

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 21 June 2016

(Extract from book 10)

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HANSARD¹⁵⁰



1866–2016

Following a select committee investigation, Victorian Hansard was conceived when the following amended motion was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 June 1865:

That in the opinion of this house, provision should be made to secure a more accurate report of the debates in Parliament, in the form of *Hansard*.

The sessional volume for the first sitting period of the Fifth Parliament, from 12 February to 10 April 1866, contains the following preface dated 11 April:

As a preface to the first volume of “Parliamentary Debates” (new series), it is not inappropriate to state that prior to the Fifth Parliament of Victoria the newspapers of the day virtually supplied the only records of the debates of the Legislature.

With the commencement of the Fifth Parliament, however, an independent report was furnished by a special staff of reporters, and issued in weekly parts.

This volume contains the complete reports of the proceedings of both Houses during the past session.

In 2016 the Hansard Unit of the Department of Parliamentary Services continues the work begun 150 years ago of providing an accurate and complete report of the proceedings of both houses of the Victorian Parliament.

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry (to 22 May 2016)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and 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 Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
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, and 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 Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

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The ministry (from 23 May 2016)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
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Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
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Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Kairouz, MP

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AM

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC, QC

The ministry (from 20 June 2016)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, and Minister for Emergency Services (from 10 June 2016) [Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation 10 June to 20 June 2016]	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	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
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Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
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Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms G. A. Tierney, MLC

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Mr Herbert, Ms Mikakos, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

Procedure Committee — The President, Dr Carling-Jenkins, Mr Davis, Mr Jennings, Ms Pennicuik, Ms Pulford, Ms Tierney and Ms Wooldridge.

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Mr Bourman, #Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Finn, Ms Hartland, Mr Leane, Mr Morris and Mr Ondarchie.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — #Mr Barber, Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, #Ms Hartland, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, Mr Somyurek, Ms Tierney and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O'Donohue, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

Port of Melbourne Select Committee — Mr Barber, Mr Drum, Mr Mulino, Mr Ondarchie, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing and Ms Tierney.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Ms Bath, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Staikos and Ms Thomson.

Dispute Resolution Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Dalidakis, Ms Dunn, Mr Jennings and Ms Wooldridge. (*Assembly*): Ms Allan, Mr Clark, Mr Merlino, Mr M. O'Brien, Mr Pakula, Ms Richardson and Mr Walsh

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee — (*Council*): Mr Bourman, Mr Elasmarr and Mr Melhem. (*Assembly*): Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Nardella and Ms Ryall.

Electoral Matters Committee — (*Council*): Ms Patten and Mr Somyurek. (*Assembly*): Ms Asher, Ms Blandthorn, Mr Dixon, Mr Northe and Ms Spence.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Ms Halfpenny, Mr McCurdy, Mr Richardson, Mr Tilley and Ms Ward.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr Finn. (*Assembly*): Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards, Ms Kealy and Ms McLeish.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, Ms Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson.

Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee — (*Council*): Mr Ramsay and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Hibbins, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Richardson, Ms Thomson and Mr Wells.

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Council*): Mr Eideh and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Ms Pennicuik and Ms Shing. (*Assembly*): Mr Dimopoulos, Mr Morris, Mr D. O'Brien, Mr Pearson, Mr T. Smith and Ms Ward.

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

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

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

President: The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President: Ms G. TIERNEY

Acting Presidents: Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Elasmr, Mr Finn, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Ramsay

Leader of the Government:
The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:
The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:
The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:
The Hon. D. K. DRUM

Leader of the Greens:
Mr G. BARBER

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ¹	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel	Western Metropolitan	DLP	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	Patten, Ms Fiona	Northern Metropolitan	ASP
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ³	Northern Victoria	Nats	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Northern Victoria	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaelyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP			

¹ Resigned 25 February 2015

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ Resigned 27 May 2016

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party;
DLP — Democratic Labour Party; Greens — Australian Greens;
LP — Liberal Party; Nats — The Nationals;
SFP — Shooters and Fishers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

CONTENTS

TUESDAY, 21 JUNE 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	2951
ROYAL ASSENT	2951
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	
<i>Membership</i>	2951
MINISTRY	2951
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
<i>Country Fire Authority chief executive officer</i>	2953, 2954
<i>Dairy industry</i>	2954
<i>Kindergartens</i>	2955
<i>Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade electorate officer</i>	2955
<i>Sex work regulation</i>	2955, 2956
<i>Firearms</i>	2956
<i>Western distributor</i>	2957
<i>Written responses</i>	2957
RULINGS BY THE CHAIR	
<i>Questions on notice</i>	2957
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS	
<i>Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	2958
<i>Western Metropolitan Region</i>	2958, 2960
<i>Northern Victoria Region</i>	2958
<i>Eastern Victoria Region</i>	2958, 2959, 2960
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	2958
<i>Western Victoria Region</i>	2958
<i>Southern Metropolitan Region</i>	2959
PETITIONS	
<i>Elevated rail proposal</i>	2960
<i>Christmas carols in schools</i>	2960
<i>Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement</i>	2960
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AMENDMENT (EQUALITY FOR STUDENTS) BILL 2016	
<i>Introduction and first reading</i>	2961
HAZELWOOD MINE FIRE INQUIRY	
<i>Victorian government implementation plan</i>	2961
SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE	
<i>Alert Digest No. 9</i>	2961
<i>Regulations and legislative instruments review</i>	2961
MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND TRADE ELECTORATE OFFICER	2962
PAPERS	2963
PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS	2963
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
<i>General business</i>	2964
STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE	
<i>Membership</i>	2964
MINISTERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Orlando shootings</i>	2964
<i>Jo Cox, MP</i>	2965
<i>Aboriginal children and young people</i>	2965
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Australian Labor Party</i>	2965
<i>Australian Deer Association</i>	2966
<i>Lorne and District Men's Shed</i>	2966
<i>Warrnambool regional youth hub</i>	2966
<i>Jo Cox, MP</i>	2966, 2967, 2968
<i>Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement</i>	2967
<i>Federation Training</i>	2967
<i>Inspiring Young Women</i>	2967
<i>Dairy industry</i>	2968
<i>Keep Australia Pet Friendly campaign</i>	2968
<i>Eating Disorders Victoria</i>	2968
<i>Olympic sailing team</i>	2969
<i>Braybrook on Board</i>	2969
<i>Gender equality</i>	2969
<i>Drug crime prevention</i>	2970
<i>Battle of Crete and the Greek campaign commemoration</i>	2970
VICTORIAN AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE	
<i>Performance audit</i>	2970
<i>Financial audit</i>	2971
STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2016	
<i>Committee</i>	2971
STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2016–2017) BILL 2016	
<i>Committee</i>	2980
STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016 and BUDGET PAPERS 2016–17	
<i>Second reading</i>	2985
STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016	
<i>Second reading</i>	3004
<i>Committee</i>	3004
ADJOURNMENT	
<i>Shepparton rail services</i>	3019
<i>LaunchVic</i>	3020
<i>Reid Oval, Warrnambool</i>	3020
<i>Knox planning scheme amendment</i>	3021
<i>Planning buffer zones</i>	3021
<i>Northern Metropolitan Region kindergartens</i>	3021
<i>Waverley Park powerlines</i>	3022
<i>Walhalla Vinter Ljusfest</i>	3022
<i>Multicultural events</i>	3023
<i>Police resources</i>	3023
<i>Melton police resources</i>	3024
<i>Elevated rail proposal</i>	3024
<i>Point Cook police resources</i>	3025
<i>NewCold</i>	3025
<i>Responses</i>	3026

Tuesday, 21 June 2016

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 2.06 p.m. and read the prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The PRESIDENT — Order! On behalf of the Victorian state Parliament I acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples, the traditional custodians of this land which has served as a significant meeting place of the first people of Victoria. I acknowledge and pay respect to the elders of the Aboriginal nations in Victoria, past and present, and welcome any elders and members of the Aboriginal communities who may visit or participate in the events or proceedings of the Parliament this week.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent on 15 June to:

**Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Amendment (Public Safety) Act 2016
Witness Protection Amendment Act 2016.**

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Membership

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have received a letter from Ms Suzanna Sheed, the Independent member for Shepparton in another place. She has written to both the Speaker, the Honourable Telmo Languiller, and me in respect of her resignation from the Family and Community Development Committee.

Ms Sheed said:

It is with much regret I am writing to formally resign from my position as a member of the Family and Community Development Committee, as set out in section 21 of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003.

Over the past 14 months I have found my work on the committee very rewarding and valuable. The inquiry the committee conducted into abuse in disability residential services had a lasting impact on me and it was a privilege to be part of the process.

There is not a day that passes, since I was elected as the state member for the Shepparton district, that I don't reflect on what a privilege it is to represent my community and lead with passion and purpose to work towards positive changes in all sectors of our community, and being a committee member extended that capacity.

The Family and Community Development Committee presented a unique opportunity for me to further engage and

develop my depth of knowledge and understanding into issues that face our most vulnerable members of society. I regret not being able to continue the good work of the committee in its further endeavours. I am proud of the work I have undertaken along with my fellow parliamentarians as a member of the committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the tyranny of distance and time is one of the factors which lead me to my decision to resign. The current legislation does not allow for attendance at committee meetings with voting rights by way of telephone or videoconferencing. This creates a significant burden on regional members of Parliament when it comes to attending committee meetings and hearings. It also ultimately impacts on the capacity of MPs to fully represent the interests of their electorate if they are not able to participate fully in committees.

Accordingly, I believe it important to review the legislation to see if it can be updated thereby enabling the appropriate use of existing technology for committee purposes.

The letter was signed by Ms Sheed on 15 June.

MINISTRY

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I wish to advise the house of changes to the ministry. The Deputy Premier has added emergency services to his current portfolio responsibilities. I am very pleased to welcome the member for Kororoit to the ministry; the member has been sworn in as the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation.

I wish to advise the house of changes to ministers responsible in this place. The Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade will represent the Deputy Premier as Minister for Emergency Services. The Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade will also represent the new Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation.

I would also like to warmly welcome Ms Tierney, a member for Western Victoria, to her new role as the Cabinet Secretary. All other representative arrangements remain in place. I would add to that that Ms Tierney has indicated her intention to resign her position as Deputy President after the conclusion of this sitting week. The government looks forward to having conversations with members about a new Deputy President over the winter break.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, the coalition has serious concerns about a member of the executive also serving in a role as the Deputy President, which has a very clear expectation of independence from all parties, in presiding over committee stages and other responsibilities. We do not think that the co-serving of these roles as outlined by

the Deputy Leader of the Government for the course of this week is an appropriate role for that member to play.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, President, I can certainly confirm for the house that the matters that will be considered by the house during the course of this sitting week are matters that have not, obviously, been considered during the 24 hours or so that Ms Tierney has been in her new role and that there is no conflict. But I would restate that it is not the government's intention for Ms Tierney to serve in both roles beyond the conclusion of this sitting week.

Mr Davis — Further on the point of order, President, I am just trying to understand this announcement and whether the Deputy President will serve as chair of committees during the budget process in the interim, because that would be a clear conflict. The chamber's right, desire and responsibility to scrutinise financial bills — the budget bills — are critical, and a member of the executive, or a member who is very close to the executive, taking on that role would be problematic.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have received a point of order from Ms Wooldridge and more of a query from Mr Davis in respect of the arrangement proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Government. Can I first take the opportunity on a positive note to convey my congratulations to Ms Tierney on her election by her party as the Cabinet Secretary. I convey to her my appreciation for the work that she has undertaken in the period she has acted as Deputy President, representing me at a number of functions and certainly, I think, discharging the duties within this house with great effect. Certainly in the committee processes in particular, which are very demanding for a Deputy President, I think she has been outstanding. I thank Ms Tierney for the work that she has done and, as I said, sincerely congratulate her on this new position.

To the matter that has been raised by way of advice to the house and the point of order inviting me to make comment on it, I would suggest that there is nothing in the standing orders that would prevent Ms Tierney from continuing in both roles beyond this week. It would be possible for her to, from the point of view of legislation — both the legislative framework and our own house's running rules — to continue in both roles into the future. Clearly I think from a perception point of view that would be a very bad look, and it is clearly not proposed by the government, which also recognises the importance of, as I understand it, the separation of the two roles.

The position of Cabinet Secretary is an interesting one. If Ms Tierney had been elected to the ministry as a member of executive government, then I do not believe that it would have been appropriate at all for her to continue in the Deputy President role this week. The position of Cabinet Secretary is a little different; it is actually one off that executive role, and whilst obviously she would sit at the cabinet table and be privy to executive government deliberations, the fact is that she is not a member of the cabinet sworn by the Governor, so it is a different position.

Given that at this point I do not have before me any proposed nominations for a new Deputy President — indeed I do not currently have before me a resignation from Ms Tierney from the position of Deputy President — I am really not in a position to suggest that anything other than the proposition made by the Deputy Leader of the Government today might be our process going forward for this particular week.

In regard to the budget matters, in my view apart from anything else the Deputy President has discharged her responsibilities as chairman of committees with impartiality and has not participated in debate as part of that role. I would anticipate that she would certainly continue that way if she does preside in committee this week.

In the event that Ms Tierney decided not to preside over that particular committee process, having heard the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Davis and as proposed by the Deputy Leader of the Government, it would be my desire that Mr Elasmar would step into that committee role. As I said, in terms of standing orders and the legislative framework within which we work, there is no reason why Ms Tierney cannot discharge both duties for the sake of this week. Certainly the proposition of the government is that this is an interim measure to allow for fairly late circumstances that have given rise to Ms Tierney's new role and there is now an opportunity for the house at a fairly early date to look at the election of a new Deputy President, presumably on the nomination of the government.

Ms Wooldridge — Thank you, President, for your response to that point of order. On a further point of order, President, I think it is important to note that this potential perception of a conflict of interest is entirely of the government's making. The government could have chosen not to appoint Ms Tierney until the end of the week. There was no Cabinet Secretary for an entire week. We could have quite comfortably dealt with that this sitting week and had that appointment made, but the government has chosen to create a potential

perceived conflict of interest by persisting with appointments yesterday rather than reflecting on the important matters and the budget that this house has to consider this week.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Rather than a point of order, that is almost a debating point — and I accept that — and I think the government and the house hears the commentary. Can I simply say at this juncture that I have the utmost confidence in the Deputy President fulfilling her duties this week.

Mr Davis — On a further point of order, President, it is true to say that I am troubled by that arrangement. What I would ask of you as assistance to the chamber is that we closely investigate other jurisdictions to see what has occurred on similar occasions. If there is such precedent where a Cabinet Secretary has sat as Deputy President, I would be pleased to hear it. Whether *May* or some other authority has useful material, I would seek that you and the clerks investigate that and perhaps report to the chamber.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am prepared to have the matter researched to some extent, although I am concerned about taking resources and putting them on what I think is a bit of a wild goose chase, without diminishing the point made by the member. I know that he has raised it in proper context and in all fairness, but I would hazard a guess that we will not find a precedent for this matter — —

Ms Shing interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Order! There is an extraordinary echo in this chamber. I will have to get it fixed, and if it cannot be fixed, I will take other action.

On that basis, I think that rather than do a lot of research work on it we will check some immediate information and authorities. But, as I said, I very much doubt that there is precedent for this. The government is relying on the goodwill of the chamber. As I said, there is no statutory reason, or indeed a reason in terms of our own house rules, why the arrangement cannot proceed this week. I think the government is very well aware — as is Ms Tierney, as an honourable member of this house who has discharged her duties as Deputy President well over the course of this Parliament — and mindful of the perception factors, and it is addressing that in due course.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Country Fire Authority chief executive officer

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Regarding the first meeting of the new Country Fire Authority (CFA) board on Friday, 17 June 2016, what time did the board meeting start and finish, and where did it take place?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I thank Ms Wooldridge for her question, and as the minister representing the minister in the other place I will take that question on notice.

Supplementary question

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My supplementary question is: given the appointment of Lucinda Nolan as chief executive officer took 219 days through, and I quote, ‘a competitive recruitment process’ and the announcement of the appointment of Frances Diver took exactly 4 hours and 12 minutes, will the government make public the full minutes of the CFA board meeting so that all Victorians can ensure the utmost probity and public service appointment procedures have been met?

Mr Dalidakis — President, I seek your ruling as to whether you believe that supplementary question was apposite to the substantive question prior to answering. I put that as a point of order to you formally, President.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I can understand the minister’s concern as to whether or not this is apposite to the original question. However, I do intend to allow the supplementary question to stand. I think that the supplementary question goes certainly to some of the content of a meeting that may or may not have taken place — I am not aware that that is what was sought in the substantive question, but the supplementary question certainly does go to a timing issue, which is relevant to the substantive question.

I might also just add on this occasion that the decision to provide a written answer to the substantive question — and this would probably have been the case with this one anyway, given that it is a minister in another house — rather than an immediate response does give me some difficulty in terms of judging the fairness of the supplementary question. But as I said, in this case it probably would have been the same result given that the minister is in another place. I will allow the supplementary question to stand on this occasion.

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — Thank you, President; I appreciate that guidance. I will take the supplementary question on notice too.

Country Fire Authority chief executive officer

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade representing the Minister for Emergency Services. How many interviews for the position of chief executive officer of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) did Frances Diver undertake prior to the announcement of her appointment as CEO on 17 June 2016, and who conducted those interviews?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — Again, in my time since being appointed to the ministry, whenever I have had a question — from the very beginning — in relation to a portfolio that I represent for a minister in the other place, I have always taken the question on notice and endeavoured to get you a response within two business days, President, as per your ruling. This will be no different. I will take that question on notice.

Supplementary question

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — How many candidates were interviewed for the CEO position of the CFA prior to the announcement of Frances Diver on Friday, 17 June 2016?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — Further to my response to the substantive question, I will also take that on notice. Let me also reflect that prior to the new minister taking over that responsibility in the other place I already had responsibility for representing that portfolio in this place. That is not a new arrangement. As I said, I will take that on notice, again.

Country Fire Authority chief executive officer

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Given the short time frame, it appears that there is likely to have been significant ministerial involvement in the appointment of the new CEO of the Country Fire Authority (CFA), so I ask: did the minister or the Premier direct the incoming CFA board to appoint Frances Diver as the new chief executive officer of the CFA?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I completely reject the characterisation in Mr Finn’s question. However, should we be able to find a substantive part to that question I will take that on notice for the minister in the other place.

Supplementary question

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. I am particularly looking forward to the answer to that one. Did the minister, the Premier or any staff in their offices talk to Frances Diver about the CEO role at the CFA prior to Lucinda Nolan’s announcement of her resignation?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I will again take the supplementary question on notice.

Dairy industry

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. In response to a dairy industry crisis triggered by Murray Goulburn and Fonterra dropping milk prices the federal government has offered dairy families a \$1000 a fortnight farm household allowance, boosted rural financial counselling services and instigated a \$555 million concessional loans program, as requested by dairy farmers. The minister has been critical of the federal government’s response. What else has the minister asked the commonwealth to do that would assist Victoria’s dairy farmers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank the member, who is perhaps the Leader of The Nationals in the upper house, for her question and her interest in these areas affecting the people who own, operate or work on these 4300 dairy farms in Victoria. I will provide a written response to the member, providing a detailed critique of our concerns about the shortcomings of the federal government’s package and indeed some of the requests for enhancement that we have made public on multiple occasions and that indeed I have communicated through, I think, now three separate letters to my federal counterpart. I think these are well known, but for Ms Bath’s benefit I will provide her with a detailed response to that question.

Supplementary question

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — I look forward to the minister’s response. My supplementary question is again about assistance for dairy farmers. Alongside the commonwealth’s \$570 million package, the Victorian government has so far announced \$11.4 million worth

of initiatives funded by the dairy industry and state programs. Given the state's dissatisfaction with the commonwealth, will the Victorian government step up and offer any direct financial relief to dairy farming businesses, such as rate rebates, which were last week requested by Gannawarra and Campaspe shires, or water charge waivers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will provide a written response to Ms Bath on those matters, including details of some further information gleaned from the many discussions I have had with dairy farmers across Victoria in the last three or four weeks.

Kindergartens

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. How many kindergartens are yet to meet the ratios for childhood educators which came into effect on 1 January this year?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank Mr Morris for his question. I look forward to providing him with a detailed written answer on this matter, detailing to him the great initiative that this government has provided in terms of funding the new ratios which started this year.

Supplementary question

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — I thank the minister for taking that question on notice to provide a written response. How many of the kindergartens have applied for a waiver, and how many of those that have applied have been approved and how many have been declined?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I thank Mr Morris for his supplementary question. I look forward to providing him with a response in writing — matters that I have in fact previously responded to in questions on notice from Ms Crozier.

Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade electorate officer

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. Why was the minister's staff member Pablo Salina bullying and intimidating small business owners who are critical of the disruptions and mismanagement of the level crossing removal at Centre Road, Bentleigh, as occurred this morning?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I think that is a particularly nasty question. The person identified in that question is in fact an electorate officer and responsible to both the Speaker of the Parliament and the President, as Presiding Officers, not to me in my ministerial capacity. It has nothing to do with my portfolio.

Mrs Peulich — On a point of order, President, Ms Crozier's question also relates to the minister's own responsibilities as the minister for small business. Clearly Ms Crozier is citing an example of a small business owner who felt aggrieved by the treatment that he has received. I believe the question is in order and that you should rule accordingly.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I do have some concern about this type of question, because the individuals named in Parliament who are members of staff, either ministerial or electorate staff, are not in a position to defend themselves in this place. A staff member's expectation that their member of Parliament will step in and defend them is to some extent a fair expectation, but there are some limitations on that. Interestingly enough, I think Mr Dalidakis's comment that the Speaker and I were responsible for the employment of electorate officers could well be the answer to that substantive question, and I think to that extent the answer is made.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Thank you, President. I note your response to the minister. Does the minister condone this bullying behaviour by his staff towards small businesses which are struggling and closing because of the Andrews government's mismanagement of level crossing removals?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I find the question most troubling and quite a disgraceful abuse of Parliament and privilege, and I find the assertions most disrespectful to this chamber. To attack staff members is very serious, and it is a grave claim to be making under privilege. I shall not deliver a response other than to say that Ms Crozier has reached a low that I did not even think she could go to.

Sex work regulation

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — My question is to Minister Dalidakis representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. Recently Dr Megan Tyler, the co-convenor of the Nordic Model Information

Network — a global alliance of researchers focusing on sex work — has been touring the country discussing the pros of the so-called ‘Swedish model’. She has called for Victoria to adopt this approach to sex work, which aims to decriminalise sex workers but criminalise the clients of sex workers. This is a ridiculous approach, which in other jurisdictions has led to increased violence against sex workers and further stigmatisation of those workers, who are mainly women. My question to the minister is: did anyone from the government meet with Dr Tyler to discuss these issues?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — I share Ms Patten’s concern about the welfare of anybody that is placed in that situation. Certainly through situation or choice or otherwise people deserve the respect in the personal employment that they undertake. In relation to the specifics of meetings otherwise, I will certainly take that question on notice and seek a response by the minister and/or her department.

Supplementary question

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister; I look forward to that. The model has been rejected by sex worker rights groups as well as advocacy groups such as Amnesty International, who note the horrifically negative impacts of driving this industry underground. Will the Labor government reject in no uncertain terms adopting the Nordic model, thus ensuring that those working in the adult industry are not further targeted by those with a paternalistic agenda?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade) — Again I say to Ms Patten I will take that question on notice and seek a fulsome response by the minister in question.

Firearms

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections in his capacity as representing the Minister for Police. The temporary ban on the importation of the eight-shot Adler A110 lever-action shotgun expires on 7 August. It has been reported that there are 7000 orders for this firearm, including 600 in Victoria. At present no decision has been made regarding an extension of the ban while the ongoing discussions of the review of the national firearms agreement continue beyond the expected end date.

The Australian Crime Commission has warned the federal justice minister of the dangers of the Adler, which is available as a category A firearm and can be modified to carry more rounds. Gun control advocates are calling for the Adler to be classified as category C if the magazine carries five rounds or less and as category D if it carries more — and people are modifying them. My question is: is the government reconsidering reclassification of the Adler ahead of the expiry of the importation ban on 7 August?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills) — I thank Ms Pennicuik for her question. Can I just take this opportunity to state that in recent times we have seen some horrendous acts of violence using firearms across the world. We have seen the tragic assassination of British MP Jo Cox and of course the horrendous death of 49 people and 53 wounded in Orlando in the US. Can I just put on the record that the government of Victoria, as is every member of this Parliament, is of course absolutely appalled at these actions, and it will do all it can to ensure that such events do not occur here in this state.

I should also point out that in regard to the weapon used by Omar Mateen in the Orlando massacre it was an AR-15 assault rifle, which would not have been available to him here in Victoria under our national firearms agreement and the Victorian Firearms Act 1996, which very heavily restrict the use of those firearms. In regard to the question, however, from Ms Pennicuik, I will take that on notice.

Supplementary question

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for his answer, and I look forward to his written response. My supplementary question is: will the government be raising with the federal government the problem of the imminent expiry of the temporary ban on the importation of the Adler lever-action shotgun in August, and what pressure is it putting on the government to do something about either extending that ban or recategorising the firearm?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Training and Skills) — I thank Ms Pennicuik for her supplementary question. As I say, we will certainly be doing all we can to ensure the tragic events that have created so much horror around the world in recent times do not occur here. In regard to the specific question about the Victorian government putting that issue on the agenda for the next national ministers meeting, I will take that on notice.

Western distributor

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture on behalf of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. As part of the western distributor project the government has presented five options for ramps connecting to the West Gate Freeway. So far the maps show a line on a map, not a 3D visual of how many storeys high each option would be or more detail about the likely noise, pollution and visual impacts of each option. While the government has consulted — or claims to have consulted — on these five options, many in the community feel that insufficient information has been given to make a properly informed decision. There are also rumours of a new option being developed. My question for the minister is: will the community be given more detailed information, rather than just squiggly lines on a map, about each option and an opportunity to provide feedback regarding these options before a final reference design is decided?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Ms Hartland for her question. I will seek a written response from Mr Donnellan and provide that.

Written responses

The PRESIDENT — Order! On the basis of today's questions can I indicate that in respect of Ms Bath's question to Ms Pulford and Mr Morris's question to Ms Mikakos, a one-day response to the members is required.

In respect of all other questions, bar Ms Crozier's questions to Mr Dalidakis, I am directing two-business-day written responses. These include Ms Wooldridge's question to Mr Dalidakis on the board of the CFA, Mr Ramsay's question to Mr Dalidakis on CEO interviews at the CFA, Mr Finn's question to Mr Dalidakis on the CEO appointment, Ms Patten's question to Mr Dalidakis in respect of the consumer affairs portfolio and the study that she mentioned, Ms Pennicuik's question to Mr Herbert in respect of the looming expiration of the ban on the particular weapon and Ms Hartland's question to Ms Pulford, which is in regard to Mr Donnellan's portfolio. For each of those, as I said, I am directing two days on both substantive and supplementary questions.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, on 7 June I asked a question of the Minister for Families and Children representing the Minister for Health, which was taken on notice. That was answered not on the 9th as required but on the 17th, but I thank

Ms Mikakos for following up with the Minister for Health so that a response came at least prior to this sitting week. Unfortunately the response is not responsive to either the main question or the supplementary question, and I therefore ask that you reinstate that question and perhaps help the minister in the other place understand the need to respond specifically to the question, as other ministers do. I am asking you to reinstate that question for a specific response.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have given some consideration to this one. It is my view that in respect of the original question the minister's response has addressed the matter with some relevant information. Whilst it was perhaps not to the satisfaction of the member, I think that there has been a reasonable answer to that question. However, in regard to the supplementary question I am of a view that that has not been answered and that is information that could well be provided. The point on the substantive question was that the minister's response was, 'That's going to be taken up in some planning in July'. I take that as an adequate response. However, the supplementary question was a lot more contemporary in terms of asking what the situation is now, in June. I think that question is capable of being answered in that context, so I would reinstate the supplementary question.

RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

Questions on notice

The PRESIDENT — Order! Ms Wooldridge has written to me about a number of questions. These are questions on notice 5295, 5298, 5300, 5301, 5302 and 5303. This was a difficult adjudication. I did seek some advice from the clerks in regard to these questions and what my ruling should be on them. Having considered each of these questions carefully, I would seek to reinstate on the notice paper question 5298, part (b), and question 5303, part (b). Whilst I am obviously not in the position of advising ministers, my reasoning with this one was that it is looking at categories — not going to actual privacy matters of individual claims but to categories of claim. That is what my expectation would be in regard to part (b).

In regard to question 5301, I would seek the reinstatement of that question in full on the notice paper — parts (a) and (b).

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question this afternoon is for the Minister for Education. I would like him to detail the rules for Victorian public schools' use of property and resources, such as newsletters, for party political purposes. Unfortunately in a number of cases the federal member for Jagajaga has been publicising a forum that she held, and I quote, 'to discuss Labor's plan for tackling climate change' to be held at Eltham High School. Secondly, there have been reports in the paper over the weekend about a newsletter from the principal of Eltham High School which very clearly suggests that because of Gonski funding a vote should be made for the Labor Party at the upcoming federal election. I seek advice from the Minister for Education about what the rules are in relation to this given the performance of the principal of Eltham High School.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Families and Children and Minister for Youth Affairs, Ms Mikakos. I was pleased to see in this year's budget a further \$10 million for kindergarten capital. This comes on top of the \$50 million delivered in last year's budget. This \$10 million of course is available for a number of growth areas, including Wyndham in my electorate, which averages 81 births per week. The early years are critical, so this is a welcome investment in our growth suburbs. Can the minister provide me with further information on how councils can apply for this funding, particularly in Western Metropolitan Region?

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and it is regarding the Premier's hand-picked and newly appointed Country Fire Authority (CFA) board. If Victorians were under the illusion that this government is operating as a democracy, they were sorely mistaken. The Premier has now successfully created a dictatorship and successfully removed all opponents to his regime within the space of a few days. First he bullied the emergency services minister, forcing her to resign, then he sacked the experienced CFA board, then he bullied the CEO until she left her position and now he has installed his five hand-picked board members, who will make up 55 per cent of the new CFA board. Victorians cannot afford the Premier

using his personally appointed new CFA board to ram through the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) in its current form. In accordance with the CFA act, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) will nominate a further four members to complete the board. Will the minister guarantee that the EBA will not be signed off until the VFBV has nominated its four board members so that the EBA can be considered by the entire board?

Eastern Victoria Region

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Families and Children, and it relates to the recently announced high-impact risk assessment and management panels, which is a very important initiative in part coming out of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. I ask the minister to detail how this initiative will better support women and children who are victims of family violence on the Mornington Peninsula.

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Planning. Does the decision of the ALP-dominated Greater Dandenong City Council to change the council position on the C143 green wedge planning scheme amendment to allow for 0.2-hectare lots in some proposed green wedge A-zoned areas reflect a change in the ALP party position to preserve the green wedge? This proposed lot size, which affects the Keys Road precinct and the Hutton Road North precinct, is dramatically lower than the 8 hectares that is the default for the green wedge A zone and would open up these parts of the Greater Dandenong green wedge to residential subdivision, contravening the purpose of the zone. I note that this decision will be subject to a rescission motion at the next council meeting on Monday, 27 June.

