation process. There was no guarantee about the level of care they would be provided with or about the ongoing viability of that centre. We saw one nursing home close after it was sold off. No attempt whatsoever was made by the previous government to provide any sense of certainty around the future of that facility. It was a blatant disregard of some of the most vulnerable people in our community and the families who care for them.

I am very proud to be part of a government that has made a clear commitment to stop that sell-off process. For people in my community — and it might be only a very small number of people in relative terms — one of the most important achievements of this government will be to stop that sell-off process and ensure that those nursing homes are kept to look after those vulnerable people.

I also want to mention schools. It is an area I had some policy involvement with in opposition. I am proud to be part of a government that is now going to set about implementing some great education policy — not just the \$500 000 worth of capital funding to schools that were left to run down under the previous government. It was interesting this morning to hear those opposite putting forward notices of motion complaining about school infrastructure in their own electorates. I would say they had four years to raise those issues with their then minister, yet they were not able to get those issues fixed. It just highlights the lack of investment in school capital over the term of the last government. We know from departmental documents that school capital investment under the Liberal-Nationals coalition fell to half of what it was under the previous Labor government.

In terms of TAFE cuts, another one that impacted on my electorate to a great extent and the electorates of the members for Eltham and Yan Yean, was the closure of the Greensborough TAFE college. I am proud that this Andrews Labor government is intent on reopening Greensborough college. We have committed \$10 million to reopen that TAFE. We have also seen the first \$20 million of the \$320 million TAFE rescue fund starting to flow. We need to do that. We saw campuses closed under the jurisdiction of the previous Liberal-Nationals government. We saw an 18 per cent drop in the number of students enrolled in government-subsidised TAFE courses.

It would be a good start by those opposite if they were to come into this place and admit their mistakes. It would be great if the former minister responsible for TAFE would admit that he got TAFE wrong. Labor will reopen Greensborough TAFE because it believes in investing in TAFE. We think if you want to bring down unemployment, you need to invest in TAFE. We believe people need the skills to get jobs.

I also want to talk about the great transport initiatives the Andrews Labor government has planned. Again in my electorate I am pleased to see the pilot or trial project of a shuttle bus from La Trobe University to Reservoir station, something which was keenly sought by La Trobe University and which will benefit many students. I am sure that that shuttle bus service will be a great success. As the local member for Bundoora, where La Trobe University sits, I am pleased to be able to say that we support that university. We have already started to support it through that service, and in our previous term in office — under the Bracks and Brumby governments — we supported projects like the AgriBio centre, which not only does a great job of

attracting science students into La Trobe University but also does great work for our agricultural industries.

In summarising, I want to say that it is a proud day for us in the Labor Party to be back in government here. It is obviously a confronting day for those opposite. My advice to them would be to admit their mistakes and to say sorry for the cuts to TAFE, for neglecting our schools, for the crisis in our ambulance service and for trying to flog off nursing homes — to say sorry for all the things that the members of the opposition we will have for the next four years seem reluctant to accept. They failed the Victorian people in key areas, and those are the key areas that the Andrews Labor government is determined to deliver on — not just to deliver on its commitments but to provide good government for the Victorian people.

As I said, I am proud to be part of a bigger Labor team — a Labor government. We look forward over the next four years to delivering sound, stable and good government to the Victorian people. I just hope that members opposite summon up the courage to say, 'We got it wrong; the Victorian people didn't get it wrong'. They should say they got it wrong and accept that the election result was a decision based on their poor performance in those key areas. You cannot run down ambulance services and expect the Victorian people to accept those poor outcomes. I commend you again, Speaker, on your election to this chair.

Mr PAYNTER (Bass) — My congratulations to you, Speaker, on your appointment. Your story is an inspirational one. It is with enormous pride that I stand before you today as the new member for Bass. Bass is a large and diverse electorate that includes rapidly expanding residential areas, fertile and productive farmland, beautiful beaches and coastal towns. The people of Bass are honest and hardworking; they call a spade a spade. They expect their fair share of the resources and infrastructure provided by the state government. That is why they place high demands on their elected officials, and I feel honoured that they have chosen me to represent them in the Parliament. It will require dedication, hard work and commitment. Thankfully these are qualities that I inherited from my father.

My father, Ray, raised our family of eight children. Leaving home at 4.00 a.m. every day to head to the newsagency in Pakenham, he would return home at 6.30 p.m. Whilst it was difficult not having both parents at home, it presented some wonderful opportunities for me and my six brothers and one sister to develop our independence. Working within the constraints of a morning and afternoon paper round, we became

streetwise and independent — characteristics we carry to this day. But above all else, it made me resilient and determined. It was a close-knit and caring Pakenham community that helped raise the Paynter children, and I thank them for this. Although life has not always been kind to Dad — as he so painfully reminds us on a daily basis — his commitment and love to family has never wavered.

They say you make your own luck in life, and in many ways that is true. But you cannot make all of it all of the time. Life is a combination of hard work and good luck. I have learnt this in many ways. I believe role models and mentors play an important role in a person's life. I have been extremely fortunate to have some high-calibre people I have called upon and observed on many, many occasions. I thank Graham Gathercole, Graham 'Josh' Kendall, Tony Fitzgerald and my brother Michael for guiding me along the way and providing me with the strength, advice and wisdom to get me to where I am today. I will call on their influence every day in fulfilling my role as a member of Parliament.

Life is about opportunities: firstly, recognising an opportunity and then taking it. Nothing worth anything is given to you on a platter. That is what makes me a Liberal. You make your own way in life, and you live and die by these decisions. As Liberals we seek opportunities, freedom, safety and security. My foundation stones are family and friends. My beautiful wife, Liz, and three wonderful daughters, Chloe, Abbey and Libby, have provided me with support, love and friendship throughout my life, and I thank them for this; my friends likewise, best represented by the Breakfast Club, ably led by Michael Carroll and past president Peter Carroll. I have been with these boys all my life and shared many great times. They know me all too well and will pull me into line if I ever get ahead of myself.

I turn now to Victoria, the greatest state in Australia, and the electorate of Bass that I represent. My predecessor, Ken Smith, filled the role for 12 years with honour and distinction. I pay tribute to Ken, who served the people of Victoria as a member of Parliament for 26 years. In what other place can you walk the magnificent granite cliffs of Cape Woolamai in the morning, grab a coffee at Porter's in San Remo, then head to the hallowed turf of the MCG? With the Richmond theme song echoing around the ground, my girls and I take our seats alongside the equally passionate Desmond family to watch our mighty Tigers break through the banner. In the Australian vernacular, I wouldn't be dead for quids. Life is good.

I will take up the fight on the issues that really mean something to Bass constituents — better public education; better public hospitals; better roads and public transport; a safe, secure and protected community; and building key infrastructure projects to support our growing state.

We must provide an environment that allows business owners to get on with what they do best — that is, run a business. I have been a chartered accountant for more than 25 years. I have owned businesses and worked closely with small business owners for most of my life. Without exception, these owners want less government regulation, fairer WorkCover and industrial relations laws, and a strong state economy. They deserve to be rewarded with the fruits of their labour, which cannot be counted by the number of hours in the day. Owning and running these businesses places enormous strains on their lives and those of their families. This includes our farmers, who work tirelessly on the land to provide us all with the basic necessities of life. When small business prospers, everybody wins.

I challenge this government to deliver some key projects for the people of Bass. The Wonthaggi education precinct would not only deliver state-of-the-art facilities but would also lift the dreams and aspirations of all people living and seeking education in the area. Other key projects include developing the Wonthaggi hospital to subregional status to deliver the range of services and health care so desperately needed in the area and building an integrated primary care centre at Phillip Island. The island is Victoria's no. 1 destination for overseas visitors and caters for not only its residents but also an influx of visitors throughout the entire year, with peaks during holiday season and major events. There is also the completion of the upgrades of Pakenham and Koo Wee Rup secondary colleges and the rebuilding of the Lang Lang jetty so families and their children can throw a line into Western Port Bay.

