

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 19 September 2018

(Extract from book 14)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

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Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Local Government	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
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Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Dalidakis, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Springle, Ms Symes 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, #Mr Davis, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr Finn, Mr Gepp, Mr Leane, #Mr Melhem, Mr Ondarchie, Mr O’Sullivan and #Mr Rich-Phillips.

Standing Committee on the Environment and Planning — Ms Bath, #Mr Bourman, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mr Davis, #Ms Dunn, Mr Elasmarr, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, #Dr Ratnam, #Ms Symes, Ms Truong and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Dr Ratnam, #Mr Rich-Phillips, Ms Shing, Mr Somyurek, Ms Springle and Ms Symes.

participating members

Legislative Council select committees

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

Fire Services Bill Select Committee — Ms Lovell, Mr Melhem, Mr Mulino, Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Rich Phillips, Ms Shing and Mr Young.

Joint committees

Accountability and Oversight Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Purcell and Ms Symes. (*Assembly*): Mr Angus, Mr Gidley, Mr Noonan and Ms Thomson.

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

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

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

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee — (*Council*): Mr O’Sullivan, Mr Ramsay and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): Mr J. Bull, Ms Halfpenny, Mr Richardson and Mr Riordan.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and Mr Finn. (*Assembly*): Ms Britnell, Ms Couzens, Mr Edbrooke, Ms Edwards and Ms McLeish.

House Committee — (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), Mr Eideh, 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*): Dr Carling-Jenkins and Mr Gepp. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): Ms Patten, 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 — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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Deputy President:

Mr N. ELASMAR

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The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

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The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

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Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John ¹	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	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	Ind	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	O'Sullivan, Mr Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	FPRP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred ⁶	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁷	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Truong, Ms Huong ¹²	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017;
AC until 3 August 2018

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁷ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 2018;
RV until 14 August 2018

¹¹ Appointed 18 October 2017

¹² Appointed 21 February 2018

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

AC — Australian Conservatives; ALP — Labor Party; ASP — Australian Sex Party; DLP — Democratic Labour Party;
FPRP — Fiona Patten's Reason Party; Greens — Australian Greens; Ind — Independent; LP — Liberal Party;
Nats — The Nationals; RV — Reason Victoria; SFFP — Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party; VILJ — Vote 1 Local Jobs

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Wednesday, 19 September 2018

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 9.36 a.m. and read the prayer.

**JUSTICE LEGISLATION
MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT
BILL 2018**

Clerk's amendment

The PRESIDENT (09:36) — I wish to advise the house that I have received a letter from the Acting Clerk of the Parliaments, Mr Young, which states:

Under standing order 14.33, I have made a correction in the Justice Legislation Miscellaneous Amendment Bill 2018, listed as follows:

in clause 42, subclause 5, line 25, I have renumbered the reference to section 33 to section 34.

PETITIONS

Following petition presented to house:

Great forest national park

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:

there exists a proposal by advocates for the creation of the great forest national park in north-east Victoria, which would lock up 355 000 hectares of public land and prohibit activities enjoyed by recreational outdoor enthusiasts and a sustainable timber industry;

under a national parks system, Parks Victoria would become the agency responsible for maintaining more than double the property it already struggles to maintain due to budget cuts; and

a lack of appropriate maintenance and prohibited hunting use would create unacceptable risks to environment and communities in the proposed park area due to increased bushfire danger and feral animal destruction.

The petitioners therefore request that the Victorian government impose a moratorium for a period of five years on the establishment of the great forest national park or any other national park that encompasses the same locations as the great forest national park proposal, or until such time as —

- (1) an investigation is undertaken to determine whether Parks Victoria is capable of managing a park of this type given that recent budget cuts have had a negative impact on the management of already established national parks and other public land;
- (2) the proposal for the great forest national park does not negatively impact access or use of land to any user

group or stakeholder that already uses the area or may do so in the future;

- (3) the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) can adequately prove that appropriate fire management can still take place in these areas and will not be negatively impacted by any change in land tenure; and
- (4) the DELWP can adequately prove that appropriate pest management can still take place in these areas and will not be negatively impacted by any change in land tenure.

**By Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria)
(659 signatures).**

Laid on table.

PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS

Reports 2017–18

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan), by leave, presented reports of Department of the Legislative Council and Department of Parliamentary Services.

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's Reports on —

Delivering Local Government Services, September 2018
(*Ordered to be published*).

Managing the Environmental Impacts of Domestic Wastewater, September 2018 (*Ordered to be published*).

Security and Privacy of Surveillance Technologies in Public Places, September 2018 (*Ordered to be published*).

Ombudsman — Report, 2017–18 (*Ordered to be published*).

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 119 and 134.

Victorian Law Reform Commission — Review of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996, July 2018 (*Ordered to be published*).

A proclamation of the Governor in Council fixing an operative date in respect of the following act:

Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018 — 4 October 2018
(*Gazette No. S433, 18 September 2018*).

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice of motion given.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Kindergarten prepurchased places program

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Early Childhood Education) (09:41) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is making things fairer for families and ensuring that all children have access to kindergarten in Victoria. The Andrews government has invested \$2.3 million to make the prepurchased places program a permanent fixture of the early education landscape because we recognise that often the children who are most likely to miss out on kindergarten are those that will benefit the most. This program enables vulnerable families and children known to child protection, refugees, Koori children and concessions card holders to still attend a local kindergarten service at no cost even if they have missed the enrolment dates.

We first piloted this approach successfully in 2016 as a way of ensuring that vulnerable kids who missed enrolment deadlines or moved during the year would still be able to access a local kindergarten place. From now on, every year more than 650 places will be reserved across the state for vulnerable families and children so that they can have that opportunity to get access to an early childhood education.

I am pleased to advise the house that in 2018, 663 kindergarten places have been reserved across 240 services in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. Research shows that children who have a stimulating and supportive start to life are more likely to do well later in life and children who attend kinder score higher on their NAPLAN tests.

The prepurchased places program changes lives by helping families overcome barriers through participating in kindergarten. It is an important way in which our government's \$202.1 million *Early Childhood Reform Plan* aims to ensure that every Victorian child can access and benefit from kinder. We are seeking to ensure that every Victorian child is ready for kinder, ready for school and ready for life.

Animal foster care

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (09:43) — Community foster care networks and rescue organisations provide critical care for animals in need by rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming pets. They are run mostly by volunteers, and these animal carers are an important part of our animal welfare system. They provide temporary foster care in a home environment for animals being rehabilitated, rehoming many dogs and cats each year. Their work decreases the amount of

time that animals spend in pounds and shelters and enables many more pets to find new families. But the system has developed over the years rather organically, and our regulatory arrangements to support their work has not kept up.

The government has recently commenced a comprehensive review that will provide us with options to improve dog and cat foster care in Victoria. The review will ensure that regulatory frameworks and legislation for community foster care networks and rescue organisations are fit for purpose. It will consider the relevant legislative, compliance and enforcement frameworks; best practice for recognising community foster care networks and animal rescue groups in legislation; opportunities to maximise the welfare and survival rates of cats and dogs, including barriers to rehoming; how to minimise shelter and pound euthanasia rates through foster care networks and rescue groups; and best practice approaches for registration and identification for dogs and cats in foster care. The independent review will involve extensive consultation and will provide recommendations to the government for change where required.

I thank our animal foster carers and those who coordinate their efforts for the amazing work they do caring for Victoria's animals. This review is about supporting their valuable work, and I encourage their input to it.

Neighbourhood houses

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (09:45) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is investing in neighbourhood houses and supporting their expansion across Victoria. Our government recognises the important role facilities like neighbourhood houses play in being places of inclusion for many people, as well as assisting in social cohesion, the provision of education and the opportunity to volunteer in local communities.

Through the neighbourhood house coordination program our government provides recurrent funding of over \$30.11 million per annum to support 375 neighbourhood houses, 16 neighbourhood house networks and the peak body, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria. And I am very pleased that, as part of the 2018–19 budget, we saw record new funding of \$21.8 million to expand the neighbourhood house network and support staff, the volunteers and the local communities that they serve.

In one budget we have invested almost eight times what the former Liberal government spent during their entire

term in support of neighbourhood houses. Our record investment has funded additional coordination hours to houses that previously received less than 25 coordination hours per week, and a total of 162 neighbourhood houses have had their coordination hours increased. This is the biggest ever funding boost in neighbourhood house coordination hours in Victoria's history.

We have also increased funding to neighbourhood house networks to deliver 4800 additional hours of support to neighbourhood houses. These networks provide valuable advice and support to neighbourhood houses to improve access to key services and activities. We are also providing coordination hours funding to a number of new or existing unfunded neighbourhood houses. The application process for new or unfunded neighbourhood houses closed on 31 July, and I look forward to announcing the newly funded neighbourhood houses very soon.

Further, neighbourhood houses funded through the neighbourhood house coordination program are now eligible to apply for non-recurrent grants of up to \$30 000 to support small-scale infrastructure modifications to improve accessibility, as well as grants of up to \$10 000 for minor works, equipment and ICT upgrades. Those grant applications close at 5 p.m. on 1 October.

Our government's unprecedented investment will ensure neighbourhood houses can continue to provide the vital employment, training and volunteering services that people need. Our government has put people first, and this is why we want more Victorians to experience the benefits of neighbourhood houses and the wonderful work that they do. I take this opportunity to congratulate Neighbourhood Houses Victoria in working with our government to deliver a great outcome.

Theatre Royal, Camperdown

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (09:47) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is delivering for all Victorians. The Camperdown Theatre Royal in south-west Victoria is set for new and improved equipment so that it can continue to serve as an important social and cultural hub, and this is occurring through funding from our government's Stronger Regional Communities Plan.

This program aims to support rural and regional towns to attract families and young people and invest in community-led projects that make regional Victoria a

wonderful place to live and work. Theatre Royal in Camperdown is a much-loved hub for arts and cultural entertainment, but its existing facilities are no longer meeting the needs of modern productions. It is my great pleasure this morning in Parliament to announce a \$50 000 grant to Corangamite Shire Council so that Theatre Royal can install the new equipment they desire.

Upgrades include permanent sound and lighting equipment and new projection equipment, as well as new tables and comfortable new seating for patrons. Currently theatre users are required to provide their own sound and lighting or hire equipment at a cost of up to \$2500. This expense jeopardises the sustainability of the theatre and limits the kind of shows that Camperdown can attract.

The improvements will strengthen the community by developing a facility that can provide ongoing economic benefits for Camperdown. This important grant will help restore Camperdown's Theatre Royal to its former glory so that people can enjoy the facility now and well into the future. This is just the latest example of the many hundreds of projects our government is supporting in getting on with the job of delivering for all Victorians and doing so hand in hand with local community organisations.

Young Pasifika

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Youth Affairs) (09:49) — I rise today to update the house on the valuable work the Young Pasifika program has been doing to give young Pacific Islanders targeted support and more opportunities to connect with their community. Young Pacific Islanders can face a number of challenges, including disengagement from school, taking drugs or alcohol, or discrimination.

In 2017 we invested \$600 000 in the Young Pasifika program to fund experienced youth outreach workers to work directly with young Pacific Islanders in the Casey and Wyndham areas to help them reconnect to school, jobs and training. Since then the program, known as Le Mana, meaning 'empower', which is run by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, has engaged over 2000 young Pacific Islander Victorians. Young people across 13 schools in the Casey and Wyndham areas are being supported through the program, which is engaging them with school and providing a culturally tailored program in which the students can explore their cultural identity and discuss challenges they face at home and at school.

Our government has invested a further \$475 000 through funding in this year's budget to expand this program to two new sites in Brimbank and Dandenong, supporting more young Pacific Islanders. The additional funding will see the expansion of the delivery of individual casework, two further youth workers and the introduction of new dedicated programs for young women. We are making this investment because our government believes every young person should have the opportunities and support they need to reach their full potential, including those young people who face levels of disadvantage.