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Ms Pulford, and the answer I am seeking from her is in relation to the drought assistance package, which consisted, in part, of a five-year concessional loan. I understand from the rural counselling service that the uptake of these drought concessional loans is very low, and one of the reasons put to me was the financial hurdles for farmers in meeting the criteria and the conditions to access the loans. So the question I ask of the minister is: how many farmers in Western Victoria

Region who applied for the drought assistance concessional loans actually received them?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport, and it is a follow-up to the answer to a constituency question I asked her. The minister replied to me on 14 April 2016 with regard to level crossing removals at Carnegie, Murrumbeena and Hughesdale, and she said that one of the benefits of the preferred design is the retention of mature trees in that area. That is also a statement on the Level Crossing Removal Authority's website. Many people have emailed me with concerns about the removal of trees, including trees with wildlife, including possums and so on, in those trees. Therefore my question to the minister is: how many trees have been removed in that area and how many will be removed as part of the level crossing removal program, and is she ensuring that wildlife carers are there at any time trees are either removed or lopped during the project?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport, and it concerns the Level Crossing Removal Authority and its sky rail project that runs from Caulfield through to Dandenong, in particular along the Pakenham line. What is occurring down there in terms of vegetation and established trees is a shocking outcome for the community. Large and established trees and stands of trees are being removed at a significant rate, and pre-European trees, including red gums greater than 250 years of age, are at risk in this process. Therefore what I seek from the minister, given that there is no environment effects statement, no proper process here, is for her to release a full vegetation study along the course of that project so that the community can see which trees are proposed to be removed and which trees will be lost forever.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — I rise today to draw a matter to the attention of the Minister for Health in the other place, and the matter on which I seek assistance and an update is the Asbestos Council of Victoria and the Gippsland Asbestos Related Diseases Support group. A highly successful domestic asbestos removal kit was trialled across 2014 and 2015 by WorkSafe Victoria and the Department of Health and Human Services. This has continued to make sure people can identify and remove asbestos in their homes,

and given the proliferation of this substance and the way in which people are now starting to renovate, it is a significant health issue to make sure this kit continues and is funded and continues to roll out across councils and that the necessary resources are provided. Therefore I seek information from the Minister for Health, as well as the minister responsible for WorkSafe in the other place, to provide an indication as to when this funding will be available and how we can continue to provide the domestic asbestos removal kit.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Education. Recently I met with the principal of Bairnsdale Secondary College and took a tour of the school. It was fantastic to see the completed stage 1 of an upgrade funded with \$10 million from the coalition government. They are great, modern, purpose-built buildings. However, the school is still waiting on funding to complete stage 2 of the build. The coalition committed to delivering \$12.5 million to finish the job, but Labor would not agree to fund it. Labor was happy to commit to the funding prior to the 2010 election but has now left the school in the lurch. Despite repeated requests from my colleague Mr Tim Bull in the Legislative Assembly, the school and the principal, the Minister for Education, James Merlino, has not visited the school. On radio this year the minister promised that he would visit this year, but here we are in June and there is still no meeting planned. I ask the minister: what date will he visit Bairnsdale Secondary College and meet with the principal and staff to discuss this very important completion of the school?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Recently when asked in the other place the minister ruled out lane reduction for cars on St Kilda Road because of the Domain railway station. However, the impact assessment for precinct 7 of Domain station suggests otherwise. It says:

The St Kilda Road functional layout, including number of traffic lanes (two lanes versus three lanes) in the post-construction arrangement is still being worked through with stakeholders.

Both options involve reductions in lanes for traffic after Domain station is built. As Domain is an underground station, why has the government decided to reduce the number of lanes for traffic above it?

Western Metropolitan Region

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Education, Minister Merlino. Recently I met with music teachers in Western Metropolitan Region, at Strathmore Secondary College. They expressed dismay that they were losing their representation with the Department of Education and Training and therefore with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) with the retirement of their regional music coordinator. This coordinator is not being replaced. I ask the minister why this essential position is not being replaced. I also ask the minister to give Western Metropolitan Region a voice in the VIT by reinstating this position.

Eastern Victoria Region

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — My question is for the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water. Sambar deer hunting was allowed in parts of the southern Alpine National Park before it became a national park in 1981 and since then with no noticeable incidents. It is deer hunting in this area that has been keeping the numbers down. Recently I have been made aware of a proposal to create firearm-free camping sites in that area. Perhaps coincidentally the sites in the proposal — the ones I have been made aware of anyway — have all the best facilities. My question is: what problem is this proposal addressing?

The PRESIDENT — Order! Whilst I was deliberating on some other matters — I was not listening to all constituency questions today — it was brought to my notice that a couple of constituency questions appeared to skate very close to talking about government policy areas as distinct from matters that are relevant specifically to a constituency, so I will be having a look at *Hansard* in respect of those matters. I just remind members that it does need to be a question that relates directly to their constituency and not a matter of broader policy. There are other options in our proceedings to pursue those matters.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Elevated rail proposal

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council, the risks and issues relating to the removal of level crossings on the Frankston train line. We the petitioners highlight to the Legislative Council of Victoria that the sky rail will:

negatively impact neighbourhood character;

create a visual bulk, overshadow property and reduce daylight;

attract crime and antisocial behaviour including vandalism, graffiti and dumping of rubbish;

decrease property values;

increase noise to the surrounding community;

have a catastrophic impact on small businesses.

The petitioners therefore request that the Premier of Victoria and the government immediately rule out a sky rail for the Frankston line and ensure that level crossings at Cheltenham, Mentone, Edithvale, Bonbeach, Carrum, Seaford and Frankston are placed underground. The petitioners also request that the community is properly consulted regarding potential upgrades to infrastructure at stations where level crossings are not being removed, such as Parkdale and Mordialloc.

By Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) (1003 signatures).

Laid on table.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan).

Christmas carols in schools

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that the government has imposed a ban on singing traditional Christmas carols in Victorian government schools.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government reverses this decision and allow students attending government schools to sing traditional Christmas carols.

By Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (8 signatures).

Laid on table.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that Premier Daniel Andrews must not hand control of the Country Fire Authority (CFA) to the United Firefighters Union (UFU).

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria ensure that the Andrews government reject any EBA conditions that:

- A. allows the UFU to direct or impede CFA activities;

- B. undermines the autonomy of CFA volunteer firefighters;
- C. impacts upon the rights of CFA volunteer firefighters (including through the volunteers charter);
- D. leads to a reduction in surge capacity of the CFA to respond to major events.

**By Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria)
(58 signatures).**

Laid on table.

**Ordered to be considered next day on motion of
Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria).**

Ms Pulford — On a point of order, President, are petitions required to be listed on the blue?

The PRESIDENT — No.

Ms Pulford — They are not?

The PRESIDENT — Essentially what happened was that Ms Lovell's petition was actually a combined petition, and administratively it has been separated into two today. So basically it has been through all the right processes, and it was just in the table office where it was decided they should be separate rather than one. Essentially the member is right — we would try to give notice of every petition.

Ms Pulford — It says 'Christmas carols', not 'Country Fire Authority'. You can all understand my confusion. Thank you, President.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AMENDMENT (EQUALITY FOR STUDENTS) BILL 2016

Introduction and first reading

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) introduced a bill for an act to amend the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 to provide that religious schools cannot discriminate against students on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity, marital status, parental status or gender identity.

Read first time.

HAZELWOOD MINE FIRE INQUIRY

Victorian government implementation plan

**Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture), by leave,
presented plan.**

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Alert Digest No. 9

Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) presented *Alert Digest No. 9 of 2016*, including appendices.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

It is not often I will move that, but *Alert Digest No. 9* is probably one of the most detailed charter reports that I have seen in the period that I have been in the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, and I would encourage members, when the Crimes Amendment (Sexual Offences) Bill 2016 is before this chamber, to look at it in some detail in the committee stage. I would also encourage the Attorney-General, who has carriage of the responsibility of that legislation, to review it. We will be writing to the Attorney-General in respect of a range of issues and expect that he may come back with some amendments in due course.

Motion agreed to.

Regulations and legislative instruments review

Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) presented 2015 report, including appendices.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be published.

Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In doing so I acknowledge the work of the subcommittee, as referenced on page 3 of the report, but in particular I just want to acknowledge the new executive officer, Mr Nathan Bunt, who has taken over the role from Mr Andrew Homer; the tireless work of Ms Helen Mason, who is the legal adviser in regulations, who has a wealth of experience in dealing with the regulations and who has been providing quite substantial information to the subcommittee; to the other officers, Mr Simon Dinsbergs, Ms Sonya Caruana, the office manager, and in particular Professor Jeremy Gans, the human rights adviser, who has provided advice.

The regulations and legislative instruments committee is probably a unique subcommittee. It meets every week before the main Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, but it provides and goes through a range of regulations. The principles of the regulations review are set out in section 21 of the Subordinate Legislation Act 1994, and they principally relate to significant issues in regulation. They are outlined in relation to statutory rules that have been prepared in contravention of any of the provisions of the act or of the guidelines where the contravention is of a substantial or material nature. They go to matters relating to issues around a technical matter where there have been incomplete certificates, where there has been a Premier's certificate or where there have been planning and other matters, or if there has been significant economic or social burden on any sector of the public and in particular if there have been any infringements on human rights, which is contained in section 21(1)(ha).

Particular to that, I thought I would outline for members interested that page 17 of the report relates to a significant human rights issue that came out in a matter relating to Harness Racing Victoria. There was an amount of work done in relation to the amendments to the Australian Rules of Harness Racing and the Australian Trotting Stud Book Regulations. That was quite an interesting outline because it spoke about the powers of those bodies in terms of their capacity to apply what we see in the regulation of bills here into a regulation. I do acknowledge the response that we got from the minister, and I would encourage members to have a look at the response to that.

Anyway, this is a report which, as I said, dates from 2015. In summary I can say that there has been a lot of work that has been undertaken in the fifth year of

operation. When this was first undertaken, there were only 24 legislative instruments in the first year compared to last year, when there were 57. The workload increases, and the report verifies and outlines that workload.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS, INNOVATION AND TRADE ELECTORATE OFFICER

The PRESIDENT — Order! I want to make a short comment following up from question time, because I have now been provided with some material that was central to the issue raised by Ms Crozier, and I have got to say I am very disturbed. In a week when we have seen one of our colleagues cut down in anger in an assassination in England, I think that it is outrageous that a debate here in this state has become so intemperate where a brochure is produced that features the face of the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade on a poster using the word 'assassination'.

The minister's staffer has been accused of bullying. It is pretty hard to be meek and mild when you are confronted with that sort of material in this sort of time frame. I am growing perhaps too old, but I am also growing increasingly saddened by the tone of so many debates not just in our community but globally. The death of Jo Cox ought to be a poignant reminder of the need for us to focus on contesting the ideas rather than attacking the individuals who discuss and promote those ideas.

When I look at this brochure I am sickened, particularly in the time frame when this has come and been released. I think those people who make claims of bullying ought to take a good hard look at themselves, and I think we all ought to think fairly carefully about the way we prosecute some of our ideas, some of our policies and some of our arguments, and to make sure that we do keep them on a constructive basis, where the community is informed and the community is able to make its choices. Yes, we — and particularly the government — are held accountable for decisions, but that should be at least in a spirit where there is a respect for other people.

This minister comes from a background where his people have been the victims of some of the worst atrocities that we have seen, and his face has now been linked to the word 'assassination'. The terminology was an assassination of small business. It was not obviously saying an assassination of the minister. It was talking a little bit more obliquely — more than a little bit more

obliquely. Nonetheless to use that word and to involve the small business minister's title and his face in that publication was outrageous. I would hope that all members of this Parliament would dissuade those people in the community who seek to provoke with such incendiary material.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Deputy Clerk:

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notices of Approval of the following amendments to planning schemes —

Alpine Planning Scheme — Amendments C39 and C52.

Glenelg Planning Scheme — Amendments C76 (Part 2) and C88.

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme — Amendment C334.

Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme — Amendment C191.

Latrobe Planning Scheme — Amendment C89.

Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme — Amendment C107.

Moonee Valley Planning Scheme — Amendment C166.

Port Phillip Planning Scheme — Amendment C119.

South Gippsland Planning Scheme — Amendment C97.

Wellington Planning Scheme — Amendment C95.

Statutory Rule under the Infringements Act 2006 — No. 56.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule No. 56.

Proclamations of the Governor in Council fixing operative dates in respect of the following acts:

Access to Medicinal Cannabis Act 2016 — Part 1, Part 3, sections 100, 123, 126, 129 to 131, 133 and 135 — 8 June 2016 (*Gazette No. S177, 7 June 2016*).

Delivering Victorian Infrastructure (Port of Melbourne Lease Transaction) Act 2016 — Sections 94(1) (other than paragraph (a)) and (2), 95 to 98, 103 to 122, 131 to 153, 155 to 157 and Divisions 3 to 7 of Part 8 — 7 June 2016; remaining provisions of Division 2 of Part 8 — 1 July 2016 (*Gazette No. S177, 7 June 2016*).

Relationships Amendment Act 2016 — Whole Act (except section 6) — 1 July 2016 (*Gazette No. S177, 7 June 2016*).

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Clerk — I have received the following letter dated 20 June 2016 from the Attorney-General headed 'Production of documents — Punt Road':

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 9 December 2015 ordering the production of all documents relating to traffic flows, projections and plans concerning Punt Road. As you are aware, on 29 April 2016, on behalf of the government, I wrote to you to provide an interim response to the order by producing 303 documents that fell within the scope of the Council's order.

I also refer to my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, noting the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege. Those limits centre on the protection of the public interest. In those letters I set out factors which the government considers in assessing whether the release of documents would be prejudicial to the public interest so as to found a claim of executive privilege.

The government has conducted a thorough and diligent search to identify the documents that may be relevant to the Council's resolution and has assessed the identified documents against the factors listed in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In final satisfaction of the Council's order, the government has determined to:

- (1) produce 23 documents in full;
- (2) produce a further 5 documents in part;
- (3) not produce 28 documents in full; and
- (4) not produce parts of 5 of the documents referred to in (2) above,

The government considers that producing the documents referred to in (3) and (4) above would be prejudicial to the public interest. Accordingly, the government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to those documents, and on the grounds set out, in the attached schedule.

Some of the documents produced by the government contain the personal information of individuals. In the interests of personal privacy, those details have been excluded.

I have received the following letter dated 20 June from the Attorney-General headed 'Production of documents — Crown Casino analysis of player gambling data':

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 4 May 2016 ordering the production of the document prepared by Crown Casino for the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation in late 2015, which outlines the finding of analysis of player data, including as an indicator for punters who may have a problem with their gambling.

Further to my letter of 6 June 2016, the government has now finalised its review and assessment of this document for the purpose of responding to the order. In response to the Council's order, I enclose a copy of the document.

I have received a further letter from the Attorney-General headed 'Production of documents — Level Crossing Removal Project':

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 24 February 2016 ordering the production of certain documents relating to the level crossing removal project — Caulfield to Dandenong project proposal.

The Council's resolution requires the production of, amongst other categories of documents, the electronic presentation of the 3D modelling shown to residents in the Level Crossing Removal Authority's one-on-one consultations.

As the presentation can only be viewed on a computer with special software, the government invites members of the Council to view the presentation by attending a briefing facilitated by the Level Crossing Removal Authority from 2.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. on Monday, 27 June 2016, at the Theatre, level 5, 121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne. Members who intend to attend the briefing should confirm their attendance to Elsie Loh, Department of Premier and Cabinet, on elsie.loh@dpc.vic.gov.au.

The government will continue to identify, collate, review and assess material that is relevant to the Council's order and provide a further response to the Council's order as soon as possible.

Mr Davis — Just as a point of order, Acting President, it is now four months since 24 February, when the Council sought the range of documents. The government is still dithering and delaying and yet actually commencing building this project. I seek from the government some explanation for this four-month delay.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! Mr Davis knows there is another procedure if he wants to raise this issue. There is no point of order.

Ordered that letter be considered next day on motion of Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan).

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

General business

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — By leave, I move:

That precedence be given to the following general business on Wednesday, 22 June 2016:

- (1) order of the day 3, second reading of the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Plastic Bags, Packaging and Microbeads) Bill 2016;
- (2) order of the day made this day, second reading of the Equal Opportunity Amendment (Equality for Students) Bill 2016;
- (3) notice of motion given this day by Mr Davis to revoke amendment GC37 to the Cardinia, Casey, Glen Eira,

Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Melbourne, Monash, Stonnington and Yarra planning schemes;

- (4) notice of motion given this day by Ms Hartland relating to a production of documents order for Crown Casino; and
- (5) order of the day 1, resumption of debate on the Ridesharing Bill 2016.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Membership

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — By leave, I move:

That Mr Bourman be appointed to the Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Orlando shootings

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I seek the house's indulgence to make comments on a couple of matters beyond my areas of ministerial responsibility but matters of significance and interest, I am sure, to all members of the house.

On Thursday, the Victorian government sponsored a vigil to commemorate those murdered in the Orlando massacre. Every death is a tragedy and every murder is despicable. Forty-nine members of the LGBTI community and their friends were gunned down in a Florida gay bar on 12 June. The Premier earlier today referred to New York author, Arwa Mahdawi, who wrote:

Gay clubs are everything that straight people take for granted ...

And:

Gay clubs are hospitals that patch up the invisible wounds you accumulate.

...

They're community centres. They're sanctuaries.

A terrorist desecrated this sanctuary in the deadliest act of violence against LGBTI people, the deadliest terrorist attack on US soil since September 11 and the worst gun massacre in US history. Loved partners, sons

and daughters were lost. For LGBTI people, this was an attack on their right to be who they are.

Jo Cox, MP

Ms PULFORD — What happened in Orlando was a discriminate attack, as too was the murder of Jo Cox, a member of the House of Commons for Batley and Spen. Ms Cox was killed doing something we all do — meeting with constituents and performing our most basic responsibility as elected representatives. Sadly it seems that a fellow parliamentarian was killed because of her beliefs and because of the devotion and energy with which she pursued them.

Today I would also like to recognise Jo's life — a life abhorrently cut short after only 41 years. We give our condolences to Jo's husband, Brendan; their children, Lejla, three years of age, and Cuilin, five years of age; their extended family; and also the 649 men and women who sat beside her at Westminster. Indeed, her colleagues have been recalled to Parliament today to pay tribute to her life and to her work.

There is no place for hatred and discrimination of any kind in our state, in this country or in the world. The government — and the people of Victoria — extend our sympathies and our compassion to the friends and families mourning the loss of their loved ones.

Aboriginal children and young people

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I rise to inform the house about our government's continued efforts to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. Last week I was pleased to co-chair the third Victorian Aboriginal Children's Forum, in which Aboriginal leaders, government and heads of community sector agencies come together to work on policies and strategies to reduce this terrible over-representation. I can inform the house that last week's meeting was very productive and all participants came away feeling positive that although we have a lot of work ahead of us together we are initiating steps that will achieve the aim of keeping Aboriginal families strong and safe.

At the forum I made a number of announcements that were very well received. The Andrews Labor government is establishing a transition team that will develop and implement a strategy to transition support services for Aboriginal children and young people who are involved with child protection to Aboriginal organisations. We are committing \$500 000 to improve access to targeted care packages for Aboriginal children

and young people. We are providing \$340 000 for a return to country program to help Aboriginal children in care stay connected to their culture. The forum was told the moving story of Charlene, a young woman who was supported by the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative to return to her country, giving her an opportunity that made a big difference to her sense of wellbeing and cultural connectedness. We are allocating \$220 000 to provide more support to Aboriginal children and young people leaving care, and we are providing \$880 000 for the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency to continue delivery of section 18 services, which provides for legal guardianship for Aboriginal children subject to a Children's Court protection order.

The initiatives respond directly to calls from the sector and community to empower Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to lead in the delivery of services and supports for Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care. This funding is in addition to the \$16.5 million investment in the Victorian budget this year to support vulnerable Aboriginal children and their families. These initiatives support implementation of the *Roadmap for Reform*, our government's once in a generation overhaul of the child protection and family services system, and includes a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination around decision-making and care for vulnerable Aboriginal children and young people.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Australian Labor Party

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — There was a time when the people of this state had some respect for the ALP, but that is all now a distant memory. It goes back to a time before the Premier of this state cancelled a vitally important piece of infrastructure to Victoria and billed the Victorian taxpayers \$1.1 billion to not build the east-west link. It goes back to way before the factional hit that set up then Minister Somyurek and left him lying face down in the cabinet room. It goes back to before the time when then minister Jane Garrett tried to do her job and was bullied into offering her resignation as a result. It goes back to before the Country Fire Authority board was sacked and this wonderful volunteer organisation that has done so much for this state was handed lock, stock and barrel into the hands of the United Firefighters Union.

Before all that Labor had some respect in Victoria. What really destroyed any respect anyone might have for Labor is its decision to direct second preferences in the Senate in the current federal election to a party that

was formed to fight Christian influence in society and has recently declared war on the Catholic Church. The founders of the once great Australian Labor Party must be turning in their graves. By openly embracing religious bigotry Labor has sunk to a new low, one from which it will not easily rise again.

Australian Deer Association

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — Last Saturday night my wife Nicole and I attended the Australian Deer Association's annual Victorian Hunters Dinner in Drouin. Along with the food and company one thing stood out — the respect for the deer. This respect is enshrined in a small verse by Rob Prior that was read out at the dinner:

You'll no more rub wild cherry,
Nor mint bush tops you'll chew,
Nor lead a chase that's merry,
Nor taste the morning dew
On leaves, grass and herbage,
Nor see a sky that's new.
Nor taste the air of morning
That's sharp and crisp and clean,
Nor tread the deer pad's winding way,
A monarch to be seen.
Your spirit now but wanders
Fern gullies in the sky,
Where sambar deer and hunters
All go e'er they die.

Lorne and District Men's Shed

Ms TIERNEY (Western Victoria) — On Sunday, 12 June, I had the pleasure of representing the Minister for Families and Children at the official opening of the Lorne and District Men's Shed. Over 200 people attended the launch, which is an example of the support the Lorne community has for its men's shedders and the shed's importance in the community. These facilities play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of men in our communities, whilst making a significant contribution to local schools, hospitals and other community projects.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the president of the Lorne and District Men's Shed, Allan Walls, the committee members and all the other members of the shed for their work in bringing this project to fruition. I would also like to acknowledge Mandy Calder and her team at the Lorne Op Shop, which raised and donated a significant amount of money — \$75 000 to be exact — for the men's shed. Funding was also contributed by the Shire of Surf Coast, the Victorian government, the Geelong Foundation and a number of local companies, and private donations were made.

Warrnambool regional youth hub

Ms TIERNEY — On another note, the new regional youth hub in Warrnambool held its first official event last week, boosting opportunities for local young people to participate in the community. The Andrews Labor government is providing \$450 000 over two years for the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) to operate the new centre, which will be co-located with other local services at Brophy Family and Youth Services. The first event included a training session about YACVic's online youth engagement portal and a meeting of the Youth Participation Practice Network, with the minister in attendance. This important network brings together youth practitioners from across the region to collaborate on best practice to support young people in Warrnambool and outlying areas.

Jo Cox, MP

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) — It is with great sadness that I rise today to add my voice to those who have paid tribute to Jo Cox. The constituency she represented in the UK bears some striking similarities to South Eastern Metropolitan region, which I have the privilege of representing along with four of my parliamentary colleagues in this place. Like Batley and Spen, South Eastern Metropolitan Region is heavily dependent on manufacturing and has been greatly enriched by immigration from many parts of the world.

Jo Cox devoted her life to the multicultural future of her constituency and her nation. Her life and her terrible, tragic death confirm above all that what we say in this place matters. At moments like this we have a choice: we can either contribute to the terrible politics of division and to the exaggeration of people's fears, uncertainties and hatred, or we can do what Jo Cox spent her life and her all-too-brief parliamentary career doing and speak to the better angels of our nature and to the hope and trust that is already in the lived experiences of our constituencies and our communities.

I will just finish by giving my last words to those of Jo Cox in her maiden speech:

While we celebrate our diversity, what surprises me time and time again as I travel around the constituency is that we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than the things that divide us.

Rest in peace.

Country Fire Authority enterprise bargaining agreement

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — Last Wednesday I had the opportunity to join hundreds of Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers and supporters, State Emergency Service (SES) workers and residents at Bannockburn for a rally against the Labor government's proposed United Firefighters Union (UFU) and CFA enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA). These volunteers were furious at the government for the lack of consultation and the disrespect shown to them throughout the process. Their anger is not directed towards paid firefighters but towards the government and the union, which are trying to interfere in the way they have served their state for more than 100 years. They respect the work career firefighters do, and they support them in advancing the pay and conditions of the job. However, they do not support the UFU's power of veto over the traditional work of the CFA volunteers.

The volunteers I heard from and met are passionate about their communities. They guaranteed that they would not take this disrespect lying down. The Andrews government is so much on the nose in regional Victoria, with the sacking of Jane Garrett as minister, the forced resignation of well-respected CFA CEO Lucinda Nolan and the sacking of the CFA board, which has all the hallmarks of the thuggish, bullying tactics of the Andrews government in sacking the water boards, the catchment management authority boards and the board of Ambulance Victoria. Which one is next: the State Emergency Service or Life Saving Victoria?

Dan Andrews's opinion puff piece says the UFU-CFA EBA is fair to all firefighters and it is just Liberal Party politics at play. He says that the minister has got it wrong, the CFA board is lying, the CEO is lying, the 60 000 volunteers are lying, the president of the Fair Work Commission is lying, Justice Jack Rush, QC, is lying and that he and Peter Marshall are the only ones telling the truth. The rallies and outcries from CFA volunteers across the state show that this is far from the reality. These rural communities are totally outraged and will continue to fight for their cause with the same relentless energy they have used to fight through so many devastating bushfires.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Time!

Jo Cox, MP

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I rise today to express my absolute outrage and my deepest sympathy at the death of British MP Jo Cox. The man charged with her murder reportedly gave his name as 'Death to traitors, freedom for Britain' during his first court appearance, betraying a political motivation for her senseless murder. Emotions run high around politics; we all understand that. I have certainly had my share of hate mail and abuse, but Ms Cox's death was a senseless act of unnecessary violence. It highlights just how far some opponents will go.

Ms Cox stood up for what she believed in. She was a humanitarian before she entered politics, which was only last year. She clearly championed unpopular and uncomfortable issues. It does not matter how much we disagree with each other inside the chamber or through opinion pieces or lively debates; there is never an excuse to take our political differences to the next level. As the President reminded the chamber earlier today, we must prosecute our arguments with respect, and we have a role to dissuade our supporters from behaviour that crosses the line. In my office we often remind ourselves to always play the politics, not the person. Never has such a statement been more relevant than in this situation.

Ms Cox, tragically, leaves behind a husband and two young children. I wish to extend my sympathy and the sympathies of the DLP to her family, friends and colleagues at this time. May she rest in peace.

Federation Training

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) — I rise today to congratulate all who have been associated with the opening of the Federation Training Skills and Jobs Centre in Sale, which I was pleased to attend on 14 June. This \$1 million investment will make sure that students have a shopfront to visit to seek assistance in accessing educational opportunities, skills and training; refine their resumes; and make sure they have the best possible opportunities to find the jobs that they want, which may involve thinking beyond what they thought their potential would confine them to, living in a regional area.

Inspiring Young Women

Ms SHING — It was my great pleasure to attend the Inspiring Young Women dinner at the Warragul Country Club on 15 June and to hear firsthand from 50 young women in year 10 from around West

Gippsland. I heard about their goals, objectives and priorities and how they wish to make their way in the world and make a contribution to their communities. I was enlightened and inspired by their significant, ambitious, inclusive and welcoming plans to make the very most of their careers and lives into the future.

Dairy industry

Ms SHING — It was a great privilege to hear directly from dairy farmers on 16 June, when I visited a dairy farm and then also went to a business round table to talk and hear firsthand about the impact of the milk price drop. I am looking forward to the opening prices providing some certainty for dairy farmers into the future.

Jo Cox, MP

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — My member's statement today is also in regard to Jo Cox. I think we have all been quite shocked by her death. I know when I heard about it I immediately thought that she did what we do every week: we go to constituents meetings and we meet with our community.

I received a letter from Oxfam about something I think is just one of those little jobs we could all do. The letter says:

We know that you, like the rest of the world, were appalled by the abhorrent violence enacted upon Jo Cox and the entire British nation last week. It goes without saying that an attack on a democratic representative is an attack on democracy itself.

Jo is especially dear to our hearts at Oxfam.

Jo joined the team in 2001 and worked for Oxfam Great Britain and Oxfam International until 2009 in a variety of different roles based in Brussels, London and New York. During this time Jo spearheaded important work on trade reform, essential services and humanitarian issues, including the conflicts in Darfur and the DRC.

It is important that we make Jo's legacy persists. So Oxfam is calling upon us to sign a petition that has been created by Crisis Action. For anybody who would like that information I am very happy to email it to them, because I think it is important that as MPs we put our name to this petition.

Dairy industry

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — Dairy farmers in my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region are under serious stress following Murray Goulburn and

Fonterra's decision to cut milk prices. As the daughter of a dairy farmer, I know the hard work put in by these people, often against environmental hurdles such as drought, and so this latest crisis is concerning to me. I have met with local farmers, including United Dairyfarmers of Victoria local president Brad Missen, a Denison farmer who is now working the job of two men after having to let one employee go. Brad understands that the major thing that needs to change to fix this industry is better returns, and he says that in the meantime farmers need assistance in assessing and applying for appropriate assistance.

There has been some criticism from the Labor government's Minister for Agriculture around the support given to our dairy farmers by the coalition. The coalition's federal Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources immediately acted following the announcement of milk price cuts to release \$555 million in dairy recovery loans, of which \$430 million will be available for dairy farmers. Unfortunately our state government chose to play politics with this much-needed assistance, by refusing to cover administrative costs and distribute the loans. Finally, Ms Pulford has agreed to cover these loans so that they can be rolled out; however, more state government assistance is required. Financial assistance for business counselling and support would be helpful, and direct financial relief to farms, such as rate rebates or water charge coverage, should be considered.

Keep Australia Pet Friendly campaign

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — On Thursday, 9 June, I attended an interesting and charming event in the Federation Room in Parliament House. The purpose of the meeting was to hear Dr Chris Brown, of TV fame in *Bondi Vet*, speak about Australia becoming more pet friendly. He is leading a Keep Australia Pet Friendly campaign. It would appear that pet numbers are declining across Australia. Dr Chris talked about the many benefits of pet ownership within a society that is becoming more diverse and more stressed out due to the pace of life. He is passionate about pets, and I can think of no-one better to advance this worthy crusade — —

Ms Pulford — A very nice fellow!

Mr ELASMAR — I thank the minister for that as well.

Eating Disorders Victoria

Mr ELASMAR — On another matter, also on Thursday, 9 June, a very topical gathering was held in

Parliament House hosted by Eating Disorders Victoria. This event saw the launch of a new mobile website aimed at early intervention for people suffering from eating disorders, and it is part of the Feed the Soul campaign. I thank the organisers for arranging this very special and important reminder to us all of the destructive and preventable diseases of bulimia and anorexia, especially evident within the very young in our community.

Olympic sailing team

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — In only 45 days we will farewell hundreds of athletes who will represent Australia at the 2016 Olympics. They have years of training and sacrifice behind them, and they all deserve our support and encouragement. It is very disappointing that Australia will be represented in only two of four women's events at the 2016 Olympic sailing regatta, plus one woman in the mixed team event. This decision has been made by Australian Sailing. I understand there will be 3 women and 10 men in our Olympic sailing squad, and 1 woman and 5 men in the Paralympic sailing squad.

Decisions about who is on the sailing team are made on the basis of how likely it is that participants are 'medal capable'. Who is considered 'medal capable' is judged on the basis of performance, but there is dispute about how fair that assessment is. The International Olympic Committee has signalled that from the 2020 Olympic regatta it is aiming for a 50-50 split in male and female competitors, in terms of participation and medals.

In other words, in the future if our sailing team is going to fully compete with those of other nations, it will need to field more women. We do have women who could compete in Rio in categories where currently we have no competitors. For example, Australia has a team of two women who are ranked 14 in International Sailing Federation world rankings for the 49erFX events. How are we creating a pipeline of success for our women sailors in 2020 if we do not bother sending teams in some women's categories in 2016? Because if women have less opportunities to compete in sailing at an elite level, how on earth are they supposed to become 'medal capable'?

Braybrook on Board

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on a fantastic, innovative community leadership program that is run in my electorate. The program is called Braybrook on Board, and it is delivered in partnership between Maribyrnong City Council and Victoria Polytechnic. The program gives 13 local

residents who are passionate about Braybrook the opportunity to participate in a 12-week accredited training program to develop their personal and professional leadership skills.