Whilst on the subject of election promises, I urge the government to extend its promise to remove railway crossings from 50 to 52 by adding both Main Street and McGregor Road in Pakenham to the list.

A strong and prosperous state economy should provide a quality education system and meaningful employment opportunities. State governments should stick to getting the fundamentals right in addition to lending support to those genuinely in need. I was reminded of that during my campaign when I was told by a wise old branch member and friend of mine, Mr Graeme Mabin, that if you do not stand for something, you stand for nothing — words that will drive me the rest of my days.

I want to pay tribute to two local organisations that helped shape my social conscience and made me realise that I could really make a difference. Outlook is a social enterprise based in Pakenham. It is led by an astute and committed board of management, with Tony Fitzgerald as CEO and Anne McCormick as deputy CEO and a wonderful and equally committed senior management team. They work tirelessly to improve the lives of people with disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. I am the youngest life governor of Outlook, and I have seen firsthand its work in transitioning participants into the community. The empowerment of the individual has had outstanding results. The participant is treated with respect and is given the dignity of taking on the risks associated with performing mundane daily tasks, something that we take for granted. I loudly applaud the introduction of the national disability insurance scheme and the positive impact it will have on the lives of recipients, their carers and their families. Not all of these people have received their share of luck in life.

The second example is Windermere. Its work extends throughout the electorate of Bass. Windermere's CEO, Dr Lynette Buoy, and her team deal with our community's most confronting issues on a daily basis. Domestic violence, and more specifically men's violence against women, is a serious issue that all men must take responsibility for and take a stand on. Talk to your sons, your work colleagues and your mates at the pub about the way they refer to and behave around women.

Why should my daughters grow up in a world where they do not feel safe walking through a park, catching a taxi or jogging around the block, just because they are women? I will continue my strong and public campaign to stop men's violence against women both in my role as a member of Parliament and by supporting the White Ribbon Foundation as a trustee of the Kylie Blackwood Foundation.

Our government must take an active role in combating our modern-day scourge, the drug ice. We must fund programs for those already caught in its evil web and their loving families, many of which have been torn apart whilst trying to provide support. I have seen this firsthand.

We must also fund positive programs that talk openly about youth suicide. Our young need to see that they have a bright future and that life is fun. Quite simply, suicide should never be seen as an option. I applaud the work of beyondblue and in particular former Premier Jeff Kennett as they continue to serve those in the community who are suffering from depression and

anxiety, and who are at risk of suicide. We must talk openly and publicly about these issues and remove any stigma that may be attached to this illness. Too many people are suffering in silence.

It is organisations like Outlook, Windermere, White Ribbon and beyondblue, along with our many volunteer groups such as the Country Fire Authority, the State Emergency Service, surf lifesaving clubs and Rotary and Lions clubs, that build strong, safe and vibrant communities.

The people of Bass and the Liberal Party have put their faith in me, but I am part of a team. I thank the Pakenham branch of the Liberal Party, in particular Marg Burrige, Helen Reid and my friend Ann Selby, along with Neville Goodwin, who put an enormous effort into me becoming the member for Bass. I also thank the tireless work of the many volunteers who supported to me, including members of the Lang Lang, Cowes and Wonthaggi branches of the Liberal Party along with the Bass SEC. In addition, I thank my parliamentary colleagues Edward O'Donohue, a member for Eastern Victoria Region in the Legislative Council, and Brad Battin, the member for Gembrook, along with the federal member for McMillan, Russell Broadbent, for their support and guidance.

I have faced many challenges in my life, and this is one more. Whilst it is important to acknowledge where you have come from, life is about today and tomorrow. A door has been opened and I am ready to walk through it. As the member for Bass, I will be happy to be judged on what I do, starting today.

In closing, there is one person who could not be here today and whom I would like to acknowledge: my grandmother, Alice Paynter. My fondest childhood memories were forged under the peppercorn trees in the backyard of her small weatherboard home in Inglewood in country Victoria. She was perhaps the strongest and yet most loving woman I have ever known. We would spend hours around the wood-fired stove in the kitchen as she recounted tales of my great-uncles, who headed off to war and sacrificed their lives to fight for the freedoms we now enjoy. I can still picture her sitting at the kitchen table, tapping her hand whilst drinking a bottle of Melbourne Bitter, just like it was yesterday. She loved me like no other. It was unconditional: the kind of love only a grandmother could have for a grandson. A part of her has been with me on every step of this journey. I hope I have made you proud, Nan.

Ms HENNESSY (Minister for Health) — I am delighted to rise this evening to make my contribution to the address-in-reply to the Governor's speech. I

commence by congratulating you, Speaker, on your election as Speaker of this Parliament. Many terrific things have happened today, but one of the really lovely things has been seeing the respect and reflection you showed in your contribution, in which you told your story to this chamber about the journey you took from the country of your birth. It reflects so beautifully on the values not just of this country but also of this state that today you became the Speaker of the Victorian Parliament. You do us all proud: congratulations.

I also pass on my congratulations to the Deputy Speaker, the member for Melton. It is a particular source of pride to me that both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker hail from Melbourne's great western suburbs. It is a fabulous story for Melbourne's west, as it is for your families and for the governance of this Parliament. As we all know, the member for Melton is not just an elder of this Parliament but a person who has given us all great support, succour and the odd push every now and again in his contribution. I put on the record my congratulations to him as well.

I also pay tribute to the new Premier of this great state. He has done a wonderful and fabulous thing in achieving what is almost a historical first — I believe it is a historical second — of defeating a first-term government and successfully seeing the election of the Australian Labor Party on a platform that I believe will fundamentally change the face of this state.

Having said that, I also acknowledge the former Premier. I for one believe in the value of public service. Whilst in this chamber and in other forums we will occasionally have a reasonably passionate and occasionally rough interchange, but to have been the Premier of the state of Victoria and to have made that contribution to public service is worthy of acknowledgement. I doff my hat to the former Premier of Victoria.

One of the really terrific things I have enjoyed today is the contribution of new members in their inaugural speeches, and I am excited that there are more to come. One of the unifying themes of those inaugural speeches has been the stories that people have told about the values that propelled them to the Victorian Parliament. Whilst there are obviously certain things we disagree about — and some of those were manifest in the contributions people made this evening — there was a great commonality when people talked about their personal reflections and their experiences in the way in which they expressed gratitude for family and friends, and in the observations they had made in both their professional and their community lives and how those

observations had informed their politics and their values.

Before the great hurly-burly of the politics and debate of the Victorian Parliament truly takes off next year it is worth occasionally pausing to reflect on what we have in common. I have been given pause to reflect this evening by virtue of the fact that some of those who sit on the other side of the house have expressed views on certain issues in their contributions to the debate which broadly reflect my views on those issues. Perhaps I may be naive in my hope that we may one day work on some of those issues in a bipartisan fashion and that the spirit that has been reflected here tonight, particularly in those inaugural speeches, might also be reflected in some of the public policy outcomes we work towards in the Parliament.

I would also like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to those who sought to be re-elected to this chamber but were unsuccessful. I make that tribute irrespective of what political party people hail from. We all know how tough an election year can be. It is tough not just on us and staff; it is also incredibly tough on families. It is important that we briefly pay tribute to the efforts and endeavours of those who worked so hard to try to be elected to the Victorian Parliament but were unsuccessful. At this very late hour, as we reflect on the presents that have not been bought, the cooking that has not been done for Christmas and all the challenges that come from parliamentary and political life, we should also pay tribute to the public service contributed by those who have not returned to this place and certainly not forget them, their friendship or their contribution.