Our new programs in youth affairs are aimed at supporting young people to be their best, and we are providing them with supports through trained youth workers. I make the point also that our government has made some recent announcements around access to free TAFE for youth workers, which will increase the number of trained and skilled youth workers in our state.

Programs like Empower Youth, Young Pasifika, our new community support groups and the Morwell youth space all focus on providing young people with quality support from youth workers to engage and strengthen their connections to community and help them to be their best. From our investment in these various programs, over 35 new youth work positions have been created. We are making significant investments that aim to get more youth workers on the ground to support young people, particularly to make sure that they can access employment and training opportunities after the cuts by the previous government.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Government performance

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (09:51) — In 2013 Joe Hockey was sworn in as Treasurer under an Abbott federal government and over the next two years the buzzwords were 'debt' and 'deficit'. As a nation we were told to tighten our belts. The surplus left by the previous hardworking Liberal government had been gobbled up and spat back at us by the Gillard-Rudd-Gillard years in the form of \$250 billion of debt. Yet as a nation we wince at any efforts to control spending — we zone in on the loudest voices, afraid of the political fallout, and assume a general consensus that everybody wants more and more debt. But that is not true. In fact many people I speak to are extraordinarily alarmed at the rate of spending and the promises that the Andrews government in Victoria is signing us up to. Some may call it fiscal confidence, but

I am inclined to believe it is more like fiscal irresponsibility.

The Andrews government is spending like a drunken sailor. Budget blowouts have hit \$26 billion and net debt forecasts show an increase from \$18 billion to \$29 billion. I guess Labor hopes people will get lost in the blur of zeros and it will become too much to comprehend and, for many, too much to even care about. Given thousands of Victorians cannot even recognise who our Premier is, why would they care about how far he has pushed the debt-laden ship out to sea?

This is a state government giddy on debt and euphoric in the wake of burgeoning stamp duty coffers and the 12 new taxes it has dumped upon the very people to whom it so solemnly promised that there would be no new taxes. The good ship Dan is taking on water as the fiscal seas rough up in the winds of change. As banks begin their interest rate climb and the housing market flattens, the stamp duty gravy train will begin to slow. Wages growth is battling inflation and total personal debt in Australia is about \$2 trillion. But what is not slowing is the spending. Labor is determined to blow billions to hold the reins. Spiralling debt —

The PRESIDENT — Thank you, Mr Ramsay.

Yom Kippur

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (09:53) — It gives me no pleasure to rise for my members statement today. This is a day on which I ordinarily would not be here. This is a day on which I have never worked in my professional career. It is of course Yom Kippur, the holiest of days in the Jewish calendar. It is a day that starts the night before, Erev Yom Kippur, which would have come at 5.55 p.m. yesterday, while I was still in this place. That is the time that I go to service every Erev Yom Kippur. It is the day I go to service with my children. I have been to synagogue on Yom Kippur every day for the last 20 years that I can recall.

It gives me no pleasure to be here on a day of atonement, a day of prayer and a day of reflection for me — a day ultimately of repentance for actions that I have taken, and their consequences, over the last 12 months. However, I am here today, and there are some who would suggest that I should have asked for a pair. I am not in a position to ask for a pair because, unfortunately, if people trash their own religion for a pair, what faith and trust do I have that they will not trash mine? I hope that the 59th Parliament fixes that

state of affairs. I think it reflects poorly on all of us, myself included, and I hope that it does not occur again.

The Greens

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) (09:54) — I came here from the grassroots of the Greens. I joined a small branch in Brimbank back in 2006, and that branch connected me to this place — the Greens party connected me to this place — while everything else in my life gave me no indication that I had any business here.

This job is all consuming, but every day I come and I work really hard to earn this privilege of representing the people of Western Metropolitan Region. It has been really tough to help the people in Western Metropolitan Region believe that this place should be relevant to them and that they should be represented, as is often the case in safe Labor regions, where people feel at best that they are overlooked and at worst that they are ignored.

I have been reading Harry Potter for a bit of escapism, but to be real I only read it because a new Greens volunteer told me that it taught a whole generation about morality and courage, the myths we tell about ourselves and how they make us behave. We are here representing our electorates and the ideologies that we bring to the party. I am so proud that being part of the Greens means that I can come here as a whole person to represent the grassroots movement that brings us progressive change.

Government performance

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (09:56) — Today I want the chamber's and the community's attention drawn to the failure of the government to table annual reports. These annual reports are an important vehicle to enable the community to know the performance of government departments, agencies, hospitals, health services and universities right across the state government's gambit. The Financial Management Act 1994 requires 233 separate annual reports to be tabled, and in terms of universities and alpine resorts there are at least another 25, so this is a very significant number. I note this is the second-last sitting day. The Financial Management Act requires the tabling of reports by the end of October. I can only think that the government's intention in finishing the sitting of the Parliament early is to avoid scrutiny by avoiding the tabling of annual reports.

Now, I am hopeful that all of these reports will be tabled tomorrow. It will in one sense be a contempt of the Parliament by dumping the reports in a way where scrutiny is restricted and diminished because of them being dumped on one day. The failure of the Parliament to sit beyond that point means that scrutiny will necessarily be restricted. I am hopeful that the government will dump all of those reports tomorrow, because at least the community will be able to see them, but my suspicion is they will table some reports and many will be hidden. I have seen Labor governments try to hide financial blowouts before. We need to see the performance of the Level Crossing Removal Authority, the performance of universities and hospitals —

The PRESIDENT — Thank you, Mr Davis.

Cobram District Health

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (09:58) — I rise to inform the house about my recent visit to Cobram District Health to announce funding of \$1.6 million from the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund. The money will be used to upgrade Irvin House, the residential aged-care facility run by Cobram District Health. The project will specifically deliver a new build of single rooms and the conversion of existing double rooms to single rooms, each with its own ensuite. The rooms will comply with the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines on aged-care facilities and will add to the life cycle of the facility. The improved facility will enable Cobram District Health to continue to deliver a high level of residential aged-care services and, most importantly, give local people the aged-care service they need and deserve. I want to thank the chair of the board, Dale Brooks, and Carolyn Hargraves, the CEO, for showing me around the facility and also for the very warm reception that I received from staff and residents.

J. Furphy & Sons

Mr GEPP — I also recently visited with J. Furphy & Sons Pty Ltd in Shepparton to announce the expansion in Shepparton of the Industry Capability Network (ICN), which will help local industry connect with local businesses and improve their chances of bidding for local government projects. I want to thank the managing director, Adam Furphy, and Grant Jennings from the ICN for showing me around the business, which is a great local manufacturing business servicing northern Victoria.

St Kilda Mums

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (09:59) — I rise to speak about a recent announcement made by Andrew Bond, the Liberal candidate for the Assembly seat of Albert Park, in relation to St Kilda Mums, that superb organisation. But before I do that, having been in the chamber when he spoke, I want to briefly respond to the comments made by Mr Dalidakis in his members statement. It is regrettable that Mr Dalidakis has said that he felt unable to request a pair, particularly given that I think everybody in this chamber knows that a pairing arrangement operated very successfully during the last sitting week for Ms Crozier. I just want to make that observation without debating the reasons behind those comments.

In relation to St Kilda Mums, I was delighted to see this announcement made last week by Andrew Bond. It is a commitment of \$100 000 if the coalition is successfully elected. This will enable St Kilda Mums, as it wishes to do, to expand its Safe Start program to Frankston Hospital and also to support —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am always conscious of those in glasshouses not throwing stones. The references to Ms Shing are inappropriate as far as I am concerned, and given what I read in the newspapers I would find it very difficult to stop similar interjections from this side against the Liberal Party if remarks were made. Just stop it, please. Ms Fitzherbert to complete her statement.

Ms FITZHERBERT — Last year St Kilda Mums supported more than 18 000 babies and children. It operates in 70 out of 79 local government areas in Victoria. But I am particularly delighted that this announcement actually caused the member for Albert Park in the Assembly, Mr Foley, to have his first contact with St Kilda Mums. It has been operating for nine years. It is a powerhouse on a statewide level, and yet it is only this announcement of support for an organisation that currently receives no government funding at all that has prompted Martin Foley to actually pick up the phone and find out what it does.

Mullum Mullum Trail

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:02) — I was very pleased on Sunday to be at the opening of the 1.3-kilometre link for the Mullum Mullum Trail, which runs through the Mullum Mullum Creek valley from Templestowe and connects to EastLink in Donvale. This last missing piece of the shared-use path connects

with other shared-use paths, as in the Koonung, EastLink and Main Yarra trails. It is a circular track that allows people to cycle or walk, if they want to, 42 kilometres of off-road shared-use paths through the Currawong Bush Park sanctuary, which is a beautiful part of Melbourne. It features wetlands with flora and fauna such as cockatoos, butcher birds and, if you are lucky enough, you can see a platypus in the creek, which I have seen from time to time. That is fantastic. There are wildflowers as well as other types of natural scenes. The trail is in one of the most beautiful parts of Melbourne.

Felicitations

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (10:03) — It is the end of another parliamentary term, the 58th Parliament. It is a busy life, and when you look back you find that four years has flown by. I would like to take the opportunity in the last sitting week to thank all the staff of the Parliament for the work they do to help us to do our work on behalf of the people of Victoria.

Thank you to the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services organisation development unit and the security and electorate properties unit who support us and our electorate officers. Thank you to IT who keep the Parliament internet and email services functioning and for whom no problem is too small to fix. Thank you to the library for the wonderful publications and seminars they run and for the research they do to support us in our work. Thank you to the protective services officers and the security staff who look after the safety of MPs, parliamentary staff and members of the public. Thank you to the catering staff for the wonderful food and coffee. Thanks to the buildings and grounds staff for the wonderful surroundings, including the new building. Thank you to the community engagement staff who show the public around Parliament House. Thank you to Hansard who make sense of what we all say in this place. Thank you to the committee and table office staff for their support and assistance, often at short notice.

Thank you to the clerks and their staff for everything they do; you are amazing. Thank you to the Presiding Officers and their staff. Thank you to the attendants, especially the redcoats, upon whom we rely on for so much. I wish those MPs who are retiring the very best in their future endeavours and the best of luck to everyone in the coming campaign.

Latrobe Valley community facility funding

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (10:05) — The work associated with the Latrobe Valley Authority's community facility fund continues, and it has been a great pleasure to be part of an additional \$3.7 million being allocated across those three local government areas, being Baw Baw shire, Latrobe shire and Wellington shire. They include the Willow Grove Recreation Reserve pavilion, Willow Grove Recreation Reserve irrigation and storage shed, Warragul cricket club, Trafalgar Victory Football Club, Community College Gippsland, Future Morwell, Traralgon Public Cemetery Trust, Morwell Historical Society, Traralgon Redsox Baseball Club, Traralgon Golf Club, Twin City Archers Gippsland, Moe Cricket Club, Old Gippstown, Yallourn North Bowling Club, Yarra Trail, Rotary Club of Sale Central, Sale Botanic Gardens, Stratford Bowling Club, Heyfield RV Park, Victoria Park water tower, Sale Golf Club, Maffra Golf Club, Maffra Dramatic Society, Licola Wilderness Village, Gumnuts Early Learning Centre and Veronica Maybury Memorial Reserve.

In addition to this, it has been wonderful to be able to support Scouts Victoria with upgrades at six halls in Glengarry, Trafalgar, Stratford, Maffra, Newborough and Traralgon to improve accessibility and universal design to make sure that more people can participate in pride of place in community activities and that all parts of the Latrobe Valley region have the best possible opportunities to thrive, to grow and to really define and set out a positive future.