The focus of this year's program was to improve good health and wellbeing in the community and to address a number of key health issues in Braybrook, particularly diabetes prevention. Forming a key component of the program, the 13 participants were required to plan a project to both support diabetes prevention and develop strong and healthy communities more broadly. I say 'were required' because the participants have since graduated from the program. For this reason, I would like to congratulate each and every member of the graduating class of 2016: Alex Koomtim, Angela Leong, Anthony Vo, Bifitu Ahmed Roba, Ca Cung Bik Tlumang, Elisa Kim Huynh, Faduma Gas, Fos Geyre, Joanna Wang and Mia McGregor.

I would also like to thank the wonderful facilitators who have made this year's program so successful: Helen Rodd, Bronwyn McKean and Julie Brock. A special mention must go also to Maribyrnong City Council and Victoria Polytechnic for making such a wonderful program possible. The next step for the graduates is to oversee the implementation of their various projects in the community. I am excited to see how these projects will strengthen and enrich the Braybrook community and indeed my electorate more broadly.

Gender equality

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — On a Victorian government website it says — and I quote:

Advancing gender equality increases women's safety, security and wellbeing by encouraging a society based on respect and equality.

And:

Gender equality also has tangible benefits for Victoria's social and economic prosperity, as more women are supported to reach their potential.

Clearly Premier Daniel Andrews has not read the memo yet, or maybe gender equality for Daniel Andrews is all very well unless it gets in the way of paying back your union mates. Lucinda Nolan is an exemplary role model for women and young girls in Victoria. Former Minister Jane Garrett stated that Lucinda Nolan has outstanding leadership skills and a great knowledge of Victoria, also saying:

Ms Nolan will make a great fire service even better as she leads the organisation into a new era.

But Daniel Andrews had other plans and bullied both this senior female minister and CEO out of their roles over their stance on an enterprise bargaining agreement that the Australian Human Rights Commission found breached the state's anti-discrimination laws by tipping the balance against women, older workers, parents, carers and disabled workers. In March 2015, fresh on the back of the election, Daniel Andrews said:

Outcomes for women start with attitudes toward women.

Now 18 months into his term we see what Daniel Andrews really thinks of women's equality when it interferes with his political safety.

Drug crime prevention

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on an issue affecting all parts of our state, and that is the rising rate of drug crimes. As a member for Western Metropolitan Region I represent an electorate that has one of the highest drug and crime rates in Victoria. The most recent crime statistics show a steady increase in drug-related crime in my electorate, especially in the Brimbank local government area, with heroin and ice being the most commonly trafficked drugs. The overall crime rate in Brimbank has risen by 10.8 per cent.

Members of this house will no doubt be aware that the damaging effects of drug use are not limited to users. Drug use damages families and relationships, jams up our health system and causes widespread issues throughout communities. Crime Stoppers Victoria has launched the Dob in a Dealer initiative, which aims to involve the community in confidentially reporting information about the manufacture, supply and trafficking of drugs, and it is the first of five initiatives to be launched in Melbourne this year. Engaging the community plays a valuable role in breaking the cycle of crime, and the Dob in a Dealer campaign will hopefully identify dealers before these illicit drugs reach end users.

Tackling drug-related crime is a priority of this government, and this is why it has invested so much in preventing crime and supporting those affected by drugs. The Andrews Labor government has committed \$45.5 million towards the *Ice Action Plan* in response to the huge increase in the use of the drug ice and the effects it has on users, their families and the community as a whole. Every person in the community must play a part in tackling this issue, and the Dob in a Dealer campaign is a great initiative —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Time!

Battle of Crete and the Greek campaign commemoration

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — I want to make comment today on the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Crete and the Greek campaign, which was in 1941. This is an important day for Australian and allied troops and a great point to celebrate the things we have in common with the Greek community and the fight that occurred during that Second World War period for not only the safety of Greece and Crete but also the freedom of Greece and Crete. The campaign saw over 17 000 Australians take part in the battles on the Greek mainland and 6500 in the battles to defend the island of Crete. It saw the involvement of Australian ships *HMAS Perth* and *HMAS Stuart*, and in a very significant Australian role, it saw a number of prisoners of war taken by the Axis invaders. Importantly there are 312 Australians who remain buried in Greece's commonwealth war cemeteries in Athens and at Souda Bay on Crete.

I want to pay tribute to the work of the Battle of Crete & Greece Commemorative Council and indicate I have met with it, and I am very impressed with the work that has been done to provide that important commemoration. I think we need to remember that in March 1941 Robert Menzies as Prime Minister, with his cabinet, agreed to send Australian troops to defend Greece. They made the point that this was a great risk but in a good cause, and I think it was, and it behoves us to remember, 75 years on, the contribution and the loss that both of our countries celebrate and which the strong Greek community in Australia remembers too.

VICTORIAN AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Performance audit

Message received from Assembly seeking concurrence with resolution.

Assembly's resolution:

That under section 19 of the Audit Act 1994, Ms Elma von Wielligh-Louw, partner, Deloitte Touche Tomatsu, be appointed to conduct the performance audit of the Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office for the period July 2013 to June 2016:

- (a) in accordance with the terms, conditions and specifications as set out in the request for tender issued on 18 December 2015;
- (b) at a fixed fee of \$288 000 excluding GST.

Resolution agreed to on motion, by leave, of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture).

Financial audit

Message received from Assembly seeking concurrence with resolution.

Assembly's resolution:

Under section 17 of the Audit Act 1994, Mr Geoff Parker be appointed for a period of three years:

- (a) to conduct the financial audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office for the financial years ending 30 June 2016, 30 June 2017 and 30 June 2018;
- (b) in accordance with the terms and conditions and remuneration of a person appointed by the Parliament of Victoria under section 17 of the Audit Act 1994, and the terms of reference as specified in Appendix One of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's report on the recommendation on the appointment of a person to conduct the financial audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (parliamentary paper no. 175, session 2014–16); and
- (c) at the following maximum fixed fee levels of remuneration:
 - (i) \$33 000 plus GST for audit services for the year ended 30 June 2016;
 - (ii) \$33 000 plus GST for audit services for the year ended 30 June 2017; and
 - (iii) \$33 000 plus GST for audit services for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Resolution agreed to on motion, by leave, of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture).

STATE TAXATION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL 2016

Committed.

Committee

Clause 1

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! We are now in committee of the whole. We are dealing with the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016, a bill for an act to amend the Duties Act 2000, the Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012, the First Home Owner Grant Act 2000, the Land Tax Act 2005, the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990, the Payroll Tax Act 2007, the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the State Taxation Acts Further Amendment Act 2015, the Taxation Administration Act 1997 and for other purposes.

There are two sets of suggested amendments for the house to consider. Under the Constitution Act 1975 the Council does not have the power to make amendments to taxation bills. Where amendments are proposed to such bills, they can only be put to the Assembly as suggested amendments. Standing order 14.15 sets out the procedure for dealing with suggested amendments, and as I understand it that has been circulated to members. Copies of the standing order and the background material are available in the chamber.

Ms Pulford has a number of suggested amendments to clause 4, and Mr Rich-Phillips has a series of suggested amendments that are linked to the proposed omission of clause 31.

We will now move to clause 1. I call on Mr Rich-Phillips to move his suggested amendment 1, which is a test and consequential amendment for all his further suggested amendments 2 to 13. These relate to the proposal to omit clause 31, 'Royalties for ignite'.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

1. Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —

Clause 1, page 2, lines 27 to 30, omit all words and expressions on those lines.

In doing so, before I proceed to debate, Deputy President, I seek your guidance on the proceeding of the committee. I intend to ask the minister some general questions with respect to the bill as well as a series of questions related to both my amendments and the minister's amendments, so I seek your guidance as to whether you are happy for that all to be done in the context of clause 1 or would prefer it to be done separately on the individual clauses.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! My preference is that we deal with it under clause 1.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — Thank you, Deputy President. Having moved that amendment, I will set that aside for the moment and just go to the general questions I wanted to ask the minister with respect to the bill. The first one goes to its purpose. As the minister may be aware, on the eve of the November 2014 election the Premier undertook a television interview with Peter Mitchell on Channel 7, during which Peter Mitchell asked the now Premier whether he promised Victorians that he would not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes.

Daniel Andrews, in response, said:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

So my question to the minister is: does this bill honour that commitment made by the Premier to Peter Mitchell in November 2014?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank the member. As Mr Rich-Phillips points out, the government made a promise to all Victorians that there would be no new increase in taxes and charges to fund its election commitments, and it has stayed true to this promise. No Victorian has paid more to fund the commitments that we delivered in our first budget. We did not make promises to the world at large; we made them to Victorians, and we have honoured those promises.

The changes to our surcharges, which is the matter Mr Rich-Phillips wishes to explore in further detail when we get to his amendment, are designed to ensure that everyone is making a fair contribution to the livability of our state. We have made some changes in relation to foreign property investors, as members would be aware, and when foreign property investors are getting between 10 and 16 per cent of capital growth per annum, asking them to pay extra on purchase, we believe, is completely reasonable. When compared to other jurisdictions our rates are lower, so that is our response to that question.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her response, but it is unclear to me from those comments made by the Premier in November 2014 whether they were qualified to election commitments, because the question was very clear:

Do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

There was no question in the context of election commitments; it was an unqualified question to which the Premier gave an unqualified answer:

I make that promise, Peter, to every single Victorian.

There was nothing in the Premier's answer that suggested that that commitment was constrained to election commitments, so can the minister clarify her answer, please?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The government stands by its commitment, and in this legislation and in our budget last year no new taxes have been imposed on Victorians.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — On the issue of increases, can the minister confirm whether this legislation increases any royalties, taxes or charges?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Mr Rich-Phillips's first question was in relation to taxes, and now he is seeking a response in relation to royalties. We are not introducing new taxes. The question of royalties speaks to the brown coal asset that belongs to all Victorians, and we are increasing this royalty, but there is a distinction to be made between what is a tax and what is a royalty, and I think Mr Rich-Phillips well understands this.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Indeed the minister is correct; there is a distinction between taxes and royalties, so let us just narrow it down to taxes. Does this legislation increase any taxes?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Not on Victorians.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Does it increase taxes on anybody else?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — There are increases that will be payable by foreign purchasers that are consistent with similar measures taken in recent times by the New South Wales government.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that response. I will move on from the apparent contradiction between what the Premier said in November 2014 and what the minister has now confirmed is in this bill today and go to the issue that is the substance of the amendments the coalition is putting forward in relation to the lignite royalties. The series of amendments that I will be suggesting ultimately seek to omit clause 31, and the other 12 amendments are consequential on that, largely relating to changes to titles and headings in the bill, so the operative one will be amendment 7. But in the context of what the government is proposing with royalties, can I firstly ask the minister: what is the purpose of the change in the royalty rate?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — This royalty relates to compensation for the extraction of a non-renewable asset which belongs to all Victorians. The change brings the royalty rate into line with other states, and whilst the funds are not directly hypothecated, it is important to note significant commitments to the communities of the Latrobe Valley in the budget, and I note that community leaders have

for a long time sought a greater share of a resource that comes from their part of the state.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. There are a couple of things in her response there. She firstly referred to bringing royalty rates into line with other states. Can the minister outline the significance of that from a policy perspective?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — In response to Mr Rich-Phillips, I indicate that the rate has not been changed for some time. We believe that the increased royalty is reasonable. This is an asset that belongs to all Victorians, and we are making sure that this state gets a fair return for the use of this resource that does belong to all Victorians.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that answer, but I am keen to explore the policy issues she raised around the nexus with other states, which is reflected in the Treasurer's second-reading speech as well. What is the relevance or the intent of the government in seeking to align the royalty with other states?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — There are a number of points that I would make in response. We are operating with a national electricity market. The interstate comparison is relevant because Victoria does get less from this resource when compared to other states. This is an asset that is available across other states, and I know it is not Mr Rich-Phillips's responsibility here to answer the questions, but I do not see any reason why we would keep the royalty fixed at 2005 rates for all time, and it has been quite some time since any change was made to this. We think it is a reasonable change to the royalty and one that returns a benefit to the state that is in keeping with the Victorian community's expectations about royalties raised from assets that belong to all of us.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that answer. The minister referred to the rate being set, or not having changed, since 2005, but is it not the case though that the rate is indexed to CPI?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his further question. Yes, I can confirm that it is indexed to CPI. The rate in 2005 was 7 cents per gigajoule. The rate with the royalty increase will be 21 cents. The interstate comparison that we have been discussing is relevant. That is much more consistent with the royalties received by the New South

Wales and Queensland governments for their coal resource.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. Is it the case, though, that the New South Wales and Queensland resources that the minister refers to are used domestically in the same way as the Victorian lignite is, or are they exported?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his further question. This is a non-renewable resource owned by all Victorians. We believe this is an appropriate royalty, and we believe this is consistent with similar royalties applied in other states.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that answer. I guess the essence of the question is: are we comparing like and like with the royalty that is being imposed here in Victoria? The government's argument is that we are raising the royalty to a comparable level, and I am saying is it being imposed on a like-for-like commodity?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I think the main point that we are making here is that we think that this is a reasonable royalty to apply to a non-renewable resource that is owned by all Victorians. I refer to the comparison with New South Wales and Queensland to provide context, but the primary reason for this is to ensure that the state gets a fair return for the use of this non-renewable resource. It is proposed through this bill to be at a rate that recognises that this resource is owned by all Victorians and that ensures that the state receives reasonable compensation for its use.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her response. Can I ask the minister about consultation. What consultation did the government undertake with the energy companies prior to proposing this tripling of royalties?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The government engages with these companies on a regular basis. In relation to the royalty, they were told about this decision after the market closed on the Friday before the Saturday on which it was announced.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — So they were not consulted; rather, they were just told.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — This was market-sensitive information, and they were advised on the Friday after the market closed, the day before the announcement was made.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I must say it is not clear to me why the government did not undertake consultation prior to deciding the policy position. I accept that governments bring some taxation measures into effect as soon as they are announced to avoid changing behaviour, but obviously with something like a coal royalty, it is not really possible to change behaviour — the coal still has to be dug out of the ground in Victoria and consumed — so there is not that concern with consultation. Why was there not actual consultation as to the impact that this would have downstream on the energy industry before the decision was taken?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — As I have indicated to Mr Rich-Phillips, the industry was advised the day before the announcement was made. The government engages with industry on a regular basis on a range of issues.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Can I ask the minister what has been the energy industry's response to this announcement, its feedback to government, given the government engages regularly with it?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I can confirm for Mr Rich-Phillips that Minister D' Ambrosio and the Treasurer have met with the generators since the announcement. Unsurprisingly, anyone receiving an increase in royalties would probably prefer that to not be the case but they understand that this is a matter of the government's prerogative and its desire to see a fair return for this resource for the Victorian taxpayer.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. Can the minister confirm that in public commentary from the generators on the day of the budget, 27 April, AGL indicated with respect to Loy Yang A that it expected the cost would be \$35 million annually and that EnergyAustralia with respect to Hazelwood estimated the cost at \$20 million annually? Does that reflect the feedback that the government received from the generators?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I would like to take on notice Mr Rich-Phillips's question about whether the numbers quoted by these companies tally exactly with our modelling, just to ensure that I provide him with an accurate response.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. The minister in her comments about the government's rationale for this policy change, in addition to referring to parity or comparability with the other states, referred to increased investment in the Latrobe Valley when she said there is not a direct hypothecation. Can she indicate what the nexus is between this bill and what the government is additionally spending on the Latrobe Valley?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes. Look, as I indicated, it is not directly hypothecated, but I would just make the observation that one of the measures in this bill is to increase this royalty. It has, I think, long been the view of community leaders in the Latrobe Valley to see a greater return to their community from the asset that is extracted in their community. I would just make the observation, without drawing too direct a link, that in the local communities that we are talking about it is not insignificant that the government is providing over \$80 million in support in relation to our response to the Hazelwood mine fire and the work that Minister D' Ambrosio was leading until the recent ministerial reshuffle and which is now being led by my colleague Minister Noonan, on continuing to support the economic diversification of the communities of the Latrobe Valley. That is something that previous governments have also endeavoured to do and something that I think we can all agree is important for that community's economic wellbeing.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. I move on to another matter related to the royalties issue. Can the minister indicate the government's expectation of what the impact will be on electricity prices for consumers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am advised that Treasury modelling tells us that for an average annual bill of \$1300 the impact will be \$2, so that is 0.18 per cent.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that answer. In the service delivery budget paper it sets out the revenue initiatives. The line item for this initiative shows the revenue expected is \$36 million in 2016–17, being the half-year, and then \$72 million for each of the subsequent years. The description of the brown coal royalty initiative states:

The brown coal royalty is levied on production from the four brown coal mines in Victoria. From 1 January 2017, the lignite (brown coal) royalty rate will be increased threefold.

It then goes on to say:

The new brown coal royalty rate will support the transition to cleaner energy sources and ensure that the state receives a fair value for its endowment of natural resources.

The minister has spoken about the government's desire to have an increased return on those resources, but I would like to ask her about the first rationale given here in the budget papers, given it is one she has not referred to, being a transition to cleaner energy sources.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his question. The government is keen to support an increased proportion of its energy resource being provided from renewable sources. I refer to the announcement by the Premier last week about renewable energy targets. So whilst we have ambitions to increase renewable energy investment and generation across the state, the targets do not have immediate effect. The member will note that the projections in the budget also suggest very stable revenue, so it will probably be a very cautious transition — and I am sure Mr Barber will join in at some point and say it is an entirely too slow transition from his perspective — but we want to increase the generation of energy from renewable sources. We understand, though, the importance of the generation of energy from non-renewable sources to the foundations of our current supply and the role that it has played historically in the underlying strength of the Victorian economy.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. I am trying to understand the nexus between that transition the minister referred to and where the Treasury projections have the revenue from this measure, which the minister said is stable, which suggests no change in the next four years and which is at odds with the Premier's announcement last week where the Premier spoke about a shift to 25 per cent renewable energy by 2020 — which is indeed the last year of these forward estimates — versus the current 14 per cent. So we would go from 14 per cent in 2015 to 25 per cent in 2020 over the forward estimates period. Treasury is saying the revenue is stable because the consumption of brown coal is stable but at the same time the government is saying the proportion of renewable energy is going to increase substantially. So can the minister explain the apparent contradiction between the targets the Premier released last week and the Treasury forecasts on the consumption of brown coal?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I think we are starting to stray a fair way from the purposes of the bill, but I would respond by saying that we do exist in a national energy market and that energy demand and consumption continue to grow in a community with a growing population and ever new ways to consume energy. It is certainly our hope and expectation that increased energy production in Victoria is increasingly coming from renewable energy sources.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — In fact all projections — and certainly those up to 2020 — are that Victoria's consumption of energy is in decline. So if the revenue is stable and that means the amount of coal being burnt is stable, it seems quite likely that the amount of energy produced from coal burning will also be stable, and yet consumption is declining. There is only one other possibility, and that is that the Premier in announcing the renewable energy target actually had a target based on the proportion of generation, not of consumption.

So if overall consumption is declining but the Premier has made no announcement about what proportion of the consumption will be renewable, in fact he could very well be just continuing to export more coal-fired power to other states and still get all the money that he is expecting to get from coal. Now if the government is going to claim that this is part of a transition to renewable energy and yet there is no reduction in the amount of coal burnt, then it is necessary for the government to explain how this measure will increase the proportion of renewable energy either generated or consumed, because it is pretty clear that the amount of coal burnt will continue at the same level.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I just restate that the energy produced in Victoria supplies a national energy market. We are getting into some quite detailed consideration of how the national energy market operates, which does go a bit beyond the scope of the bill, but the government is perfectly able to work with generators to have reasonable expectations about generation activities from non-renewable sources and manage an aspiration and indeed a target to increase the production of energy from renewable sources as well. We believe that this increased royalty is a reasonable rate of return to the Victorian community for a resource that is not renewable. We will continue to support the diversification of the Latrobe Valley economy and we will continue to support the growth of renewable energy in Victoria.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. I take the minister's point about the breadth of discussion around the national electricity market, but it is somewhat relevant to the subject we are talking about. But if I can just narrow it down then, Minister, is it fair to say that the Treasury forecasts of stable electricity or coal production is at odds with the Premier's forecast of an increase in renewable energy by 2020?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — No, we do not believe that is the case.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — So is it, as Mr Barber suggested, the government's policy to export energy produced with brown coal here in Victoria and substitute it with renewables in the state while exporting the brown coal-produced energy?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — As I indicated earlier, Treasury forecasts on the royalty would suggest a stable revenue from electricity generated from brown coal, as Mr Rich-Phillips said. The government has a very strong desire to see an increase in renewable energy generation in this state, and I would have thought that this was something that mostly we could all agree was a good thing. We will therefore be contributing to the national energy market a greater production. There are many variables in the national energy market beyond Victoria, but the government believes that these royalties are an entirely reasonable rate to apply. I think we have perhaps talked about the national energy market enough, but that is really up to Mr Rich-Phillips and Mr Barber.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. The proposition is a bit like saying, 'Let's not have any logging of native forests in Victoria, but let's import native timber from Papua New Guinea', or something.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I suppose that is an analogy that you could make, but we have a strong timber industry in Victoria with a fine future.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her response. Can I take the minister back to the modelling she referred to earlier around the impact on retail prices — the estimate of the marginal increase. The Grattan Institute among others has suggested that the cost of this royalty increase will be in the order of \$2 to \$3 per megawatt hour on the wholesale price. At 4.30 p.m.,

when the Victorian spot price was around \$58, that would have been a 5 per cent margin. A half an hour earlier the Victorian spot price was the highest in the Australian market, but it is no longer. It is now the second lowest, as it shifts from hour to hour. So I am interested in what the assumptions are which underpin that estimated increase in the retail price that you outlined before. What are the key assumptions that Treasury has relied on?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will take Mr Rich-Phillips's question on details of the modelling on notice and provide an answer.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that. Could the minister indicate when we can expect to receive that?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Later today.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The only other matter I want to ask the minister about with respect to this actually relates to the mechanism that provided for the increase in the royalty. For reasons that are not clear, it is not a simple threefold increase in the royalty as currently provided in the principal legislation. It is a quite convoluted mechanism that has been put in place to treble the royalty from where it currently sits. I was wondering if the minister would be able to advise the committee or presumably take advice on why the mechanism has been put in place that is being used in clause 31 and if she can confirm, as my calculations seem to suggest, the increase is actually slightly more than a threefold increase and not the threefold, as the Treasurer suggested, when you work the arithmetic back?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Perhaps if I could just clarify Mr Rich-Phillips's question. Is he asking why a lower dollar figure is being used to calculate the base rate; is that what he is seeking?

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — No. I am seeking an understanding as to why the government has pursued the mechanism it has in clause 31, which is shifting from the current base of 5.88 cents indexed, which is the current mechanism, to what is now proposed at the bottom of page 38 of the bill, which is a figure of \$0.0021402 multiplied by the CPI denominator as the basis for the new rate, and why that is being used rather than a simple trebling of the existing base, and a confirmation as to why, when you actually work that calculation back — because that denominator is 83 points in June 2005 — it seems to

work out with an increase of 3.02 rather than a straight 3.0 increase. I appreciate it is complex.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Let me see if I can satisfy Mr Rich-Phillips's curiosity on this question. The starting dollar value for the formula for calculating the base royalty rate for the period 1 January 2017 to 30 June 2017 is \$0.0021402 per gigajoule. This is a lower amount than the dollar figure of \$0.0588 per gigajoule currently used to calculate the base royalty rate.

I think Mr Rich-Phillips was asking why a lower dollar figure is required. That is because the CPI for the reference period 30 June 2016 cannot be known now as this amendment is being introduced to the Parliament. The lower figure has been obtained by dividing the current dollar figure by the CPI number for the financial year ending June 2005 and multiplying it by three. The formula which will apply to calculate the royalty rate from 1 January 2017 will then multiply that amount by the CPI index number for the financial year ending on 30 June 2016. This will result in a threefold increase in the royalty rate from 7.6 cents per gigajoule to around 23 cents per gigajoule, once adjusted for CPI. Is that what Mr Rich-Phillips was asking?

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister; that certainly goes to the issue. What is not clear is why it was done in such a complex way. My own reverse engineering of that calculation suggests that it is more than three — it is 3.02, but if the minister's advice is that it is actually meant to be an even three, not more than three, I will take that.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I think the short answer is that it is not meant to be complex or in any way different to what we have said; I think it is just rounding — so, yes, three times.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — I thank the minister. I am happy to leave that one there.

The coalition's view on this, and I obviously welcome that material on notice from the minister, is that this \$252 million impost through the royalty will have a direct flowthrough ultimately to retail prices. The coalition is concerned about the cost-of-living impact of this increase and the flow-on effect of that increase. For that reason, we are proposing a series of amendments that I moved formally at the start of the committee stage. The purpose of those amendments is to omit this threefold increase in lignite royalties and therefore preserve the royalties at the current level. Therefore I indicate that my first amendment, which I have moved,

tests the others, and subsequently, given the way the amendments are structured, later in the committee stage I would also seek to put amendment 7, which directly tests clause 31.

Committee divided on suggested amendment:

Ayes, 18

Atkinson, Mr	Lovell, Ms
Bath, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Morris, Mr
Bourman, Mr	O'Donohue, Mr
Carling-Jenkins, Dr	Ondarchie, Mr
Crozier, Ms	Peulich, Mrs
Dalla-Riva, Mr	Ramsay, Mr
Davis, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Finn, Mr	Wooldridge, Ms
Fitzherbert, Ms	Young, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)

Noes, 20

Barber, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Dalidakis, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Patten, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Dunn, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Elasmar, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Hartland, Ms	Shing, Ms
Herbert, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Leane, Mr	Springle, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Symes, Ms
Mikakos, Ms	Tierney, Ms

Suggested amendment negated.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Given that this is a money bill, it is a different procedure — we are not putting each clause one by one — so we will now proceed to clause 4. Ms Pulford has 12 suggested amendments to clause 4, which relate to definitions under the Duties Act 2000. I consider Ms Pulford's suggested amendment 1 to be a test for all of her further suggested amendments 2 to 12.

Clause 4

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I move:

1. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —

Clause 4, lines 10 and 11, omit "or short-term accommodation".

2. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —

Clause 4, lines 17 and 18, omit "or short-term accommodation".

3. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —

Clause 4, line 25, omit "or short-term accommodation".

4. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 6, lines 4 and 5, omit “or short-term accommodation”.

5. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 6, lines 12 and 13, omit “or short-term accommodation”.

6. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 6, after line 15 insert—

“(2) Despite subsection (1), residential property does not include any of the following—

(a) land—

(i) capable of being used solely or primarily as commercial residential premises, a residential care facility, a supported residential service or for the purposes of a retirement village and that may lawfully be used in that way; and

(ii) that a person intends to use solely or primarily as commercial residential premises, a residential care facility, a supported residential service or for the purposes of a retirement village;

(b) land which includes a building, or part of a building, that a person intends to refurbish or extend so the land is capable of being used solely or primarily as commercial residential premises, a residential care facility, a supported residential service or for the purposes of a retirement village and that may lawfully be used in that way;

(c) land—

(i) on which a person intends to construct a building so the land is capable of being used solely or primarily as commercial residential premises, a residential care facility, a supported residential service or for the purposes of a retirement village and that may lawfully be used in that way; or

(ii) in respect of which a person has undertaken or intends to undertake land development for the purposes of—

(A) constructing a building so the land is capable of being used solely or primarily as commercial residential premises, a residential care facility, a supported residential service or for the purposes of a retirement village and that may lawfully be used in that way; or

(B) enabling another person to construct a building so the land is capable of being used solely or primarily as commercial residential premises, a residential care facility, a supported residential service or for the purposes of a retirement village and that may lawfully be used in that way.”.

7. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 6, line 16, omit “(2)” and insert “(3)”.

8. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 6, after line 16 insert—

“*commercial residential premises* has the same meaning as in the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 of the Commonwealth;”.

9. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 6, lines 21 to 23, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert—

“*residential care facility* has the same meaning as in section 76 of the **Land Tax Act 2005**;

retirement village has the same meaning as in the **Retirement Villages Act 1986**;

supported residential service has the same meaning as in the **Supported Residential Services (Private Proprietors) Act 2010**.”.

10. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 7, lines 1 and 2, omit “a serviced” and insert “an”.

11. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 7, line 8, omit “or as short-term accommodation”.

12. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly —**

Clause 4, page 7, line 9, omit “those ways” and insert “that way”.

The government is introducing these amendments following feedback from stakeholders in the property and tourism industries. The bill proposes a technical amendment to the definition of ‘residential property’ to ensure that all land intended to be captured by the duty surcharge is treated in the same way; however, this would have the unintended consequence of capturing entire developments of hotels and other short-term

accommodation. So what we are seeking to do in bringing these house amendments — or suggested amendments on this occasion — is to ensure that the definition of ‘residential property’ for the foreign buyer duty does not include commercial residential premises. This means that premises like hotels, motels, serviced apartments and student accommodation will not be captured by the duties surcharge, and nor will retirement villages, residential care villages and supported residential services.

So in effect the house amendments ensure that it is the purchase of single units of short-term accommodation that attracts a surcharge as intended, and not the purchase of the entire complex. I seek the house’s support for these suggested amendments.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her outline. Could the minister confirm that she said this is to address an unintended consequence of the bill?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, that is right. Following feedback from the property and tourism industries we sought to make that minor change so that the intention was clear.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. I take the minister to the Treasurer’s second-reading speech, where the Treasurer stated:

The foreign purchaser duty surcharge only applies on the purchase or acquisition of residential property. This bill clarifies the definition of residential property in the Duties Act 2000 to put beyond doubt that residential property includes short-term accommodation, such as serviced apartments, student accommodation, hotels and retirement villages.

It seems that rather than being an unintended consequence it was in fact the government’s policy intent as set out in the second-reading speech to put in place the changes which the minister says the government is now backing out of by way of these amendments.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The policy intent is the same. What these suggested house amendments do is to make certain the applicability for those investors seeking to purchase the entire building as distinct from an individual property.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — Just a quick and hopefully simple one. I have had some representations from the Accommodation Association of Australia, which has said that it supports the government’s amendments — and of course the Greens are not going to be opposing amendments that the

government wants to put forward to improve its own bill — but I just want to check that the amendments that were provided to the association and which I think were circulated last week are substantially the same as the ones we are moving and debating today.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, they are exactly the same.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. Indeed I received the same correspondence that Mr Barber referred to supporting these amendments, and the coalition is not going to oppose them.

I have also received correspondence from the Property Council of Australia with respect to the amendments, and indeed supporting the amendments, raising the issue of the carve-out that the government is seeking to put in place. It is seeking that it be extended to include property held in trusts as distinct from property held directly. Can the minister explain why the government is not intending to extend the carve-out to property held in trust structures?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I can confirm that the government has received the same representations from the property council and it has confirmed that it will continue to work with it on this question. In relation to Mr Rich-Phillips’s specific inquiry as to why trusts were not included, it was the government’s view that that would make the exemption too broad — broader than it was desired for it to be.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that answer. I guess my response to that would be to ask: in what way would providing the same type of carve-out simply for something held in a trust structure but with the same other criteria as opposed to held individually or held in a corporate structure be too broad?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — We understand the property council’s position on this, but on this occasion we have determined to protect this revenue and that is a decision that the government has made. But we will continue to discuss these matters and work with the property council on this and other matters of interest to it.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. Can I just confirm then: are there live discussions between the government and the property council on this matter, or is this closed as an issue?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am advised that we have written to the property council indicating that we will not be amending this in the way that it has asked, but we fully expect that it will continue to make representations on this and other issues and we will continue to engage with it in a positive manner.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister.

Suggested amendments agreed to; clause postponed.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! In accordance with standing order 14.15(2), as there are no forms of amendments to or proposals to omit clauses 5 to 30, no question will be put.