I am honoured and delighted to have become the Minister for Health and the Minister for Ambulance Services. It is a particular honour for me because obviously health is one of those issues that has both a direct and a major impact on the lives of so many Victorians. Certainly after the last four years I am under no illusions about the work that needs to be done in order to improve our health system, but I am particularly proud of the government's policy offering and the work it has done in these early days to that end.

In these early days I have had the opportunity to move around visiting health services and ambulance stations and to meet with paramedics, doctors, nurses, allied health workers, volunteers and patients. It has been a true honour. One particular staff member I met was a woman who had worked for 39 years at Bacchus Marsh and Melton Regional Hospital. The day I visited Bacchus Marsh hospital was the day of her retirement. Our health service is full of incredible people. We have a very important health workforce, and it is one I will

continue to nurture. In achieving that end I will not waste a day.

We have really taken steps to end the war on paramedics. On day one the Premier of the state made a referral to the Fair Work Commission in order that Victorian paramedics will get a work value case to ensure that their rates of pay are commensurate with those in other states. We sought the resignation of members of the Ambulance Victoria board. We have appointed an administrator, changing the culture of that organisation and ensuring that the great challenges of our ambulance service are strategically aligned. It is a very important priority for the new government that Ambulance Victoria is managed with passion, purpose and fairness.

We also put into the public domain the hospital data that had been hidden by the previous government. It shows that ambulance response times are much worse than we thought them to be, even under the scrutiny we had applied in opposition. In almost every local government area things have never been so bad. We have our work cut out to turn that around. An important part of doing that will be the establishment of a consultative committee with paramedics, Ambulance Victoria and other health service experts to look at some of the things we can do to improve response times, because every minute and every second saves lives. We take that commitment very seriously. We have also made a commitment to invest \$100 million to try to improve ambulance response times, and certainly the work of the ambulance performance and policy committee will help advise us to that end.

We have appointed Doug Travis, the former state president of the Australian Medical Association, to conduct an audit of our hospital system to identify where some of the so-called beds the previous government promised might be, to have a look at what our theatre capacity might be and to look at how we might grow the capacity of the Victorian health system. We have also started some work to deliver on our commitment to legislate nurse-patient ratios. As is the case in many other jurisdictions, putting these into law is important not just from a public policy perspective but also from a fairness perspective. We want to take nurse-patient ratios out of the hurly-burly of enterprise bargaining agreement negotiations. This is an incredibly important measure to ensure that patients get the best care and to respect the work of our nurses.

As the Minister for Health and the Minister for Ambulance Services, I hope to be a great champion of nurses and midwives. I am incredibly passionate about their work being recognised. They are a critical part of

our health system and health services, and I hope to demonstrate this government's respect through not just the processes we use but also our public policy responses to their work.

We will also take a very strong stand against hospital violence and aggression. This is a very challenging issue, but I intend to work with each hospital board to ensure that staff and site security is at the highest standard and that violence is reported publicly. It is very firmly my view that greater transparency about violence and aggression in our health services — putting a light on it — will focus the attention of decision-makers and of those who allocate resources and will bring about greater community understanding and sentiment in relation to the importance of addressing these issues. Our health service employees, volunteers and other patients ought not be the direct victims of violence and aggression without response. That also exacerbates some other very difficult model-of-care issues, but the government intends to work very closely with health services boards for the purpose of addressing that.

As I have already indicated in this Parliament, we have referred the issue of medicinal cannabis to the Victorian Law Reform Commission to look at not whether we implement this policy but how we go about implementing it. Having spent time with both the children and families reliant on medicinal cannabis and having observed the difficult choices they have had to make, I note that these families, these children and many other patients deserve to have government trying to work through some of these very challenging issues. I for one am very committed to doing so. We have also launched the ice task force.

I am also very excited about many of the capital commitments the Labor government has made. Particularly close to my heart — and maybe close to your heart as well, Speaker — is the western women's and children's hospital, to be built in Sunshine. There is to be the Victorian heart hospital, a major expansion of Casey Hospital, a comprehensive breast cancer centre in Melbourne's east, a major boost to Moorabbin Hospital, as well as improvements to cardiac services in Ballarat and improvements to critical care services at the Angliss Hospital and many others. I know that many health services right across the state have some really challenging capital issues. We obviously have a very limited pool of resources; it is certainly not a bottomless pool of resources. How we go about allocating those resources in a way that is effective and fair and does not leave communities, particularly vulnerable communities, behind is one of the great challenges that I will confront.

I am very passionate about bench-to-bedside medicine. It can make an incredibly important contribution, and Victoria holds a very pre-eminent position in health and medical research in Australia. We must not let New South Wales and Queensland get ahead of us. Let us appeal to our parochialism! We see in many international jurisdictions an attempt on the part of others to leverage off some of the commercialisation approaches that have been adopted in this country. We must never forget that Victoria has been at the forefront of medical research. It has been at the forefront of discovering things such as the bionic ear and non-invasive genetic testing for epilepsy. Researchers at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research discovered all of the colony-stimulating factors which have helped treat more than 10 million cancer patients and reduced the impacts of chemotherapy.

These are not just heavy scientific matters but things that make a difference in the quality of people's lives. We need to continue to argue and advocate for greater investment in health and medical research. We must never underestimate the power and importance of innovation. We must not just talk about science and education being a competitive advantage of this state and this country; we must nurture and incubate them. I am very passionate about this issue, on which I hope to make great inroads.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge and thank the people of my electorate of Altona for putting their faith in me once again and for re-electing me. I am honoured and privileged by that faith. I intend to reciprocate that honour and faith by delivering to my electorate many of the election commitments that have been made. Those include a new senior school, a new tech school and a new children's centre, as well as ensuring that we get the Sunshine women's and children's hospital built. I have 3000 people at Toyota Altona who will not have employment in the not-too-distant future, and we need to support workers in obtaining retraining and ensure that there are real jobs. I want the people of Altona to feel assured that this government is on their side and that they and their families will not be abandoned. That matter is very important to me.

In conclusion, I wish to honour and thank my gorgeous family and my lovely children, whom I hope to see in the not-too-distant future.

Mr CRISP (Mildura) — I rise to reply to the Governor's speech, which outlines the government's plans for Victoria in the 58th Parliament, and to talk about how this applies to the electorate of Mildura. It is

great to be back in the 58th Parliament representing the diverse people of an expanded Mildura electorate, which takes in many industries in many parts. We have grain and livestock, irrigation, substantial national parks, the great Murray River and mining, with Iluka Resources, as well as the jobs that support all of those industries and the communities that live around them.

This year the grain and livestock industry has had very mixed results across my electorate: almost inverse to logic, the further north you go in my electorate the better the grain crops, and thus the livestock results, have been. The very poor conditions around the central and southern parts of my electorate — certainly south of Sea Lake and Hopetoun — have resulted in very poor crops. For this incoming government there will be local government and electorate issues in Mildura resulting from what has been a severe drought. Though in a very confined area, it has nonetheless affected a great number of people.

Water for irrigation is vital for Mildura's production of high-value horticultural crops, and they are substantial. We have almonds, table grapes, citrus, dried fruit, wines and myriad other fruit and vegetable crops. Certainly at the moment the outlook for almonds is very promising, with some stable to improving prices and growing demand around the world. There is much talk in the almond industry about the capacity to expand, and that expansion will need to be guided and assisted. I will talk a little more about that later. Our table grape, other grape and citrus industries have been damaged by storms, and some assessment of that damage is still underway. Those industries have been in touch with the Premier, seeking some assistance for the small but devastated areas. The Murray River is our lifeline. It is the heart of much of the electorate, with its economic tourism. Having a great river on the doorstep makes Mildura, Robinvale and other Murray River towns great to live and work in.