Mat Bowtell

The PRESIDENT (10:06) — It is a bit unusual for me to do a members statement, but I do want to make one this morning. I am often asked what is the most significant thing about the work that I do — what I find the most satisfactory. I always answer that it is the inspirational people I meet. Last Friday night I attended a dinner of the Australia-Japan Society of Victoria. They had a guest speaker at that function, a man called Mat Bowtell, who is an innovator and an engineer who worked for Toyota for a number of years and when Toyota was closing was part of what I regard as quite a successful transition program for some of their employees.

Mat Bowtell is an incredible Victorian and Australian. He now develops prosthetics for people who need them, and he puts the plans for those prosthetics on the open web for anyone anywhere in the world to actually copy and create new limbs for people who are in need of them. With his genius he could be a multimillionaire,

and yet he is so dedicated to humanity that he develops these products that give people a whole new life, effectively, and then puts them on open source on the internet for anybody else to use.

The interesting thing is that one of the hands that he described the other night at this function was the equivalent of a product that is available in the marketplace for around \$15 000. In Australia that might be feasible; in many parts of the world it clearly is not. Mat Bowtell has invented a prosthetic hand that costs \$8. He is a remarkable man and, as I said, a remarkable Victorian and Australian, and I thought that today he needed some acknowledgement in this place.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Debate resumed from 5 September; motion of Ms Wooldridge (Eastern Metropolitan):

That this house notes that after four long years Victoria is beset with problems caused by Premier Daniel Andrews and his Labor government and Victorians are now faced with —

- (1) the highest crimes against the person offence numbers in Victoria's history;
- (2) sentences and a bail system that do not meet community expectations;
- (3) a youth justice system in crisis;
- (4) rising electricity prices due to Labor's forced closure of Hazelwood power station;
- (5) increasing traffic congestion on our freeways and in our suburbs;
- (6) a \$1.3 billion bill for not building the east-west link;
- (7) the betrayal of 60 000 Country Fire Authority volunteers and their communities;
- (8) six ministers and six Labor members whose actions are under police investigation;
- (9) 74 cancer beds axed at a cost to taxpayers of \$100 million;
- (10) a broken education system and a vocational education and training system with ongoing cuts and reduced enrolments;
- (11) watered-down planning protections;
- (12) sporting organisations and community clubs forced to take out loans;
- (13) farmers and regional communities being ignored and funding cuts for local country roads;
- (14) an ice injecting room;

(15) blowouts in public housing waiting lists and dental waiting lists;

(16) 14 straight negative Sensis small business index results;

(17) no plan to manage Victoria's population;

and further notes that Premier Daniel Andrews has presided over a dysfunctional, rorting and morally corrupt government plagued by infighting, mismanagement, favouritism and crisis focused only on itself and not on Victorians.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (10:09) — I believe I only have a short while to conclude my contribution to this motion, but I do note that it is without doubt —

Mr Gepp — Take your time.

Mr MORRIS — Thank you, Mr Gepp; I will. It is without doubt a disgraceful and shocking government that Victoria has been subjected to for nearly four years now. We have no greater examples than those laid out in the motion that Ms Wooldridge has moved.

The crime rate has continued to increase. I note that just yesterday in Ararat, in western Victoria, there was a home invasion. It was almost unthought-of that a home invasion would occur in Ararat just a few short years ago, yet unfortunately these are the types of crimes that are becoming everyday occurrences in parts of western Victoria that we would have thought would be exceptionally safe.

It is crucial that on 24 November this year, when Victorians go to vote — and I am sure many people are actually going to be voting before 24 November with both postal votes and early votes — people make a choice as to whether or not they want to continue on with a government that has seen crime spiral out of control, a government that, despite committing to introducing no new taxes, has introduced in excess of 12 new taxes that represent 12 broken promises to every single Victorian from Daniel Andrews and his government. Perhaps one of the most shocking deceptions of this government was the over \$1.3 billion not to build the east–west link, a critical piece of infrastructure that we know is needed now — not tomorrow, not in a year's time. It is required now.

Mr Finn — \$1.3 billion.

Mr MORRIS — Yes, Mr Finn, it was \$1.3 billion wasted.

Mr Finn — Criminal waste.

Mr MORRIS — It would go close to criminal waste indeed to not build a critical piece of infrastructure that is urgently required in our state.

However, there is an opportunity for the state of Victoria to turn this around and to elect a government in November this year that will actually prioritise the community rather than prioritising union mates. We have a leader in Matthew Guy who will prioritise the needs of the Victorian community and place those at the front and centre.

We know that Victoria is growing significantly, and in many cases Melbourne is growing in a way that is unsustainable. We know what we need to do. We need to ensure that regional Victoria can take that growth. The 8 per cent of population growth that is occurring outside of Melbourne is nowhere near large enough. We need to make sure that more people move to regional Victoria. Regional Victoria is a great place to live. Whether it is Ballarat, Geelong, Ararat or Maryborough, there are many wonderful places.

Mr Finn — Colac.

Mr MORRIS — Colac indeed. There is also Warrnambool. Hamilton is a great spot; Casterton is another great spot. We have an opportunity to grow Victoria, and we know that needs to happen because Daniel Andrews and his city-centric government have wholly focused on Melbourne. They have completely ignored regional Victoria to the point that we have a minister in this place, Minister Dalidakis, who could not tell the difference between Ballarat and Bendigo in a recent small business pamphlet that was mailed out.

Mr Finn — He doesn't know which way is up.

Mr MORRIS — No, he does not know which way is up indeed. For a minister of the Crown not to be able to tell the difference between Ballarat and Bendigo is indicative of the fact that we have a government that is not serving all of Victoria; it is only looking after metropolitan Melbourne.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MORRIS — It does get a bit chilly in Ballarat on the odd occasion; we had a bit of snow on Saturday night.

It is critical that Victorians do make a choice when it comes to the election in November this year — a choice between the Andrews government, which has rorted taxpayers money and misled the public, and a positive approach for the state under a Matthew Guy-led Liberal government.

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) (10:14) — I rise to speak on the coalition motion on failures of the Andrews government. Every year the west gets left a little further behind. We see the visible signs of neglect every day. The residents of West Footscray, Seddon and Brooklyn understood this well before toxic ash darkened their sky. They could hear it every day in the trucks that thundered down their residential streets. They understood this well before Stony Creek bled blue from toxic pollutants. Local residents throughout the west have been fighting for their waterways to be properly looked after, cleaned and regulated for years.

That neglect is well understood in other suburbs of my electorate. Residents in Ravenhall and Werribee smell it in the regulatory failures that allow Melbourne's largest landfills to blow the stench of rubbish into their homes. Parents in Sunshine faced it this year when funding dedicated to long-awaited upgrades at Sunshine College were spent on removing asbestos. They lost facilities because of this. Doctors and nurses in Footscray know it when they have to treat emergency patients in hospital corridors because their rooms are no longer fit for purpose. At the end of the day commuters heading west sit idle in traffic congestion on the West Gate Bridge because trains are too infrequent and bus stops do not connect.

The opposition have tabled a motion that levels serious accusations at the Andrews Labor government on the decisions and actions they have gotten wrong in their first term of government, when what the motion fails to recognise, as the members of my electorate know well, is that irrespective of who is in government this is politics as usual. Under a coalition state government outcomes for the west are likely to be even worse. Infrastructure spending will still be prioritised for marginal seats, political pointscoring will still win over sound policy and every year the west will get left a little further behind. The reality is that to reverse decades of neglect the vision of government needs to be focused on long-term, recurrent, dedicated funding based on the real and growing needs of my community. For the west what this requires is more than politics as usual.

To understand the full story of neglect in the west, let me start with population growth. The west is currently home to 20 per cent of Melbourne's population, and it is where Melbourne's population growth will accelerate greatest and fastest. In fact Regional Development Australia predicted we will get 40 per cent of Melbourne's population growth over the next 40 years. LeadWest, the regional collaborative partnership between councils and industries, told us that the estimated growth will be more in the order of 30 000 to 50 000 new residents per year for the region. We know

the City of Wyndham has officially outgrown the City of Greater Geelong.

So what does this population need? Sure, it needs houses, but in some ways that is the easy part. The west needs social infrastructure. This means community centres, libraries, sport and recreation facilities, parks and open space, aged-care facilities and all kinds of emergency services — the stuff that keeps communities strong, safe and healthy.

This week, and every week, 250 babies will be born in Melbourne's west. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office report *Effective Planning for Population Growth* from August 2017 says that for every 10 000 residents you need a new primary school. So to keep up with those population figures in the next 15 years the western suburbs of Melbourne will need dozens of new primary schools, council community centres accommodating childcare and youth services, public parks, buildings for social housing and at least one or two new hospitals. That is in the next 15 years.

The updated *One Melbourne or Two?* report from the interface councils estimates that the existing infrastructure gap for all growing suburbs across Melbourne is at \$11 billion. How many unmet projects does this represent for my constituents alone?

In the time that the Labor government has had to govern, what has the Andrews government achieved? In this year's budget papers the Andrews government assigned \$650 million to public transport. This money is plugging holes in a heavily leaking dam supporting maintenance, planning and long-overdue upgrades. A report from the West of Melbourne Economic Development Alliance tells us that 92 000 commuters living in the western metropolitan area head into the city every day. Where is the spend on public transport services that service local commuters, such as the long-overdue electrification of the Melton line, whilst there is a projected increase of over 100 000 residents in Melton in the next five years?

Let us talk about health services for a moment — health services for a population that suffers from the highest levels of diabetes, obesity and chronic health issues in the state. Western Health estimates that its service catchment will increase from 800 000 to 1.2 million people by 2026, yet the Andrews state government cannot even outline where the Footscray Hospital rebuild will occur, though the planning for this is well overdue.

Residents advocating for a new Melton hospital are gathering on the steps of Parliament today for a

postcard drop. Apparently Minister Jill Hennessy will not even meet them there. The council and the Build Melton Hospital campaign group heard Cesar Melhem say 14 Labor MPs have advocated for this much-needed urban infrastructure, but who are they advocating to when they are the government? Is this the best that we can get? If so, then what?

I am worried. I am worried that the funding meant for the west has been pork-barrelled into bellwether seats for the state election. I am worried that the Footscray Hospital rebuild will fall well short of what is necessary for the extra 400 000 people coming into the Western Health catchment over the next 10 years. I am worried the Andrews government will squander this opportunity to build a world-class facility with specialist hospital services for our community's complex needs. I am worried that they will be blind to the huge opportunity this represents to create a teaching hospital for the west, directly linked into our local universities and allied health services, like the Monash and Alfred hospitals.

The west also needs jobs. Report after report reinforces that, with all that population growth, job creation just is not keeping up. The state government wants to hand over billions to Transurban to build the West Gate toll road — the opaque non-solution to the west's transport challenges. It is an expensive mistake we cannot afford to make. It takes trucks off some roads while adding them to others without actually solving congestion — and tolling us for the privilege. Meanwhile the state Labor government tells us the project represents 6000 construction jobs, but recent reports suggest that while there were approximately 413 200 working residents in the west there were only 307 500 jobs. Another report warns that 100 000 more people will be commuting out of Melbourne's west by 2030 above the number of jobs available now.

The National Institute of Economic and Industry Research called for investment in the western metro region to create 48 000 jobs in education and health. They warn that policymakers need to peg employment to the rapidly increasing population. In this context 6000 jobs for a pointless West Gate toll road barely plugs a hole in the dam. If the state government does not provide strong, long-term planning to reverse longstanding neglect, the future of our communities is one of greater unemployment and greater social disadvantage, and communities are already fighting to keep their heads above water.