Clause 31

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Rich-Phillips’s suggested amendment 7 invites the committee to omit clause 31. Does Mr Rich-Phillips wish to speak?

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — No. Thank you, Deputy President.

Committee divided on clause:

Ayes, 20

Barber, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Dalidakis, Mr	Patten, Ms
Dunn, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Elasmar, Mr	Purcell, Mr
Hartland, Ms	Shing, Ms
Herbert, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Leane, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Springle, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Melhem, Mr	Symes, Ms
Mikakos, Ms	Tierney, Ms

Noes, 18

Atkinson, Mr	Lovell, Ms
Bath, Ms	Morris, Mr
Bourman, Mr	O’Donohue, Mr
Carling-Jenkins, Dr	Ondarchie, Mr
Crozier, Ms	Peulich, Mrs
Dalla-Riva, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Ramsay, Mr
Davis, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Finn, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Wooldridge, Ms
Fitzherbert, Ms	Young, Mr

Clause agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! In accordance with standing order 14.15(2), as there are no forms of amendments to or proposals to omit clauses 32 to 53, no question will be put.

That concludes the committee’s consideration, and I will report the bill to the house with suggested amendments and ask for leave to sit again.

Progress reported.

Suggested amendments reported to house.

Report adopted.

Ordered to be returned to Assembly with message informing them of decision of house.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2016–2017) BILL 2016

Committed.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Clause 3 is the clause that provides for the appropriation that we are seeking in the schedule, but it also provides, at subclause (2)(b), that where there is an increased cost associated with employment agreements, the Treasurer may appropriate an increased amount to cover those employment costs. Can I just ask: does the government envisage in the budget period, the following 12 months, needing to deal with any new employment agreements with respect to the Parliament that may trigger that particular clause?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — No, we do not.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I am happy to proceed to schedule 1.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Perhaps before we do that, given that Mr Rich-Phillips’s question, whilst quite specific, did touch on the options available to the Parliament for making an additional funding request and perhaps in anticipation of Mr Rich-Phillips’s amendments that I have just become aware of, there are some options available, including under section 31 of the Financial Management Act 1994. The Parliament has the standing authority under this legislation to transfer appropriation between the departments of the Parliament for the same line item. So that is an option that is available to the Presiding Officers; it is an authority that they currently have. In addition to that, the Parliament is of course able to make a submission

through the budget process, seek a Treasurer’s advance and of course the usual budget management and internal prioritisation that all those responsible for the management of public funds also have to contemplate from time to time.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for outlining those options. Obviously from a Council perspective — and speaking with a Council hat on — it would be good to have the certainty in the appropriation bill as to the allocation for the Council at the start of the financial year. The mechanisms the minister outlined, while obviously available, do not provide any certainty at the start of the financial year and are entirely dependent upon either the Treasurer’s concurrence or indeed the concurrence of both Presiding Officers with respect to section 31, a transfer internal to the Parliament. So we will get to amendments later when we get to the schedule. Certainly the coalition’s view is that having the certainty of the appropriation in the bill reflecting the position of the Council, rather than relying on those mechanisms that the minister spoke about, would be the preferred way to proceed.

Clause agreed to; clauses 4 to 7 agreed to.

Schedule 1

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Now we are moving to schedule 1, and I call on Mr Rich-Phillips to move his suggested amendments 1 to 6, which seek to reallocate a portion of the Parliament’s 2016–17 appropriation from joint committees to the Legislative Council.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I move:

1. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —
Schedule 1, page 4, line 8 omit “3 737” and insert “4 337”.
2. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —
Schedule 1, page 4, line 11, omit “7 751” and insert “7 51”.
3. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —
Schedule 1, page 5, line 7, omit “3 737” and insert “4 337”.

4. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —
Schedule 1, page 5, line 11, omit “3 737” and insert “4 337”.
5. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —
Schedule 1, page 7, line 8, omit “7 751” and insert “7 151”.
6. **Suggested amendment to the Legislative Assembly** —
Schedule 1, page 7, line 12, omit “7 751” and insert “7 151”.

The purpose of these amendments is to reallocate the \$600 000 that is currently proposed to be appropriated from the parliamentary investigatory committees to the Department of the Legislative Council. The reason for this proposal is for recognition of the work that the three Legislative Council committees are undertaking and of the level of activity they are involved in. In the second-reading debate I canvassed at some length the level of activity that those upper house committees are undertaking — the number of submissions, for example, that have been handled by upper house committees versus the combined joint committees, and the number and complexity of references that those committees have undertaken. Of course, we have just seen in the last week the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues bring down its final report on end-of-life choices, which was an incredibly complex and long inquiry for that committee, and it was an inquiry which heavily stretched the resources of the Department of the Legislative Council. Likewise last year the Council established the Port of Melbourne Select Committee, which also was a resource-intensive committee.

What we have not seen since the Council moved into this phase of active standing and select committees is resourcing to reflect the level of activity that those committees are undertaking. By contrast we see that the nine substantive joint committees — while there are house committees et cetera appended to that, the main joint committees, of which there are nine — are proposed to be appropriated \$7.7 million in the new financial year. I understand some of that increase reflects the decision the house made earlier around funding the performance audit and the financial audit for the Auditor-General, but nonetheless, putting that \$380 000 aside, there is still a substantial increase for the joint committees proposed in the budget but with no ongoing commensurate increase for the upper house committees.

In the current financial year there was a one-off transfer of \$500 000 to provide additional resources for the upper house committees; this budget only proposes to provide \$400 000 ongoing, so it is a reduction in real funding for the new financial year, and it is our view that the work that is undertaken by the upper house committees justifies additional resourcing. Therefore we believe a figure of \$600 000 — being \$200 000 for each of the standing committees in the Council — is an appropriate reallocation from the joint committees, which are funded at around \$860 000 each, in order to provide an additional but certainly not excessive level of extra resourcing to the Council committees. On that basis I have moved amendments 1 to 6, all of which seek to shift \$600 000 from the appropriation line for parliamentary investigative committees to the Legislative Council line item.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — In the early days of working here I did not really understand the committee system that much. Obviously not coming from a political background I did not really get it, and for a long time I did not think that they were worth my time, but clearly time has changed my thoughts on these things. I have gotten involved, I have seen what they do and I have noted that the Assembly does not do committees of the whole, as the Council does now. There are a lot of things that we need to do that get answers where you cannot get answers anywhere else. To be able to do all of this you have got to have the great staff and you have got to have the ability to have lunches and call people in to do this, that and the other, but it became apparent this year that the Council runs out of money quite regularly and has to go to the Assembly to get the money. Now, as a one-off that is maybe not necessarily a bad thing, but as I understand it this has been going on for a long time, and this needs to be dealt with on a proper and permanent basis.

The Shooters and Fishers Party is definitely supporting this motion. I think this is something that needs to be done, and in fact I think that the committee system has actually proven its worth to me. Early on a lot of people said that they thought their best work in Parliament was done in committees, and again, I did not understand it, but like a lot of things when you enter this place, you may not understand it but you learn it. We cannot do it with cutting back money and we cannot do it with the Council having to always go and ask for money from the Assembly, so we need to get this done and to get it done properly. So by making these amendments and supporting these amendments, that will at least sort out the next year.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I will not take up much time. I just wanted to rise briefly to support these amendments that Mr Rich-Phillips has put before us tonight. I have seen from my time on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, in which we have discussed these issues in depth, that the council committees really struggle with funding. Considering the current work of our house and also the significance of our house, both now and in the future, with regard to reviewing legislation, reviewing the considerable number of references that are coming through this house and acknowledging the number of submissions that are received by the Council committees, the current restrictions are certainly not assisting this process. If no major party in the foreseeable future will have control of this house, then the council committees will continue to be extremely important into the future.

I note that we are not quite halfway through our term here, but very soon these committees will be too full to take on any more references, and this is a problem with the under-resourcing of these committees. I agree with Mr Rich-Phillips that this money is an appropriate reallocation, and I will be supporting his amendment.

Mr BARBER (Northern Metropolitan) — I was waiting to hear the government's view on this, but I will dive in anyway and say that the Greens will also be supporting these amendments. I have served on one joint committee, the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, and also on a number of different upper house committees ad hoc. It has taken my three terms in Parliament to actually establish this system, which mirrors the system of the Senate, and get it up and running.

One of the things that these committees have been doing is scrutinising various bits of government legislation, some of which were hugely impactful and actually quite detailed. We do not know what piece of legislation the government is going to throw up next. Therefore we have to make sure that the committees are well provided for, because the next major move by the government, along the lines of the privatisation of the port, could be coming around the corner. Therefore we need to make sure not that the committees are running out of money but in fact that they are well provided with money.

The other thing that these committees have done since the election is they have in a broad sense scrutinised the activities of government. We did not know that V/Line was going to go belly up earlier this year, but it did, and in my view when it did it required a response from the Legislative Council to act quickly and to thoroughly

review what was going on there by calling all the relevant witnesses.

Likewise you do not always know with a particular reference or a particular job of work that the Council votes to give these committees how much the public is going to get involved. There will be some issues on which the public will have minimal involvement. It will mainly be a discussion around technical and expert issues. But there will be other things, such as end-of-life choices or the current bill about better safety for bicycles on the roads, where you can have a huge level of community engagement. For that reason you just cannot have committees limping along on the basic requirements of simply the paid staff. You need the ability to travel around the state; you need the ability to make provision for witnesses and different types of testimony. Sometimes you need to go out and gather evidence, and in the case of the end-of-life choices I think most people here have agreed that it was a worthwhile exercise taking some MPs off to different jurisdictions to scrutinise the issues in detail.

Having sat on one of the joint committees I can tell you their budgets are very well provided. In fact just the travel budgets of some of those committees are more than some of our upper house staff would dream of having at their disposal. I think the upper house committees are doing good work.

The other issue I would raise is that, as was noted, the government is not actually putting its bill through committee of the whole in the lower house. Sometimes those bills are coming to this house with problems. Some of the work of those committees is actually fixing the government's own legislation or negotiating out the kind of issues that the government should have already dealt with through its own external processes, which it has almost unlimited resources to do. It can refer things to the Victorian Law Reform Commission. It can conduct its own public consultations. We have got an inquiry underway into Uber and ridesharing, and yet the government's processes on that issue so far have been almost completely secret. We would not have to do that if the government had actually done its own public process. As long as the government continues to act in that vein these committees are going to need the resources to do things that in my view really should be done by the government before it brings the bills here.

So for all those reasons it is important to have a proper allocation of funds made available up-front. The upper house needs to be free to refer matters whenever it needs to to those committees rather than first having to check whether that is all right with the government and ask 'Do we have enough money to do so?'. For that

reason Mr Rich-Phillips's quite proportionate amendment, simply topping up a similar amount to that which we know has been used in the current financial year, is an appropriate move. I hope that the Legislative Assembly, when it receives this suggested amendment, sees it the same way we do.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — If I could just respond to some of the points that have been raised today, Mr Barber asked what the government's position on this is. The government will take a moment to consider what the government's position is on this, because it only heard about this about 30 seconds before we commenced the committee stage of this bill.

I think if the opposition were interested in having a genuine dialogue with the government about resourcing for upper house committees, then maybe we might have heard about it yesterday or last week or even earlier than that. Mr Barber talked about committee members' desire to go on trips and suggested a top-up as long as committees can keep generating good ideas and worthy questions of public policy to contemplate. He was almost arguing for a blank cheque, and I know Dr Carling-Jenkins's comments reflected on the cab rank of possible inquiries lining up at committees. What I would say is that committees do know their budgets. They are given a nominal allocation. There has to be some responsibility for our parliamentary committees to manage their workloads, particularly when they have self-referencing capacity, as they do.

I would also point out that the parliamentary appropriation bill does represent a broad exemption from the saving requirement. We are of course conscious, as everyone in the house is, of the demands on our upper house committees, so we will not oppose these amendments. We will reflect on the consequences of this thing we just heard about not more than half an hour ago on the work of joint investigatory committees and members in the other place, and respond accordingly when the lower house considers the suggested amendments, which I imagine will occur, based on speakers to date. However, I have to say — I know there are many members of the crossbench who were not here in the last Parliament — that Mr Barber and I, for our sins, sat on the Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure of the upper house in the last Parliament, and Mr Barber would well recall the utter contempt with which the former government treated our upper house committees. Mr Rich-Phillips came along on one or two occasions to that committee as a witness, and the great regard and esteem with which upper house committees are now held was unrecognisable during the last Parliament when the Liberal Party was in government. So this enthusiasm

for upper house committees is great, but I wish there had been something even faintly resembling such enthusiasm in the last Parliament, and I just wanted to call out the rank hypocrisy from the Liberal Party here.

On a more positive note, I do share other speakers' sentiments about the work of our upper house committees. I note Mr O'Donohue is in the chamber, and other members have reflected on the considerable workload of our upper house committees, in particular the end-of-life choices report which I know all members have taken a great interest in. So while not wanting to in any way diminish the exceptional work that is done by members of those committees, I make the point that we think there is some responsibility on committees to manage their workloads. Unlike Mr Barber's suggestion of just a top-up and a top-up and a top-up until we have run out of things to inquire into, we think there do need to be limits and a reasonable balance between the important work that an upper house committee can do and things like how many trips members want to go on.

This is a measure from the Liberal Party which stands in extraordinary contrast to its carry-on in the last Parliament, and the government will take a moment to contemplate the consequences of this for joint investigatory committees, and it will let the chamber know its view on this in due course.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — In relation to those comments, I had not planned on speaking but I must say that — —

Mr Rich-Phillips — You were provoked!

Mrs PEULICH — I was. Ms Pulford's comments have encouraged me to lay on the record my concerns, and they are not new concerns. This should not be a surprise to the government at all because these comments have been made time and time again in the chamber. A lot of the work that previously had been undertaken by the joint house committees is now being undertaken by the upper house committees, and that is reflected in the workload. I do not believe that that ought to be the case. I have always said that new policy work should be done by joint house committees and predominately the stuff that is done in the upper house committees should be matters that are connected with its review role, whether it is legislation or issues such as the port of Melbourne inquiry and so forth.

However, notwithstanding Ms Pulford's comments about how bad things were, referrals from this chamber are not referrals made by the Liberal Party; they are referrals made by the chamber. Again, because no party

has a majority, they are a reflection of the will of the chamber, and I think you have got to show some respect for the decisions of the chamber. In my 20 years of parliamentary experience I have never before been approached to help pay for the publication of a committee report out of my electorate office budget. Not in 20 years, but I was recently. There was no money left in the budget and I actually dug my heels in because I felt that was terribly inappropriate. The money that is allocated to my electorate office is for the service of my constituents, and I think in principle that should not have even been contemplated. That has never happened in my 20 years of parliamentary experience, and I do not think it should ever be contemplated.

Therefore these fairly modest amendments are a way of reflecting the amount of work that is undertaken by the upper house committees and the disproportionate sums that are allocated to, one, the joint house committees and, two, the upper house committees. I think it is absolutely extraordinary to say that somehow those upper house committees must manage their workloads better when references are given by the resolution of this chamber. By underfunding committees as it has done, the government is obviously trying to manage that workload, and I think that is inappropriate. So I certainly look forward to these amendments being passed.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Just very briefly in response, a great deal of the work being generated for our upper house committees in this Parliament is as a result of the committees now having the capacity to self-reference. That was not the case in the former Parliament. I am certainly aware of at least two committees that have rolling references that are important and significant pieces of those committees' work. In fact we have received reports from both of those committees in recent times — the rolling inquiry into rate capping is one of those and the inquiry into infrastructure projects is another, the latter being chaired by Mr Morris. So committees do have a degree of capacity to influence their workloads, but as I indicated, the government will consider its position on this over the next day or so.

Suggested amendments agreed to.

Progress reported.

Suggested amendments reported to house.

Report adopted.

Ordered to be returned to Assembly with message informing them of decision of house.

**APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016
and BUDGET PAPERS 2016–17**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 9 June; motion of
Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) and
motion of Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern
Metropolitan):**

That the Council take note of the budget papers 2016–17.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am pleased to rise to make a contribution in relation to the budget papers. With my colleagues from Eastern Victoria Region who are in the chamber, let me express my disappointment at the lack of new initiatives for the Eastern Victoria Region. I particularly draw the attention of my colleagues in the chamber with whom I share the beautiful Eastern Victoria Region to the paucity of initiatives in the growth corridor of our electorate. When we look at the Cardinia shire, which is growing at a rapid rate, we can see it is experiencing rapid and ongoing population growth through that Beaconsfield-Officer-Pakenham corridor. There are virtually no new initiatives in the budget for that rapidly growing area. That stands in stark contrast to what the coalition delivered when it was in office: the Officer Specialist School, the new Officer Secondary College, the long-called-for Koo Wee Rup bypass, the upgrade to Koo Wee Rup Secondary College and a range of other initiatives.

These were delivered not just to accommodate the population growth that was being experienced through that area but also to deliver jobs for local people, because what we need to see in that Casey-Cardinia growth corridor is improved transport links to Melbourne and to the industrial belt through Dandenong and the like so people can get to their place of employment without sitting in traffic or on overcrowded trains. We also need to see more jobs being created through that corridor from Officer-Pakenham through to Warragul-Drouin so that people can work near where they live, be more involved in their local community, spend less time on the road, spend less time on the train and spend more time with their families. That is really what we need to see more of, but unfortunately we saw little of that in the budget.

The only other thing I want to touch on from an electorate perspective before moving to some comments in relation to portfolio matters is the disappointment that, after the disappointing first Andrews budget, the Wonthaggi education precinct did

not get the funding it needs to rebuild its facilities to deliver a modern education precinct. The government did not match the promise made by the coalition before the 2014 election.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr O'DONOHUE — I call on the Andrews government, and I call on Ms Shing, to ensure that project is belatedly delivered in the next budget. After all, Mr Nathan, the Labor candidate for Bass, promised this at a forum before the 2014 election, and here we are, more than 18 months into the term of the government, and little progress has been made, despite that promise made by Mr Nathan. I make those comments about beautiful Eastern Victoria Region. There is a lot more to be done. I think there are questions over the rebuild of the Cowes police station. It has been touted by the government in a media release and in commentary as a brand-new police station. The money allocated is \$3 million. I think we need clarification from the government about whether this is a refurbishment of the existing building, what the extent of the rebuild is and whether it is to be on the current site. Those sorts of details need to be clarified.

Let me move on to matters in relation to corrections. The backdrop to the budget for corrections is the riot that took place at the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC) from 30 June through to 1 July last year, nearly a year ago. This riot, which the corrections commissioner described as the worst prison riot in Victoria's history, has had a significant impact on the corrections system over the last 12 months. We have heard about police cells overflowing with prisoners. We heard from Minister Herbert that on 17 May there were, if I quote my figures correctly, 243 prisoners in police cells — a dramatic increase from what the current government inherited from the previous government. Prisoners in police cells were consistently below 100 in the latter part of the term of the coalition.

The reduction of remand maximum security front-end beds in the prison system has put enormous pressure on the Melbourne Assessment Prison, which has seen roughly a 20 per cent increase in prisoner numbers going on the most recent figures from April 2015 to April 2016. It has seen the number of prisoners in police cells consistently around 200, and at times over 200, as the minister himself has described in question time. We have seen the cost of repairs to the prison and the rebuild of the prison go from an estimated \$10 million to \$12 million in August last year, to \$52 million when Kieran Walshe released his report and to \$95 million when one considers the budget papers as they pertain to this.

The smoking ban that was introduced in Victorian prisons on 1 July was followed — —

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr O'DONOHUE — Absolutely. It was followed a few weeks later by a smoking ban in New South Wales. There was no riot in New South Wales. There was no major incident. There was no damage to property.

Similarly New Zealand, the Northern Territory and Queensland — a range of comparable jurisdictions — have managed to implement this ban without the \$95 million cost that is now associated with the rebuild of the Metropolitan Remand Centre.

One of the other consequences of the rebuild of the Metropolitan Remand Centre is that projects that were identified and deemed necessary and that obviously went through the budget process in the first Andrews government budget have been cancelled. Important infrastructure projects, particularly at country prisons where those sorts of infrastructure projects can be real drivers of economic activity in those communities, have been cancelled. They have been cancelled: that money has gone from country Victoria and been diverted to Melbourne to help rebuild the MRC following the worst prison riot in Victoria's history, according to the corrections commissioner, which the Premier failed to prevent. That is a real issue.

The other thing I will just touch on briefly in the corrections space is the continued lack of action from the government on community correction orders. Following the Boulton decision in December 2014 we have seen enormous growth in the number of offenders on community correction orders. Perhaps most concerning was an increase in the number of serious offenders following the Boulton decision, where it was determined at paragraph 131 of that judgement that some offences that traditionally have attracted a medium term of imprisonment would now be suitable for a community correction order, including some forms of homicide, some sexual offences and other quite serious offences. The government has failed to take action. The Attorney-General has flagged reforms in this space but, again, 18 months since the Boulton decision of December 2014 there is no action, no legislation before the Parliament, to change this.

Just touching on issues of community safety, the coalition had a crime prevention portfolio when in government. This government has cut funding to Step Back Think in this budget. The coalition had funded Step Back Think with \$100 000 over four years and

committed to re-funding that organisation. The Andrews government provided \$200 000 in 2015–16, but that funding has been cut in this budget. There are cuts to Neighbourhood Watch. The department of justice prevention of violence against women and children grants have been cut. With the greatest respect to the parliamentary secretary, the role of the crime prevention program has been downgraded. It no longer forms its own separate portfolio but is absorbed into the much larger, broader police portfolio, which I think is a mistake.

Touching quickly on police, the crime statistics that were released last week show that crime in Victoria was up 12.4 per cent to 519 130 offences to 31 March this year and that weapons and explosives offences were up nearly 20 per cent, theft offences were up over 16 per cent, burglary and break-and-enter offences were up 13 per cent and drug use and possession offences were up 13 per cent. This reflects the community concern about community safety.

The shocking examples of carjackings, drive-by shootings and home invasions that the community is seeing now with very concerning regularity are crimes that were distant from Victoria. They were something we saw on TV from a different country 10 or 20 years ago, but they are now being reported all too frequently as taking place in Victoria, and what has Premier Daniel Andrews's response been to that? He has watered down the juvenile bail laws. He has failed to take action on sentencing. He has failed to take action to toughen the community correction order legislative framework following the Boulton decision, and he has failed to deliver the police that Victoria needs.

The number of regional police attached to police stations across all of Victoria's police regions has decreased from 9840.57 full-time equivalents in November 2014 to 9708.84 in March 2016, so give or take the rounding of those numbers, there are 131 fewer police attached to stations across Victoria. This is despite population growth of over 100 000 people per year. The two-up policy is a legitimate decision of the police commissioner to keep his members safe but has resourcing implications for Victoria Police that have not been matched by the government with extra police.

Even in total global figures there are only 63.6 additional police since the change of government despite Victoria's population growing by over 150 000 people in that time, so the number of police per capita is going backwards. There are gaping holes in police station rosters, particularly in Melbourne's growth corridors, and the 300 frontline police, or the

406 total, that are promised as part of this budget over the next two years — from 2016–17 to 2017–18 — is a drop in the ocean compared to the extra police resources that are needed to tackle the surging crime that Victoria is seeing.

Community safety should be the first, second and third priorities of this government, but what we are seeing is the number of police per capita going backwards, police stations with gaping holes in their rosters and police stations that have either closed or had their hours cut. What we saw last Sunday week in an article in the *Herald Sun* dated 11 June was:

Victoria Police will reduce opening hours at some stations across the state despite concerns ... about cuts to services.

So while crime is rising — up 26.7 per cent in Greater Dandenong and 35 per cent in Cardinia — police station hours are going to be cut, the number of police per capita continues to go backwards and Premier Daniel Andrews has weakened some of the key laws as they relate to our community. So let me just conclude by saying this is a very disappointing budget for community safety and for my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region.

Sitting suspended 6.25 p.m. until 8.04 p.m.

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) — I am absolutely delighted to speak on the recently released 2016–17 budget. This budget is a budget for Victorians. It is for families, for workers and for the future. Once again the Andrews Labor government has produced an exceptional budget, and it is something that we are very, very proud of. It is another budget which puts the previous budgets under the former government to shame. This budget builds upon our previous budget and reaffirms our commitment to deliver the projects we promised to deliver when we came into government in November 2014.

When we came to government we set our sights on delivering hospitals and schools, reliable roads and public transport, and secure jobs in growing industries in Melbourne and across regional Victoria. When we came to government we promised that we would ensure Victoria's economy would continue to grow, and it has. This budget will maintain our AAA credit rating. It forecasts 3 per cent growth; it highlights unemployment falling and infrastructure investment rising to an average of \$7.4 billion a year. Overall, our budget highlights an operating surplus of \$2.9 billion.

I am extremely proud to be part of a government that will continue to deliver key projects in my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region. We promised to remove

50 of the state's worst level crossings, a number of which are located in my electorate, and are wasting no time in achieving this. Works have already started with the removal of the Main Road and Furlong Road crossings in St Albans. The level crossing removals have created 200 jobs, and works will soon begin on the removal of the Melton Highway level crossing, another project that the community had been calling for for a number of years, but its calls fell on deaf ears under the previous government. We have delivered the Caroline Springs station, which has been needed for years — all this because our government understands the importance of keeping people moving in the west and investing in important projects that enable this. And the community is thrilled.

The removal of the two level crossings in St Albans will address congestion in the area, but more importantly, it will address ongoing issues of safety. As I have raised in this house before, there have been a number of accidents and fatalities occur at these unsafe level crossings, and their removal will help to reduce the chances of such dreadful occurrences. But the government's investment in the west does not stop with transport infrastructure.

Our government is delivering the new Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital. This new \$200 million hospital will be a multistorey facility with 20 labour delivery rooms, 39 special care nursery cots, 64 women's inpatient beds, 32 children's inpatient beds, 4 operating theatres and additional outpatient clinics. The west is growing, and we need the services to cope with the demand. This new hospital will create new jobs in the west, something we have listed as one of our top priorities.

Other investments in my electorate include \$50 million as part of the outer suburban roads construction package, mainly in relation to Dohertys Road, and \$110 million in the Essendon district. For the implementation of the Leukaemia Foundation patient accommodation there is \$500 000. There is a \$50 million investment in the National Centre for Proton Beam Therapy planning and development project, which is to support the progress of proton beam therapy as part of an ongoing investment in that sector. There is \$10 million in the housing, disability and ageing sector to upgrade rooming houses in Ascot Vale, Flemington and St Kilda to improve the safety and welfare of residents; \$2.5 million for the upgrade and modernisation of Sunshine Special Developmental School; \$9.9 million for an upgrade of Sunshine College; \$1 million for the upgrade and modernisation of Aberfeldie Primary School; and \$500 000 for an upgrade of Furlong Park School for Deaf Children.

University Park Primary School will also get a further investment.

There are many more investments that have been made in the west, and I am proud of what our government has achieved and delivered for my constituents within Western Metropolitan Region. I am proud of this budget and I am proud to be part of this government which has delivered so much to people in the west. I commend the budget to the house.

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — This is a high-taxing, high-spending budget that the Labor Party has handed down this year. So much for the Premier's claims before the election that there would be no new taxes. What we have seen is a new carbon tax — Daniel Andrews's very own carbon tax — introduced. We have also seen the absentee landowner tax introduced. Of course we have seen taxes hiked up by this government and the fire services levy has been put up to 7.25 per cent. This budget will deliver an additional \$3.7 billion, or an increase of 20.7 per cent, in taxes over two years. We will see \$1.6 billion come in from stamp duty, \$1.1 billion from GST, half a billion dollars from land tax, and of course the carbon tax will put all of our electricity bills up as well.

The budget actually has rivers of gold running through it, whether that be from additional taxes, from the sale of the lease of the port of Melbourne or from the asset recycling money that will come from the federal government. However, it does not truly deliver for Victorians. Even though for my home town of Shepparton this budget includes \$169 million towards commencing the redevelopment of our hospital, there is disappointment there too because that is short of the money needed to fully redevelop it. Yet the Premier did not tell WIN TV that this is stage 1 and then we will come back for stage 2 or stage 3; he told it that this is the whole thing fully funded. But we know it is not the whole thing and we know it is not going to completely redevelop Goulburn Valley Health. It does not even touch the outpatients department, which is bursting at the seams. The infrastructure for outpatients is outdated and does not meet modern medical requirements. We know that people, particularly those with orthopaedic needs, are spending 440 days on the hidden waiting list before they even get to a clinic to go on to the official waiting list.

This money does not touch subacute needs; it does not touch mental health, which is bursting at the seams; and it does not touch oncology. There is a lot more that needs to be done at Goulburn Valley Health, and of course the money that has been committed in this budget will not deliver a new hospital until 2020. So for

improvements to a hospital that already has the worst performing emergency department (ED) in the state — it has been the worst performing ED in the state for some time now — our community is going to have to wait quite some time.

One of our locals wrote a letter to the editor that actually suggested that what the government could have done to help increase capacity at Goulburn Valley Health on an interim basis was to have shifted the temporary facility from the Numurkah hospital to the Goulburn Valley Health site. That was a very good suggestion, I thought, but the government sold that facility off relatively cheaply to the Shire of Moira instead of thinking more broadly about how it could improve health services in Shepparton.

As I said, mental health is an area that really needs investment, and we need significant investment in child and adolescent health. We need a mother and baby unit in Shepparton, and I call on the government to look towards funding that before the next budget because mental health is a serious issue and something that needs to be addressed in Shepparton.

The budget claims to have delivered on transport services for Shepparton with one additional service a day. But it is not even one additional service; it is actually a quarter of a service because it is only from Seymour to Shepparton. It does not deliver a service from Shepparton to Melbourne and Melbourne to Shepparton — it is one service from Seymour to Shepparton. That is a quarter of a trip to Melbourne. The budget does very little to increase our accessibility to Melbourne, it does nothing to improve the track conditions and it has short-changed Shepparton's public transport users.

We were promised great things for public transport by this government. In fact in 2013 Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan visited the Shepparton railway station and claimed that they would, on coming to government, instigate Sprinter services from Shepparton to Seymour to increase our accessibility and our access to the 20 services a day from Seymour to Melbourne. But we have not seen any of that. Shepparton's community consultation session for the regional network development plan was the best attended in the state. There has been a huge outcry from Shepparton for additional services, but all this government has supplied us with is one-quarter of an additional service. That is less than was promised by the coalition at the last election.

Those services were to start in 2016 and would have been an additional service from Melbourne to

Shepparton from Monday to Friday and an additional return service on Saturdays and Sundays. This one-quarter of a service — from Seymour to Shepparton — runs only from Monday to Friday, and there is nothing at all on weekends to increase our access to Melbourne. So the people of Shepparton are rightly disappointed in what the budget has delivered to them in public transport. The regional network development plan which has since come out promises very little more. It promises an investigation into VLocity trains and it talks about some improvements to tracks down the line, but there is no time frame and there is no budget for those.

Let us see what other areas got in the budget compared to Shepparton when it comes to rail. As I said, Shepparton got one-quarter of a service, but what did Ballarat get? It got \$518 million for track duplications, new passing loops, second platforms at two stations and 14 new services per week. For Geelong the budget had 50 additional services per week and \$6 million for track duplication planning and further transport options. Bendigo got 14 additional services per week, \$16 million for station upgrades and \$2 million for line upgrade planning works. Gippsland got 14 additional services per week, \$9 million in station upgrades and \$2.6 million dollars for line upgrade planning. So other areas are doing far better than Shepparton when it comes to public transport. That is despite the member for Shepparton telling us, 'It's our turn'. Well, it has certainly not been our turn under Labor.

I would like to go back to health for a little bit, because attached to the disappointment that Shepparton hospital has not been fully redeveloped is also the disappointment that there is nothing there for the Rushworth campus of Goulburn Valley Health. It is only an \$8 million project, but it is something that is desperately needed and it was an election commitment by the coalition. We cannot even get the Minister for Health to visit Rushworth to see the need for that facility. She has come close — she has been to Kyabram and Echuca — but she could never find the time to go to Rushworth and see the health needs of that community, which is extremely disappointing.