In terms of mining, Iluka is mineral sands-oriented. It has been very busy mining zircon, rutile, ilmenite and titanium dioxide. Some of the uses to which these substances are put are quite surprising. Zircon is used in household and industrial ceramics and glazes. Rutile is a titanium which is separated out. We know that titanium is used as a metal in many things, including prosthetics. Anyone who has a few screws in them from their childhood probably has titanium in them. Ilmenite is a variation of titanium. Titanium dioxide is a white highly reflective pigment used in paints, plastics, paper, food — Smartie shells come from the Mallee — toothpaste and sunscreen. This is an important industry. Iluka has been a good citizen of my electorate, and the

mining operation is based on moving its mineral ore to Hamilton for concentration and separation.

This brings me to another lifeline through the electorate — that is, the rail system, which is vital for transporting the goods I have spoken of. The Murray Basin rail project, which is a project to standardise the Mildura line, the Sea Lake line and the Manangatang line, was allocated \$220 million in the last state budget. The feasibility study recommended that there be a business case to determine the best route. We have three major users of the railway line, being the grain industry, the mineral sands industry and the high-value horticulture industry. The feasibility study produced four options. With four options and three users, we need to sort out how to make these three very different users fit into one rail route.

The grain industry wants to get to Geelong and Portland, the mineral sands industry wants to get to Hamilton and the high-value horticulture wants to get to the port of Melbourne. This project is in the budget; the funds are there for it to take place. It is ready to go, and in fact it has started, with \$12 million of the \$220 million having been already expended in upgrading the standard gauge link between Hopetoun and Murtoa, which is currently used by the mineral sands companies.

A report for the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure entitled *Murray Basin Region Freight Demand and Infrastructure Study* states:

The opportunity exists to reduce the freight-based road trips (currently over 500 000 trips for grain alone) and the subsequent impacts on the road network. Increased rail mode share through accelerated gauge standardisation and axle load uplift would alleviate the adverse impacts on the road network and reduce port receipt costs.

This is an excellent project that is ready to go and is important to my electorate. I believe that with the funding intact this is a project that is justified and that the new government could pick up, run with and deliver an early result on in its term. It is a major infrastructure project that will have a significant impact on the economy, not just in my electorate but in Victoria generally. The project is ready to go. All we need to do is push the button and, once the engineers and transport economists have established which of the four routes would accommodate the three very different users and what needs to be done, it can start.

I will now look at education. This government wants to make Victoria the education state, and the \$510 million for school upgrades is welcome. However, there are a couple of schools in my electorate that need to be considered. The Merbein P-10 College and the

completion of the Robinvale P-12 College should be high priorities. This is Merbein's second time around. The college has been here before with the Labor government, which promised to do this project in the past. Things have come full cycle. We were prepared to do it in a second term. It very much comes back to the current government to complete this job, which was high on its list of priorities when it lost government. With the \$510 million, the government should now be able to fund the Merbein project and complete it.

I move on to health. There is \$200 million for more beds, and Mildura needs some of them. During our term of government we bought back the Mildura Base Hospital and expanded its accident and emergency department; in fact we doubled it. We put in an extra birthing suite and doubled the size of the special care nursery and the oncology unit. More general beds are now required, and I notice that that is a priority of this government, which has set aside funding for it. Mildura has a strong case, and I look — —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The time has come for me to interrupt proceedings. The honourable member will have the call when this item is next before the house.

Business interrupted under standing orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Country Fire Authority Bayswater station

Ms VICTORIA (Bayswater) — I congratulate you, Deputy Speaker, on your rise to office.

I rise to ask the Minister for Emergency Services to fund the rebuilding of the Bayswater Country Fire Authority (CFA) station to ensure that the residents and businesses of the Bayswater district are fully protected into the future. The current station is manned by an unwaveringly dedicated CFA volunteer team, but there is an urgent need to construct a new, larger and more modern station.

For about a decade the Bayswater fire brigade has campaigned for the redevelopment of its station, which was built in the 1970s and at that time suited the needs of the community. The brigade has outgrown the station, with operational members and communications and administrative staff requiring a new building with up-to-date facilities and more room to store the modern, larger appliances. These trucks and this specialist

equipment are vital assets when it comes to protecting our community. Currently the brigade has a pumper, a tanker, a specialist breathing apparatus vehicle and a slip-on unit, which the community fundraised for. At present the CFA building has room for only two appliances, one of which is only inches from the back wall when reversed into the firehouse, and this leaves no room for volunteers to walk between the two vehicles. This is an obvious occupational health and safety issue.

The Bayswater CFA station is the only one in Victoria to have its administration separate from the firehouse. They are actually divided by a road. This dysfunctional arrangement came about in 2008. There was a need to alleviate the demand on the station, so the brigade took over the nearby Royal District Nursing Service building for administrative purposes. That facility was also used for meetings and indoor training. The building is dilapidated, hazardous and, as was shown during a recent storm, in bad disrepair. It is basically a maintenance nightmare. While the addition of a shipping container and a shed has been a temporary help, the brigade is in dire need of a purpose-built facility to resolve existing and future demands.

The volunteer members respond to some 500 call-outs each year and must be given a safe and suitable workplace. A larger station would also enable safe storage of the brigade's vital equipment. These hardworking volunteers have been amazing members of our community. Some of them have volunteered for well over 20 years, and I commend every single one of them on their dedicated service. I ask the minister to put the Bayswater CFA station rebuilding project at the top of the priority list to ensure that a modernised and functional station will service the dedicated volunteers of the Bayswater fire brigade and ensure the ongoing safety of the residents and businesses of the Bayswater district.

Country Fire Authority Edithvale station

Mr RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the action I seek is that the minister meet with members of the Edithvale Country Fire Authority (CFA) brigade to hear about their service to the community and discuss Labor's commitment to build a new fire station in Edithvale. Edithvale CFA has had a long and proud history of serving and protecting our community since its establishment in 1925. All indications are that this fire season will again be challenging, and firstly I wish all firefighters well in protecting our community over the coming months. Edithvale CFA is an entirely volunteer brigade, supported by over 80 local members

who play a vital role in keeping our region safe. It is one of the most active brigades in Victoria and last year expanded its membership by 60 per cent.

Last year I had the opportunity to visit the brigade at the launch of its emergency response vehicle.

Acknowledging that on occasion volunteer members are first on the scene of a critical incident, the brigade identified the need for this specialised vehicle and was able to raise the funds through the generosity of locals.

Over the past 12 months the Edithvale CFA has attended 88 fires and explosions, 53 protected premises and high-risk structures, 50 motor vehicle accidents and 18 hazardous material incidents. Last summer brigade members also fought fires in the Grampians and at Morwell. This highlights the fact that the dedicated volunteers serve not only their community but also many regions across Victoria when called upon. It was a pleasure to be joined by the former shadow minister for emergency services during the year to hear from brigade captain Graham Fountain and his team about the future plans for the station.

The Edithvale brigade moved across the railway line from the Nepean Highway to Station Street in 1972 but has outgrown its current premises. The Bracks and Brumby Labor governments delivered \$1 million to secure the land adjacent to the current fire station to accommodate a future rebuild of the station. In the past two months I have been honoured to join the former shadow minister for emergency services, now the Minister for Police, to announce the next instalment for Edithvale CFA, with Labor committing \$2.5 million to build a new fire station.

Local firefighters have called for this upgrade, which will include additional bays, offices, training facilities and car parking. Our local firefighters work hard to protect us, and they deserve our support. In conclusion, I request that the Minister for Emergency Services visit the Edithvale CFA in the near future to hear about the brigade's rich history and service to the community and to detail how an Andrews Labor government will work with the brigade to build a new fire station.

Swinburne University of Technology former Lilydale campus

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — May I take this opportunity, Deputy Speaker, to congratulate you on your appointment. I know from having seen you in the role of Acting Speaker that you will carry out your duties with great professionalism and impartiality. It is a very good appointment.