In the west we are playing catch-up following decades of neglect. Our services are stretched — some are at breaking point — while our population booms. What the west needed from this government was for its

growth to be matched with public investment. The vision the Greens have for the west rejects the politics-as-usual approach. In this age of accelerated climate change the west could be the renewables-powered electric motor of a new clean, green economy, one that gives us a fighting chance of reversing the disadvantage and staggering health problems that have gripped our communities. It concerns me that our communities remain wanting because this government cannot bring itself to join the dots on the pressures of growth and the worsening disadvantage in our region.

We want secure local jobs that help us build sustainable communities that are good for our environment and allow us time to enjoy being with our family and friends. We want our native vegetation and natural habitats restored and celebrated for their preciousness and biodiversity. We want people-friendly infrastructure that builds connectivity and makes it a pleasure rather than a curse to move around our great city. So in response to the coalition's motion and to any future state government, we have four propositions about how you can demonstrate to my constituents living in the west that you are willing to work beyond politics as usual. These would get the communities in Western Metropolitan Region to be on par with Melbourne's average. Surely that is not asking too much.

In relation to the West Footscray fires, the community survey my office conducted almost immediately after the fire shows that 60 per cent of respondents reported symptoms, from sore throats, headaches and dizziness to children with week-long blood noses. Signs warning residents about Stony Creek are still being put up, and I wonder how long toxic run-off such as BTEX — benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene — PFAS and other fire combustion by-products will remain in this waterway. We want the minister to commit to collate all health data, monitor the health impacts of the fire over the long term and map the long-term impacts of the toxic run-off from Stony Creek on our local ecosystems.

In relation to waste, my constituents tell me all the time about the health and safety impacts of living near the Werribee and Ravenhall tips. The tip expansions also damage our groundwater and air quality. Not only does the Labor government need to stop the expansion of these tips; we Greens believe that our approach to waste management needs to be transformed. We need to find ways to create a zero-waste Victoria. Take food waste — over a third of what we put in our wheelie bins is food waste, and if you look across all our waste streams, we are talking about 40 per cent that is food.

We Greens believe Victoria needs to get smart and collect this for composting instead of throwing it into landfill, and this is why we have charted a road map for Victoria to get to the circular economy we need to get to. This is why we are calling on Victorians without the option to recycle food to join us, get a sticker for their bin and support our compost landfill plan.

In terms of transport, throughout 2018 we Greens have argued that the Labor government needs to stop the West Gate toll road. People from the outer west will save just 3 minutes if they take the West Gate tunnel, and that is if they pay a toll. And that is after sitting through five years of roadworks. It is time we get smart on how we move hundreds of people and hundreds of new residents in the west. One person per car commuting large distances just does not work; we need to concentrate on moving people and not cars. This is why we have developed a transport master plan that builds a port rail shuttle, gets the worst truck polluters off our roads, expands and increases trains and bus services, replaces V/Line services with Metro services in the outer west, plans for the second Metro Tunnel and funds feasibility studies for more light rail passenger routes through the west. This will transform the capacity for those of us commuting between the outer west and Melbourne and change the way we live.

Finally, we live in unprecedented times in which certain politicians do not even flinch when considering whether they will use racism to extract a political advantage. As a migrant, as the daughter of Vietnamese boat people, the divisive targeting of our First Nations people, of migrants and of people seeking asylum both troubles and sickens me. I am tired of representatives who look at power and the formation of government as more important than the damage they cause not only to marginal communities but also to the social and political fabric they swear to protect. We Greens reject this view. We recognise that Victorians need to join together with people from all walks of life to fight for a future together. The Victorian Greens believe we deserve from Parliament representatives who will demonstrate that our diversity is our strength.

I am really, really pleased to be standing here and speaking against this motion, as I believe that we need to work a lot harder on focusing on long-term planning using evidence to back the things that we need for our communities and our electorates, rather than using parliamentary time to take a whack at our political opponents.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture)
(10:27) — I might pick up where Ms Truong just left off. I think this is great evidence of the intellectual

bankruptcy of the Liberal Party. I just checked the app on my phone — I reckon everyone has got one of these, don't they? — and it is 42 days until caretaker mode and 66 days until the election. Maybe some people do not need an app on their phone; they can just remember this and calculate it instantly.

Today represents the last opposition business day, and it is an opportunity for the alternative government to talk about anything that they would like to talk about — their positive plans for Victoria's future, perhaps some reflection on their philosophy, some reflection on what their priorities would be, maybe even some self-congratulatory pat on the back about some of the election commitments they have announced. What we have instead is a list of 17 things that just equate to the Liberal-National party's favourite talking points. Time does not allow me to provide a thorough critique of all of them, so I have picked out about four that I would just like to speak on. I am sure other members will take the opportunity to flesh out some of the others. Point 4 is:

rising electricity prices due to Labor's forced closure of Hazelwood power station ...

This motion is prefaced on a lie. Number 14 is:

an ice injecting room ...

which is another lie. We are here 66 days before an election and with all day to rabbit on about whatever it is they want to talk about. The best the opposition can do is come in with a 17-point list of things which they all want to carry on about and in which there are discernible lies to be found.

I would also like to draw attention to number 7 — the alleged betrayal of 60 000 Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers and their communities. Again, this is just a complete mistruth. Our fire services do need reform. The maps that delineate between our metropolitan fire service and our CFA represent a picture of what Melbourne looked like in the 1950s. They were good boundaries then, but they are not anymore. Similarly the motion talks about population, yet the opposition's approach to the reform, or lack thereof, in our fire services is completely absent of any practical consideration of where Victoria's current population dispersal is.

Point 13 suggests farmers and regional communities are being ignored and that there are funding cuts for local country roads. Again, nothing could be further from the truth. This language that Ms Wooldridge has chosen to use is just completely dishonest. I will just talk a little bit about the approach that we have taken to farmers

and regional communities and just remind members opposite about exactly who does the ignoring, exactly who does the neglect and exactly who when in government forces on our country communities cuts and closures every single time they have the opportunity, compared to our significant investment and support for our farmers and for our regional communities.

Let us talk about the farmers first up. The government that the coalition last formed — the Baillieu-Napthine-Ryan government — oversaw dramatic cuts to frontline biosecurity services. They claim to be for the farmers, they claim to care about exports and they claim to care about our \$13 billion agricultural industry. When they were in government and they had their so-called sustainable government initiative, which was beautiful Orwellian language for ‘We’re going to sack a whole bunch of the public servants who support our communities’, they had little department-by-department lists of which frontline services would be exempt.

The department that comprised environment, water and agriculture under the former government was one that really stood out in any analysis of the sustainable government initiative, and the agriculture portfolio was, really, the one area where no-one was declared as being frontline service delivery. I have gotten to know lots of our Agriculture Victoria staff over the last four years, and I cannot think of much that is much more frontline than the work that these people do. They are very close to being first responders in emergency management, they interact with the public on a daily basis — in fact on an hourly basis — and they provide emergency response, practical support, advice and testing. The list is long, and it is frontline work by any measure. The cuts to core biosecurity services were so dramatic that we have had to invest many, many millions of dollars to rebuild capacity after what was done by the National Party when they were in government.

Contrast that with the approach that we have taken. We have invested in our agriculture sector with a \$200 million Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund. We have also led the biggest reform in agriculture since the last time a Labor government led the biggest reform in agriculture, with the electronic tagging of our sheep and goats. When The Nationals put up the white flag on fruit fly we said, ‘No, that’s not a good idea’. We rolled that back, and we have been supporting our communities to better respond to fruit fly rather than just say, ‘Sorry, folks. That was all just a bit hard, so we’re not going to do that anymore’. The Agriculture Infrastructure and Jobs Fund is driving significant change in terms of agricultural technology.

There is a long list of infrastructure projects, from the Macalister irrigation district in Gippsland to the Doppler radar in the Wimmera to country roads projects like the regional first and last mile project, and the list goes on. There is a \$30 million agriculture investment plan to help our farmers better manage their energy consumption, generation and obviously, therefore, their costs. On country roads, in addition to the regional first and last mile project for agricultural roads that has now had its second successful round delivered to support all commodity groups in all regions — and these are council roads, I might add — there was close to \$1 billion in the last state budget for country roads. The idea that there are cuts or that communities are being ignored is just the stupidest assertion ever, and I would suggest that the author of this motion probably does not know anything much about regional Victoria at all.

On regional communities, can I just say that the idea that regional communities are being ignored is just laughable. I will just take one set of numbers to illustrate my point here. The four budgets that our government has delivered have provided \$13.6 billion to our regional Victorian communities in services and infrastructure.

We have got all sorts of exciting projects in Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, and we have got all sorts of exciting projects in communities everywhere else in the state. I announced one this morning for Camperdown. I talked to the regional community leadership participants yesterday about one in Rupanyup. Mr Gepp and I are going to be in Mildura next week talking about projects in Mildura, and of course what about Shepparton? Why don’t we talk about Shepparton? Why don’t we talk about how utterly useless the coalition have been in delivering for Shepparton since time began, basically, and how suddenly that is different now that there is some decent local representation.

I was talking about \$13.6 billion. What was the total investment by government in the previous four budgets? It was \$7.2 billion. We never set out to double investment in regional Victoria, in schools, in hospitals, in local roads to markets and in hundreds and hundreds of community projects, but \$13.6 billion is quite a lot more than \$7.2 billion. Even if you jiggle that 7.2 up a bit with some generous indexation, you cannot get it within a bull’s roar of 13.6, because the fact is the Nats roll over and get their tummies tickled by the Liberals every time they are in government, and they never deliver for rural communities. They never deliver for regional Victoria, and we know the Libs just do not care.

Ms Bath — You're edging up to the Greens.

Ms PULFORD — Ms Bath talks about the Greens. Ms Bath votes with the Greens in here a fair bit more often than I do. Ms Bath was cosyng up to the Greens in that debate yesterday. We know how much you love the Greens — you love 'em, you love 'em, you love 'em!

Ms Bath interjected.

Ms PULFORD — Back to what I was saying, The Nationals — there is a bit of carry-on over there because they are hypersensitive, and they should be. The Kennett and McNamara government was a devastating experience for regional Victoria. When I think back about where we were this time four years ago, what were people talking about in rural Victoria? They were talking about how the TAFE campuses were closing. They were talking about how the ambulance response times were putting people at grave risk. What have we got now? We have got TAFE campuses opening, we have got new courses, we have got an amazing restoration and recovery, almost phoenix-like, of our TAFE system in Victoria. How about ambulance response times? It turns out they have never been better. I live in a regional city, but if I lived in a rural community — and I grew up in a much smaller community in regional Victoria — I sure as hell would not be voting for The Nationals because no good can ever come from that for our regional communities and for our rural communities.

Then, if I could come to point (17) — and this is a ripper, this is — 'no plan to manage Victoria's population'. That would be apart from the decentralisation of public sector jobs. That would be apart from record investment in just about anything you can think of, including close to doubling government investment in our regions. The Liberals are running around Melbourne telling everyone in Melbourne they are going to move the traffic jams to regional Victoria, and they are quiet as a mouse in regional Victoria about what they are going to do because we know that they never actually care what the local communities think. They do not. They have got a really paternalistic style and a really paternalistic view. They will just tell regional communities and tell rural communities what is best for them.

Our approach could not be more different. We have developed and delivered this year a remarkable reform of extraordinary depth in terms of community engagement. It is creating real results for regional Victorian communities through the regional partnerships model. You can look at the Wimmera

region and the pilot project currently underway for the local community to completely redesign how early years services are delivered for them. You can look at the preventative health work that the Loddon Campaspe region is doing. Giving schoolkids — primary, secondary and even university students — a better understanding of and engagement with our ag sector in Gippsland. The Shipwreck Coast master plan has finally been funded after having been talked about since forever. Our regional partnerships and the way that the government is responding to much deeper community engagement than we have ever had before is delivering extraordinary results for our rural Victorian communities.