Our schools were also largely ignored in this budget. There was a small amount of money in the school and community pride funding for Congupna, Harston, Undera, Invergordon and Waaia Yalca South primary schools. They are all very small schools, and I am sure they will welcome that funding, but as a whole education in the Shepparton district missed out in this budget. It was a real disappointment that the government did not fund the Better Together schools alliance project. That is a project that has the four

secondary schools in Shepparton working together to give a greater variety of subject choice to students and to deliver a holistic secondary education in Shepparton that is really kicking goals for those students that are disadvantaged.

But when the alliance asked for money the Minister for Education was not forthcoming with the money it needs not only for its coordinator but also for training and for transportation of students. The minister gave an answer in the lower house that suggested the government had given them some money, but it was actually money that was already in the schools' bank accounts under the banker school arrangement that has been allowed to stay there for the schools to use. It is a very small amount of money, and the schools are actually tipping in a great deal of money out of their own budgets. It is very disappointing that something as important as education for those who are disadvantaged has been overlooked.

The City of Greater Shepparton asked for quite a few things that were overlooked in the budget. Of course it asked for the improved and increased passenger rail services which I have already spoken about, but a lot of things are needed in addition to passenger services. Stabling and lighting works are required at Shepparton station, which would cost around \$2 million. There are 30 level crossings between Seymour and Shepparton that need to be fixed; that is a \$15 million exercise. The council wanted new VLocity trains, and of course timetabling also needs to be improved.

Construction of the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton bypass is another opportunity that has been missed in this budget. This government needs to prioritise that project for it to also attract federal government funding. I encourage the state government to get on with prioritising our bypass. It is a desperately needed road. We need to get the trucks out of the middle of Shepparton. Although the bypass is a north–south bypass, it would also provide a second river crossing, which would give us an additional east–west bypass of Shepparton as well. Currently there is only one river crossing going east–west, which means we have B-doubles travelling down High Street, Shepparton. That is right through the shopping centre; it is not safe for our community. There needs to be a second river crossing, which will be provided as part of the bypass project if the government ever gets on with planning that project, providing state government funding and prioritising it for federal funding as well.

I have spoken about the Goulburn Valley Health redevelopment. That was a priority for our local government, but when the Premier came to town to

announce that the government was going to provide some funding for that, the government failed to even invite the mayor and councillors to that announcement. I know that the mayor and councillors were very upset about that. They actually attended the event even though they were not invited, but they were not even acknowledged as being there — a complete snub of local government in Shepparton.

The Shepparton central business district revitalisation is another area for which the council was asking for money — around \$5 million to help it get on with that. It is a desperately needed project. There are a number of empty shops in Shepparton, and the CBD does need revitalisation. It currently gives an impression of our town that is less than we would like to give visitors to our city. The revitalisation will enliven that area and also portray a much brighter economic output for our city.

Regarding the Shepparton railway station precinct, the Greater Shepparton City Council asked for \$2.5 million for that one, which centres on constructing a pedestrian bridge to provide direct access between Shepparton railway station and Vaughan Street in the CBD to link the railway station to the city, but that was ignored by this government. It also asked for around \$100 000 for a commercial activities centre strategy.

There is a great plan to redevelop our sports stadium in the budget application from the council. It estimated about \$12.5 million for that. I know the budget includes some money for sports stadiums so I would hope that the government looks favourably on Shepparton when that fund is expended.

All in all, we are very grateful for the money for our hospital. We know it is not enough to completely redevelop it. It is disappointing to hear the Premier say, 'This is it. That's it, all of it done, finished, dusted', when there are so many areas that still need to be looked at. I will continue to lobby for that project along with some of the other projects that I have outlined tonight.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) — I rise tonight to speak very briefly on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016 and the budget. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the government on a healthy budget, themed 'Getting It Done'. This budget reflects a very healthy economy. I also acknowledge the role of the previous government in building the foundations for this healthy economy. Strong investments have been made in this budget across a broad range of sectors — from health to education, employment to infrastructure and from

social services to the arts. I would like to pick up on just a few points in my brief contribution tonight.

One point that I noted with great interest, being from a party that supports small businesses, was the payroll tax relief. I was very pleased to see the provision of tax relief to more small businesses in this year's budget. I note that this is something that I requested in my first Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, and I am pleased to see that it is now included. However, I do note that the amount of the phased increase still remains \$100 000 per annum below that for New South Wales businesses, and I just question the ability of Victorian small businesses to continue to compete with their New South Wales counterparts without that extra relief. I hope that the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade will address that in the coming year.

I want to turn to education. I am very encouraged that primary schools are being built to accommodate the number of children being born each month in local government areas such as Wyndham, the fastest growing area in Victoria. However, I fear a lack of long-term planning. Primary school students quickly — far too quickly, many parents would agree — become high school students, and already in Wyndham, in areas such as Derrimut, high school students must bus out of their area to access a high school. I hope to see this addressed in the next budget, not just in Derrimut but across Victoria.

I wish to note my strong support for the government's tech schools program, which will be an important stepping stone for many students towards finding their preferred careers and gaining the skills they need to enter the workforce. I also note and appreciate the support for one of these tech schools in the area of Wyndham.

I now move to health. There were a number of great investments in health in this budget. There is a planned increase in critical care capacity distributed throughout the state. I even found some of the smaller initiatives impressive in the budget. Noteworthy, for example, was the investment into the planning and development of an electronic medical records system. This might not seem to be a very attractive thing to fund, but it is a very important initiative. Having visited many hospitals, I know they are very impressed with that.

Then there were the measures to decrease the elective surgery waiting list, with more than \$1.3 billion committed over the next four years to tackle it. This is an ongoing problem and we need to address it. I appreciate the government's support, but I also believe that we need to address the underlying issues here. I

appreciate that the Minister for Health has undertaken the Travis review, and I look forward to the recommendations of that review being addressed fully over the coming year. The coming year might be a bit optimistic, but let us give it a go.

I would now like to make some brief comments on the prevention of family violence. I applaud the investment into the family violence system over the next two years and I also applaud the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence's commitment and advocacy in this area. This is an area very close to me personally. The investments outlined in the budget are just the beginning in an effort to implement the 227 recommendations of that report. As many people know, the specialist family violence sector has been in crisis and underresourced for a long time. It is good to see that these resources are finally coming through.

I am concerned about the ongoing need to work with victims with disability, particularly victims with intellectual disability. Many people with disabilities, particularly intellectual disabilities, are victims of family violence. This is an issue that I have raised in the past and that I will continue to raise as the year progresses.

I would like to note what the Salvation Army said on the area of family violence in its examination of the budget, because I thought it was a very good summary. It said:

It is wonderful to see ... family violence exposed for the terrible social ill that it is. This funding has been described by the Victorian government as a 'down payment' on future investment, acknowledging the ongoing need to support women and children experiencing family violence. The Salvation Army works with hundreds of women every year in our specialist family violence services. However, we know that many women accessing our other services, such as homelessness services, have also experienced family violence, even though many choose not to disclose this information —

and many choose not to disclose this information.

As initial recommendations are implemented, better data is collected and a clearer picture of demand emerges, funding will need to be continually reviewed and adapted to meet demand and cover the full cost of service delivery.

I encourage the government to adopt a continual review process in this area.

I move on to disability, a subject that it is perhaps no surprise I would bring up tonight. Funding for disability continues to be an issue grappled with here in Victoria and indeed across the country. I would like to commend the government for two particular initiatives. One is the inclusion of the Changing Places program, which not

too many people know about but which I believe is an excellent initiative. There have been many years of advocacy around this project, as far back as when I worked at Monash University, which was a very long time ago. I commend the inclusion of this program in this year's budget.

I also commend the closure of the last institution here in Victoria, Colanda. These institutions have been a stain on our state's character and it is a credit that we have finally been able to shut down the last of them.

The national disability insurance scheme (NDIS), however, continues to be listed as a specific fiscal risk in the budget papers, as it needs to be. There is a lot of ongoing uncertainty surrounding the funding contribution, especially regarding the commonwealth contribution. I have raised this issue before, and I remain concerned, that the NDIS could be in danger of being downgraded in the future if funding is not secured in a sustainable and ongoing way. I know that this is something that the government is very aware of and the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Mr Foley, is definitely working on, and I encourage and applaud his efforts.

I also wish to commend Minister Foley for coming to the rescue of perinatal depression care providers in this year's budget, with the allocation of support that was withdrawn by the commonwealth. Perinatal depression is a very serious issue for many women, and I was very concerned prior to this budget about the future of the services providing the specialist care and support for women with depression. I note, however, that this funding is for this year's budget only, and I acknowledge the advocacy of the minister in lobbying for a return to commonwealth funding. However, I do urge the government to not leave these services in the lurch again should this funding not materialise over the next 12 months. I would ask that it commit to an annual funding amount to these services.

Now to the issue of gambling, which we may well be debating in this place tomorrow as well. Problem gambling remains — well, a problem; that is the easiest way to say it. This was not addressed in this year's budget, despite revenue from gambling being expected around the \$2 billion mark. Around half of this comes from poker machines — machines that are often found not in the big cities but in the local venues, in local communities and too often in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods.

I had the privilege of watching recently at Parliament House the *Ka-Ching! Pokie Nation* documentary. It showed the significant costs to families and

individuals — financially, socially and emotionally. And these costs were costs from gambling on poker machines. If anyone in this chamber has not seen that documentary, I would encourage them to do so. It clearly shows how losses are simply not spread out evenly among the population. We need to note that a big segment of the losses is concentrated on a small segment of our population and that in the financial year of 2014–15 Victorians suffered \$5.8 billion in gambling losses, according to the annual report of the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation. That roughly equals \$1000 per Victorian — man, woman and child. This represents a massive loss, losses that we know destroy lives and families.

While I understand that the true social cost of gambling is very difficult to quantify, we have a lot of anecdotal evidence in this area, and we have a lot of emerging research as well, that suggests the social costs of gambling are enormous, and that is an understatement. Investing gambling revenue in social services does not offset this social cost or change the fact that the government is clearly profiting from its citizens' misfortune. I would urge the Victorian government to address this issue more fully in the next budget, to move clearly away from its dependency on gambling revenue and to take greater steps towards minimising gambling-related social harms.

I would also like to talk about the children and families portfolio. We have heard in this place the Minister for Families and Children, Ms Mikakos, speak about the Roadmap for Reform in glowing terms, and this reform has been aimed at improving outcomes in the out-of-home care space. The injection of \$169 million is a significant amount of funding for this program, and it will help families and children in out-of-home care. For far too long children in out-of-home care have suffered poorer outcomes in education, health, employment and housing in comparison to their peers. It is a very important step in the right direction that the specialist support packages which are now being funded, which are designed to ensure a stable family unit for our most vulnerable children, are followed through in the years to come. An ongoing concern that we have is what happens once a child turns 18, when they are forced in many instances to exit these programs. We know that over 50 per cent become homeless within the first year. A solution is overdue here, and I call on the government to address this.

My final point is around housing affordability, because it does capture a lot of the points that I have been talking about. Housing affordability is an ongoing concern across this great state of Victoria, and it is a growing concern. There are concerns about the NDIS

and housing affordability, and there are concerns about public housing instability and the evolution of the social housing sector. These sectors are looking for clear direction and clear leadership from this government in these areas. I do note that the Treasurer has acknowledged housing affordability as a priority into the future through an affordable housing strategy, and I certainly look forward to this. I do note in this budget there is a healthy projected surplus this year and a healthy economy projected in the short term here in Victoria. I do hope that this can be used to address the area of housing affordability for all.

I want to again thank the government for its healthy budget, 'Getting It Done', and just reiterate that my observations have been around small business, education, health, the prevention of family violence, disability and mental health, gambling, children and families, and finally housing affordability.

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) — I will be speaking very briefly on the budget, but I would like to echo some of the comments of Dr Carling-Jenkins on the issue of gambling. I think she has summed up extremely well the dangers of gambling — —

Dr Carling-Jenkins — Awful dangers.

Ms HARTLAND — especially the way that it affects our region and the fact that all governments of all colours have come to rely far too heavily on the revenue from pokies and have refused to actively do anything about it. So I would totally concur with Dr Carling-Jenkins.

The main thing I wanted to talk about around the budget is the health budget. Now, while there are a number of extremely good things in the budget, it was pretty clear to me that you actually need to live in a marginal seat if you want to get a major building program.

The example I give of this is the Western Health hospital at Footscray. This is a hospital that has been neglected by a range of governments over the last 20 years. It turned 60 this year, and it is in a terrible state of disrepair, especially the emergency room. I live just a few streets behind the hospital, and I would have to say that because I am extremely accident prone and at times clumsy I have ended up in the emergency room having broken my fingers, having broken my ankle or having done all kinds of things. It has fabulous staff — the best staff you could imagine — but it is the worst emergency room that you can imagine. It is disconnected, it has no proper flow-through and staff find it very difficult to work there. There is broken

equipment. There are cubicles where you cannot actually resuscitate a person. You actually have to wheel the trolley into the corridor to have enough space for a team to work on that person. It has fantastic staff but is in a shocking state of repair.

What would happen at that hospital if there was a major industrial accident in the area or if there was a major freeway accident and it was the hospital of first response? I do not believe that they could actually manage in that emergency room. And wards have been closed at Footscray Hospital because they were just simply no longer fit for purpose. The showers do not work, the toilets do not work and there is concrete cancer throughout the building so the floors are uneven.

This year the hospital received \$17 million, and this will mainly go to maintenance. The hospital's plan for this rebuild is \$350 million. Seventeen million dollars will just cover maintenance; it will just keep the building ticking over, but it really feels like the building is operating on a wing and a prayer. Hopefully it does stay together, but you cannot keep holding that kind of building together with rubber bands. There is not the \$30 million that I would roughly estimate it requires to start the planning process for a major rebuild of the hospital. The government just has to get on with it and say what it is going to do about Footscray Hospital.

We also have to consider that the western suburbs are a growing area. Sunshine Hospital was well deserving. It received a large amount of money to build the new paediatrics and maternity wing. It was absolutely necessary because of the numbers of babies that are being born in the region, which covers a huge area, but Footscray needs this kind of major money as well. So I urge the government in next year's budget to make sure that it does not forget about Footscray Hospital and that it comes to understand that health funding should be about need and not whether you live in a marginal seat.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I am very pleased to be able to make a contribution tonight to the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. It is fair to say, I think, that there are a number of aspects of the budget that should be of concern to all Victorians, because essentially in many aspects this is a budget that leaves Victorians and Victoria further behind. There is no jobs plan in a time when clearly Victoria's jobs growth is massively falling behind the jobs growth that we are seeing in New South Wales. We are seeing the outcomes of the dominance of the unions in relation to their influence over both the Premier and the government. You just need to look at the 15 per cent increase in public sector wages to see that that influence is obviously being exerted and is

being delivered on by this government. That does not even include some of the funding from things like the nurses enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) and the paramedics EBA, which were additional significant increases and which will drive that public sector wages bill up by much more than the 15 per cent increase that we have seen under this government.

There are new taxes in the face of promises from the government that there would be no new taxes, and concerning the outcome of these taxes is going to be increases in power bills. Now, obviously the coalition put in an amendment earlier today — that was not supported by the house — because of its concern about the cost of living being such an important and vital issue for so many Victorian families, yet here we have a government that is prepared to charge extra on those power bills, which are going to not only hurt families but also hurt Victoria's jobs and industries. There is a failure to address population growth, which we have seen quite comprehensively from this government, there are less kids in TAFE, and the list just goes on and on. What we are seeing with Daniel Andrews again and again is that it is union mates first, second and third. We are not seeing Victorians prioritised by the budget that the house is considering tonight.

Understandably I want to spend most of my contribution speaking in relation to the area of health and the health portfolio, for which I have shadow responsibility. There are a couple of key things here in relation to health. I think the first one is the pea-and-thimble-type approach in so many areas in relation to some capital investments. What we are seeing again and again is the government claiming that projects are funded when there is not the funding actually allocated in the budget. Instead what we are seeing is funding conveniently parked in the contingency fund and not actually being delivered. There are footnotes even to the extent that 'Until the business case is done and the planning is done, this funding will not be allocated', but the government, with a desperate need to claim and to be seen to be doing things, is claiming to be funding this variety of items, but the reality is they are not funded. There are no business cases, the work has not been done and the funding has not been allocated from the contingency fund.

Let me give you a couple of examples of that. The Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery — \$60 million in the contingency fund. Casey Hospital was actually funded with \$2.4 million in last year's budget of a total of \$106 million. Last year the difference was in the contingency fund, and interestingly this year the funding is still in the

contingency fund. This was a project that Daniel Andrews promised would be underway in 2015 and completed by 2018. Instead we are seeing over \$103 million parked in a contingency fund and the project not being funded so that it can actually get underway.

A classic example of this is the proton beam therapy initiative — an investment of \$50 million. Once again this is one of those ones where the footnote says the business planning is still to be done. So the government can stand up and claim \$50 million for this initiative, but there is not one cent. There was \$2 million for planning allocated last year, and we have had no input into what that \$2 million has actually delivered. There is \$50 million this year, but the government still does not even know how much the overall project is going to cost. The business planning has not been done, and there is no plan on funding partners or a time frame for delivery. This is a classic example of claiming something is funded and claiming it is delivered. I have been told the government is even interested in claiming the issue just so that no other states would think about doing it, when really no work has been done — or little work has been done — on whether there is actually an economic or social benefit from this project and how it will be realised.

Another one of these is the Victorian Heart Hospital, for which there is \$135 million which is once again in the contingency. It was a \$150 million promise from the government. What we have seen is \$15 million in last year's budget and \$135 million that is claimed to have been delivered in this year's budget. Once again, every single cent of that \$135 million is sitting in the contingency fund. The problem with this initiative is that it is all about Daniel Andrews's ego. This is not about delivering better cardiac care.

We have seen a cardiac services plan released, which was really a plan to justify this ego-driven initiative of having a standalone Victorian Heart Hospital located on the Monash University campus rather than being co-located at Monash Medical Centre. We are going to see significant loss in terms of this idea of having it standalone. The problem is that you duplicate services. Rather than just expanding the existing cardiac services, which could have been done at the Monash Medical Centre site, you actually have to replicate a whole set of new services to have it as a standalone at Monash University. You are going to need a dedicated ambulance to drive the kilometres between the two facilities — to shuttle patients from the emergency department at the Monash Medical Centre — because there is no emergency department at the new Victorian Heart Hospital that patients can walk into and self-refer.

At so many levels this is an absolute failure in relation to the Victorian Heart Hospital. The fact is that once again this was a promise that Daniel Andrews said would be delivered in 2018. At the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee the minister could not give a time frame for when this would be concluded, and the budget documents themselves say times varying from 2019 to 2020 and even a 'to be confirmed' — we have got no idea.

The other area where there has been no funding at all on the capital front is the Ballarat hospital — the fit-out of the surgical units, the theatres, there. For a small investment in addition to the capital that has already been provided, you could see what is a constrained capacity of the existing hospital actually being expanded. There would be more operations and more elective surgery to deal with the waiting lists that are absolutely blowing out.

The Northern Hospital is another good example. It is one that my colleague Mr Ondarchie knows very well. It needs additional investment for the capacity and the growth that is happening in the northern suburbs, something this government continuously fails to invest in. Not only is it not investing in further capital development; in contrast to the coalition it is not even providing the funding to fit out and open facilities that have been built in the new capital build, such as the intensive care unit. This is a real failure of this government to deliver to the northern suburbs.

One area that has been widely criticised is the lack of IT funding in this budget. I quote from the Victorian Healthcare Association, which has said:

... there remain important initiatives where we call on the Andrews government to take action in future budgets.

These include:

...

statewide strategy for digital health with substantial statewide health IT investment.

The Australian Medical Association has also said, and I quote:

We are disappointed, however, that it is another Victorian budget that sidesteps health IT. The hospital-general practice IT interface needs significant investment. The fact that every GP clinic relies on faxes is unacceptable. Proper health IT funding must be addressed ...

This is an area of real failure by the government. There is a little bit of funding to do some planning over a series of years in relation to Melbourne Health and that precinct, but fundamentally there is not the funding for IT to bring our health services into the 21st century. As

Ms Hartland mentioned about Western Health, it is good that there is planning money there, but the money that is provided will literally just put some sticky tape over the walls that are falling down — some basic maintenance to keep the thing alive. We need that commitment. We need the planning to be done and the commitment to be delivered.

The other thing about this budget — I think a very common theme — is what it is hiding, what is not included in the budget, what is not delivered. There is the cost of the public holidays — many, many tens of millions of dollars because of the additional public holidays established by this Labor government — but once again there is no transparency in relation to the cost of that. There was \$25 million in supplementation to hospital costs in this budget for the last financial year. Most of that, I suspect, would partially cover just the cost of the additional public holidays. So there is not one additional patient treated — in fact probably fewer — but it is a very significant additional cost.

As I mentioned earlier, the paramedics EBA, with a \$54 million cost this financial year — let alone what the cost will be next year — is not included in the budget even though the paramedics EBA was concluded many weeks before the budget was handed down and a cost was attributed to that but not included in this budget. The nurses EBA we calculate could cost up to about \$1 billion over the course of the next four or five years, yet only a 2.5 per cent increase is included in the budget. Over the first four years of the nurses EBA it is an average of a 4.5 per cent increase. So there is 2 per cent on a wages bill each and every year that the nurses EBA will require the government to fund that is not yet included in the budget, and once again it will be a very real and present cost for the 2016–17 budget.

So this budget hides a number of costs that will very clearly be incurred and will further drive up those public sector wages bills and increase the funding required for public sector wages. There are a number of areas of legislation for which this government has said that the funding will be addressed in the budget, but that is not clearly identified, including the health complaints commissioner and the Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority — and the list goes on.

The other thing that is interesting is that we have seen in relation to a number of these initiatives, particularly capital items, the government repeatedly calling on the federal government to provide funding. But have we had any commitments from Bill Shorten in relation to these initiatives? On the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery, the government said in a press release back

in August 2015 that the Andrews Labor government called on the federal government to contribute \$60 million. Nothing from Bill Shorten.

Consider the Victorian Heart Hospital, and I quote from a *Herald Sun* article of 27 April 2016:

... the Andrews government ... still needs to raise ... \$200 million from private partners, the federal government and fundraising before it can provide a time line to turn the first sod.

Have we heard anything from Bill Shorten on this? Absolutely nothing.

On funding for the Latrobe Valley — and a report on implementation was just tabled today — I quote from a press release of 10 February 2016:

We have also written to the commonwealth government to request their support for future health funding for the Latrobe Valley ...

Have we heard anything from Bill Shorten? Absolutely nothing. The list goes on and on. On the continued claim in relation to a \$57 million gap in funding in the out years, what have we had from Bill Shorten? Two billion dollars. We have had a promise that it would be delivered, but all Bill Shorten is prepared to put actual funding against is \$2 billion. I look at a press release from 23 June 2015, which states:

... any reform of health funding must ensure the commonwealth funds its fair share.

Well, it is clear that the health minister, Jill Hennessy, and the Premier, Daniel Andrews, are not having any influence and that they do not have any capacity for what they very clearly articulate as important Victorian projects, because there is no delivery, no commitment and no funding from their federal counterparts.

In the last minute I want to make sure that we can also highlight the needs in my electorate, and particularly in the electorate of Eltham. We have no commitments that deal with the congestion that is such a massive issue for Eltham residents. We have nothing on north-east link — absolute radio silence from the government in terms of progress on that front. The government also promised three additional morning peak train services on the Hurstbridge line, but we have seen absolutely nothing. Eighteen months on and that has still not been delivered. In relation to Bolton Street, the government has only delivered half the funding needed to deliver on the issues that have been identified again and again. We get half-baked solutions from the government that do not address the core needs of the constituency.

Of course election promises are still not funded, such as funding for St Francis Xavier School and the Eltham North Reserve. This is a budget that does not deliver for Victorians. It is union mates first, union mates second, and union mates third under Daniel Andrews.

Mr Herbert — Eltham North Reserve, the funding's there in full.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — It is not funded.

Mr Herbert — You know that very well.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — The funding is not there.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmr) — Order! Minister!

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — If I may commence by interrupting Mr Herbert's interjections as he vainly tries to defend this atrocious budget that has been presented to the Victorian people, I will start by recognising the issues associated with Melbourne's north. The Premier must stop taking Melbourne's north for granted. I think the Labor Party say, 'Well, it's a safe Labor area so we don't have to do anything and we'll just keep getting re-elected', and quite frankly the people are sick and tired of it. Over the last few weeks we have seen Labor more interested in picking fights with volunteers than supporting the people of Victoria. It scrapped beds at the Peter MacCallum hospital, where private money was going to support cancer patients. It blew \$1.1 billion of taxpayers money not to build a vital piece of infrastructure that would have helped Melbourne's north. Under Labor Victoria's economy is falling behind New South Wales, crime is on the rise, there is a jobs crisis — and the people of Melbourne's northern suburbs are the hardest hit.

But I tell you what: there is either denial across the chamber here or complete ignorance; I am not sure which one it is. Crime is on the rise in Victoria. I want to touch on some key issues around law and order, safety, health, roads and jobs. Let us take frontline police, which I know my colleague Mr O'Donohue is a great champion of. Crime is up over 8.1 per cent in Victoria, yet the answer to the Premier's dilemma is to close police stations. Epping police station was closed for part of the weekend along with Craigieburn, Greensborough and Reservoir. They were all closed or had their hours reduced. West Heidelberg police station, which was closed by Labor, remains closed.

The first responsibility of any government is to protect the community, and we want to see more action on community safety. Daniel Andrews said he would not

waste a day in improving law and order in this state. Yet here we are 570 days into the Andrews government, and how much work do you think has been done on its much-lauded Mernda police station?

Mr Morris interjected.

Mr ONDARCHIE — As Mr Morris interjects, zero. Absolutely none. If the Premier said he would not waste a day and so far 570 days have elapsed, I wonder what he really meant by that. Maybe he meant he would not waste a decade rather than a day.

Respite beds are sorely needed out in the northern suburbs, and that issue has been top of mind for parents, families, children and health service providers over a long time. The Liberal-Nationals coalition committed \$3.6 million at the election to build a respite centre in the City of Whittlesea. I know even the member for Yan Yean has called for more respite beds out in Whittlesea. What do we see in the budget for respite care in the City of Whittlesea and Melbourne's northern suburbs? Nothing. And the government remains silent about that. Not a word. Those who get out and pontificate about how important it is and how much they care for Victorians have said nothing about the lack of respite facilities in the north.

But that is consistent when we look at their silence over support for Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers. Those who go to Facebook, to Twitter and to local media and talk about their involvement in CFA and their volunteerism in CFA have been absolutely silent. I draw on the member for Yan Yean in the Legislative Assembly in this case — a prolific Facebooker who has not put an entry on Facebook since 1 June this year, and that had nothing to do with CFA volunteers. Where are they standing up for the CFA volunteers now?

Ms Wooldridge touched on the need for more health services. I draw the government's attention to the lack of support for the Northern Hospital, one of the busiest and most under pressure hospitals in the state. The Northern Hospital is one of Melbourne's major acute treatment centres. The emergency department of the Northern Hospital is the busiest in the state, treating nearly 70 000 patients annually. Northern Health provides services to an extremely diverse community representing more than 126 countries by birth, and it is characterised by a range of unique facilities that create significant challenges for health service provision in the north. The community has a higher than average number of younger and older people and the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the metropolitan region. There are over 118 languages spoken, with a high proportion of

residents with low English proficiency. There is a high concentration of socio-economic disadvantage. There are high levels of poor health, disability, disease and injury. There are high levels of unemployment. People living in the outer west generally have poor health, with high obesity levels, type 2 diabetes, lack of physical activity and a smoking rate above the Victorian average.

What support did we get for the Northern Hospital?

The Northern Hospital in an average week sees 1500 patients treated in the emergency department, including 284 paediatric presentations and 420 ambulance arrivals. Each week there are 3900 outpatient appointments provided across the Northern Health campuses and 66 babies born — and a record-breaking 3420 babies were born in the hospital over the past 12 months. The Northern Hospital performs almost 115 emergency operations and more than 278 elective procedures each week. As I said, it helps people from more than 126 different countries, using interpreter services for more than 750 patients for whom English is not their first language.

How much support did the Northern Hospital get in this year's budget? None — for its growing area. There was a little bit for the Broadmeadows campus, which was a token amount. But do not forget that the coalition promised to expand the Northern Hospital, and that money was cut and then not provided in this year's budget. So a government whose members claim — and members for Northern Metropolitan Region other than me who claim — they support the northern area have been absolutely silent on support for our hospital.

Roads are an issue for us in the north. The 6.30 departure for work in the morning now starts at 5.30. The roads are clogged up from 5.30 in the morning as people try to commute to work. What has this government done about it? Nothing but talk. Government members have said they are going to commit to the new Mernda rail. What is interesting is that they have conned the community. They said they were going to build a lovely new train line all the way from South Morang to Mernda. It seems now that lovely new train line is actually going to be elevated. It is actually going overhead. And it has caused a lot of grief for the community, particularly for people who live around the Hawkesdale estate south of Mernda, in the South Morang area.

What are government members saying now? After pitching this lovely rail line to the people of Melbourne's north, they are now saying, 'There could be some budgetary constraints, there could be some geotechnical issues, there could be rocks underground,

there could be water, there could be issues that are going to preclude us from going completely at ground level'. I have to tell you that if you are a local and you know the area, you would have known that from the start. At the back of my place I have pulled out a rock the size of a Volkswagen. We know there are big rocks in this area, and members of this government are using it as an excuse. I live in that area. A great majority of people who saw the railway line going along the lovely country road flats are now going to see it elevated above their homes. They are angry — and members of this government are silent. Where are they? They were quick to hold community meetings when they thought it was a good idea. Now that it has turned bad they are missing in action.

The automotive manufacturing industry is in decline, as we know. Ford will close its doors in October this year. In fact you cannot order a new Falcon anymore; they have stopped taking orders for new vehicles. General Motors and Toyota will close over the next 12 months. This is going to affect not just the car manufacturers themselves but component suppliers, consultants and people supplying ancillary services — those who cut the lawns at the manufacturing sites, those who provide courier services and the people who mortgaged their home to put a cafe in an industrial estate who now find those companies in that surrounding area are going to close. Those people are going to suffer. Lots and lots of jobs are going to be lost.

We are very disappointed as an opposition that there is a lack of detailed support for an industry that is going to hurt over the next 12 months. Where is the jobs plan? Where is the support, albeit a little too late? There is just nothing coming from this government that claims it stands up for workers. It does not stand up for workers, and it does not stand up for volunteers in our community either. Those opposite are not standing up for the 60 000 volunteers across Victoria who turn out in their turn-out jackets to protect us in times of fire. Those opposite are standing up for their union mates. They are making sure their union mates are well protected, but they have absolutely disrespected Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers in the process. Where are they on this? Cue the sound of crickets. Nothing. There is no support for CFA volunteers.

When it comes to jobs, as I was speaking about, employment agencies like WISE Employment, AMES, Sarina Russo, MAX Solutions, MatchWorks, Employment Plus and many others overwhelmingly are giving me the same message: 'We hear all this spin from the government, but where are the jobs going to come from?'. The government's answer to that is, 'We

don't know'. There is a complete lack of a jobs plan and fewer dollars in the budget for employment investment in 2016–17 than what was spent in 2015–16.

Those in government have reduced the delivery of skilled migration. In fact in the budget they have said that the average processing time for skilled migration — those jobs we do not have here but that we have to bring in — will be about 20 days. When they came to government it was 17 days. They have got progressively worse.

There is a lack of investment in regional Victoria. When those opposite came to government there was \$724 million in the budget for regional Victoria. This year there is less. There are fewer dollars for overall delivery around investment and trade than when they came to office. If members look at the budget papers, and I have — I am not sure the government has — the total output cost when those opposite came to office for investment and trade was \$22.3 million. In 2016–17 there has been a reduction. They are doing less.