My request for action is to the Minister for Education, who I am pleased to see is at the table. The action I request is for the minister to come to my electorate to clarify exactly when the former Swinburne University of Technology site at Lilydale will be reopened and who the provider will be. The minister has made many statements about reopening the site, yet the community has no information as to when and by whom. Box Hill Institute looked at relocating to the site, but the amount that Swinburne wanted for rental was unrealistic. Box Hill Institute has instead leased a former new car dealership site in the centre of Lilydale within easy walking distance of transport and shops. It is now spending considerable funds on adapting the building, which will be open for the first students in late January.

The minister has continually talked down Box Hill Institute and its plans to fill the gap in further education in Lilydale, which will service the whole of the Yarra Valley. Indeed this excellent initiative from Box Hill Institute will also provide further education for residents in the minister's electorate. Box Hill Institute's standard of education is highly regarded by students and employers, yet the minister has been continuously and publicly disparaging, talking down TAFE and talking down Box Hill Institute. The minister has announced that the government will provide \$10 million to refurbish the Swinburne campus, and \$1 million of it has now been committed to assist the wonderful Melba Support Services to build on the site. Melba is currently leasing a building from Swinburne that for all intents and purposes fits its purposes. Swinburne owns the land and buildings. If the government follows through on its commitment to compulsorily acquire them from Swinburne, it must pay the Valuer-General Victoria's price, which I am told is approximately \$24 million. I want the minister to clarify how many more millions of dollars he is going to provide for the purchase of the property from Swinburne, or is he going to allow Swinburne to subdivide the rest of the site and sell it for housing?

Mr Merlino interjected.

Mrs FYFFE — Will he add to this a sweetener to persuade, bully or cajole a TAFE and university provider to move onto the site? The minister has made the announcements and my constituents are entitled to have answers to their questions. I will take up the interjection made by the minister a moment ago about my representation of the community. I know the minister was very active in getting an Independent to stand on the Swinburne matter; he got less than 400 votes. I ask the minister to come out to Lilydale to clarify the position, answer the questions and tell people

when he will reopen the Swinburne site and who will be coming there.

Lyndale Secondary College

Ms WILLIAMS (Dandenong) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. The matter relates to Labor's commitment of \$7 million for stage 1 of the rebuild of Lyndale Secondary College. I ask the minister to reaffirm his commitment to the school and to work with staff to ensure that funding is allocated as soon as possible.

Lyndale Secondary College is a coeducational government secondary school located in Dandenong North and has an enrolment of about 1000 students. Lyndale consistently achieves strong results and is particularly well regarded for its sporting excellence. It has a strong leadership team led by principal Mark Moyer and a dedicated staff committed to achievement and student wellbeing. The school was built in 1961 and, sadly, has not enjoyed any substantial upgrade to its core teaching facilities since that time. It suffers from many serious structural deficiencies, including having several classrooms that are uninhabitable during the winter months and in periods of extreme heat. Over the years the school has applied for maintenance funding to temporarily patch up problem areas that really need a permanent solution. The staff feel as though they are throwing good money after bad, given that much of the infrastructure is beyond repair. The school also has a number of asbestos-filled portables.

In the lead-up to the election I spent a lot of time with the team at Lyndale, discussing the school's needs and ambitions. I never cease to be amazed by the commitment of the school's staff to ensure they deliver the best possible outcomes for their students. I have also been inspired by the attitudes of students who, more than anything, want to improve the campus for future generations. Lyndale Secondary College is more than just a school; it is a community facility, with the school frequently opening its modest grounds and facilities to local primary schools and sporting clubs. The school leadership is dedicated to maintaining this approach moving forward and believes that any government investment will pay dividends for the Dandenong community as a whole. I call on the minister to reaffirm his commitment to Lyndale with a view to starting works as soon as practicable.

Bushfires

Mr McCURDY (Ovens Valley) — I raise a matter for the Premier as the acting Minister for Agriculture, and the action I seek is for him to visit the communities

of Boweya and Lake Rowan in northern Victoria to speak with farmers who lost livestock during the recent bushfires. Although the Premier visited the area recently, it is vital that he undertake a more comprehensive visit in order to meet those who have lost hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of animals to understand the overwhelming heartbreak these losses have caused these farming families.

The bushfire season is well and truly underway in regional Victoria. In the north-east we have already seen significant damage, with houses lost, livestock killed and hundreds of kilometres of fencing lost. I make an impassioned plea to both the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture to urgently address the needs of our community members. We have buried many animals over the last few days and those that have survived are in need of fodder immediately. The Premier visited the part of the devastated region where he grew up, but clearly a more comprehensive visit is required.

The way locals worked together was simply astonishing and should be commended. Their help ensured that the damage was not greater. The Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service crews and all the volunteer staff were simply outstanding, and I want to place on the record their spirited team work in the face of adversity.

I have attended many community meetings with the member for Euroa, and it was pleasing to see the member for Gembrook, the shadow Minister for Emergency Services, attend the community feedback meetings as well. However, as the smoke disappears, the charred trees, buildings and what used to be fences remain. It is important that the Premier put a package on the table that will allow farmers and all those affected by these events the opportunity to make decisions now. Enough time has elapsed. We want answers and we want them now. The fire season is only beginning and we need help to not just clean up the mess but rebuild the region.

Natural disaster relief has been granted in some local government areas. The Rural City of Wangaratta is yet to receive such status, and part of the problem lies in the qualification of the extent of the area affected in each local government area. The Lake Rowan fire burnt across three local government authorities. The Shire of Moira has been successful in receiving relief and so too has Benalla. With only 320 hectares affected in the Rural City of Wangaratta we need to ensure that just because a local government boundary line was drawn across a farm it does not mean the farmer is any less deserving of compensation and support. I implore the

Premier and the Minister for Agriculture to provide the support that we need.

Bentleigh electorate secondary colleges

Mr STAIKOS (Bentleigh) — My adjournment matter is for the attention of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and concerns Bentleigh Secondary College and McKinnon Secondary College. The action I seek is that the minister ensures that funding for the redevelopment of both secondary colleges is included in the 2015 state budget.

McKinnon and Bentleigh secondary colleges are two schools in my electorate that have served our community well since they were established in the 1950s. Like all schools built at that time, the schools are comprised of temporary classrooms constructed with asbestos. Labor has always believed that a comfortable, modern learning environment is critical to providing young people with a great education and the best possible start in life. That is why successive Labor governments have invested heavily in rebuilding schools in the Bentleigh electorate, including our two government secondary colleges.

Both schools are part of a great Labor legacy in the Bentleigh electorate. It was great to have the former Labor member for Bentleigh, Rob Hudson, in the gallery earlier today because when he was the member \$62 million was invested in rebuilding schools in the Bentleigh electorate. This is in stark contrast to what happened under the Liberal government, which neglected both of these schools. McKinnon Secondary College turned 60 this year, and to commemorate this special occasion the school community released a book on the history of the college. It is a great read that celebrates the college's tradition of excellence. But one cannot get past the author's chronicle of new building works at the school over its 60 years without making a startling observation: the last time a state Liberal government provided a new building for McKinnon Secondary College was in 1964 — that is 50 years ago — when Henry Bolte was Premier, the pound was Australia's currency and television was in black and white.

It was due to that shameful track record that nobody believed the pre-election promises of school rebuilds by the former government. I was proud to announce very early in the year that an Andrews Labor government would invest \$9 million to complete the final stage of the redevelopment of the McKinnon Secondary College and \$9.6 million for Bentleigh Secondary College. At McKinnon Secondary College, which will have nearly 2000 students in 2015, this will mean new buildings to

replace the 32 portables and old temporary classrooms. At Bentleigh Secondary College this will mean new classrooms, a refurbished tech wing and additional basketball courts, which the McKinnon Basketball Association is very excited about. I look forward to work starting on these two very important projects and ask that the minister ensure that they are funded in the next budget.