We will be putting to the Victorian community lots of plans about how we want to continue the momentum, how we want to protect them from cuts, closures and big corporations. This motion tells me that the people opposite are not fit to form a decent opposition, let alone to form a government. Frankly, on your last day of general business, you probably should have done better.

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (10:42) — It gives me a lot of pleasure to rise this morning to speak on this motion. It is a very good motion that has been raised, and there are 17 points in it in relation to the failures of the government. I think it could have been 117, actually. I picked out 17, and I agree with some of them, but there are a whole lot more that I would have added to it. I am also interested to follow the Minister for Agriculture in relation to her selective use of information. What I found really disappointing about the Minister for Agriculture's contribution was that she did not even mention one of the most significant things that is going on in the whole of regional Victoria at the moment, and that is significant drought, particularly down in East Gippsland. The minister was down there, and she told the people — told the farmers and told the communities — that they have only been in drought for three weeks. On ABC radio she told them, 'You've only been in drought for three weeks'. That is an absolute disgrace and a slap in the face to those communities and to those people who are doing it really tough in the drought conditions that they have been experiencing.

The minister came in here this morning and gave a ministers statement, and I thought, 'Great! The minister is going to say something about drought, she's going to say something about the damage that's been done to the strawberry farmers here in Victoria'. No. What did the minister speak about? Dog and cat foster care. Oh, my God, that shows you the priorities of this agriculture minister and it shows you the priorities of this

government. Instead of talking about the real issues in regional Victoria that you would expect from the agriculture minister, we are talking about dog and cat foster care.

That takes me right back to where I wanted to actually start my contribution. This is the most city-centric government we have ever seen in this state. We have got the most city-centric Premier that we have ever seen in this state, and everything we see from this government is really based on what happens to some of those seats in Melbourne that they are trying to throw money at to try to buy their way back into a second term of office, and I am pretty sure that that will not be the case.

This government is about creating winners and creating losers. Everything that they do creates winners in relation to a payback for a favour or a deal that they have done somewhere along the line, and as a result of that it creates losers on the other side of the ledger in terms of people who have to pick up the pieces and pay for those deals that the government has done, and I will certainly get to some of those. But one of the most critical elements a state government is required to do on behalf of its constituency is to keep them safe, and it should not be too much to ask that people can go about their daily lives, can go about their daily business, can go home to their homes at night-time and feel safe. Unfortunately that is not the case under this government. Never before have people felt so unsafe to live in this state, and it is an absolute disgrace.

I am not going to go into all of the crime numbers, but I will have a look at just a few of them. Since this government came into office homicide-related offences have gone up by 40 per cent, sexual assaults have gone up by 45 per cent, robberies have gone up by 65 per cent, motor vehicle thefts have gone up by 11 per cent, which was one of the other ones, and you compare that to some of the other states and we are well above most of the other states. So people are more unsafe in this community than they have ever been before, because this government is soft on crime. It is very soft on crime.

Many people experience theft and offences against them on a daily basis, and just this week I had the same experience myself. My flat was broken into on Sunday night and my pushbike was stolen. Not that that is going to bother me, but it is just another example of how people break into places all the time and they steal things and they get away with it, because they know this government is not going to treat it seriously in terms of trying to prosecute them. I feel for the police. I rang up the police because I thought, 'I'd better report it

because it needs to be part of the statistics'. I knew the police could not do much about it, because they are very busy trying to do a whole range of other things and there are not enough police. They are doing everything that they can, but there are not enough resources for the police and there are not enough of them. They are fighting a daily battle to try to keep their heads above water. I do feel for the police force here in Victoria, because they are not getting the support that they need from the government in terms of doing what they need to do to try to keep people safe in this state.

We have heard stories — and Mr Morris mentioned one earlier — that tell us this is not just a Melbourne phenomenon. It is actually starting to occur right around country Victoria as well, as people feel that they can go and commit crimes and get away with it in this day and age. That is an absolute disgrace. We need to have much tougher measures in relation to people who commit crimes, and we must have much more regard for the victims of crime in terms of the impact that it has on them. When we come into government in just 66 days, one of the first things we will do is beef up a whole range of laws in relation to prosecuting people and making people feel safe in their own homes. That should be one of the first things that happens.

Another thing where this government has absolutely been the worst that this state has ever seen is in relation to corruption. We have seen it time and time and time again. I cannot list them all but I will mention some. The red shirts brigade. We have seen what happened there, where taxpayers money was used by the Labor Party to pay staff that were employed by the Parliament to campaign directly on behalf of the Labor Party.

Ms Pulford — I reckon you shouldn't talk about this, because if you do, we will talk about what Steph Ryan is up to.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — It is interesting that the Minister for Agriculture is here. Your two staff accompanied the Labor candidate to the police station. We have got Minister Mikakos here; she was signing blank forms in advance. How many — hundreds and hundreds of them? I do not know how many. I am sure she does not know how many there were either. She was just signing blank forms for casual staff to work on behalf of the Labor Party.

Ms Bath — Taxpayers money — \$388 million.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — And we had 19 Labor people arrested — 19 arrested so far — and I suspect that there are going to be a few more knocks on the door early in the morning from the police talking to some other

people from the Labor Party in relation to those crimes that were committed.

In terms of some of the other things, you could talk about the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker in the other place rorting their second home allowance. That certainly happened. You could talk about the minister who had the dogs in the ministerial car. I wonder if he was off to the foster program that the minister was talking about this morning with Ted and Patch. And there have been a whole range of printing rorts and so forth that have occurred on the other side of the chamber. Unfortunately people in Victoria expect it from the Labor Party nowadays; they absolutely expect it.

I am going to move on next to one of the ones that is very dear to my heart and very dear to people who live in regional Victoria, and that is the Country Fire Authority (CFA). I have not got enough time to go through it in a lot of detail, but what we have seen from this government is a blatant attempt to smash up the CFA and break it up. Why did they do that? It is because they did a deal with Peter Marshall before the last election, where he demanded much more power over Victoria's fire services. In return he had his firefighters out campaigning directly on behalf of the Labor Party in those marginal seats.

We know that what Peter Marshall wanted was veto rights over just about every aspect of the CFA, and what did we see as a result of that? Anyone from the Labor Party or anyone in the fire services who put up their hand and said, 'Sorry, Premier, I disagree with what you are trying to do here' — do you know what happened to them? They got sacked. Whether it was the former Minister for Emergency Services that got sacked, whether it was the leaders of the CFA or the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) or whether it was board members of the CFA or the MFB, it did not matter. If they disagreed with this government, they got sacked.

Thankfully this side of politics — those on this side of the chamber — was able to make sure that that bill did not go through, and the CFA has been saved for now, although I suspect it is going to be very high on the list in relation to Mr Marshall. He will want his pound of flesh because he has already said he will have more to say about that before the election. We will have a royal commission into the fire services here in Victoria, which will give us a better indication of exactly what is really going on so we can have those issues dealt with in a manner that they need to be dealt with in.

The cost of living is out of control in this state, whether it is electricity, gas, water or taxes. As we know, Daniel Andrews promised there would be no new taxes under a government that he led. We know that that was a lie.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Mr Finn, you will be very interested to hear this. The Treasurer was out doing a doorstep this morning, and he made a comment that was reported by one of the media representatives there. The tweet said:

Treasurer @timpallas says it would be irresponsible to promise no tax increases or new taxes.

So very clearly —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — At least he is not going to lie about it this time. At least he is actually telling the truth. It is not very often that the Treasurer tells the truth, but on this occasion he is telling the truth. If this government is re-elected, it will put taxes up again all over the place. There will be new taxes and taxes that will go up, which will hurt people who are trying to pay their bills. We know that there have been 12 new taxes from this government when they promised none.

I want to touch on electricity. The government closed down the Hazelwood power station, which provided 22 per cent of baseload power. Why did they do that? They wanted to do it by stealth. It was their policy in 2010. They put a \$252 million coal tax on the industry, and it got to the point where the company that was running Hazelwood could not afford to run it anymore so they closed it down. As a result of that, electricity prices have doubled under this government, and we see no signs of electricity prices coming down at all. That is an absolute disgrace. We are having to import power from other states just to keep the lights on, and that is not good enough.

In relation to electricity, if this side of politics cannot form government at the next election there is no doubt there will be a coalition between the Labor Party and the Greens. The Leader of the Greens asked a question yesterday, talking about how they want to shut down every coal-powered station here in Victoria. That will be their demand if they are asked to join a coalition government with the Labor Party, with Dr Ratnam as the Deputy Premier of the state. She made it very clear yesterday that her demand will be that we close down every coal-powered station in Victoria, which will drive costs up and make energy very, very scarce indeed in this state, and that is going to be a problem.

I will move on to other things very quickly. Next is roads in country Victoria. The government closed down the country roads and bridges program. I was speaking to some regional councillors on Monday night of this week, and they were saying how that has desperately hurt them in terms of maintaining their roads. Country roads are an absolute disgrace, and this government has underfunded them. When they did have a program for country bridges, do you know where they put a third of the bridges? They put about a third of the money from the country bridges program into the seat of Mulgrave. Mr Finn, do you know whose seat the seat of Mulgrave is?

Mr Finn — It might be the despot's.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — It is the Premier's seat. A third of the country bridges budget went into the Premier's seat of Mulgrave, which is about 11 kilometres from where I am standing right now in the heart of this city of Melbourne.

The east-west link is the one that galls people more than anything else, with a cost of \$1.3 billion not to build a road — \$1.3 billion! Imagine what that could do if you were to put that money into country roads. We would have freeways everywhere, but unfortunately this government decided that they did not want to go ahead with that piece of infrastructure that Melbourne desperately needs with its congestion. They spent \$1.3 billion not to build a road.

I will quickly move on to the next one. This government has just given a gift of some \$250 million to the AFL, one of the richest sporting organisations in the country. What did they offer to country sporting organisations? They can get a low-interest loan from the government and pay it back. Yet they give the richest sporting organisation \$250 million, and apparently that was a deal that the Premier did directly himself. I understand that the original deal was only meant to be about \$150 million, but the Premier decided that he wanted to give them \$250 million. That is a pretty generous dinner that the Premier had on that occasion.

I have only got 44 seconds to go, so I am going to have to skip through a bit, but one I really want to touch on is council rates. This government has got a policy of rate capping, but we heard from the Victorian Farmers Federation just yesterday morning that rates for farmers have gone up in some instances by 30 per cent. I was talking to a farmer at the Speed field day whose rate bill is \$70 000, and he does not even get his rubbish collected. It is absolutely out of control.

I was going to talk about the port of Melbourne and how this government promised 10 per cent of the proceeds from the lease of the port of Melbourne to regional Victoria, but that went back to Melbourne unfortunately. This is a government that does not deserve to be re-elected, and I wish I had more time to go into the rest of it because there is plenty more to go.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:57) — I rise to speak on this motion. Again it is a very politicised motion from the opposition. It does very little to advance any cause on behalf of Victorians or any particular electorate or constituency represented by the opposition or indeed by anyone in this chamber.

I had not initially intended to speak to this motion, but some of the contributions, particularly one made by Ms Wooldridge the last time this motion was being contemplated in the house, caught my attention. It was her assertion that the government is trying to close down the timber industry. I really thought that that probably warranted some commentary from me because, given the moves that we have seen by the government, I would not have thought that there was in fact any intention of closing down the timber industry, particularly when you look at the preferential treatment given to Australian Paper through the continued wood pulp agreement, the use of taxpayers money in the order of \$61 million to purchase the Heyfield mill and the continued overlogging of our native forests.

I would like to note that this government has failed the people of the Central Highlands and East Gippsland through its stalling, distraction and obfuscation around the matter of ending native forest logging and creating the great forest national park.