There is a plan for reduction in the interaction of Victoria agribusinesses, exporters, international customers and trading partners. To put it into perspective, those opposite set themselves a target of interacting with 250 contacts in those industries. When they came to government, it was actually 320 — a 30 per cent reduction in their delivery of those services. Can you believe it? They announced last year, and they have reannounced, three new overseas offices. They are championing that as their great new initiative. Mr Somyurek did that last year, and they are doing it again this year. Maybe a new minister thinks, 'I get to read it differently, so it is a new announcement'. They are not fooling Victorians. This budget does not fool Victorians.

Victoria is growing at an unsustainably fast rate — more than 90 000 people per annum, which is almost the size of Ballarat per annum. Ninety per cent of that state growth is coming to Melbourne, yet there is no population plan in this budget. There is no plan for the infrastructure and the spending that might be required in future years. Our responsibility as legislators, as representatives of the people, is not just to think into the first year of this budget. Our job is to think beyond the forward estimates to Victorians who are not even born yet. Why are we not making plans for that? This government does not deal with that. Our city needs a population plan. It needs a plan that involves regionalisation and decentralisation. It is about supporting regional Victorians. I know Mr Ramsay, Mr Morris and many of my colleagues on this side of

the house are great advocates for regional Victoria. Ms Bath is a great advocate for regional Victoria, as Mr O'Donohue is for eastern Victoria. But there is no plan and no money. There is no vision from the government to support people in regional Victoria — there is nothing.

As members have heard me say in this place before, forget Shane Warne and forget Harbhajan Singh. Daniel Andrews and Tim Pallas are the true spin kings of the globe, because they spin a story better than anybody else. This budget is just more of the same. It is a typical Labor budget that literally taxes its way to a surplus. I remind you, Acting President, of the words of the then opposition leader, now Premier, to Peter Mitchell on the eve of the state election.

Mr O'Donohue — What did he say?

Mr ONDARCHIE — Well, Mr O'Donohue asked me a direct question, so I will answer it. Peter Mitchell asked the then opposition leader now Premier, 'Will there be any new taxes? Any new taxes for Victoria?', and the Premier looked down the barrel of the camera and said to every Victorian watching Channel 7 news that night, 'Peter, I give you this commitment: there will be no new taxes or charges for Victorians'.

Yet here we are with this budget, and it is going to survive on growth and taxes, increasing 20 per cent in just two years with a massive blowout of public sector wages of 15 per cent. And those services are not going to frontline services; they are going to support Labor's union mates — backroom deals with Labor's union mates.

This is a Treasurer who has taxed his way to a surplus. But do you know what? You cannot tax your way into prosperity and growth. This government does not have any idea beyond the concept of serving its mates, and that is what this budget represents. Unashamedly those opposite say, 'We're a Labor government, and this is a Labor budget. We are protecting our union mates, and everybody else can go and get nicked'.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — It gives me pleasure to be able to speak on the Appropriation (2016–2017) Bill 2016. In doing so I just want to make a couple of broad statements in relation to the budget and the impact it has on my region of Western Victoria and also particularly on the many small businesses that I represent across that electorate.

I note in the overview of the bill that operating surpluses have increased to \$2.9 billion in the 2016–17 budget and are proposed to be \$9 billion cumulatively over four years, but I might add that that \$2.9 billion

forecast operating surplus includes within the budget the expected proceeds from the long-term lease of the port of Melbourne. So in this budget the government is counting the eggs before the chooks have actually laid them. I certainly hope that the projected sale price of somewhere between \$7 billion to \$8 billion actually eventuates, but we do not know that yet. Also we know that \$1.5 billion was allocated from the federal government in relation to the proposed east–west link, which still sits in the Treasury figures.

I have significant concerns with a government that relies significantly on the housing and building industries and the taxes that are subjected to growth, particularly in the building industry, whereby this government has been extremely lucky, I might add, to have very healthy returns in stamp duty and land tax. In fact the government's operating surpluses and forecast profits are based on the fact that there has been sustained growth in the housing industry and there will be sustained growth in revenue from stamp duty and land tax.

As Mr Ondarchie said, there have also been a number of increases in taxes across the board. We have seen a 7.2 per cent increase in the fire services property levy. We have seen increases in tax on our energy market with an increase in royalties, and I expect we will see increases in tax to cover off the fiscal blowouts in the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) negotiations that are current and seen as continuing in the future.

We have already seen in the public service a potential blowout of \$357 million, and we are yet to see what the costs associated with the police EBAs, the health EBAs and the firefighters EBA will be. We already know that the cost of the United Firefighters Union-Country Fire Authority EBA could potentially be somewhere between \$700 million and \$1 billion. These figures are quite large and will have a significant impact on operating surpluses in the future and also the net debt. The net debt sits at around \$22 billion. Tim Pallas has indicated that he is more than happy to increase that debt to invest in infrastructure and, as I said, the operating surpluses and the budget itself are reliant on the port of Melbourne lease and the contingent growth in the building and housing sectors.

The areas that I would like to cover in my contribution are regional Victoria and the impact that this budget has on regional Victoria. Can I say from the outset there are some good announcements and investments in this budget for regional Victoria, particularly in the area of transport where the Andrews government has committed to the election commitments the Napthine government made in relation to a fourth daily service

from Warrnambool to Melbourne, additional services between Melbourne and Geelong, the infrastructure upgrade of the Ballarat line and further rolling stock. Certainly in the rail sector the commitments that we made as a coalition during the campaign have been re-announced as budgetary commitments by the Andrews government. It is pleasing to see that the government has seen fit to support the commitments the coalition made in that area during the election campaign.

I am really disappointed that the Andrews government has not seen fit to continue the Regional Growth Fund — \$1 billion allocated for investment in regional Victoria. That Regional Growth Fund provided both local governments and regional communities right across Victoria with significant upgrades of facilities, whether they be halls or sporting facilities, and leadership training. It made very broad investments across a whole range of activities and purposes. Under the new Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund that has replaced the Regional Growth Fund we have seen a belittling of the sorts of investments made through the Regional Growth Fund.

Equally, I have seen this firsthand through the Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning's inquiry into rate capping, with many local councils struggling not only to meet the CPI rate cap but also to deal with the loss of the country roads and bridges program, which provided significant funding to 41 regional councils seen as rural disadvantaged councils. The program provided funding directly to councils for local government roads and bridges. We know that that fund and that money was much appreciated by local government. In fact it was seen as critical to helping with some of the backlog of maintenance and road network upgrade projects that local governments were struggling to fund. The loss of that program really has stifled any capacity local governments had to continue the work they did under the coalition's country road and bridges program, which is having a significant impact as we now see road infrastructure failing all over regional Victoria and the desperate need for significant upgrades.

The Andrews government has played smoke and mirrors with a lot of these new funding projects and a lot of these new funds. We have seen it continue to re-announce the moneys that were made available through the sale of the Rural Finance Corporation of Victoria, which was concluded by the coalition government. There was over \$410 million from that sale, of which the Napthine government committed \$216 million to the Murray Basin rail project. If you read and believe the press releases coming out of the

Andrews government, it fully funded that project. Well, it did not. It was in fact the sale of rural finance and the coalition government's \$216 million provision within the 2013–14 budget that paid for that quite significant infrastructure project in country Victoria, and also the support of the federal government with a further \$200 million.

What the Andrews government did with the rest of the proceeds from the rural finance corporation was put it into the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund under Minister Pulford and reannounce that money about three or four times as if it had in fact allocated those funds in the budget. Then through the discussions of the port of Melbourne lease sale, where 10 per cent of that sale price net was to be provided to fund transport infrastructure in regional Victoria, the government has cunningly reannounced again that the same \$200 million is part of the 10 per cent of the sale proceeds of the port of Melbourne. The government is trying to dupe regional Victoria into thinking that it has provided \$200 million initially through the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund and is then providing the same money again through the port of Melbourne lease sale. I can assure you we will not let that go unchecked when that sale does go through.

Another issue I am particularly concerned about is the cost of the V/Line crisis that we have seen being run out across Victoria over the last four or five months, where rolling stock has been derailed off tracks, there have been late services and there have been replacement bus services. The cost I am told is anywhere between \$80 million and \$100 million for the V/Line fiasco that we have seen plaguing rail commuters over the last six or seven months, and it is not yet clear whether those significant costs are supposed to come out of the V/Line budget or in fact out of the state budget.

I have talked about the loss of some of the regional transport programs, and I would also like to flag the significant cost which again has to be borne in this budget of the \$1.1 billion that was spent not on a road but on tearing up a contract for the east–west link. That money has been lost forever and again has to be paid for by the Victorian taxpayer through the loss of that money through the budget.

On a local front I would like to flag again that we have seen the agricultural budget being cut by \$30 million, which is a significant loss to regional Victoria, particularly for those farmers that are dependent on a healthy state agricultural budget for both productivity gains and innovation research. Sadly we have seen many of our research farms, our research bodies and

some of the on-farm farming systems that were funded by the state government through its agricultural budget now either falling over or curtailed to a high degree.

Some of the local projects that we have seen no funding for in the budget include detox beds to help curb Geelong's alcohol abuse issues. I have raised this in the Parliament over the last two years, particularly in relation to the methamphetamine inquiry of the Law Reform, Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee which I chaired, when I made it very clear that there needed to be rehabilitation and detox beds to help with the increased impact of the use of methamphetamines and also with the significant increase of alcohol abuse we are seeing. Yet Geelong does not have any segregated beds to help with the immediate detoxification of those affected by alcohol.

We have seen no funding for a car park upgrade for the Geelong train station. We have this ludicrous situation where the car park is on the other side of the tracks to the train station and commuters have to go down on the road and come up and around to get to the station. It is probably about a 20-minute walk in hail, rain, sunshine or floods. There has been no funding for Barwon Heads Road. The government has built a satellite city in Armstrong Creek but has made no provision for a duplication of the road or road upgrade to assist with the heavier usage of that road due to that area being populated. We have not seen a feasibility study for light rail through to Bellarine, where the community is looking for greater connectivity between Bellarine and the Geelong CBD than just the antiquated bus system.

There is no funding to increase axle loadings for the Murray Basin rail project. We know that stakeholders are calling for 23-tonne axle loadings, but unfortunately only 21-tonne axle loadings have been budgeted for. There is no funding to complete the project to the Geelong port. We have about a kilometre gap between the Murray Basin rail standardised rail track and Lascelles Wharf, but unfortunately there is still about a kilometre that does not provide that rail track to the Geelong port. There is no commitment to facilitate a business case for the Geelong exhibition and convention centre. Even though some monies were given to the planning authority, none was identified specifically for a business case. We expect it will cost up to \$30 million to move that project forward.

There is no plan to distribute \$572 million to fund family violence recommendations for regional Victoria, no funding for the Golden Plains sporting ground upgrade, no funding for the Birregurra Primary School upgrade, nothing about an international airport at Geelong and no CCTV funding for Bellarine towns.

There is no significant increase in the police budget for more police resources on the Bellarine and in the Geelong CBD, despite a 12 per cent increase in crime across the Geelong area. In fact some of the smaller towns are seeing increases of 300 per cent in criminal activity in the Greater Geelong area, yet we have seen no significant increase in police resources being identified in the budget.

There have been some small gains. The threshold to payroll tax — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Finn) — Order! Mr Ramsay’s time has expired.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) — I rise today to speak on the budget, and I will keep it quite brief. One of the things I have noticed — in fact today it is quite contextual — is the crime figures that came out recently. One of the things they have shown is an increase in violent crime, and a lot of it is in the teens. That is a big concern, and what that means is we need more money for law enforcement. It is not just extra police recruits that are needed, it is also extra police cars. I remember years ago that the forensic science laboratory was woefully behind; it needs more people. This is something that we as a society cannot ignore. We have seen a lot of the youth gang problems coming up, and the police to a large degree have to be reactive, but they also need to be proactive. Like everything in this world, this issue needs resources.

Moving on, I found a couple of items of interest. One is the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund. In regional areas community sports are a huge bonding mechanism. Basically it is where people get together for their football on Saturday afternoons and the activities usually held afterwards, and it is things like pools during summer, which is a long way away from today, when it is freezing. There is a grant for up to \$3 million to provide for high-quality aquatic leisure facilities. Some pools in some of the regional areas are pretty prehistoric; some of them are quite nice.

Ms Bath — Traralgon pool.

Mr BOURMAN — Traralgon pool, yes. Like everything, pools need upkeep, and occasionally when they get to a certain point they need fixing.

There are also minor facilities grants of up to \$100 000 for any one project where the total project cost is up to \$1 million for community sports and recreation groups — working in public-private partnerships no doubt — to upgrade or develop community sports and recreation centres. As our society grows there will be a need for more facilities, and a lot of these things from

my perspective also tie back into my first comment on crime rates. Kids with nothing to do misbehave. They get bored. What starts as a few little petty crimes can often grow into something else. Giving them something to do, whether it is table tennis, swimming, football or whatever, gives them an outlet for their activities, and we should never fall behind in this. We cannot forget about that.

There is also some interesting planning funding for initiatives that address future sport and recreational needs. One of the more interesting ones that I see are grants of up to \$30 000 for female participation strategies. That might sound a bit strange, but one of the fastest growing segments — in fact the fastest growing segment — in shooting sports is females. There are quite a few shooting come-and-try days for females only, such as those run by Marion Barnes in the northern region, which is somewhat outside of my area. That does show that there is money available to help with these sorts of things. Shooting is one of those sports that is very inclusive, regardless of what some people to our far left may think. Your race, your creed, your sex, your proclivities — anything like that — does not matter. If you pass the police check, you are off and running.

That brings me to something that is probably more a future thing but something the government really needs to start thinking about shortly, which is the Shooting Sports Facilities grants. The Shooting Sports Facilities program was originally delivered by the previous government, but it has well and truly been embraced by the current government, which is up to round 2 or maybe even round 3 of these grants. These grants are for exactly what the name says — they make sure the facilities are okay, make sure the facilities are safe and make sure the general amenities around the area are kept up to scratch. Some of these clubs are quite old and have no money. This is something I would like to see maybe in future budgets and maybe on an ongoing basis.

Moving on to regional jobs, there is \$40 million over four years to help the Latrobe Valley build a strong and secure economy. This will be needed given the increase in the rate of the tax on coal. However, much of that may or may not end up being passed on to the end user, it adds an extra cost to the production of electricity. Yes, renewable energy is coming along, but at the moment we are still stuck with what we have got, and that is brown coal. Should that tax lead to a reduction in jobs, we are going to have to do something. We are losing manufacturing in this state and in this country. I think this year is supposed to mark the end of Ford;

next year it is Holden, and I think Toyota as well. We are going to have to rely on something else.

Tourism is obviously one thing, and in this budget there is \$58.2 million for a new Penguin Parade Visitors Centre to be built on Phillip Island. We are going to need that. With the number of tourists who come to Victoria to see the penguins or the Twelve Apostles — or the eight apostles or whatever it is down to at the moment — we need to develop these things as a matter of priority.

In regional education I was really pleased to see \$4 million for Yarram Primary School — finally. I had a talk with representatives of the school just before budget time. The school needs that money. One part of the school is okay, but the rest of it is exactly the same as it was when I went to the school, which is quite a while ago. The budget includes a fund for future upgrades and building works. I had a quick look, and it seems that there are only four schools from Eastern Victoria Region that will receive funding — Drouin Secondary College, Morwell Park Primary School, Warragul Regional College and the aforementioned Yarram Primary School. That is not a lot given the size of the list. The eastern region is going to be hurting soon if we have a problem with the coal industry, or the power generation industry I should say. We need to make sure that schools are there to help train people because education will help us in the future.

Rail is another one of our things. It is obviously very contentious at the moment, but I am looking at it more from the point of view of the regional areas. A total of \$9 million has been allocated to station upgrades in Gippsland, including extra parking at Morwell and Traralgon. There will be a few upgrades between Moe and Bairnsdale, and we will see the duplication of the Bunyip River Bridge. There is still a lot more to go. There is the Stratford Bridge. There is also the fact that, like a lot of this stuff, it has just fallen behind. It is really the case that we need to plan for a lot longer into the future, for many governments ahead. We are going to have to start to decide whether we want to have our regional areas as just regional areas or regional hubs. We cannot just keep on going with a piecemeal approach. This applies to both sides of the chamber.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BOURMAN — On that note, at the risk of getting involved in the interjections, I am going to leave it at that.

Mr Barber — Have you run out of material?

Mr BOURMAN — I will take up that interjection of Mr Barber — yes, I have run out of material. On that note, I am going to say thank you and sit down.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) — I am happy to make a small contribution this evening on the budget papers, having already spent many hours looking at them in detail through the budget estimates process as a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I note that another member of the committee, Ms Shing, is in the chamber too.

Ms Shing interjected.

Ms PENNICUIK — Yes, I know Ms Shing is very pleased to hear about the estimates process. Certainly through that process I raised many questions across all areas of the budget and across all portfolio areas of the ministers who appeared before us.

On the revenue side of the budget, as Mr Barber pointed out in his contribution, the government has a large revenue stream on the taxation side of it, made up of increased stamp duty revenue not only now but into the future. As he pointed out, unless things go according to the projections, future budgets may not look quite as rosy. So a significant proportion of the budget is based on that. Of course around half of the budget revenue is, as always, made up from federal grants to the various large portfolios, particularly health, education et cetera.

It is fair to say that this budget has some spending in areas that we think are very good. A couple of things that I would like to point out are things under the equality portfolio, such as the appointment of the gender and sexuality commissioner and the introduction of LGBTI grants under that portfolio. There is more funding in the budget for Parks Victoria, funding for which was drastically cut by the last government. But more is needed there to undo the vast amount of damage that was done. There is also a fairly significant increase in funding in the creative industries area, which is also very welcome.

My Greens colleagues have already spent quite a bit of time raising issues on some of the big portfolios such as transport. There is a lot of money in the transport portfolio, but much of it is on big-ticket items and some of it — for example, the Melbourne Metro rail project — is way into the future. That project will not be completed for at least a decade so it will not make much difference to people's lives now. In terms of public transport, we still need much more investment in trams, trains, buses, cycling and of course in high-capacity signalling. During the budget estimates

process I did raise the issue of high-capacity signalling. I asked the minister about the high-capacity signalling trial on the Sandringham line. To my surprise, and that of everyone else there, it has in fact been abandoned even though significant funds had been poured into it in the previous budget. Now that funding has been transferred to the South Morang line, between three stations.

In terms of high-capacity signalling, I think I have mentioned before in this place that it is one of the areas in the transport system that could make a big difference across the system as to the number of trains that can be run per hour across lines and particularly through the loop. Without that, we are still limited by the old signalling system that we have in place. If people listen to the radio traffic reports every morning, pretty well four out of five mornings you will hear about delays on particular railway lines, and the cause will be signalling problems on those lines. In fact, of the amount of money that is allocated for maintenance of the system, a very large majority of it is devoted to patching up those sorts of problems.

My colleagues also raised the issue of there being very little spending in the budget in the area of climate change in terms of actual spending on initiatives and on renewable energy. In fact searching through the budget I could only find about \$40 million at most in actual spending on projects to do with taking action on climate change. Also, as was mentioned earlier today in proceedings, the revenue from coal is set to continue at the same level over the forward estimates, so the budget actually factors no fall or reduction in the burning of coal and therefore no reduction in emissions from coal over the forward estimates.

Ms Hartland mentioned problems with health, in particular Footscray Hospital, or the Western general hospital, which I also followed up on during the budget estimates with regard to the state of that hospital and of course the problems with the withdrawal of federal funding, which is an issue in many other areas of the budget as well.

In the time I have remaining I would like to talk about funding for schools. There has been a significant amount of money allocated to schools — more than under the previous government — and I will acknowledge that, but we do have a problem. Just recently it has been reported that 361 of Victoria's 1528 government schools are in deficit — that is, 23 per cent of schools — and that 66 schools had to call in the department to help pay staffing costs. My response to that, of course, is that it is in fact absurd for a government school that is funded from the budget of

the Department of Education and Training — that is, funded from the appropriation budget that we are talking about today — to actually be in deficit. In terms of schools, the problem is that schools are not funded for the actual costs that they have in terms of delivering the programs, the subjects and the staffing costs that are needed for each school.

Many times in this place I have raised the issue of a lack of transparency of school funding, and in fact even the government itself has commissioned a report, the Bracks report, which pointed out the same thing — that there needs to be a change in the funding arrangements for government schools. The Minister for Education and the Premier himself mentioned this in the budget estimates process, but I have seen no evidence of it actually proceeding anywhere. Whether that will happen in the next financial year I am not sure, but it is certainly something that is sorely needed. If we have a situation where we are saying that almost one-quarter of government schools are somehow being deemed to be in deficit, we certainly do have a problem in school funding.

If schools are not topped up with funding from the department — and many of them are regional schools, schools in the outer suburban areas or schools in disadvantaged areas — then they are actually axing classes and programs that are needed for their students or are having to let staff go. They are not able to run additional literacy support or music programs; those sorts of programs are the first to go. We know that music programs in fact are going across our government schools as we speak, and this is something that has been raised with me by the Victorian Music Teachers Association — that there is no funding from school budgets anymore to deliver those music programs in schools. So many government schools now — more and more of them — are not running music programs.

That is just one of the examples that come from not funding schools in their recurrent budgets to the extent that they actually need, and we still have Victorian public schools receiving \$2253 less than the national average. Even with the government saying that it is pouring more and more money into schools, and more than the previous government did, we are still in that situation.

There was a lot of fanfare made by the Minister for Education about capital spending on government schools and how much more money has been allocated in this budget to capital works in schools, but if you actually look at the budget papers under the previous government, the number of new projects that were

about specifics was 5 per cent. In last year's budget under this government it was 4.6 per cent and in this budget it is 5.6 per cent, so it is generally around the same number of schools. An average of around 5 per cent of schools get funding for new projects. In the last three years that is only 15 per cent of schools, so 85 per cent of schools are not getting anything.

The major problem is the lack of transparency about which schools receive money for upgrades and for maintenance. We know that schools do receive information from the department about a maintenance audit of their own school which is pretty transparent to that school. They are placed in certain categories which are not open and transparent to the public, so the public is not provided with information about which schools need what maintenance or what schools have the most urgent needs. The government says it is funding the most urgent, but we do not know how many of our 1500-odd government schools are in the most urgent category, in the second category or in the next category. All of this is not transparent, and I believe it should be more transparent so that the public can see why certain funds are going to certain schools.

The other analysis you can do is to look at which schools are receiving which funds, and you will find, as Ms Hartland mentioned with regard to health expenditure, that those funds are often targeted towards marginal seats or government-held seats. So in terms of equity, transparency and accountability, as I have said before, the education department in its allocation of capital expenditure and recurrent expenditure just needs to be more transparent to the public.

The Auditor-General a couple of years ago made the same comments that the allocation of school funding in Victoria was basically mysterious to him and it took him quite a while to get to the bottom of it. He went to the trouble in one of his reports about particular aspects of school funding — about the maintenance audits — to actually include an appendix in that report explaining to the Victorian public as best he could how schools were funded in Victoria. We were in a situation where the detail of school funding was non-transparent, and we still have that situation. In terms of education spending and the allocation of money for capital works to schools, the government is very unaccountable to the public. We know that a large number of schools still require upgrades and maintenance. If we stick with the average of 5 per cent of schools every year, we are still going to be in the situation we have been in for a long time — of underinvestment in schools and of schools in disadvantaged areas not having the basic requirements.

We also know that the recent survey of school principals by the Australian Education Union, which it does every year, found that 65 per cent of principals believe their schools are under-resourced, some significantly, and 70 per cent of principals consider they still have to fundraise. That is a very important part of their budget, and it is necessary just to provide the basics required in their schools. They are not fundraising for extras or luxuries but just to provide basic resources for their school and for their students.

APPROPRIATION (2016–2017) BILL 2016

Second reading

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Committed.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Clause 3

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Clause 3 is similar to the clause that the committee considered when looking at the Appropriation (Parliament 2016–2017) Bill 2016 this afternoon except, I might add, for the scale of the appropriation that it proposes. Clause 3 provides that the Consolidated Fund is appropriated to the extent of \$49.57 billion for the 2016–17 budget year, which is the base appropriation, if you like, that the chamber is now considering. But as with the Parliament appropriation bill, it goes on to say in subclause 2(a) that if:

in respect of the financial year 2016/2017 the amount payable in respect of salaries and related costs is increased as the result of any legislation or determination —

et cetera, indicating that although the base appropriation is \$49.57 billion, if there is a legislated outcome or determination — a determination is defined subsequently as a decision of Fair Work Australia et cetera — the Consolidated Fund is appropriated to the extent necessary. So my first question to the minister is: what is the state's potential exposure under clause 3(2)(a) given that automatic appropriation for any additional wages expenditure?

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

Sitting extended pursuant to standing orders.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — We do not believe that there is any additional exposure arising from clause 3(2)(a). The budget has capacity to fully fund every enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA), and they are all fully provisioned in the budget.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. What policy settings have been assumed for wages in the budget that lead the minister to the conclusion that all EBAs in the budget year are fully provisioned?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The underlying wages policy is for a 2.5 per cent per year increase and additional increases as a result of productivity improvements agreed through negotiation processes.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that answer. I assume that the 2.5 per cent increase is built into the base appropriations for each of the departments. Can the minister indicate what element of productivity has been factored in in aggregate — we are talking aggregate at this stage — above that 2.5 per cent?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his question. There is an amount set aside for enterprise bargaining agreements in line with wages policy.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I guess that was what the minister indicated in the previous answer. Can the minister indicate what that amount is above the 2.5 per cent, which is the base increase?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips. I am advised that there is provision for 2.5 per cent, as I indicated, and for service delivery improvements as a result of EBA-negotiated outcomes.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The Strategy and Outlook budget paper shows that the government expects employee expenses in the budget year to increase to \$21.29 billion, which is a 6 per cent increase on the current financial year, the 2015–16 year. If the minister is indicating 2.5 per cent has been built in for the base wage increase, the effective automatic increment, can she indicate: of the 6.1 per cent increase that is shown in the budget papers, what proportion of that is reflected by wage increases versus growth in the size of the public sector?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips. What that represents is a combination of the 2.5 per cent productivity increase and also a change in staffing numbers.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that, which was essentially repeating the question. What I am seeking to understand, though, is, what is the element — the breakdown — between those three factors that the minister rightly identified: the base amount, the growth in staffing and the productivity element?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his question. The increase is broadly driven by, as I indicated, the changes to average wages and the number of employees. The factors contributing to those changes are annual public sector price indexation for services and the profile of major enterprise agreements, as I am sure Mr Rich-Phillips well understands. Growth in employee expenses is also the result of the government's continuing commitment to meet growing demand for services and indeed restoring funding to critical core services, including health and education, to name but two. Mr Rich-Phillips I think is inviting me to break down a number that is not able to be broken down, and so what I would again state is that the increase is made up of two components: increases to wages — the 2.5 per cent productivity increases — and changes in the staffing profile.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer, but I must say that I am not at all clear from her response why she or her advisers are unable to break down that number. Clearly forecasts have been made that have taken the wages bill from \$20.57 billion to \$21.298 billion. The minister has been quite clear that the base wage increase is 2.5 per cent. Forecasts must have been made as to the productivity increase beyond that 2.5 per cent; likewise forecasts must have been made as to the growth in the public sector. These are the two compound factors that the minister has identified, so I am not clear why the minister's advisers are unable to provide her with that information. Perhaps the minister can clarify that.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I can offer to take that question on notice for the Treasurer and seek, if it is possible to provide it, a further breakdown for Mr Rich-Phillips. But I am advised that that represents, as I have indicated, a number of components that contribute to that growth in expenditure.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I appreciate the offer to take the question on notice, but I must say that having received an answer to a question taken on notice earlier today during the State Taxation and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2016 committee stage when the minister undertook to provide information in relation to the Treasury modelling on the increase in electricity prices only to be provided with a written answer during the dinner break which said, ‘No further information can be provided because it is cabinet-in-confidence’, I am slightly reluctant to now take on notice a further answer from the minister. So if the minister can provide information from her advisers at this point, it may help us with the progress of the committee.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Perhaps to assist I can indicate to the house some of the areas that will contribute to increased employee expenditure. Included in that figure is increased investment in our health services and in hospitals to meet growing demand; the additional commitments as part of the education state; 406 additional sworn police officers and 52 additional specialised staff; additional investment in ambulance services; community corrections; programs for students with disabilities; funding for additional firefighters; and an expansion of child protection and family services.

I understand Mr Rich-Phillips is seeking a breakdown of the anticipated wages growth by wages and productivity increase and changes in the staffing profile, but I am advised that that is not a breakdown that is presented through the budget papers, including in Mr Rich-Phillips’s time in government.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her efforts in obtaining further information about the breakdown in staff, the areas where staffing is expected to increase. The minister correctly notes that the information I am seeking is not contained in the budget papers, which is why I am seeking it in committee. Going to the information the minister has provided, is she able to indicate what the expected increase in headcount is in the general government sector across those areas she referred to. The minister spoke about 460 police-related roles. Can the minister indicate the total increase in headcount associated with the other areas where she said there was new investment?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his question. I am not in a position to provide the headcount information that Mr Rich-Phillips is seeking. Some of these programs and initiatives are still being designed or developed or

implemented, and whilst for some of them I would be in a position to be able to provide that kind of breakdown, for others I would not, and so in terms of a total headcount number, unfortunately that is not something I am in a position to provide Mr Rich-Phillips with tonight.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for that. Can I move on slightly with the issue of wage cost increases under this provision. The minister indicated that the government believes that all likely EBA outcomes are covered within the appropriation. Can the minister indicate to the house what appropriation has been allowed for the Country Fire Authority (CFA) EBA?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — As Mr Rich-Phillips is possibly aware, the agreement he has specifically asked about has not been finalised, but we are confident of Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) costings and that it has made provision for the conclusion of this matter.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. Can the minister indicate what the DTF provision for that matter is?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for his further question on this matter, and in making this comment I again state that the matter that Mr Rich-Phillips is asking about is not a matter that has been completely finalised, but the Treasurer has indicated, and has made public statements to the effect, that the cost above indexation for this agreement is in the order of \$160 million over four years.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for her answer. To just be clear, is she saying that is above the 2.5 per cent indexation — on top of it?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, that is correct.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. I will leave that one there for now. Mr O’Donohue has a related question.

Mr O’DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I just want to ask the minister: what is the provision for the outcome of the police EBA that was settled earlier this year?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I again refer Mr O’Donohue to my earlier statements on

the broader question: all enterprise bargaining agreements are fully provisioned for in this budget.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I appreciate the minister's response, but what is the figure?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Perhaps, Deputy President, a question for you, if I could invite you to reflect on the scope of the bill: I gather that the opposition is keen to interrogate the details of every enterprise bargaining agreement that covers state government employees, and I just wonder what your view is on the scope of the bill and the extent to which you would desire our committee process tonight to go into that kind of detail.