Ferntree Gully girl guides hall

Mr WAKELING (Ferntree Gully) — Congratulations, Deputy Speaker, on your elevation. I rise to raise a matter for the Minister for Public Transport. The action I seek is for the minister to adjust the current annual lease that applies to the Ferntree Gully girl guides hall on Underwood Road with VicTrack, and I seek the negotiation of a longer term lease for the Ferntree Gully girl guides. The girl guides have been encouraging community awareness for girls aged between 5 and 18 throughout Victoria for over 100 years. The Ferntree Gully guides group was established over 60 years ago. Through fundraising efforts by local families back in 1972, the hall on its current site in Underwood Road was constructed to accommodate the group's weekly meetings.

The Ferntree Gully girl guides has a membership base of approximately 100 and has been using this hall on a weekly basis for the past 44 years every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening. The hall is also used by many other local groups, including the Upwey Country Music Club — which is well known to the Minister for Education, who is at the table — on a monthly basis; the Foothills Community Church, which provides community meals every Wednesday night for over 100 residents of the local community; and the outer eastern region of the Trefoil Guild of Girl Guides Australia meets there on a monthly basis. It is also used by many other groups. This is a significant facility which is used by many people throughout the Ferntree Gully community.

The hall is currently located on VicTrack land with an annual lease that is provided to the girl guides. This situation is causing problems because of large and ongoing maintenance concerns at the hall. As a tenant, the Ferntree Gully girl guides is responsible for the maintenance of the hall. However, the group is unable to undertake significant works given the fact that it has only a yearly lease. The building is principally affected by problems with drainage, which have seen the wooden floor and joists rotting. This has required the group to install a pump in order to discharge the water. This is causing significant problems, and the

organisation is loath to invest significant funds unless the issue of the lease can be sorted out.

On behalf of this very important community group and on behalf of the many users who access this hall, which is a significant piece of infrastructure in the local community, I ask the Minister for Public Transport to take action and to ensure that VicTrack is able to negotiate a new contract for the lease with the organisation on terms that are favourable to the operation of Ferntree Gully girl guides.

Essendon level crossing

Mr PEARSON (Essendon) — Congratulations on your appointment, Deputy Speaker. I rise in the adjournment debate to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. The issue relates to the removal of the Buckley Street, Essendon, level crossing. The Buckley Street level crossing is a major issue in not only the Essendon electorate but also the Niddrie electorate. I ask that the minister meet with local businesses, residents and community organisations to discuss options for removing this level crossing.

The removal of the Buckley Street level crossing was one of the most important issues raised in the course of my campaign for the seat of Essendon, and I know it was one of the major issues in the campaign of the member for Niddrie as well. I would like to acknowledge the role played by the previous member for Essendon, the Honourable Justin Madden, in advocating for the removal of the Buckley Street level crossing over many years. I am certainly very grateful for the attendance of the now Premier at Buckley Street in 2013, when he announced that the Buckley Street level crossing would be earmarked for removal as part of Labor's plan to remove 50 of Melbourne's worst level crossings. In the course of the election campaign I contacted countless residents and attended various street stalls and community forums in the Essendon electorate, and there was overwhelming interest from residents in the vicinity of the Buckley Street level crossing in relation to its being removed as soon as possible.

Throughout the course of this year I have lost count of the number of times the member for Niddrie and I have stood at the Buckley Street level crossing during peak hour and witnessed firsthand what our constituents experience on a daily basis. The reality is that in the peak period the boom gates can be down for 50 minutes in an hour. Also during the peak period the boom gates sometimes go down for 15 minutes at a time when a city-bound service is followed by a Craigieburn-bound

service, followed by a V/Line service and then a freight train — or a combination thereof. The boom gates are then raised for only a brief time before they go down again, and the process repeats.

The City of Moonee Valley has conducted some research on options, and its preferred option is to remove the level crossing and use grade separation at Mount Alexander Road. This would result in the undergrounding of the rail line throughout the precinct and would enable better connectivity with other modes of public transport, such as trams and buses. It will be important to work with the council and the local community to explore the various alternatives for delivering this important project. It would be wonderful to have the opportunity to meet with the minister and interested parties to discuss this matter further.

Woori Yallock Primary School

Ms McLEISH (Eildon) — I rise to make a request of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. The action I seek is for the minister to move swiftly to arrange for the installation of electronic 40-kilometre-an-hour school speed signs at Woori Yallock Primary School on the Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road. Several months ago I became aware of the school's concern for the safety of its students and its crossing supervisor at the crossing.

The school is on a very busy road. Some 180 children use this crossing frequently, because the bulk of housing in the area is across the street. The school had been trying to have this matter addressed for six months prior to contacting me about it. I visited the school on several occasions and witnessed the activity at the school crossing during the afternoon pick-up. I met with principal Danny Hyndman, deputy principal Brendan Fitzpatrick, school council president Kate Russell and school crossing supervisor Dawn and saw firsthand how dangerous this crossing can be. I also had the opportunity to take the former Minister for Finance, the member for Box Hill, and the former Minister for Education, the member for Nepean, there on separate occasions, and we were able to announce a pre-election commitment to install electronic flashing signs at that site.

The cost of the signs is only about \$60 000. There is a cheaper price available, which I know might appeal to the government because today the Treasurer tried to hide the government's \$1 billion cut to Victoria's surplus and hiking up of the state debt. The government may be quite willing to look at a cheaper option. This is certainly something that needs to be looked at. I know there is an option to re-use a set of lights from outside a

school further down the line that was closed a number of years ago.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms McLEISH — This is a very serious matter, and I find it quite disturbing that members of the government, including the Minister for Education, who is at the table, are mocking the requests that I am making.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms McLEISH — I find that extremely disappointing. This is about student safety and the safety of the school crossing supervisor. The issue of the Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road is one that the minister may not be aware of, being an inner city dweller. It is the main road into town, and the school is on the edge of Healesville, where there is an 80-kilometre-an-hour speed limit. The road carries a lot of heavy traffic, such as cars, buses and trucks. The current static signs are proving to be ineffective. They are not highly visible, and the traffic is not slowing. The police were asked by the council to enforce the limit. The first time the police enforced the limit, they charged nine drivers; the second time they did it, they charged three. During winter, foggy conditions make it extremely difficult to see the static signs and the crossing supervisor. The flashing lights would help motorists see the signs, slow down the traffic and improve safety for the students.

Frankston railway station precinct

Mr EDBROOKE (Frankston) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport and concerns the \$50 million investment to transform the Frankston railway station precinct and clean up Young Street after four years of absolutely nothing being done.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr EDBROOKE — And obviously in your electorate too.

The action I seek on behalf of the constituents of the Frankston electorate is that the minister make a timely announcement regarding the Frankston station precinct task force, which was to be established and commence work within the first 100 days of the election of an Andrews Labor government.

I am pleased to note that this is the largest commitment to the community of Frankston in decades, and any vision for the future of Frankston involves this hurdle being overcome. We must upgrade the railway station

precinct in order to attract new employers and new shops and to increase tourism. The rejuvenation of this precinct will make Frankston the gateway to the Mornington Peninsula.

Often people base their initial decision to live, work and invest in our beautiful city on their experience of this precinct. The people of Frankston would greatly appreciate the minister's consideration of this request.

Responses

Mr MERLINO (Minister for Education) — I congratulate you, Deputy Speaker, on your appointment.

The member for Evelyn raised the matter of Swinburne University's Lilydale campus, which is quite an extraordinary adjournment matter for her to raise. Members might need a very quick history lesson. Swinburne University's Lilydale campus — the only university campus and the biggest TAFE provider in the outer east — closed as a direct result of the cuts to TAFE made by the Baillieu and Napthine Liberal governments. Those opposite are shaking their heads.

Mr Wakeling — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I appreciate that the minister has the right to respond, but he is clearly misleading the house. The decision to close Swinburne University's Lilydale campus was made specifically by Swinburne. The minister knows that, and the minister should stop misleading the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order.