We have an industry in terminal decline. Earlier this week Bunnings and Officeworks both announced that by 2020 they would not take timber or paper products that were not FSC-certified. I congratulate them on that move because clearly consumers are very concerned about the products they buy and want to see appropriate industry certification so they can purchase with some surety around the social licence attached to those products. However, on reflection, which Victorian logging company was it that recently failed to get FSC certification for the third time? It was VicForests, the government logging enterprise.

This government has done everything it can to prop up the native forest logging industry. It even nationalised a timber mill, wasting over \$60 million in taxpayers money to create itself a vertically integrated logging and timber enterprise that will soon not be able to send

a single product to the largest commercial products retailer and the largest hardware retailer in the state.

This government has failed to transition the timber and paper industries to 100 per cent sustainable supply. It has failed to spend a cent of its \$110 million allocated for plantations in Gippsland. It has failed to protect the greater glider, the Leadbeater's possum and the 77 other forest-dependent species in our state. It has failed to show the way for ecotourism entrepreneurs in the Central Highlands and East Gippsland who want to create jobs and attract investment.

I am now going to turn to my electorate of Eastern Metropolitan Region. This government has failed to heed the lesson of the 2014 election, and that was this: do not build more toll roads; instead build train lines and public transport. There is an entire local government area, Manningham, which has the indignity of being the only metropolitan local government area without a train or tram service. This government has failed to build or even plan for Doncaster rail. Instead it has promised a giant toll road that will only worsen congestion in the east. It will take up the median of the Eastern Freeway, which was reserved for decades for a future Doncaster rail. To seal it up with bitumen and use it for another lane of congested traffic is exceptionally short-sighted.

The Andrews government has failed to provide a single improved bus service in the east. The Doncaster area rapid transit system continues with its substandard and poorly maintained services, its insufficient frequency and its inadequate bus priority infrastructure. I cannot tell you, Acting President, how many constituents come to me complaining about the services in Manningham and how frustrated they are that, should a bus arrive at all, there is no space for them to get on, so it simply bypasses them, making a mockery of the public transport system in that region. Local bus services are important in servicing areas such as local shopping and activity centres, but they remain low frequency. Many only operate on weekdays, as if people do not need to get anywhere on the weekend.

The Greens of course have a different vision for our state. Our vision is one that looks at fast and frequent public transport that gets you where you want to go when you want to get there. We would not sell off state assets. We would restore integrity to the Parliament. It is the Greens who will protect our environment, and it is the Greens who really care about providing housing for all.

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (11:03) — I am very pleased to rise this morning to speak on Ms Wooldridge's motion. It is interesting to hear others on the other side of the house say that we are taking up valuable time by speaking on this motion. I would say to them that one of the most important roles of any Parliament and any MP's life is to actually hold the government to account and have transparency around government-made legislation and decisions, so debating this motion is a very important part of democracy.

In my time in this place we have had bipartisan support for various pieces of legislation and policy, but there is a long list — and this motion does have 17 points — of woeful and inadequate mismanagement, bullying behaviour and, quite frankly, disrespect for the citizens of this state and in many, many circumstances of rural and regional Victoria, who are the people of my particular interest.

What Daniel Andrews deals in is a currency of bullying, of intimidation and, quite frankly, of mistruths, if we can put it in that context. There is an arrogance here that I find astounding. Words are shoved down our throats and we are told to chew it up and enjoy it when this government time and time again disrespects our community.

If there was real communication, if there was real consultation, we would have seen an incredible amount of detail and collaborative effort between the government and Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers, but we have not seen that. Let me just reflect on some of the needs of our CFA. Back in 2015 there was a review — indeed it was a review commissioned by this government — into our fire services. Lucinda Nolan said in that review that there was a need for change, and there were a number of recommendations. But what the government did, in cahoots with the United Firefighters Union, was use a very blunt instrument to bludgeon the volunteers into submission. Now, no-one is ever going to deny our career servicemen and women the appropriate level of pay and conditions. That is a given. But what this enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) was looking to do at the time was disadvantage, discriminate and disrespect our 60 000 volunteers who give their time in their communities, week after week and in the middle of the night. They did not consult.

The other thing that I find quite appalling is that in many respects the government continually disrespects and talks down to Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, which is a body that represents up to 90 or 95 per cent of our brigades in country Victoria, and I find that to be quite abusive.

What has happened in terms of the collateral damage in this particular situation? My colleague Mr O'Sullivan rightly pointed out that anyone who stood up to the government in terms of this issue became collateral damage. The Honourable Jane Garrett, the former Minister for Emergency Services, became collateral damage. Lucinda Nolan lost her job as chief executive officer of the CFA. The CFA's chief fire officer, Joe Buffone, a man of many years of experience and expertise, could not stomach the fact that in going through with an EBA he would have to go against his statutory obligations and go against the CFA charter. He went. They sacked the CFA board and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade board. It is a clear indication that a government is doing something wrong when the only way they can muscle something through is by sacking those who stand up against them.

Then we saw two bills shackled together; the bill to split the CFA with Fire Rescue Victoria, again without consultation with our grassroots people. We hear that a lot. It would be great if the government actually went out and consulted prior to the formation of legislation. There is such a lot of detail to go into which has been dealt with before, but what I also want to talk about is the fact that the bills were shackled together and the government really tried to hold us over a barrel when we decided that it was not in the best interests of country Victoria to do that to the CFA. The government could have split the CFA. We put up a motion in the lower house to split it, but it was rejected. When the bill was rejected by this house we, true to our word, put up a bill to push through presumptive legislation that was fair for all — for volunteers and for career firefighters. But what did the government do? It shut it down. This is how sincere they are about our rural and regional fire services.

We have talked a lot about rising power prices. Mr Brumby, back in 2010 came out with this in relation to his policy:

... as part of that I have outlined the government's plan for the staged closure of the Hazelwood power station.

What we have seen is this government's agenda being railroaded through. They tripled the coal royalties tax to \$252 million. Engie was faced with the burden of a huge tax bill, so it closed. But it could not negotiate with the government; the government did not want to say, 'Let's look at that phased closure'. We lost 22 per cent of our dispatchable baseload power, and that is well documented.

That caused pain in the Latrobe Valley and the wider areas, with the loss of 750 jobs and reverberations through the engineering service industries. The local

fish and chip and hamburger shop in Shakespeare Street in Traralgon had an approximately 50 per cent increase in their power cost directly because of that. On top of that they lost custom because they no longer had people coming in to buy hamburgers and the like. The government said that there would only be a small increase — an extra 4 per cent, or 85 cents per week — yet we have seen huge increases across the state. In fact a St Vincent de Paul report talks about Victorians now paying upwards of \$300 more for their electricity and \$500 more for their gas each year.

Indeed a little while ago I had a conversation with a postie on the phone. He had been a postie in the Latrobe Valley area for a long time. He said, 'I hate going into certain areas and delivering post because I know there are renters there who will receive their electricity bills and they are not going to be able to pay them or are going to struggle phenomenally to pay those bills'. So there is also the emotional impact of this. It is okay to say we want renewables and they are going to come on board. That is great, but there has been a total lack of planning in this. It is about kicking the bucket and letting people fall over.

We saw 105 diesel generators go into the Latrobe Valley last summer season to sandbag the state against brownouts, blackouts and the like. It cost roughly \$51 million to sandbag the state so we had a measure of supply. We are living in Australia in the 21st century and we are having to do this sort of sandbagging. There is also the impact of load shedding on our industries and our rural communities: 'No, sorry, we'll pay you not to run today. We'll pay you to make a loss'. This is not a progressive form of government for the economy.

If we look at some other examples, one key one that astounds me is that in Morwell we have Kiel Industries, which is a great family business. They make custom mouldings. They employ 25 local people and they put millions of dollars in wages into the town and its surrounds. Their electricity bill has gone up 150 per cent and their gas bill has gone up 300 per cent. They are taking that at the minute, but they ask, 'How long can we sustain that and keep those 25 employees?'.

David Jochinke at yesterday's Victorian Farmers Federation breakfast said that for farmers to continue doing their job of growing fibre and food for Victoria, Australia and the world, we need decent roads, we need energy security, we need proper infrastructure and a fair rate system.

We have heard a lot today about the road system as well and the lack of proper investment in our country roads and bridges. The government withdrew

\$160 million worth of funding that we had put in place. They stopped that going to each of the rural and regional councils to provide good support for our regional roads and our bridges that take on-farm product and deliver it to market. When speaking to our rate capping inquiry, across the board — Baw Baw, Wellington, South Gippsland and East Gippsland — council CEOs spoke about how important that is, and they said that they would not cope well with the lack of that funding.

We have also heard about the Stronger Country Bridges program. I did the maths a little while ago and there are approximately 700 local bridges in my area of Gippsland. One bridge near Tyers, I think, was replaced under the Stronger Country Bridges program. This is a joke. This is a media release and photo opportunity without substance, and it is appalling.

The other thing I found interesting was when Ms Pulford came up to speak, and she spoke passionately as she does, about country communities. What she failed to speak about were the country communities that are affected by the government's policies around timber. These communities have been there for a long time. They are amazingly resilient and supportive communities, but they are in a very fragile state at the moment, not knowing whether or not there will be any timber allocation. The timber release plan is six months overdue. A newspaper report a couple of weeks ago says:

The *Herald Sun* can reveal cabinet will consider a controversial and detailed transition package that would end the state's —

native timber —

industry by 2029.

And taxpayers will be footing the bill for that. What we heard in Minister Pulford's response at question time was a very wishy-washy response in relation to the government's commitment to that industry. They are really not, but they are not saying it.

The other day I had the pleasure of going up to Rawson and spending time with the native timber industry contractors and seeing, standing in the site, the fact that this coupe had a considerable number of seed trees of native habitat trees that were left there. They showed me across the gully on the other side a coupe that had been harvested two years ago and the mass of beautiful green tips of new shoots and new plants coming through, and it was wonderful. We walked down a little bit further and saw a regrowth coupe that was harvested 15 years ago, and the trees were sky high. They were

metres and metres high. They were long and spindly but growing great, and they were capturing carbon and the like.

There is so much more to speak on on this bill, and I know I have drilled into some detail, but the other thing that I would just like to highlight is the fact that we have a government that says it is okay to take the taxpayers money that should be going to electorate office budgets and that should be going to serve our community and that it is okay to sign forms when they do not know who they are for or where they are going and to send them off for the Labor Party's agenda, campaigning on behalf of the Labor Party — not in terms of Victorians, not in terms of serving the needs of Victorians, but for their own agenda. This is the government that we have before us, and we now see that there happen to be a number of people who are being interviewed — knock, knock — by police in terms of fraudulent behaviour. So this is the government that we have before us.

The last interesting comment — and I will take up the point that my colleague Mr O'Sullivan raised — is the fact that today the Treasurer, Mr Tim Pallas, talked about the fact that he would not commit to there being no new taxes. He talked about the need for there to be flexibility to adjust. That means more of the same. Indeed again this is a government that tells mistruths. Let me give you one. In 2014 Daniel Andrews was interviewed by Peter Mitchell, and Peter Mitchell said:

Daniel Andrews, all the polls say you will be Victoria's next Premier. If you are, do you promise Victorians here tonight that you will not increase taxes or introduce any new taxes?

Daniel Andrews said:

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

Well, we have seen that Daniel Andrews has produced not one or two but 12 new taxes. And stay tuned, Victoria, because if Daniel Andrews gets back in and if he has to form government with the Greens on a tight margin, there will be more taxes. Country communities will hurt more. Jobs will go out of the community. It is the role of the opposition to hold this government to account, and I support wholeheartedly the motion.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (11:18) — It has been very interesting to observe the debate on this woeful motion this morning. Those who might have the misfortune of tuning in and watching this online need to be reminded that this is in fact the last sitting week before the state election, and yet it is very clear that those opposite just do not have their heart in it.