Mr Rich-Phillips — To take the minister's comment as a point of order, clause 3 of the bill clearly sets out that the bill is appropriating \$49 billion and goes on to state that the Consolidated Fund is appropriated for whatever other amount is required to cover the cost of enterprise bargaining agreements, including legislative agreements reached through the Fair Work Act 2009. It is completely relevant for this committee to have an understanding of what the potential cost may be beyond the \$49 billion that is seeking to be appropriated or even within the \$49 billion that is seeking to be appropriated.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! It is my view that this is a fairly broad bill, and therefore the scope is not narrow. I think we will just see how things go, but if it starts getting into the realm of the repetitive, then we will revisit the issue.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Thank you for your guidance on that earlier matter, Deputy President. As I indicated earlier, the police EBA, like all others, is fully provisioned for in this budget.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I appreciate that they are fully provided for, but I am asking the minister for the figure.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will take that on notice.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I thank the minister for her preparedness to take that on notice. Could I perhaps have some indication from the minister as to when she anticipates providing a response and whether the answer will actually contain the figure? From previous experiences in the budget committee, sometimes the answers have been elusive, to be generous.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am advised that we will be in a position to provide an answer to questions that need to be taken on notice. I am endeavouring to provide whatever answers I can to members to assist with the committee stage. I will provide an answer by the end of the week, but in terms of managing Mr O'Donohue's expectations we will not be disclosing the amounts associated with each EBA.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I thank the minister for her answer. I seek further clarification as to why she will not be providing any details about the cost of those EBA outcomes.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The budget provides the global figure. I have spoken in response to a number of earlier questions from Mr Rich-Phillips about the things that comprise that increase. I understand members have an interest in these matters. The overall figure is there. I have provided some detail on some of the areas where we are experiencing or anticipating growth in public sector employment in line with the government's priorities and election commitments, but we will not be breaking down that number EBA by EBA.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I do not quite understand why not when Mr Rich-Phillips asked about an EBA that is currently on foot and yet to be resolved. I appreciate there are some variables and that is subject to further resolution, but the police EBA has been resolved. The government has made commitments around additional police in the budget, so the parameters are known and no doubt clearly budgeted. I do not seek to ask these questions for any pointscore purpose but purely to understand the figure. With respect, I do not think it is acceptable for the minister to say it is part of the \$49 billion and that is it. I think it is reasonable to expect an answer to that question.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — What I will be able to provide is a breakdown to the extent that is possible for areas of additional public sector employment by program, and we will provide that. I am not intending to provide detailed financial costings for EBAs.

Picking up on Mr O'Donohue's point about the figure that I provided to Mr Rich-Phillips in response to an earlier question, these are matters that are very much in the public domain at the moment. I was referring to some comments that the Treasurer has made today and, I think, on other occasions in recent days and weeks on that matter, and again I make the distinction, as I note Mr O'Donohue did acknowledge, that that matter is still being finalised.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I thank the minister. Yes, that is right; the matter Mr Rich-Phillips asked about is still being finalised. The matter I asked about was finalised months ago, so why can the minister not answer the question that I have asked?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I think I have provided an answer to this question. There are a number of components that represent this wages growth. We will provide a breakdown of areas of employee growth. I will not be providing an EBA-by-EBA detailed breakdown of the financial costings for each agreement. The CFA matter and the costs associated with that are matters that have been in the public domain, and for the benefit of the committee I was able to confirm some public comments that the Treasurer made this week, but we will not be providing that detailed breakdown EBA by EBA, as is the usual practice.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Can I just ask one further question pursuant to the EBA matter Mr Rich-Phillips asked about. I note the minister's comments referring to what the Treasurer said about the contingency for the CFA EBA at \$160 million. I note the comments of the former chair of the CFA board, who put the figure I think at around \$700 million, from memory, on Melbourne radio this week. Does the government stand by that \$160 million figure?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, we do.

Clause agreed to; clauses 4 to 10 agreed to.

Schedule 1

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I have a series of questions on schedule 1, as do my colleagues, so we will work our way along those. They go to schedule 1 and the budget papers tabled by the Treasurer that underpin that. I want to talk to the minister about the priority growth sectors. The budget allocates \$111 million to the Future Industries Fund extension and sector-strategic projects to help Victoria take advantage of some of the fastest growing industries in the world. Could the minister confirm, then, how this Victorian government identified the six priority growth sectors?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The priority growth sectors were identified as part of our election commitments and as part of the government's strategy to grow jobs in those sectors in the Victorian economy that we believe are poised for significant growth and significant opportunity to create jobs in Victoria.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — In terms of those growth sectors the minister referred to as being in the election commitments, the government commissioned an external study on the matter of the growth sectors. Are the growth sectors that the minister has identified and confirmed the same as those that were identified in the external study the government commissioned?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — What I would say in response to Mr Ondarchie's question is that there were six future industries identified in the election commitment. These were of course never exclusive opportunities for support; other sectors have been considered as a result of the extensive stakeholder consultation that has been undertaken as those sector strategies have been developed. So there are additions to that initial six, and the sector strategies have been completed and released — the result of extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation. The one I am most familiar with is the *Food and Fibre Sector Strategy*, and I think it is a very, very important document — a very useful document — for those who are involved in that important sector. The work Minister D'Ambrosio undertook when she was Minister for Industry has been similarly comprehensive across the others.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — That is not what I asked the minister. I did not quite ask for an editorial on what the government has already published; I asked if the external study this government commissioned on identifying the priority sectors identified the same ones as the six growth sectors Labor announced. The government paid for an external study; those involved have done a study that provided the government with advice on what the priority sectors are. What I am asking Ms Pulford is: are they the same sectors Labor has now committed to?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — If Mr Ondarchie would like me to take that on notice and provide a more detailed response on the sector strategies and the additions that have occurred as a result of the government's work since the election and any differences that might exist — any supplementation to the original six that were identified by the then opposition before the election — I am more than happy to do so. The foundation industry sectors are very much the focus of our work going forward, but there have been additions to that original six, and these were informed by the work of the government to grow jobs in the Victorian economy.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I will make it easier for the minister and save her some elongated work in taking this on notice. Can the minister just advise the committee which sectors the external study the government commissioned advised the government of that are not congruent with the six sectors that Labor has announced as its priorities? Which are the ones that are not in there?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — As I indicated to Mr Ondarchie a few moments ago, I can take that question on notice and provide him with further detail on those that have been added to the original six that were identified as part of Labor's election commitment.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I am conscious of the fact that the Deputy President may draw the minister's attention to her being repetitious, but I want to try to avoid that for her sake, if possible. It is fairly simple. The minister's government engaged an external study to identify the priority sectors. Labor has announced six priority sectors. It is a simple question: are the ones that were advised to the government in the study it commissioned exactly the same as the six that have been announced? It is a simple yes or no answer, and we know the answer.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Mr Ondarchie misunderstands the development of the future industries strategy work. Sectors were identified before Labor came to government. This has been the foundation of its work in the development of the future industries strategy and in the implementation of that election commitment. Further sectors have been identified, and what Mr Ondarchie would no doubt notice is that the core is very much the same. There are some additions of sectors that the government believes are also likely to benefit from significant government investment to support their development and jobs growth.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — We will make this easy for the minister. Can the minister advise the committee of the growth sectors that the government identified in the external study that it commissioned on this matter?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Mr Ondarchie seems to be asking if an external consultant identified the sectors. Yes?

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — That is what you were advised.

Ms PULFORD — The sectors were identified first, in fact before the election. After the election the

detailed work on the implementation of that policy occurred. That is the period of time where additional sectors were identified to complement those that were named in the election commitment.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — The now government commissioned an external study on this matter to identify the growth sectors. It is a simple question. Those growth sectors are identified in the external study the minister commissioned. Are they exactly the ones that she is now using as growth sectors?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I hope that Mr Ondarchie does not need to be cautioned about his repetition any more than I do. The government identified the sectors. The study did not identify the sectors; the government identified the sectors.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — So is the minister's position that despite the commission of an external study paid for by the taxpayer, the government in fact ignored that advice and decided its own growth sectors? Is that what the minister is saying?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Mr Ondarchie has the order wrong.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — Okay, we will do it this way if we have to, Deputy President. Did the government commit to an external study to identify the growth sectors?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — For Mr Ondarchie's benefit, the sectors that were identified as part of the election commitment were medical tech and pharmaceuticals; new energy technology; food and fibre; transport, defence and construction technology; international education; and professional services. I am advised there are seven, not six, sector strategies that have now been finalised and released. These are — this will sound familiar — medical tech and pharmaceuticals, new energy technology, food and fibre, international education, and professional services; transport and defence are now two categories, not one, so that is different. I know that there is also a great deal of work going on in support of the creative industries, but unless I am mistaken, that is not part of the sector work and therefore is not a sector eligible for funding under the Future Industries Fund. But if I am mistaken we will get that information for Mr Ondarchie in just a jiffy.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister for outlining Victoria's seven-six priority sectors. The government is investing \$297 million in sectors where Victoria has a

competitive advantage, according to the budget papers. The budget papers state that strategically targeted programs will help business grow and create jobs of the future. Can the minister advise the committee why manufacturing as a sector will not benefit from these investments?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Perhaps, if I can help Mr Ondarchie, if Mr Ondarchie has a look at the future industries strategies, he will find manufacturing represented there in a number of different ways: in new energy, in food and fibre, in medical tech. In many of them there is an emphasis and a focus on the opportunity to support jobs growth in manufacturing. Again reflecting on a sector that I am most familiar with, we are talking about a sector that employs many tens of thousands of people in manufacturing.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — Given the minister has outlined the seven priority sectors of the six growth sectors, could she outline to the committee why manufacturing — —

Ms Pulford — On a point of order, Deputy President, Mr Ondarchie is being pretty cheeky here. I indicated that six is now seven because one of them is in two parts. How much longer does Mr Ondarchie want to carry on like this? I think it is a bit embarrassing for Mr Ondarchie. I am sure there are lots of members with lots of questions on other things, and we have been labouring the point about six strategies, all of which are on the internet and all of which have names that are perhaps not absolutely identical to the wording that was used in the election commitment, but it is not hard to line one up with the other and work out where they went.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! There is no point of order; there is debate, however, and we will continue.

Mr ONDARCHIE — Thank you, Deputy President. I will seek to ask the minister another question, but just to pick up on her comments then, I was wondering when it was going to get to the point when the government would ask me to go to the internet to find out the answer. But it becomes consistent. I was simply picking up the budget papers where they refer to six priority sectors. I was just referring to the budget papers, but I am now advised that the budget papers have an addendum where it is now seven priority sectors.

In the budget papers — and this is something I know the minister will know about — it states that new

residents will be able to access the growing number of jobs in high-growth sectors in both the metropolitan and regional areas of the state. In terms of regional Victoria, can the minister advise the committee on exactly how she plans to achieve that, given there is a reduced investment in regional Victoria compared to when Labor came to government in 2014–15? There was \$724 million, and there is \$700 million now.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — This budget represents the greatest infrastructure spend in regional Victoria in the state's history.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I am just asking the minister to rationalise for the committee how in the year she came to government there was \$724 million allocated here and there is only \$700 million — \$24 million less — in this budget paper.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! We are in committee. We are exchanging questions and answers, not interjections.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am familiar with many of the numbers in the budget that represent expenditure in regional Victoria. To assist, I am just wondering if Mr Ondarchie can indicate which numbers in which budget paper he is referring to?

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I refer the minister to, as I indicated at the start of my questions on the budget papers that underline this, budget paper 3, page 136, the second item from the bottom:

New investment in regional Victoria resulting from government facilitation services and assistance.

I draw the minister's attention to the right-hand column for the 2014–15 actual, which is \$724 million. In 2016–17 the allocated number is \$700 million. So I am asking the minister: why is there a \$24 million reduction given from when she came to government?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr Ondarchie, and I will point him to the considerable investment in regional Victoria — the government's investment in infrastructure. What this item in the budget paper represents is investment in regional Victoria that can be directly attributed to government facilitation. So this is not government expenditure; this is investment facilitated. What I would indicate to Mr Ondarchie is that the target is the same for 2016–17 as it was for 2015–16, and we will be

delighted to exceed that, all things going well. Our teams at Regional Development Victoria work around the clock every day of the week on supporting investment facilitation in regional Victoria.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — If this, as the minister outlines, is an indication of the amount of investment that will occur in regional Victoria as a result of her government's support, why is she predicting that there will be less investment in regional Victoria than when she came to office?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — As I indicated earlier, the target for 2016–17 is the same as the target for 2015–16. Of course, like many targets in the budget papers, we would hope to meet and exceed them. This is not a full account of every bit of investment activity going on in regional Victoria. This is an account of investment in regional Victoria that can be directly attributed to the efforts of government facilitation.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — Given that response, does the minister accept under her watch then that there will be less predicted investment in 2016 than actually occurred in 2014–15, where there was \$724 million of investment made in regional Victoria due to government assistance and facilitation? The minister is now predicting only \$700 million, so is it a fact that the government there is predicting it will do less than when it came to office?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The target is the same, and we would hope to exceed it, but throughout the preparation of budgets, targets are considered and reviewed and they are the things against which departmental performance is managed. The target in this coming financial year is as it was in the past financial year. I can certainly assure Mr Ondarchie that there is considerably more investment in regional Victoria occurring than this number represents. This represents that which can be fully attributed to the assistance of our departmental staff in facilitating that investment.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — In 2014–15, to use the minister's words — and I may paraphrase here, so I apologise — for the work of the departmental staff the delivery was \$724 million of actual investment. So her target now, for the next financial year, is only \$700 million due to the work of the departmental staff. Given the minister's comments that there may be more investment than is actually attributed in the budget, is this then a soft target, is it?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — This is not government investment as such when we are talking about budget expenditure. I just want to make sure Mr Ondarchie understands that, because it was not 100 per cent clear.

Mr Ondarchie — It is the value of the investment; we understand that.

Ms PULFORD — Yes, okay, so the budget target has not been changed, but if the budget target is exceeded, then that is something that we would review. Budget targets that are consistently exceeded are typically adjusted if there is a reason to adjust them, but we certainly will not be limited by that number.

Mr Herbert — You should be asking that question of Malcolm Turnbull. Ask him what he is going to spend in regional Victoria, because that will have an impact on everything.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — Deputy President, you might ask Mr Herbert to back off the red cordial at dinnertime.

Mr Herbert — And you might not wear a three-piece suit to try to emulate Kim Carr!

Mr ONDARCHIE — Well, if you retire, there is a job in the circus as a clown; I am sure of it. Without those interruptions, coming back to the matter at hand, actually delivered was \$724 million of new investment due to government work by the department or whoever. Why is it, then, that the minister is setting a lower target in 2016–17? Should it not be more ambitious, given the qualities of the department she has talked about?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I have answered this three times. The target is unchanged. Of course we would hope to exceed the target, but the target is the same as it was in the previous financial year. It would be a wonderful thing, of course, and we hope to exceed the target, but the Department of Treasury and Finance requires targets to be set, the budget process provides for the setting of all sorts of targets on all sorts of things and of course we all work to exceed each and every one of them or certainly to meet each and every one of them. Mr Ondarchie is inviting me to speculate on the amount of investment that will be facilitated by government in regional Victoria. I do not have a crystal ball, but the budget papers do indicate the target.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — I have several more questions on schedule 1, but as many of my colleagues do also I will come back to other

questions on schedule 1 a bit later, but I do note that the overriding theme from the minister is hope.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — My first lot of questions go to some of the financial areas where the numbers are quite aggregated. I raised some of these issues last year and through the debate in this chamber was able to get a breakdown department by department of some of these numbers. I do not expect the minister to have the numbers at her fingertips, although if the officials are able to provide them, that would be fantastic. My hope is that the minister will at least be prepared to take them on notice so that the information can be provided. The first lot relates to budget paper 5.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

Sitting extended pursuant to standing orders.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE — I am referring specifically to budget paper 5, page 33, under ‘General government output contingencies not allocated to departments’. On both those lines, but particularly ‘Decisions made but not yet allocated’, I ask the minister to assist with a breakdown of each of those four years by department. Clearly there are decisions and they clearly relate to individual portfolios, but my understanding is that that money has not yet been specifically allocated to a departmental budget but sits in the overall contingency. It would be very helpful if that could be provided across the seven departments.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — As requested, I will take that on notice.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — On that line, there are a number of items specific to my area of interest, the health portfolio, that would fall under that contingency, and that is noted in footnotes throughout the document. I am wondering if the minister is able to furnish some information tonight in relation to — just to pick one of them — the Victorian Heart Hospital, where \$135 million has been committed to the project, placed in contingency and not yet finalised? Is the minister able to outline the profile of that \$135 million as it is reflected against the four years that are outlined here in relation to the overall budget — that is, what that profile is for the Victorian Heart Hospital?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will take that question on notice.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — I have a number of other health capital projects on which I seek to ask similar questions. I suppose my question,

to facilitate that, is: does the minister have the capacity or do her officials have the capacity this evening to answer some questions relating to the profile of the funding on a number of health capital items or would the minister like me to just list them and then they can all be taken on notice?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — If Ms Wooldridge is able to list them, I will take them all on notice and we will provide an answer to her.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — One answer that would be helpful, just in terms of facilitating, is that last year the \$103-plus million for the Casey Hospital was clearly identified as funded in contingency. I am unable to, from the budget documentation, determine whether this budget has allocated that \$103 million out of contingency and to the specific project or whether that is still sitting in contingency. Is the minister at least able to answer for the Casey Hospital question whether that funding is still in contingency?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — We have identified the Casey Hospital estimated expenditure profile in budget paper 4. I assume Ms Wooldridge has seen this, but perhaps just for the record and for those in the room who are with us at this hour, page 51 of budget paper 4 indicates a Casey Hospital total estimated investment of \$106.3 million; estimated expenditure to the end of June 2016 of \$400 000; \$2 million in 2016–17; and then the remaining expenditure is identified there under that heading. Is that what the member is after?

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Yes. That is exactly as it was represented last year, and the funding for the difference between the \$2.4 million and the \$106.3 million was identified last year in the budget as being in contingency. These numbers, as I said, do not allow clarification about whether that funding has come out of contingency and been allocated specifically to the project and the Department of Health and Human Services in order to do that or if that difference is still sitting in contingency. My question is: under this budget, which one is the case?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Sure. I thank Ms Wooldridge for clarifying that. I will take that on notice.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Further, table 4.4 on page 51 of budget paper 2 talks about the net impact of the 2016–17. Sorry; before I go to that, can I give the minister the list of the health projects that I want clarification on in terms of the

funding profile as they sit in contingency? It will be Casey Hospital, subject to the answer in relation to it, the Victorian Heart Hospital, the Aikenhead Centre for Medical Discovery and the proton beam therapy facility. They would be the four key health projects that are still funded or allocated to the contingency.

The footnote to some of those says that the business planning still needs to be done, and I acknowledge in advance that the exact profile of how they will need to be funded will not be finally determined, but that is why my question is: how are they profiled in terms of the contingency fund they are in, acknowledging that it may not be where they eventually land in terms of how that funding is then allocated?

If I can go on then to budget paper 2, page 51, table 4.4, ‘Net impact of the 2016–17 budget new output initiatives’, there is a line item ‘Funding from reprioritisation of existing resources’, and the footnote says:

This includes the reprioritisation of resources previously allocated to departments and retained revenues.

What I would like to understand once again for each of the four years — 2016–17 through 2019–20 — is what the breakdown is of those reprioritisations by each of the departments, and similarly for the adjustments, which is immediately below that, if they can also be profiled by department for each of the four years.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, we are happy to provide the information on notice that Ms Wooldridge is seeking. I think the people who have this sort of detailed knowledge are probably all tucked up in their beds at the moment, but we will get that to Ms Wooldridge at the earliest opportunity.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) — Half their luck. I think it is probably still a couple of hours before we may be in that situation as well. For the last one in terms of this group, I will go back to budget paper 5, page 33, and it is note 12(b), ‘Total expenses by department’. Footnote (d), which relates to the line item ‘Less eliminations and adjustments’ is a very large number — we are looking at \$10 billion in the next financial year and about that amount each year. The footnote says that it is:

Mainly comprising payroll tax, capital asset charge, departmental underspend estimates and interdepartmental transfers.

My question is: of that line item, how much of it relates to departmental underspend estimates, and could we get that total number and then that also broken down on a departmental basis?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, I will also take that on notice, and we will provide whatever level of detail in response to Ms Wooldridge’s questions that we are able to.

Mr O’DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — In relation to the budget allocation for the Department of Justice and Regulation, I draw the minister’s attention to the response from the Premier about police station closures. In a written response to the Public Accounts and Estimate Committee, he said:

One aspect of operational reform recognises that in the digital age, there is a reduced need for face-to-face services, and that police are often better deployed on the front line, out in the community, rather than behind the front desk. As a result, there can be a reduction in counter services provided at police stations.

This was followed up by an article in the *Herald Sun* of 11 June, which said:

Victoria Police will reduce opening hours at some stations across the state ...

Noting that there are holes in police station rosters right across Victoria and that the additional 300 police budgeted for in this budget over the next two years — and the 406 police in total — will barely manage to maintain police numbers in the face of population growth, is the minister able to update the committee as to which police stations will either close or have their operating hours reduced?

Mr Herbert — The member knows that this is a police operational matter.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Mr Herbert, by way of interjection, did almost beat me to the microphone. This is an operational matter for the chief commissioner to determine. I would add to that — Mr O’Donohue is no doubt familiar with this — the package of support to provide for greater resources for Victoria Police so that it can do its job, but I think given the hour I will spare the committee my reading through that in great detail. I am sure Mr O’Donohue is well familiar with the new equipment, additional offices and the like.

Mr O’DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I thank the minister. Just to be clear, the minister is saying it is the chief commissioner’s discretion as to the opening hours of each and every police station in Victoria.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Those operational matters are a matter for Victoria Police, so, whilst I imagine the chief commissioner does not micromanage every detail of every operational matter, there is a significant command structure that supports

the work of somebody leading such a complex, large and important organisation as Victoria Police. These are operational matters.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — So that would apply to every police station across Victoria.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — The government has provided a significant package of support — \$596 million of support — with many components. We believe our role here is to provide Victoria Police with the resources that it needs to do its job and that operational matters are a matter for Victoria Police.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — And does that apply to every police station across Victoria?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I can provide some detail about funding for specific police stations, but I am not in a position to provide the kinds of detail Mr O'Donohue wants about the hours of every single police station in this state.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — That is not what I am seeking. I am just seeking confirmation from the minister that the chief commissioner is responsible for the allocation of resources to each police station across Victoria.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am doing my level best to assist Mr O'Donohue with his question here, but I wonder if some of this is perhaps not better suited to being directed to the Minister for Police through any number of the Parliament's mechanisms available to members to extract this information. This is the committee stage of the budget, and I can provide a whole lot of detail of the breakdown of the additional resources provided to Victoria Police — —

Mr Herbert — Massive budget.

Ms PULFORD — Massive budget — thank you, Mr Herbert. Again I can reconfirm that operational matters are matters for Victoria Police.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am just asking a very simple question in response to the answer provided by the minister. Does the chief commissioner's responsibility apply to all police stations across Victoria?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! I believe Mr O'Donohue has repeated the same question and the minister has responded to it already,

but I will give the chance to the minister again. Would the minister like to add to what she said before?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I refer Mr O'Donohue to my earlier answer. If he has a specific question about a specific police station, I suggest he direct that to the Minister for Police on an occasion when we are not considering the appropriation bill.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Will the protective services officers (PSOs) deployment be completed by 30 June this year?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will take that on notice.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — The budget allocates additional resources for the ongoing growth in the number of community correction orders, following the Boulton decision by the Court of Appeal in December 2014. The Attorney-General has foreshadowed some changes to the parameters for community correction orders belatedly following that Boulton decision, which I am sure Ms Pulford would be familiar with, and following questions to the minister in this place and adjournment matters and the like. The question I wish to ask is: is the growth in funding for community correction orders to reflect that growth in the number of offenders on an order while living in the community premised on the current framework as defined by Boulton or does it anticipate some tightening of that framework as foreshadowed but yet to be implemented or announced by the Attorney-General?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr O'Donohue for his question. Any foreshadowed changes that the Attorney-General has flagged, as the member referred to in his question, would be matters, if there is a budget impact, that would require consideration of that, and that would be part of the government's deliberation on those matters. So I can confirm for Mr O'Donohue that the assumptions made in the budget item to which he refers precede the Boulton case that he referred to in his question.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — If I could just seek clarification, the Boulton decision was made in 2014. That has led to the significant growth in community correction orders now that serious offenders are receiving community correction orders rather than going to jail, and the Attorney has foreshadowed some potential changes to that. I am still not quite clear from the minister's answer whether the numbers that are the

basis of the budget are premised on the current arrangements and that any change that may come at a later time could alter these assumptions.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I can confirm that is correct. The budget is based on the current arrangements, not the changes that are foreshadowed. No doubt in the detailed consideration and development of the changes that the Attorney-General has foreshadowed those matters will be considered by the government and addressed at the time.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I want to take the minister to the riot at the Metropolitan Remand Centre on 30 June last year. The anticipated cost of the repairs has escalated from \$10 million to \$12 million, as advised to me by Minister Jennings in August last year, to \$52 million following the release of the Walshe report in December last year, to \$95 million as detailed in the budget, noting that does have a component of output funding. The reduction of front-end maximum security remand beds has had a significant impact on the flow of prisoners through the system, which particularly is evidenced by the increased number of prisoners in police cells. The question I ask the minister is: when does the government anticipate that the Metropolitan Remand Centre will be fully operational and back to full capacity?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Corrections) — As Mr O'Donohue knows, there was significant damage during those riots and there was an initial amount for repairs to many windows et cetera, but then there was a decision taken to harden the remand centre, which involved constructing new concrete walls with dome tops and securing the various sections of prisoners in there. Those significant engineering works — significant works at the entry portal et cetera — are all being undertaken and negotiated with the provider of the services there and are well on track.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I do not want to interrupt Mr O'Donohue's proceedings, but just to clarify: Minister Herbert has provided input from the bleachers. I am just wondering if Minister Pulford, given that she is the minister responsible for this bill, whether the comments made by Minister Herbert represent the government's position on this matter.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, I can confirm that they do, and I thank Mr Herbert for lending his knowledge to me on this occasion in this committee stage. Of course all members are able to participate in the committee, and it is our good fortune

that we have the minister responsible for this portfolio in here to keep us company.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am happy for Minister Herbert or Minister Pulford to answer the question. I thank the minister for that advice. When will those works be completed?

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Corrections) — As we know there are a lot of contractual arrangements here; there are a whole heap of security arrangements here. The government has provided substantial funds for this, and it will be completed as soon as it can be completed.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Again I thank Minister Herbert, and I indicate also that budget paper 3, page 101, indicates that that will be completed during the course of the 2017–18 financial year. That is when the final expenditure is expected to be made on this project. Mr Herbert probably has more detailed knowledge than I do about the project delivery time line.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I am aware of that time line in the budget papers. I was hoping Minister Herbert might provide a more detailed answer as to when those works will be completed, because clearly they are critical to the efficient operation of the prison system, particularly the receiving of prisoners into the corrections system.

Mr HERBERT (Minister for Corrections) — As Ms Pulford said, there are time lines in there. I should say first off that of course other arrangements have been made for remand. There was no issue in the security system. In terms of the metropolitan remand system, those negotiations have been done, the engineering works have been done and we are discussing these matters with the provider of that prison. We will get those works done as quickly as possible. I think we all want to make sure, though, that the works are done at a level at which we do not have to revisit them, that they provide the security we want, that there is safety for staff, that there is safety for prisoners and that they are done to the level of satisfaction we require. As I said, they are progressing very well and we will do them as quickly as we can. The money is there. It is not an issue of funding. It is an issue of contractual arrangements and getting it done.

It is also difficult; Mr O'Donohue will know very well from his previous experience as the Minister for Corrections that these things are not simple. What is simple in building a construction project outside of a prison is more difficult — that is, in managing lockdown and managing large numbers of inmates

whilst completing those works. It is a fair bit more complex doing this level of hardening of a prison when it is an existing prison that has many inmates in it. Isolating the various areas and making sure that you are maintaining security while you are doing construction works is a much bigger task. But Corrections Victoria is well progressed on this, and it is progressing as quickly as possible.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — Following the tragic death of Masa Vukotic, the government commissioned the Harper review, the report of which was handed to government late last year. The government has released the broad substance of the Harper review, and in the budget before us tonight it has made some investments in the management of serious sex offenders. The question I have relates to the new facility that is to be constructed for the management of serious sex offenders — the new 20-bed facility. My question is: when does the government anticipate that that will be operational?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I am not in position this evening to provide Mr O'Donohue with the project delivery time line, but I can advise, as I did in relation to Mr O'Donohue's earlier question, that budget paper 3, page 101, under the line item 'Management of serious sex offenders' indicates that the expenditure on that project will be concluded in the 2017–18 financial year. I am happy to provide for Mr O'Donohue any further detail I can about the project time line.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I want to ask a question about the public safety community crime prevention program, which has funding in this budget for just two additional years. There is \$9.8 million in 2016–17 and \$9.6 million in 2017–18. I note that the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice has done a review of the previous program, the coalition's program, and basically the government has continued to fund some components of that while others have been cut. I do understand that the parliamentary secretary stressed in his report the need for continuity of funding, so the question I have is: why was only two years of funding provided for these important crime prevention grants programs?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr O'Donohue for his question and his interest in this matter. The budget papers indicate funding for the community crime prevention program of \$9.8 million in 2016–17 and \$9.6 million in 2017–18. I just indicate, in response to Mr O'Donohue's question about what happens next, that this will be subject to a

review and evaluation of the efficacy of new components and will be considered in future budgets.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) — I appreciate the minister's response. I suppose I just make the point that the parliamentary secretary has in effect done that, and most of the elements of the community crime prevention program have now been in place for several years. Some significant number of them originated under the term of the coalition government and some predate the coalition government, so I suppose I make that as an observation.

I have another question in relation to the 406 additional police that are funded over the next two years. Is the minister able to provide a breakdown of the anticipated deployment timetable for the 406 police, and is there any opportunity to bring forward that deployment given the scarcity of police in many parts of Victoria that currently exists?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mr O'Donohue for his question. The deployment timetable I will take on notice, but what I would indicate is that we are of course very keen to see these new officers recruited, trained and deployed at the earliest opportunity.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — I would just like to focus on the multicultural affairs portfolio for a little while — budget paper 3, pages 296 and 297. First of all just beneath the total output cost there is a notation that there has been an increase in the budget allocation for 2016–17. However, there is also a transfer of grants payments initially budgeted for 2015–16 that have not been expensed until 2016–17. Could the minister advise me of what proportion of the \$46.8 million allocated is the not-expensed amount from the previous budget and what the nature is of the items that have not been expensed and the breakdown of them? I am happy for the minister to take that on notice.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — To provide Mrs Peulich with the sort of detail she is seeking I will need to take that on notice.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Furthermore, as a result of some criticisms made by the Auditor-General about the lack of clarity between Multicultural Affairs Victoria and the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, the grants program has been restructured. Fifteen grants programs for 2015–16 were conflated into four, one being capacity building and participation, two being community harmony, three being multicultural festivals

and events and four being community infrastructure and cultural precincts. Could I have a breakdown of the budget allocation for each of the new program streams in terms of money? In addition to that, could the minister advise us who is responsible for the administration of those funds? Is it the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship or is it the Victorian Multicultural Commission? Lastly, in the new guidelines for the new programs there is a notation that regional communities, women, young people, LGBTI communities and new and emerging communities, including refugees and asylum seekers, are prioritised. Is the minister able to advise how much out of each stream is prioritised for each category? I am happy for the minister to take that on notice.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Mrs Peulich for her question and her interest in these grants programs and some of the changes that have been made. I will seek an answer on the detail that Mrs Peulich seeks and provide that to her on notice.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The new outputs that have been developed I find less illuminating than the previous outputs, but nonetheless there is mention made of 14 new strategic partnerships that are place based and issue specific and that are to be funded to deliver coordinated settlements for refugee and asylum seeker communities. Is the minister able to give me information about which places and which issues are being budgeted for and the amount for each?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Again I will take that question on notice. It is not a program I am immediately familiar with, but I will endeavour to get the answer for Mrs Peulich at the earliest opportunity.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — Now if I may just move to a whole-of-government approach — because obviously multicultural affairs is also across the whole government — is the minister able to advise on the total spend on multicultural affairs and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities portfolio by portfolio, with a breakdown on capital expenditure, recurrent expenditure and specific grants programs targeting CALD and multicultural communities?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will provide that information to the best of our ability to Mrs Peulich on notice.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Just before I get into my own portfolio areas, could I ask: in relation to an area around the training-higher

education-workforce development and skills area, there is an item in the budget, ‘Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre development’, with \$2.5 million allocated in this financial year, the 2016–17 budget, and \$2.5 million in the following budget. Could the minister outline how much of that money will be going to the fit-out of the recently constructed Geelong centre, as is highlighted in the budget papers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I would love to be able to provide Ms Crozier with an answer, but I am going to have to take that on notice, I am afraid. We do not have that information at hand at this very moment.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. She may also have to take this one on notice, and it goes to the construction of a new facility in Narre Warren. I am just wanting to also understand the total amount that will be attributed to that particular facility, if the minister could. Will that be another one on notice?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes, I can confirm we will provide that on notice.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. In relation to what those two facilities will undertake in retraining workers for the various trades that are highlighted, could the minister outline how many are expected to be trained in both of those facilities?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I will also provide that information on notice.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Now, if I could, I turn to my areas of portfolio responsibility, the area of family violence firstly, which obviously has a whole-of-government approach the government is taking. Various amounts of allocated money is coming out of the Department of Health and Human Services. I note that the Victorian public service agreement was recently signed, and that included up to 20 days paid leave per year. I am wondering if that relates to family violence leave. Is that 20 days of family violence leave for those public sector workers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — To the best of my knowledge, the way that this will work is that it is the reprovisioning of existing leave entitlements in the same way that someone who has a sick leave entitlement accumulated seeks to convert that to carers leave. It is not additional leave in overall quantity, rather an additional right or circumstance in which that leave can be accessed.