Mr MERLINO — The new shadow Minister for Education, the member for Ferntree Gully, was previously the Minister for Higher Education and Skills and one of the wreckers of our TAFE system in Victoria. If those opposite want to shake their heads at what I say at the table, I suggest they re-read the letter from the vice-chancellor of Swinburne University and see the reasons put by the university for closing the doors of Swinburne Lilydale. I read that letter into *Hansard* on another occasion, so they can look at *Hansard*. I can give members opposite a copy of the letter from Swinburne University. That campus was closed as a direct result of the cuts made to TAFE by the Liberals.

Ms McLeish — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Minister for Education needs to be factual. University responsibility is a federal matter, not a state matter.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order. That is a point in debate.

Mr MERLINO — I suggest that all members of the Liberal Party re-read the letter that was released following Swinburne's decision to close its Lilydale campus. It was a forced closure following the cuts to TAFE by the Liberal government. Many members on this side of the chamber have visited Swinburne's Lilydale campus, which is a purpose-built facility. If that facility is lost, it will never be replicated. It is a beautiful property with two purpose-built buildings — a university building and a TAFE building.

At its height, 2500 students from my community and the communities represented by the members for Evelyn and Ferntree Gully — people from right around the outer east — were going to this place of learning for TAFE and higher education in areas like business, hospitality and horticulture. That facility was closed as a direct result of the Liberal cuts to TAFE. If the member for Evelyn thinks that training being provided in shipping containers on a used-car saleyard is an adequate long-term solution for the closure of Swinburne Lilydale, then she is not only deluded —

Mr Wakeling — So you're opposed to Box Hill TAFE?

Mr MERLINO — I am opposed to a solution that involves training in shipping containers at a used-car saleyard.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MERLINO — When Box Hill TAFE announced that it had made a deal with the Liberal government and it was going to deliver training in shipping containers at a used-car saleyard, the member for Evelyn was so excited by that opportunity for young people in our region that she would do cartwheels. Perhaps the member for Evelyn can get up on her feet and tell us what she will do when Labor reopens Swinburne Lilydale, when thousands of people will have the opportunity to undertake a TAFE or higher education course at Swinburne Lilydale. Everyone in our community was horrified at the closure.

I have spoken to people at every secondary school in our region, and principals have told me what a devastating impact the forced closure of Swinburne Lilydale had on our community. I suggest the member for Evelyn should be advocating for the reopening of Swinburne Lilydale. That is what a member who is concerned about her community and about the opportunities for young people in our region would do.

The Minister for Training and Skills will be engaging with all TAFE and higher education providers, and the best and most appropriate provider will be delivering higher education and TAFE at Swinburne Lilydale. That is what will happen. Labor committed unambiguously to the reopening of Swinburne Lilydale and to the reintroduction of TAFE and higher education there. We have committed \$10 million to the refurbishment of those facilities, because they were gutted. All the fixtures and all the furniture — everything — was removed from those buildings following the cuts by the Liberal government. We will provide \$10 million for the refurbishment of that facility. That is part of our \$320 million TAFE Rescue Fund, because that is what we on this side of the house are going to do as the new Labor government: save TAFE and reinvest in our TAFE system. We will have Bruce Mackenzie, the highly respected former CEO — —

Mr Wakeling interjected.

Mr MERLINO — Does the shadow Minister for Education have something to say about Bruce Mackenzie? He is the highly respected former CEO of Holmesglen Institute who will undertake a very important independent vocational education and training funding review. We will get TAFE off its knees and provide a sustainable funding base for TAFE into the future. That is what we will do.

We will reopen Swinburne Lilydale — following its closure. I will be inviting the member for Evelyn to the reopening of Swinburne Lilydale, and perhaps then the member might have something positive to say about that wonderful facility.

The member for Dandenong raised a matter in relation to Lyndale Secondary College. Before the election, as the member pointed out, Labor committed \$7 million to begin the planning and then the stage 1 building works at Lyndale Secondary College. It is a school that, as the member pointed out, is in great need of a capital upgrade. Like so many other schools around the state, it was consistently overlooked by the previous government when it made cuts to the overall budget for school upgrades.

I want to put on the record that the advocacy of the new member for Dandenong did not start tonight with this adjournment debate. When she was the Labor candidate for Dandenong the member was on the phone talking to me about the needs of Lyndale Secondary College. She has been an advocate for her community in Dandenong since the moment she became a preselected candidate and has been strongly pursuing this issue and the needs

of Lyndale with me. This is a large school with over 1000 students. It is delivering terrific outcomes, but the facilities are in a very poor state.

In relation to these adjournment matters from both the member for Dandenong and the member for Bentleigh — and I will get to the member for Bentleigh in a moment — I need to put on the record why we are in this position now. Just like the history lesson with the forced closure of Swinburne Lilydale by the former government, let us go through what investment it made in schools in the last term.

If you look at the last four years of the previous Labor government, you see there was an average investment of \$467 million per year on new schools and capital upgrades for existing schools. Let us go through the first three budgets under the Liberal government: \$208 million in its first budget, \$200 million in its second budget and \$203 million in its third budget. It has a long-term impact. When you cut the capital budget by more than half year on year, it has a devastating impact. New schools in growth corridors simply are not being built. Then that has an impact on portables right across the state.

We have had a 500 per cent increase in portables being ripped out of school communities and being dumped into growth corridors because the former government did not build new schools. It ripped up portables from across the state. It did not deliver capital upgrades to existing schools, so schools like Lyndale Secondary College were left to rot and fall apart.

I want to thank the member for Bentleigh as well for his hard work and advocacy for his local schools, Bentleigh Secondary College and McKinnon Secondary College.

Mr Wakeling — Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Mr MERLINO — Labor has made a commitment of \$9 million to complete the final stage of the redevelopment of McKinnon Secondary College and \$9.6 million for Bentleigh Secondary College. The project at Bentleigh Secondary College involves not only a significant redevelopment around classrooms and its tech wing but also, as the member for Bentleigh pointed out, two additional basketball courts for McKinnon Basketball Association.

McKinnon Basketball Association will move its base to Bentleigh Secondary College. This is an example of what we can deliver. It will not only provide fantastic facilities for students at the schools but also open those

facilities up to the community and make those connections to sporting associations, which is quite exciting.

These are great schools, and the delivery of our commitments to these schools will serve to make them even better. I want to take this opportunity tonight in this adjournment debate to reaffirm all of Labor's election commitments to schools around the state, including Lyndale Secondary College, Bentleigh Secondary College and McKinnon Secondary College, and outline that we will be aiming to meet all of our election commitments as soon as possible, including in the 2015 budget.

Our initial package of \$510 million, which was a commitment for government school building works, will enable us to do just that. I want to assure the members for Dandenong and Bentleigh that we will not waste a day on these projects. We have had four wasted years and three budgets with an average of \$200 million invested in our schools. That is woefully inadequate. We will be engaging with the Lyndale Secondary College community, as well as the McKinnon and Bentleigh secondary college communities. My department will be engaging with them, and we will be getting on with these projects as soon as possible. I want to thank both members for their advocacy for these projects.

Ms GARRETT (Minister for Emergency Services) — I rise to respond to the member for Mordialloc first, and I congratulate him on his election to the seat of Mordialloc and on the extraordinary hard work he undertook over many months to achieve that fine victory.

It was with great pleasure on 23 October that the then shadow minister for emergency services — whom I note is in the house — now the Minister for Police and the Minister for Corrections, joined the now member for Mordialloc at the Edithvale Country Fire Authority (CFA) station to announce that an elected Andrews government would commit \$2.5 million to build a new CFA station at Edithvale. At the time the now member for Mordialloc said:

It's one of the most active brigades in the state and I'm so proud that a Labor government will build them a new station.