What the Victorian people are seeing right across this state is unprecedented works and unprecedented infrastructure under construction. They are seeing new roads being built and roads being upgraded. They are seeing new rail lines being built and our public transport system being upgraded. They are seeing hospitals and schools being built across Victoria. They are seeing kindergartens being expanded across Victoria. They are seeing an awful lot of projects right across the state of Victoria being constructed as a result of a government that puts people first and invests in the services and the infrastructure that the Victorian community needs.

What we are seeing here is an opposition that clearly do not have their heart in it. They know that they are facing a real contest here when they are seeking to make their woeful arguments, criticising a government that has an enormous record of achievement right across every portfolio and right across the state of delivering to the Victorian people. We have got a motion here that talks about policing issues and community safety issues, and I want to touch upon that briefly because what we are seeing from those opposite is that they have fully embraced Donald Trump's strategy of peddling alternative facts in the community, making an awful lot of false assertions and making things up every day. We see it every day in the media. They are just making it up as they go along. They are making up a whole lot of assertions and trying to twist and turn statistics to try and suit their purpose. We have seen them engaging in disgraceful race baiting, trying to vilify particular parts of the community to serve their political purpose. This is exactly out of the Donald Trump playbook. We know that they have gone and embraced Donald Trump's strategy when it comes to law and order.

The fact is that the Andrews Labor government is making the biggest ever investment in law and order in our state's history. We are recruiting and deploying an extra 3135 police. We have got the police academy full, and it will be full for some time to come. What actually happened under the previous coalition government was that there was not a single new police officer actually paid for or budgeted for. During the four budgets of the coalition government there was not a single new police officer that was paid for or budgeted for. In fact every new police officer that came on during their time was budgeted for by the previous Brumby government. Go and have a look at the budget papers, because we know you do not like facts. We are growing the police force by 20 per cent. This means that Victoria Police have the resources that they need to keep our communities safe. We listen to police command and the experts when it comes to the deployment of Victoria Police officers.

What you want to do — what you have done in fact in the last year — is politicise the police. Time and time again you have gone out in the media and had a go at Victoria Police about failing to place charges against young people who might have committed offences in the community. Every time you do that — go out and try to politicise the police force — you are having a go at those people who are working to keep the community safe. You have no interest in supporting Victoria Police; you just want to use them as a political tool.

What we saw during the previous government was in fact cuts. We saw more than \$100 million cut from Victoria Police. You actually sacked 350 support staff, including forensic officers, who are critical to support the frontline staff. Not only did you do that, not only did you make their job harder, but also you did not fund a single additional police officer. We have put in place a record investment that is making a difference when it comes to community safety, because what we have seen in our most recent crime stats is a decrease of 9.5 per cent across Victoria, with some types of crime going down even further. Crime rose every year when the Liberals were last in government. It is only now starting to turn around for the first time in the last six years, in part because of this additional deployment.

We are also addressing the biggest law and order issue in our community: we are supporting Victoria Police and putting in place a broad range of reforms and investment to address family violence. We have got those opposite thinking they can go out there and make small announcements in relation to these issues, ignoring 227 recommendations. In fact they are going out there and putting forward proposals that were considered by the Royal Commission into Family Violence and actually rejected — ideas that were considered and rejected by the royal commission.

The royal commission heard the full breadth of evidence and information from a range of stakeholders and handed down 227 recommendations. As a government we have listened to the experts. We have committed to implementing each of those recommendations, and we are yet to hear, more than two years later, any commitment from the Liberal Party to implement all of those family violence recommendations.

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms MIKAKOS — The family violence sector know, Ms Crozier, that platitudes are not enough. There is \$2.4 billion of investment from our government to address these issues, and all they are hearing from the

Liberal Party are platitudes, mealy-mouthed words around commitments to family violence. You need to put your money where your mouth is; you need to make the same commitment. This should be a bipartisan issue, and it is a disgrace that it actually is not. It is a disgrace that we do not have a bipartisan commitment when it comes to the family violence royal commission.

We are not just putting in place additional police officers to enable them to attend family violence incidents, we are also making sure that victim survivors have the supports that they need when they need them. By providing access to flexible funding, the type of brokerage funding that they need to get their lives back on track — and it might be paying for upgrades to someone's home security or paying for books and clothes for their kids if they have had to flee their home and they are starting again from scratch with nothing — we have put in the investments that are necessary to make sure people have got that broad range of supports.

What we see in this motion are woeful statements around bail and sentencing. Again, we are dealing with a coalition that is peddling alternative facts to the community. They are not interested in the real facts. They are putting about a whole lot of lies. What we are seeing is more young offenders locked up in custody now under our government than was the case under the previous coalition government. That is a direct result of our bail and sentencing reforms, which have led to more young people being remanded in custody and sentenced to a period of detention.

What we saw under the previous government was a master plan to redevelop the Parkville youth justice facility that actually got shelved — it got put in Mary Wooldridge's bottom drawer. They left that facility vulnerable. Then she commissioned some new, so-called 'secure' units at Malmsbury. They were found absolutely wanting — as we know because we have had experts do the reviews — and we have had to put in almost the same amount of investment again to fix them up. They built a gingerbread house, and we had to go in and fix it up.

They also cut youth justice staff — unbelievable! As part of the 600 staff that they cut from the Department of Human Services, they actually also cut youth justice staff, leaving those facilities vulnerable. We have made a record investment — \$1.2 billion — to deliver the transformation that is needed in the youth justice system. I have had to make a lot of changes to how things were done in the youth justice system in Mary Wooldridge's time and to end the woeful practices that Ms Wooldridge allowed for four years. She allowed

them for four years, making no reforms, making no investment, cutting jobs and also restructuring the department to move the entire youth justice system into the north division. It was hidden away so she would have no oversight — no care in the world, no focus, no attention whatsoever — during those four years.

We are a government that is getting on with making the investments that are necessary. We are seeing improvements to emergency department response times and ambulance response times. We are seeing huge investment in building our kindergartens in our schools across the state. What we have got from those opposite is a whole lot of people trying to claim that they are holier than thou, including some of the people sitting in the chamber at the moment who are under police investigation. They come in here and throw mud at members of the government when we have got Mr Ondarchie, Mr Finn, Mr Dalla-Riva, Mrs Peulich — members of the Liberal Party in this house — and a whole lot of others who have been referred to Victoria Police as part of the blue shirts rotting that happened during the last election.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms MIKAKOS — Because I have seen the photos. I have seen photos. There are photos of Liberal Party electorate officers handing out material at early voting centres and at railway stations during the last state election. But of course they made sure that they never referred their own party. They made a deliberate decision never to refer their own party to the Ombudsman for investigation. I think that spoke volumes. It spoke volumes for the fact that they did not want to have themselves examined at all.

But what would you expect from a party that is led by the Four Million Dollar Man — Mr Ventnor himself — the man who was prepared to sit down with the alleged head of the mafia in this state and eat lobster and drink Grange? Then he seemed to forget that he had had this dinner. He seemed to forget how many people were at the dinner. He seemed to forget whether he had drunk wine or not. There were a whole lot of things he had selective amnesia about. He just seemed to forget about all of these matters.

We know that Barrie Macmillan, the consigliere, the Liberal Party bagman, has actually been out in the media. He has been recorded talking about how the whole dinner was set up with the alleged mafia to elicit donations to the Liberal Party. In fact he is quoted as saying that the mafia hated 'the bloody Labor Party'. Well, I wear that as a badge of honour, that the Victorian mafia —

Mr Mulino — You've got another badge, have you?

Ms MIKAKOS — Yes, I have got another badge, Mr Mulino. We know that the mafia said that they hated 'the bloody Labor Party'. Well, I wear that as a badge of honour. I think it speaks volumes that you would have the Liberal Party in this state being prepared to dine with alleged organised crime figures in this state, and then they come in here and talk to us about community safety. What a bunch of hypocrites.

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (11:33) — I am very pleased to be able to rise and speak to this excellent motion, because it goes to the heart of what this government has delivered to Victorians over the past four years. We have just heard from Minister Mikakos herself, who was flailing all over the place then actually in relation to the contribution. There were a lot of extraordinary desperate comments made about —

Mr O'Sullivan — Lies.

Ms CROZIER — Lies certainly. I mean, you can say anything in this place, Mr O'Sullivan, but there seem to be a lot of lies being told on that side of the house constantly, as we have seen from media releases. Let us just run through a few of those things, because Victorians actually in their streets, in their homes and in their businesses have never seen the activity of crime at the level that has occurred in this state as it has over the past four years. The facts are the facts that, despite what the government members might say, the increase in violent crimes against the person is off the Richter scale. You do not see that in other parts of the country. You do not see that in New South Wales, for instance, and you do not see it in other parts of the country to the extent that it has occurred here. And why has it occurred? It is because this government has been totally inept and soft on crime.

We saw it from the moment they got in. They sent this message to young offenders that it was all right to breach bail. Why is it all right to do a crime, then get the privilege of bail and then go out there —

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Ms CROZIER — That has not happened, Minister Mikakos. Ms Mikakos, that was the first thing you did. I will say again, Minister Mikakos, you have led a youth justice system in utter, utter crisis for four years. In terms of the youth justice system, we have seen a system in crisis for four years. I asked a question here in the house yesterday about the number of assaults on youth justice workers. More than one

assault a week, violent assaults, are occurring on youth justice workers. It means that the youth justice system is now the most dangerous workplace in Victoria. What an indictment! What a shocking indictment it is that these workers who go to work every day to do their work —

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Ms CROZIER — You have not protected them at all, Ms Mikakos, and you know it. You are incompetent, and it is shown in the figures that we have seen through the mismanagement. In youth justice we have seen record numbers of riots. Never have riots occurred in the youth justice system where we have seen so much damage and ongoing repairs. Then there were Mr Ondarchie's comments in relation to what this government has done to bribe those young offenders. Again it is sending the wrong message in terms of what they can do, and they know the government is soft on crime.

We have got a shocking system at the moment. Rehabilitation is not even occurring. It is seen as more dangerous than the adult prison system. These are the facts; it is not the rubbish that was spouted by Ms Mikakos just 10 minutes ago. These are the facts. The workers know that and those young offenders in there know that; they are getting assaulted at record levels too. Again, you talk about hiding data. Well, it is interesting just to see the number of police investigations that are occurring in youth justice and the number of category 1s that are placed. That is at record levels because it is a system out of control and in crisis.

We also saw a mass escape from Malmsbury in January last year, a most dreadful situation that was completely out of control because, again, the system was out of control. Those offenders took advantage of a system out of control and ran rampant across the state, putting the lives of dozens of Victorians at risk. What a disgraceful occurrence. It is no wonder that this chamber passed a motion of no confidence in this minister, because her record speaks for itself loudly and clearly. She goes out —

Ms Mikakos — That was a political stunt.

Ms CROZIER — Well, it says something about you, Ms Mikakos, because it is symptomatic of what this government stands for. If you look at it, the government is in complete denial about a range of things, and if I could just move to another area you have led the way in, and that is rorts. We have seen a culture of rorts with this government that is so rotten. It is so rotten.

Ms Mikakos — You refused to have any of your members examined. You refused.

Ms CROZIER — The Ombudsman found that the only party that rorted was the Labor Party.

Ms Mikakos — You refused to send them to the Ombudsman. Why were you hiding?

Ms CROZIER — Ms Mikakos, you might try to deflect, but the facts are that it is the Labor Party that rorted. It was not any other party in this chamber or in this Parliament; it was Labor. It was you. You are the lead rorter. Have you been seen by the fraud squad? Ms Mikakos, your record stands clearly.

Ms Mikakos — You're a bunch of hypocrites. You hid yourselves from scrutiny.