Ms Symes interjected.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — There was a comment from the whip, who was giving some advice to the minister.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Yes. Ms Symes described it, I think appropriately, as a new access point. A leave entitlement is accrued, and this is a new circumstance in which that entitlement can be accessed, as distinct from additional days. I think the scenario that perhaps we are all a little more familiar with is a sick leave to carers leave conversion.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Just to clarify: that 20 days leave can be either carers leave, sick leave or family violence leave. Is that right? It is 20 days in total per employee.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I place on this the caveat that I do not have the agreement and the specific clause in the agreement to hand — and I note that Ms Crozier is indicating that neither does she — but certainly that is my understanding of how it is intended to work.

It is nice to have the assistance of so many colleagues. Ms Shing correctly points out that there quite reasonably could be circumstances where the reasons for needing to access leave may be the experience of family violence. Similarly it could also be sick leave associated with health issues due to an illness or injury — perhaps injury is more appropriate — associated with that experience.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Thank you, Minister, for that clarification. I am taking it that it is just up to the employee whether they want to name it as family violence leave, carers leave, sick leave or whatever they want. It is up to the employee. It is not an additional entitlement.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Again, to the best of my knowledge and to any extent that we can provide further information to make this clearer, it is an additional right and, as Ms Symes has described it, an additional entry point to access leave. Perhaps in the scenario where someone needs to take leave, if they have an entitlement accrued and any number of the other types of leave that they might be able to access that entitlement through are not the appropriate fit but family violence is, then this would make accessing that entitlement easier for those people. To the extent that we can provide further information on this, perhaps the best thing for us all is if I do.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. I will not dwell on the point, and I thank her for providing that information.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — And to all my colleagues who have some knowledge and interest in this.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Indeed. Thank you. The recommendations from the royal commission and the family violence initiatives that were highlighted in the budget involved co-designing initiatives and programs with various parts of the sector. I am wanting to understand, with the budget allocations being made on the assumptions that the government has, will it fully fund those initiatives or will there have to be some co-payments from the sector or from the private sector coming in to fund all those initiatives? Can the minister provide information to that effect?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Again I thank Ms Crozier for her question. The principle of co-design is one that the government is committed to. The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and indeed the funding that is provided in the budget together represent the early days of a very significant period of reform in an area which is the single biggest law and order issue facing the Victorian community. It is one where I think we all desperately want to see improvement. In making the announcement of the funding in the lead-up to the budget the government indicated that it would make further responses and that that was very much an initial response and funding to support the beginning of work on the most urgent of the royal commission's recommendations. We recognise that this work is a long way from completed, and we will continue to support the reform that is so desperately needed.

In terms of the impact on other providers of co-design, perhaps what I can say on this occasion is that the dialogue with service providers is ongoing and will continue to be throughout this period of reform. The member's question is very broad and, limited by my own knowledge of this, is perhaps even theoretical, but the co-design process will ensure that concerns of people who are currently delivering services in this respect will be taken into account as we work with them to build a new system.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. I understand that the stakeholders will want to have some input into that co-design. The minister said in her answer that this was an initial funding announcement. Obviously I understand that. She referred to further announcements being made. Can

the minister provide us with any indication of when the next funding announcements will be made in relation to funding these family violence initiatives and the recommendations from the royal commission?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — During the course of 2016–17.

Ms Crozier — Sorry?

Ms PULFORD — There will be further announcements on this work, including further funding announcements, in 2016–17.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Can we have a little bit less noise from members? It is becoming difficult to hear answers.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Thank you, Deputy President. I did have difficulty hearing the minister. I thought she said ‘June’.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — No, ‘during’ — during 2016–17.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. The Rapid Housing Assistance Fund provides \$48.8 million for to 130 new dwellings. Are they all new dwellings or is that funding going towards refurbishments?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank Ms Crozier for her question. The \$572 million package represents the government’s response to this over two years, and that package delivers on 65 of the royal commission’s most urgent recommendations. Within that, the housing blitz to which Ms Crozier referred is \$152.5 million. I can confirm that that funds up to 130 new social housing homes.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — I thank the minister. If I could just go to another part and ask a question in relation to children in out-of-home care — and I note that in the budget there are projections for numbers of children in out-of-home care on a daily basis. Can the minister provide the estimates or the costings for children who will leave out-of-home care in 2016–17?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Is Ms Crozier able to give a page reference in the budget papers? Does she want a costing for the cost of children leaving out-of-home care? I am sorry; I am not sure I understand the question. We can do it on Thursday if

she likes. I think we will all turn into pumpkins in about a minute.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — It is page 248. I have found it.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) — Page 248 of budget paper 3?

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — Yes. At ‘Daily average number of children in out-of-home care placements’ the target for 2016–17 is 8159. I want to know the calculated number and costings for children leaving out-of-home care in 2016–17 — the assumptions.

Progress reported.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Shepparton rail services

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and it is regarding the ongoing issue with the quality and reliability of the Shepparton line rail services. My request of the minister is that she makes improving the quality and reliability of Shepparton rail line services an immediate priority so that my constituents do not have to continue to suffer the indignation of being treated like second-class citizens by the Andrews Labor government.

A 75-year-old Shepparton gentleman recently had the unfortunate experience of travelling first class by train from Melbourne to Shepparton. He explained that the trip, which he took with his wife, was one of the worst train rides he had ever experienced. In an attempt at purchasing extra comfort, he upgraded their tickets to first class only to find out, on arrival, that the train did not in fact have a first-class carriage, because the usual carriage was out of action for maintenance. He said the carriages they were in were the oldest he can remember, which must have been pretty old as most of the carriages still in use on our line were actually commissioned by the Hamer government in the 1970s.

The door handle would not open on one of the carriages. The carriages were so outdated that the suitcases did not fit down the aisle between the seats, so he was unable to get his suitcases to the other end of the

carriage where the luggage rack was located. This meant that he was forced to manually restrain the suitcases for the duration of the trip. The noise created by the rocking and vibration of the carriage is so bad that a passenger who was an engineer thought the train would derail. The toilet would not flush, and due to the pitching and lurching of the carriage, this resulted in raw human excrement overflowing into the aisle.

One of my constituent's fellow passengers on the Shepparton train that day was a man from Geelong who said he has experienced the best of Victorian rail services — the Geelong to Melbourne line — and now, thanks to his trip to Shepparton, the worst. He said he could not believe what was occurring.

But this is not the end of recent stories of the poor rail service for users of the Shepparton line. In another example of the poor rail service under the Labor government, on the Friday of the Queen's Birthday long weekend Shepparton line passengers were left stranded for 2 hours when an engine fault caused the 6.22 p.m. train from Melbourne to Shepparton to break down just on Melbourne's outskirts. A trip that should have had passengers arrive in Shepparton at 9.00 p.m. resulted in passengers not arriving at the station until around 11.00 p.m. — a great start for people's long weekend! Train services continued to be affected throughout the long weekend, with breakdowns and delays the common complaint. Quality and reliability of services on the Shepparton line should be a priority, but unfortunately the Shepparton line continues to be overlooked by the Andrews Labor government.

LaunchVic

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade. On 27 November 2015 the minister launched a Victorian independent company called LaunchVic to support the ecosystem for local start-up businesses and the rapidly growing start-up sector in Victoria. Having received \$60 million in funding, the start-up initiative forms a key component of the Andrews Labor government's approach to driving investment, jobs growth and sustainable development in the Victorian economy.

The goal of LaunchVic is simple: to strengthen Victoria's entrepreneurial and start-up ecosystem. This will be done by working in partnership with entrepreneurs, industry, business, the community and our educational institutions, and by further providing a comprehensive program over the next few years. This program includes marketing campaigns and events to profile Victoria's start-up ecosystem locally and

globally, entrepreneur monitoring, attracting global thought leaders to Victoria, expanding the capacity of accelerators and other infrastructure in the state, and providing advocacy around commonwealth legislation and regulation affecting start-ups and entrepreneurial enterprises.

I have been keenly interested in the development of the Andrews Labor government's LaunchVic fund as I believe it will do a great deal to enhance the current innovation ecosystem in Victoria and particularly in Western Metropolitan Region. We will all benefit from the creation of a more diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem, and I know the western suburbs of Melbourne look forward to the opportunities such an ecosystem can provide. The action I seek is that the minister give due consideration to any applications to the LaunchVic fund coming from Western Metropolitan Region so that my constituents are able to benefit from Labor's innovation policy.

Reid Oval, Warrnambool

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) — The matter I raise tonight is for the Minister for Sport. Sport in western Victoria is a huge activity, particularly around the Warrnambool area. Many great sportsmen have come from that area. Just to name one, Marc Leishman is a great golfer who is high in the world standings and who has again scored well at the US Open. There are strong clubs in soccer, angling is big, as is netball. Warrnambool is also home to many great races, including the world-renowned Grand Annual.

However, of all of these AFL is by far the biggest sport in western Victoria. This week two home-grown footballers, Martin Gleeson and Lewis Taylor, earned AFL mark and goal of the year nominations. Marty Gleeson, who was drafted by Essendon from Hampden league club Koroit, took a courageous mark against Greater Western Sydney on Sunday. Lewis Taylor, now a Brisbane Lion but formally a Terang Mortlake player, kicked an amazing goal at the weekend to earn his nomination.

Despite the Hampden league producing many AFL greats, including Marty and Lewis, Jonathan Brown, Jordan Lewis and the late Paul Couch, it does not have an AFL-standard facility. It is very disappointing that despite our region's contribution to the national sporting scene we remain without a facility of AFL standard. Reid Oval in Warrnambool is a major sporting centre for the Hampden league, yet it has antiquated changing rooms and is simply not up to the standard of facilities elsewhere in Victoria. I therefore urge the minister to acknowledge the contribution the

south-west makes to the national sporting community by committing to supporting the upgrading of Warrnambool's Reid Oval to AFL standard.

Knox planning scheme amendment

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning. The action I seek from the minister is that he urgently agree to the request by Knox City Council to approve planning scheme amendment C146. Amendment C146 to the Knox planning scheme seeks to apply interim controls contained in clause 43.02, 'Design and Development Overlay — Schedule 10', which expired on 30 April 2016. The C146 amendment seeks to extend the height controls for a period of 18 months by extending the expiry date to 30 October 2017. The Knox City Council requested approval of C146 on 16 May 2016. Residents are concerned that there are currently no height controls in place in Upper Ferntree Gully whilst council is still working on amendment C141, which seeks to implement permanent controls through the *Upper Gully Strategic Plan*.

As the height controls have now expired, the action I seek is that the minister urgently approve amendment C146 to ensure that there are appropriate height planning controls in place to maintain the integrity of Upper Ferntree Gully, a key gateway town to the Dandenong Ranges.

Planning buffer zones

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Planning, the Honourable Richard Wynne, and the action I seek from him is a review of the industry buffer zones that extend outside the title boundaries of the originating industry. I brought to the attention of this house in 2012 the concerns of farmer Geoff Guinane, who had overlay buffer zones on his property from an intensive industry broiler farm neighbouring his property that required a 500-metre buffer zone to meet the industry code of practice. This has now restricted what Mr Guinane can do and for what purpose he may want to use his property in the future.

Last Friday I visited Paul and Paula Guinane's property and spoke with Des and Paul Guinane, Drusilla Bremner and Geoff Menzel, who all have properties that border an active quarry. The owners of the quarry have applied for a planning permit to use the cells of the quarry as a waste landfill and a waste recycling area. If this permit was successful, the neighbouring properties would be overlaid with a 500-metre buffer that

restricts land use and a further 2000-metre buffer that restricts less invasive land use. The families impacted by these buffers are concerned with potential litter waste, traffic use and devaluation of their lands due to the restrictive use of their land.

I am sure there are many examples across Victoria of industry buffers affecting neighbouring land use, and the time is right for the minister to review industry buffer zones and seek an agreement with industry that, for any industry that requires buffer zones, those zones remain within the land boundary of the industry itself.

Northern Metropolitan Region kindergartens

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Families and Children, the Honourable Jenny Mikakos. Victoria can be rightly proud of its kindergarten sector and its kindergarten participation rate. Research shows that all children benefit from kindergarten into school years and beyond. Long-term studies have shown that children who attend preschool education have improved job prospects and higher wages when they enter the workforce. But sadly there are still too many children missing out on kindergarten, and some of those who are most at risk of missing out are our most vulnerable children.

We know that one of the barriers for them is that sometimes their families might enrol late and they might be turned away because no places are available. This is just not good enough. We want all our kids in kinder. We never want a child turned away. That is why I was pleased to see the announcement of a pilot this year to pre-purchase kindergarten places to reserve them for the children who need them most. Children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage have the most to gain from high-quality early childhood education. Significant gaps in learning and development can develop by three years of age and are increasingly difficult to address as a child ages. Disadvantaged children who attend kindergarten are more likely to begin school on par with their peers, whereas those who do not tend to fall further behind the average with each year of schooling.

While a number of grants to support children to attend kindergarten already exist, there are not always local places available for children if they enrol late. This pilot is addressing that barrier to participation. I believe this is a great initiative, and I call on the minister to ensure that kindergartens in my electorate are able to participate in this pilot.

Waverley Park powerlines

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) — My matter for the adjournment tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Planning, but it will also be of interest to the Premier, to whose electorate this matter relates, and it is the issue of the Waverley Park powerlines, which is something Mrs Peulich is very familiar with, as is the Monash City Council, and I pay tribute to the work of Cr Davies in particular.

This goes back to 2002, and at that time Mirvac promised purchasers of properties in Waverley Park that the powerlines would go underground. Mirvac has not delivered on that, and the previous Labor government dithered on this for a long period, noting that the now Premier promised a solution to people over a long period of time, including over the four years between 2010 and 2014. The then planning minister commissioned a panel, and the panel was held up for a year by the current government. Its report has come down, but what is clear from all this is that Labor needs to live up to the promises that it made to the people in the Waverley Park estate. It needs to see that Mirvac commits as it should to what it promised initially in the contracts. I have seen one of the contracts, and it was very clear that the powerlines would go underground. The cost of this has now become significant. Nonetheless, that is no reason for Mirvac to get out of this contract, to get out of these contractual arrangements that they promised faithfully to the people in a contractual way at the time of the purchase of the property.

I see that Minister Wynne has made statements about this now, and he intends to find a way through whereby some compensation or some arrangement is made for the people in Waverley Park, but this is not what they wanted. They do not want some half-baked solution; they actually want what was promised to them and what they contractually are entitled to. They want the powerlines underground instead of their being let down by the Premier, Daniel Andrews, who is the local member. He has fundamentally been untruthful with the electorate and has not given the community the facts of this matter. He has sought to string them along. He has sought to jolly them along. He has hoodwinked them all through this process.

The way the Premier has behaved is disgraceful, and it is time he got off his hands, spoke to his planning minister and said, 'I want a solution here, and I want an outcome, Minister Wynne. I want an outcome where the planning system makes sure that the people get what they were promised, get what they deserve and get the outcome in terms of the contractual arrangement'.

He needs to act, and he needs to make sure that his planning minister acts. Minister Wynne needs to make sure that people get what they are entitled to. He needs to act, finally, and put those powerlines underground.

Walhalla Vinter Ljusfest

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is directed to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events in regard to the 2016 Walhalla Vinter Ljusfest unfortunately being cancelled in my electorate due to the lack of government funding. The action I seek from the minister is to change the application funding guidelines for country events to give groups such as the Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Tourism Association a fair chance of running successful events and attracting tourism to regional areas.

The Walhalla Vinter Ljusfest was created in 2009 after the Black Saturday bushfires to counteract the loss of tourism trade in summer months. It turned the month of August around from being the quietest month to one of the busiest months. It developed a loyal following over five years, with many people returning year after year for lighting displays and to take photographs. This unique event of nightly lighting displays, increased train rides and ghost tours brings back tourists to experience all that Walhalla has to offer. In the past this event has relied on local government and state government funds, but this year it has been cancelled as these funds have not been secured. Walhalla is fully dependent on tourism, and within hours of the cancellation announcement visitors began to cancel their accommodation as well. Many locals and tourists alike were devastated when this much-loved event was not scheduled to go ahead this year.

The Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Tourism Association president, Mr Michael Leaney, informs me that each year the board has applied for funding from the state government's Country Victoria Events program. He says the Andrews government cut funding to this program this year. Currently the funding program is based on securing local government funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis. No other source of funding, such as sponsorship, has been taken into account. It is therefore vital that the minister review the current funding model for country events so that funding is no longer linked to local government funding and would take into account sponsorship. It is also important that the new funding model include in-kind donations.

In regional areas volunteerism, as we know with the Country Fire Authority, is huge, and a dollar-for-dollar value need to be placed on these types of activities so

that these events can go ahead. There have been hundreds of people involved in giving up their time and expertise to ensure that these special events get to go ahead.

The other issue is the time factor for funding. Events such as this one at Walhalla need an appropriate amount of time to be organised and suitably promoted. Funding needs to be secured ideally six months to a year beforehand so that adequate planning can take place. We know that millions of dollars are spent in the city by this government, and it is very disappointing when rural events are not supported in this way. It has wide-reaching ramifications for employment as well as an overall beautiful effect on the people and tourists who go there.

Multicultural events

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) — The matter that I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Being the month of Ramadan, I am sure that many members of Parliament have had the opportunity to attend various iftar dinners in their own electorates and further afield. Only last night I was delighted to co-host the parliamentary iftar dinner organised by the Australian Intercultural Society. It was a terrific affair which the Governor attended and which many members of Parliament from all sides of the fence also attended. I am certainly very grateful to my colleagues for that support.

The underpinning commitment and the reason for the success of our multicultural affairs policy in Victoria over successive governments is the bipartisan — or dare I even say multiparty — commitment to multicultural affairs. The protocols are very important to that particular sector to ensure that we all stand side by side in support of our multicultural communities in the good times and also in dealing with some of the challenges. I am raising this matter because I am sensing a drift away from some of those protocols. The protocols involve inviting all representative members of the respective parties as well as providing them with an opportunity to extend their greetings or deliver a message appropriate to the occasion.

Recently the Premier held the Premier's Iftar Dinner, the second one in a row. I was hoping that his failure last year to invite members of the opposition or a representative of the opposition was an oversight, but unfortunately this year he did so again. No member of the opposition was invited to the Premier's Iftar Dinner, and I understand there were something like 100 or 120 guests.

I think that is a really serious concern because it does suggest a drifting away from that strong, multiparty commitment to multicultural affairs, which is so important if we are going to continue meeting our challenges.

The action I am asking that the minister take — and can I say the minister is often very strong on the commitment of all parties to multiculturalism — is that he reaffirm the government's commitment to a bipartisan approach to multicultural affairs and to ensure that this occurs both by following appropriate protocols and by making sure that members of the respective parties are invited to events and given an opportunity to extend the appropriate greetings at these occasions.

There could be nothing more important at this juncture than iftar dinners to which representatives of our Islamic communities are invited, who themselves are facing significant challenges and need all the support that they can get. That is why it is of significant concern to me that the Premier has been so one-eyed and so blind to the importance of multiparty support for this particular area of activity.

Police resources

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Police. Last week I was contacted by a constituent who lives in Brighton. I have known him and his wife for many years. They wrote to me telling of their appalling experience in seeking help when their home was burgled.

On 9 June my constituents had been out for dinner and returned home just after 9.00 p.m. They noticed from the car that their bedroom lights were on and the shutters were open on a door and a window. They also saw that the double entry doors to their home had been battered and were open. The husband said:

I immediately rang 000 and was connected to the police at 9.13 p.m. The operator said not to enter the house but to wait until the police arrived. We were still waiting on the nature strip at 10.20 p.m. —

when a policeman, who is named in the statement to me —

rang from Sandringham police station. He said they were busy and it might be some time before they could attend. However if we entered the house we should not touch anything.

My constituents went inside to find their bedroom and an adjacent room both in total disarray. The husband continued:

It was fairly evident that the thieves had left when we trained the full beam headlights on the house and the fact that I had opened the car access gate allowed them to escape into the very poorly lit —

street.

He continued:

At 11.23 p.m. I had a further call from —

the same police officer —

to say it might be 1.00 a.m. before the police could attend. He said they only had one vehicle on the road and it was at a domestic violence situation and he was unsure when they might be free. At that stage I gave up and said I wanted to go to bed and wasn't prepared to wait around until about 1.00 a.m. or 2.00 a.m. in the morning. We spoke for 15 minutes, with him advising not to touch anything! I said that would be difficult given the bedroom was a mess.

The couple fixed up the external doors as best they could and went to bed in a spare room just after 1.00 a.m. Two police officers finally arrived a little after 9.00 a.m. on Friday morning to take photographs and fingerprints.

My constituents made it clear to me that they were complaining not about the police but about the resources made available to the police. He said:

The main point of this email is to remind you how under-resourced our police force is, and I wonder what would have happened if I'd confronted the thieves and been hurt in a fight. I had asked —

the police officer —

if Moorabbin could attend, but he said no. Perhaps there are so many robberies that Victoria Police no longer worry about property damage.

It is disgraceful that this couple was unable to get help when they rang 000, knowing that their house had been broken into and believing that the burglars might still be inside. The Andrews government has justified its move to police super-stations on the basis that this means police will have more resources to attend to calls and requests from those who need them, but this experience shows that this is not happening.

My constituents' experience is also becoming increasingly common. Overall crime figures released last week show an increase of more than 12 per cent, comparing the first quarter of 2016 with the same in 2015, and figures have also increased significantly in the City of Bayside. Theft in particular rose from

1441 incidents to 2053. The action I am seeking from the Minister for Police is an explanation of why the Sandringham police station was reportedly so poorly resourced on 9 June, with one vehicle on the road but at a domestic violence incident with no clarity about when it might be available.

Melton police resources

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Minister for Police. The adjournment matter I wish to raise relates to crime figures in Melton, which I am sure Mr Ramsay is well aware is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, an area where many young families are choosing to set up their homes. Unfortunately what we are seeing in the recent crime statistics is a huge increase in crime.

We have seen assaults and related offences up 16.9 per cent; stalking, harassment and threatening behaviour up 8.4 per cent; dangerous and negligent acts endangering people up 28.2 per cent; as well as burglaries and break and enters up 15.9 per cent. Theft is up 21.3 per cent; deception offences are up 13.7 per cent; cultivating or manufacturing drugs is up 10.4 per cent; weapons and explosive offences are up a remarkable 24.2 per cent; public nuisance offences are up 168.2 per cent; justice procedure offences are up 86.8 per cent; and breaches of orders are up 45.2 per cent. This all equates to a rise in crime in the City of Melton of 17.4 per cent.

As we well know, Melton is a very fast growing area, and these are quite shocking crime figures. It is evident from these numbers that there certainly is a crime crisis in Melton, and families who have a right to feel safe in their own communities have not got that luxury in Melton. I would certainly like to acknowledge the great work that Victoria Police does, but it can only do the work that it can with the resources that it is given. So the action that I seek from the minister is that the minister ensure that the police in Melton receive additional resources to ensure that the good people of Melton can be kept safe in their own community.

Elevated rail proposal

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Families and Children, so I am glad she is in the house this evening. On Sunday, together with my colleagues Mr Davis and Mrs Peulich, I joined hundreds of concerned members of the community to walk along the sky rail route from Hughesdale to Carnegie.

Along this track we went, and it was 2.6 kilometres long. We went down streets where we were shown that when the structure is in place those streets will only have 20 minutes of sunlight at certain times during the winter, and in other areas there is particular concern around vibration to parts of aged-care facilities. But in one particular area, a new childcare centre and kindergarten was given planning approval. This is along the line near Murrumbeena; it is actually on Neerim Road, Murrumbeena. Planning approval was given, and the developers went ahead to put this facility in place to cater for that growing community with young children. It sits very close to the sky rail, which goes right above it; it is adjacent to the sky rail tracks. There is considerable concern, as I said, from members of the community not only in relation to this facility but in relation to the aged-care facility, the streets that will have blockage of sunlight and the impact on amenity in general. Some of those young parents who were walking with talked about their concerns about the effects of diesel emissions.

My question to the minister is: is she aware of the World Health Organisation warnings on diesel emissions, and why has an environment effects statement not been undertaken to assess the potential dangers to children who will be attending this childcare centre when it opens in only a few weeks time? It actually opens in August of this year. I want to understand why that process has not been undertaken. The dispersion of diesel fumes can be very dangerous. As I said, the World Health Organisation has made various findings on it. I would like to understand the minister's concern about that and whether she will then advocate for an environment effects statement to be undertaken in relation to this particular early childhood facility.

Point Cook police resources

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police in another place. I have many times raised concerns about the number of criminal activities in the western suburbs. Once again tonight I was horrified to see on the television news activities in Point Cook that involved hoons; that involved violent, vicious assaults; and that involved threatening the burning down of houses and general lawlessness. This, unfortunately, I am told, is nothing new. Unfortunately for the good people of Point Cook, they had some difficulty in actually getting the police there. If you are being attacked, if you are being harassed in the way that we talk about, then clearly you need the police, and they were unable to get there.

It is not surprising we have the sorts of crime figures we have seen over the last year rising significantly. For example, in Hobsons Bay, in the western suburbs, they got off well; they were the lucky ones. There was an increase of only 3.1 per cent.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr FINN — ‘Only’ in inverted commas. Moonee Valley is up 5.7 per cent, Brimbank is up 10.8 per cent, Maribyrnong — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr FINN — Yes. Well, Brimbank — that is just mainly the council! Maribyrnong is up 14.1 per cent, Hume is up 18.4 per cent and Wyndham is up a massive 19.8 per cent. That is something that I find totally unacceptable for the people of the western suburbs. Something has to be done. Something has to give here. Something is just not right. I believe the thing that is not right is the fact that we have very, very few police, comparatively speaking, given a very fast growing population.

What I am asking the minister to do is provide sufficient police for the western suburbs. I am asking the minister to provide sufficient police so that lawfulness can be restored in the western suburbs — throughout the west and particularly for the good people of Point Cook.

NewCold

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Industry and Employment, Wade Noonan. This relates to an announcement he made on 14 June about NewCold in Melton. This matter relates to an announcement he made about NewCold's new headquarters in Melton, where he announced that the Labor government helped secure the Asia-Pacific headquarters there, working closely with NewCold. The minister said:

Having secured the headquarters in Melbourne, the company anticipates its Truganina facility will be the first in a series of projects across the Asia-Pacific ...

The minister went on to say, and I quote:

This is another vote of confidence for Victoria's food and beverage sector and will create 127 full-time jobs in Melbourne's west.

My action request for Minister Noonan is: can he advise me what the government actually did, and in particular what financial or in-kind services or support it gave to NewCold to secure this investment.

Responses

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) — This evening I have received adjournment matters from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Public Transport; from Mr Melhem to the Minister for Small Business, Innovation and Trade; from Mr Purcell to the Minister for Sport; from Ms Dunn to the Minister for Planning; from Mr Ramsay also to the Minister for Planning; from Mr Davis also to the Minister for Planning; from Ms Bath to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events; from Mrs Peulich to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs; from Ms Fitzherbert to the Minister for Police; from Mr Morris to the Minister for Police; from Mr Finn to the Minister for Police; and from Mr Ondarchie to the Minister for Industry and Employment. I will refer all those matters to the appropriate ministers for response.

In relation to Mr Elasmars matter directed to me, I propose to respond to the member and therefore discharge this matter. Mr Elasmars referred to a pilot that the government is trialling this year in relation to kindergarten places that relates to reserving pre-purchased places for vulnerable or disadvantaged children so that they do not miss out on participating in that vital kindergarten year. I am very proud of this particular initiative. As Mr Elasmars has outlined to the house, kindergarten participation is a very important step towards assisting young children to develop their socialisation and other skills in preparation for attending school, and it is important that disadvantaged children also have that experience.

Our government undertook an expression of interest process. As a result of that 569 places have been reserved across 196 services in both metropolitan and regional Victoria. I am pleased to advise Mr Elasmars that there are in fact 19 services in Northern Metropolitan Region which are benefiting from this pilot, including Grace Park Preschool, Mill Park Preschool, Olympic Village Preschool, Keon Park Children's Hub, Dalton Road Kindergarten and Westmeadows Preschool. They are just a few of the 19 services covering constituents in Mr Elasmars' electorate who will have the benefit of this. As we know there are some very disadvantaged parts in that electorate, and therefore I hope that that will ensure that disadvantaged children in Mr Elasmars' and my electorate will have the ability to participate in that vital kindergarten year. I thank Mr Elasmars for his continued advocacy around the importance of early childhood education and particularly for referring to this important pilot program this evening.

In relation to Ms Crozier's matter that she directed to me, I believe she should have referred this particular matter to the Minister for Public Transport, because she did refer to the sky rail project. I think the member perhaps fails to understand the regulatory role that the Department of Education and Training plays in terms of regulating early childhood services. It does not make planning decisions about where services are built, nor does it consider issues such as emissions or pollution. It regulates matters that happen within the centre itself, and this goes to issues around the quality of the program that is provided to children in a childcare centre or kindergarten.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms MIKAKOS — Ms Crozier, you need to have a look at the general order. I am explaining to you my portfolio responsibilities, and you have asked me —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Order! Through the Chair!

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, Acting President. Ms Crozier has asked me to respond to a particular matter that relates to sky rail, and I am suggesting to the member that she may wish to direct this matter to a more appropriate minister who will be able to respond to her around diesel emissions. She specifically asked about matters to do with diesel emissions, and issues around pollution and emissions obviously are the responsibility of other ministers. It was a pretty wideranging adjournment matter in any event, but I believe that I have discharged this matter. Ms Crozier may wish to direct this matter to other ministers.

Ms Crozier — On a point of order, Acting President, because the minister has declined to undertake the request that I asked of her, perhaps I should address the matter to the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water if it is not appropriate to go to Ms Mikakos and if she has not got any concerns about the effects on children of the diesel emissions. Rather than to Minister Allan, I think it should go to the environment minister, so I will redirect it to the environment minister if I could.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Order! Just to be clear, is Ms Crozier now asking to have her adjournment matter directed to the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water?

Ms Crozier — Minister Mikakos said it was not her responsibility. She said it was Minister Allan's responsibility.

Ms Mikakos — On the point of order, Acting President, in terms of the broad-ranging sky rail project, obviously Minister Allan has that broad-ranging responsibility, but if the member wishes to — —

Ms Crozier — My concern is about the effect of diesel fumes on these children, so if it goes to Minister Allan, that is fine.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Order! That particular adjournment matter will be directed to the Minister for Public Transport.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, Acting President, and I thank Ms Crozier for clarifying who she wishes to have that matter directed to.

In addition I have received written responses to 24 adjournment debate matters.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Order! At that point, the house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 12.44 a.m. (Wednesday).