We have been elected. There is an Andrews Labor government in Victoria, and we are delighted to be able to fulfil that commitment and ensure that there will be a new CFA station at Edithvale. I note that the member for Mordialloc worked extremely hard to secure this outstanding commitment and that the commitment of \$2.5 million was preceded by a \$1 million investment

provided by the previous Labor government to secure the land next door to the current station. This is where the new station is planned to be built.

I will be absolutely delighted to join the member for Mordialloc at a meeting with the Edithvale CFA brigade — such an active and vibrant branch — to discuss its plans and vision for the new station that will be built at Edithvale and to hear how this commitment from the Andrews Labor government will be received by a very deserving community on the basis of a very hardworking new member.

I now turn to the member for Bayswater's adjournment matter regarding an upgrade to the Bayswater CFA station. We could not move for the reverberations around the building over the last four years from the calling for a CFA station upgrade in Bayswater! The Liberal-Nationals coalition had four years in government, and really it was a cacophony of sound for four years! It committed to the upgrade right at the end — at the death knell. It is interesting.

While we are talking about these matters, I know the Deputy Premier was extremely passionate in his address, and fair enough too. We had four very long, dark years of the Baillieu and Napthine governments, and in no space has this been more apparent than in our emergency services. We have had tens of millions of dollars ripped out of our fire services. We had a failure to deliver the firefighters that were promised. Then the previous government went to war with our firefighters, went to war with our ambulance service, went to war with our nurses and went to war with our teachers.

I am very happy to look at the issues the member for Bayswater has raised. I will be happy to have that conversation. However, as I say, we have had four years of neglect of our emergency services and four years of neglect of the Victorian community. It is an absolute and utter disgrace for the member to come here after four years, having delivered nothing for Bayswater in that space. As I said — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Victoria — On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I find the derogatory attacks most unbecoming when the minister has no idea about what I am asking for or the reason it took this long. It was actually a land issue. If the minister would like to be informed, I am happy to inform her on this issue, but a derogatory attack on me or on the former government on an issue the minister knows nothing about is not becoming of this house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! There is no point of order.

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Public Transport) — I join the enormous list of members who have offered congratulations to you on your fine appointment, Deputy Speaker.

The member for Ovens Valley raised a matter for the Premier as the acting Minister for Agriculture. He called on the Premier to visit the communities at Boyer and Lake Rowan, if I recall correctly, which have been affected by the recent fires in the north-east. Those fires are a poignant reminder that we are heading into another very difficult and dangerous fire season. As the member indicated to the house, the Premier has visited communities in the area, and the member is looking for a follow-up visit and follow-up communications from the government.

The Minister for Emergency Services is at the table, and she and I will be following those matters up on behalf of the member for Ovens Valley. I can assure the member and indeed all members of the house, particularly those in bushfire-affected communities, that we are working very closely with the emergency services in ensuring that the state is as well prepared as it possibly can be for this difficult and dangerous fire season, and we will be working very hard. As the member would know, hardship grants have already been activated for that local community, and we will continue to work closely with communities that are affected by the bushfires that have already occurred this season.

The member for Ferntree Gully raised a matter for me as Minister for Public Transport regarding an issue with the lease for the Ferntree Gully girl guides. The member requested that I make representations in their negotiations with VicTrack, requesting that a longer lease arrangement be put in place so that the girl guides can have some certainty around their use of the site. I ask the member for Ferntree Gully to send something to me in writing so I can follow that up with VicTrack. That would be helpful to me.

I will respond to two members of the government. It is great to have members of the government advocating positively and strongly for their communities. I am happy to respond to the matter raised by the member for Essendon. He is a fantastic member for Essendon, following in a great tradition of fantastic members who have represented the Labor Party in the Essendon electorate. The member for Essendon is strongly advocating for his community in asking for work to progress as quickly as possible on the removal of the

level crossing at Buckley Street in Essendon. This level crossing has been ranked as very dangerous by the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model, and it has been included in the Andrews Labor government's Project 10 000 plan to remove the 50 most dangerous level crossings across Melbourne. The Craigieburn line, which this level crossing sits on, is a very busy line, as the member for Essendon would well know. Not only are there safety issues at these level crossings but congestion is also a significant matter for commuters and businesses in the area. We also know that people will spend less time with their families if they have to sit at level crossings.

We have already started work on our level crossing removal program, and we are well on our way towards hitting that target of removing 20 level crossings in our first term. The member for Essendon asked for a follow-up conversation to be held with key groups in his community. In partnership with the member for Essendon, I will be very pleased to arrange meetings with the Moonee Valley City Council, with businesses, with residents and with community groups as the member for Essendon sees fit. I look forward to talking with him following tonight's adjournment debate to arrange that time. I am very pleased to respond positively to the member for Essendon, and I thank him for his tremendous advocacy in this place for his community.

I turn to the matter raised by the member for Frankston, who is continuing a strong tradition of Labor representatives in Frankston, and I congratulate him on his election to this place. The Frankston railway station precinct is well known to many of us in the house. You cannot travel to Frankston without being struck by some of the challenges that sit around that precinct. There are challenges for passengers, challenges for people trying to use the train station and bus interchange and challenges for businesses in that area. When I was shadow Minister for Police and Emergency Services I spent time talking to businesses in and around the station about some of the safety issues, and of course I heard concerns and issues raised by the community.

The Frankston station precinct project is an incredibly important project for these reasons, but it is also important in that it will support the Frankston community to develop and will ensure that the community has the facilities and services it needs for the future. We will be looking at working with a range of organisations in the local community on this project. We have already indicated that a station precinct task force will be established within our first 100 days of being in government, with the member for Frankston's

very strong involvement. The task force will involve the city council, Victoria Police, Public Transport Victoria and Chisholm TAFE, which has a significant presence in that area and is a very important training provider to that local community, to local traders and to businesses as well.

I look forward to working with the member for Frankston. He has already demonstrated that he is going to be a very powerful advocate for his community. He is exactly the sort of person that the community of Frankston needs representing it in this place and standing up for what it needs and what it deserves. I very much look forward over the next four years to working with the member for Frankston on delivering this important Frankston station precinct project.

The member for Eildon raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety regarding the installation of 40-kilometre-per-hour flashing speed signs at Woori Yallock Primary School. Has safety just become an issue at this school? I recognise that school safety is a very important issue that members will raise, but it is funny that the member had a lot of information about the different options that could be developed around this school. It is clear she has made representations in the past and obviously failed. It is no wonder the member's representations failed in the past to see this sort of work done at the school, because the previous government halted works on the 40-kilometre-per-hour speed signs around schools. I will be absolutely pleased to raise this matter with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. We will look at doing the work that the former government clearly failed to do over four years. It is quite astonishing that after four years this school has suddenly become a priority for the member for Eildon. It is a great shame it was not a priority for her in the past.

In concluding the adjournment debate tonight, on behalf of the Andrews Labor government — and I hope opposition members will not mind me saying this on their behalf as well — I wish the parliamentary staff a very happy Christmas season. I am sure it has been quite a challenge for the staff to ensure that Parliament could return for this one day of sitting after the 2014 election, to ensure that we managed to get proceedings underway, that we were able to get members sworn in, that we were able to get legislation started and that new members were able to make their inaugural speeches. A lot of work goes into preparing for the first sitting of Parliament. We appreciate the work that has been done by the parliamentary staff given that it has come at a time when people are starting to prepare for Christmas. I think we can say the day has gone very smoothly for all of us, and we pass on our deepest appreciation to all

of the staff, who have clearly given up a lot of their time in the busy festive season to ensure that democracy is on the move in Victoria and the Andrews Labor government is able to get to work.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! I concur with the minister. On behalf of myself and the Speaker, I wish everybody a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous new year. The house is now adjourned.

**House adjourned 10.55 p.m. until Tuesday,
10 February.**

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