Ms CROZIER — No, you are a pack of rorters. You are a bunch of rorters, and the Victorian public know it. You are under investigation by the Victoria Police fraud squad. What a shocking indictment of this government. If you look at the rorting — Mr Herbert, who sat next to you, chauffeured around two dogs in a Victorian taxpayer-funded car. Your arrogance, your presumption of everything that you do —

An honourable member — Dog-gate.

Ms CROZIER — Dog-gate — Ted and Patch. Who will forget that? What a shocking display of arrogance and presumption by this government. Then we have got the former Speaker and former Deputy Speaker. It is extraordinary. The two men who held two of the highest offices blatantly rorted the Victorian taxpayer through the second home allowance with the most pathetic excuses. Again, the presumption and arrogance of this government. Victorians have had 15 of the last 19 years under Labor. You have been in power for 15 of the last 19 years, and it is enough. Victorians have had enough of this culture of systematic rorting —

Ms Mikakos — They booted you out after four years because you did nothing.

Ms CROZIER — Well, let us talk about that, then. Let us talk about the unions and the paybacks. Let us talk about the unions and what they did in the lead-up to the 2014 election. We saw that yesterday with Mr Setka and the blowout in projects. He did not even deny the fact that somebody pushing a wheelbarrow would be getting \$150 000. He said it was worth it. This is again payback. We have got projects paid for with Victorian taxpayers money being blown to smithereens under you. You just cannot manage projects and you just cannot manage money. You take

it all for granted, that taxpayers money. It is not your money. The government is the custodian of taxpayers money and you are blowing it, and you expect paybacks for John Setka, of all people — that individual who has got a string of things associated with his name and his activities. What a disgrace you all are to be associated and affiliated with that union.

Well, you know what? Those unions, the paybacks — and then you have got Peter Marshall with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) coming out crying crocodile tears. 'Nothing to see here. No deal, no tape' — who would believe him and who would believe you? Who would believe Daniel Andrews? Who could ever believe him? He went out before the 2014 election and said there would be no new taxes. He gave his word to Peter Mitchell, looking down the Channel 7 camera, 'I give you no new taxes'. Well, this is the highest taxing state —

Ms Mikakos — You wouldn't know a worker if you tripped over one.

Ms CROZIER — Well, I tell you what, Ms Mikakos, I worked for 16 years in the public health system. I know plenty of excellent workers. I tell you what, I have just had a phone call from a retailer in that area who was robbed not once but twice by a gang of thugs who went in with machetes and guns and assaulted those workers who were just going to work and doing their job. You do not care. You do not care about the victims of crime. That vision went right around the world. You are a disgrace. You have done nothing for victims of crime — nothing. They know it —

Ms Mikakos — You cut funding to Victoria Police and now you're crying crocodile tears.

Ms CROZIER — No. Your record stands for itself. The government's record stands for itself, and —

Ms Mikakos — Cuts, cuts, cuts — that is in the Liberal DNA.

Ms CROZIER — Well, Minister Mikakos, let me tell you what is your DNA: lying. You lie. It is in Labor's DNA. Rorting is in the DNA —

Ms Mikakos — You lie every day. You come in here in question time every day and lie. You make up things every day. You come in here and you lie.

Ms CROZIER — Oh, really? Do the youth justice workers think that after 38 assaults? Are you telling me that there have not been 38 assaults against youth justice workers this year, Ms Mikakos? Are you saying that is not true? Through you, Acting President.

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, this is not a debate between Ms Mikakos and Ms Crozier. You had your turn speaking, Ms Mikakos; it is Ms Crozier's turn. I ask you to allow Ms Crozier to make her contribution without interjection from Ms Mikakos.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — There is no point of order, but I would encourage Ms Crozier to make her comments through the Chair, and I would encourage the chamber to hear Ms Crozier's contribution without assistance.

Ms CROZIER — Thank you, Acting President. I think Ms Mikakos has said enough. Her record speaks for itself.

If I could just go to the other issues that Victorians are facing, cost-of-living pressures are through the roof. Utility prices are through the roof. Through the actions of this government — by taxing a company, Engie, out of existence and closing Hazelwood — 22 per cent of our baseload energy was taken out of the system. It is no wonder electricity prices are going through the roof. If you go and speak to drycleaners, greengrocers, butchers — anyone who has high energy use — they will tell you just how much they are hurting. What that means is staff have to be laid off, they have to close down or they have to work harder. This government is doing nothing for small business. In fact they are putting more and more pressure on them all the time. It is truly shameful. This is a government of the unions. We know that; it is very, very evident.

Likewise, there is congestion. There is no plan for the increased congestion in our city. As I said, Labor has been in power for 15 of the last 19 years. They have just ignored the extraordinary population increase this state has experienced over those almost two decades. They have had no plan. They have just sat on their hands and hoped it would all go away. Well, it has not. It is affecting our livability and Victorians' ability to really enjoy what is a magnificent city and a magnificent state. That, on top of a crime wave, has led to insecurities. People, young families and women in particular are feeling less safe than ever before. The Minister for Police acknowledges that herself.

Yet again we have got little consequence for this government's actions but more pain in a whole range of areas. That is why in just over 60 days when Victorians go to the polls they will make a decision and will reflect on what this government has done. Yes, there is infrastructure going on, but so should there be. They have had billions of dollars coming into this state, so if they were not building something, you would be

wondering what the hell they had been doing, quite seriously. There was the sale of the port of Melbourne, Snowy Hydro 2.0 and record-high stamp duty. This government has been rolling in money. There was the increase in GST returns. I mean, they have been seriously rolling in money, so if they were not building things, you would have to ask what the hell they had been doing.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms CROZIER — Well, they wasted it. We saw that with the east–west link, a road that Infrastructure Victoria —

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Ms CROZIER — Here she goes again. Ms Mikakos, Infrastructure Victoria has recognised that the east–west link is a major project that needs to be done. You ignore the fact that that was even your legislation and your idea.

The Premier goes out there with pie-in-the-sky ideas that most of us in this chamber know will never, ever see the light of day. But that is what he does. Victorians are very, very aware of this government's culture and this government's approach. It is a rotten government. It is rotten to the core. It is led by a man who has really fallen over himself to be at the mercy of the unions. We have seen that through not only the lead-up to the 2014 election but also the CFA's shocking treatment of volunteers in this state.

There is so much about this government's culture that is wrong, but I can go back to where I started in relation to the records that stand for themselves. I know the minister has now gone from the chamber, but her record stands for itself. It is a shocking indictment of the mismanagement of our youth justice system and the young people that are committing serious crimes, continuously ending up in youth justice and not getting the rehabilitation they require. It is a shocking indictment of the lack of acknowledgement for the victims of crime. The victims of crime who come out and speak to me and other members of the coalition will tell you the most horrific stories. One that I cannot go without mentioning is the way the Premier treated Maria Aylward and her family, a brave woman who is standing up for what is right for those poor children that were orphaned.

Well, let me tell you in the last few seconds that I have that Victorians know the nature of this government. It is rotten to the core. One can easily see that. As the Leader of the Opposition said, there appeared a window into the soul of the Premier in the last sitting week, and it was a disgrace.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (11:49) — I rise to speak to order of the day 1, moved by Ms Wooldridge, concerning the rabble that has been the Andrews Labor government for the last four years. As we come to the end of the parliamentary term it is fitting that we provide those interested stakeholders with a report card for the end of term so that people know how their government has been travelling, so today I present to the chamber the Daniel Andrews report card after four long years. Dear taxpayers, the report card for the Daniel Andrews Labor government can be summed up by saying that Daniel Andrews and his government have been bad for Victoria.

In this term of government Daniel Andrews has spent \$1.3 billion not to build a road. Before the election Daniel Andrews said it would not cost taxpayers a single cent to stop from being built the very vital piece of infrastructure that was recommended by their own party's report, the Sir Rod Eddington report. So the Premier spent \$1.3 billion of taxpayers money not to build a road. That \$1.3 billion could have built 70 new schools, 650 new ambulance stations or even a major new hospital, but the road still needs to be built. This vital piece of infrastructure still needs to be built, and it will be built, based on the recommendation also of Infrastructure Victoria, by a Liberal-Nationals Matthew Guy coalition government.

Taxpayers, can I indicate to you that the Premier said on the night of the election that there would be no new taxes in Victoria. He looked down the camera and said to Peter Mitchell on Channel 7 news as he stood on the steps of Parliament that there would be no new taxes, and we have at least 12 new taxes.

There has been a debacle with our 60 000 Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteers and the fire readiness of Victoria. There has been a history in the term of this government of violence, of intimidation, of bullying, of sacking CFA and Metropolitan Fire Brigade members and staff and of getting rid of anybody who objects to the United Firefighters Union-Daniel Andrews plan to take over the fire services. There has been the hidden Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission report as well.

Taxpayers, I can tell you in this report card that the youth justice system is broken. In a recent damning report the Auditor-General confirmed that Victoria's youth justice system is a system:

... under pressure, due to incidents at both sites in 2016 and 2017, which resulted in reduced accommodation and subsequent overcrowding.

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office report comes on the back of the release of the youth justice category 1 incident numbers for 2017–18, which show an alarming increase in the number of serious assaults and incidents occurring in youth justice centres across Victoria, as Ms Crozier often reminds this chamber. Since June 2017 the number of assaults has increased 77 per cent. A number of other incidents, which include self-harm and drug and alcohol offences, has increased 235 per cent. Since June 2015 the number of riots and serious incidents, commonly referred to as 'category 1 offences', has increased 606 per cent.

The Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria found a record number of lockdowns occurred in youth justice as the centres struggled with staff shortages and violent offences taking place. The number of young offenders who were placed into isolation increased from an average of 8.8 per day to 42.4 per day, and 40 per cent of young offenders reoffend within two years. There have been over 50 riots or serious incidents in youth justice centres under Daniel Andrews, and over \$72 million needs to be spent on repairs and fortification. Taxpayers, this is the report into the Daniel Andrews Labor government.

In terms of bail laws, bail laws have been broken far too often. Violent criminals are let out on bail and have been free to commit other offences. A Matthew Guy government will introduce new statutory minimum jail terms for those who commit a second violent offence like murder, rape, armed robbery, aggravated home invasion or robbery while on bail. A Matthew Guy government will also introduce a presumption of remand for those charged with violent offences — in other words, the one-strike-and-you-are-out principle for people breaching bail conditions — and reinstate the offence of breaching bail by juveniles, which Labor abolished in 2016.

Crime is up by almost 10 per cent in this state. This taxpayer report into the record of the Daniel Andrews Labor government indicates that total crime is up by 9.5 per cent since this government came to office. Attempted murder and manslaughter is up 42 per cent, burglary and break and enter is up 33 per cent, and assaults against the person are up 17.2 per cent. Let us compare that record to that of New South Wales. Victoria's murder rate is up 6.9 per cent while in New South Wales it has decreased 41.8 per cent. In Victoria motor vehicle theft is up 7.6 per cent, while in New South Wales it has fallen by 12.8 per cent. Robberies in Victoria are up 33 per cent, but over the same period in New South Wales it is down 27.5 per cent.

Taxpayers, I further give you this report card into the Daniel Andrews Labor government. Carjackings were unheard of before Daniel Andrews's Labor came to government, except in places like South Africa. New laws only came into effect in December 2016 after the government defeated a Liberal-Nationals private members bill. The emphasis on improving crime in Victoria has come from the Liberals-Nationals opposition in this state. Mr O'Donohue has got up in this place and moved motions and presented private members bills to make Victorians safer. Often this government has rejected them, because Daniel Andrews, taxpayers, is soft on crime.

The crime stats for 2017 reveal, amongst other things, 40 incidents of aggravated carjacking with offensive weapons, 22 incidents of attempted aggravated carjacking, 10 incidents of aggravated carjacking with a firearm, and 2017 was also the year that the Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre escapees committed a carjacking on the run. I do not know if they had been supplied with capricciosa and Fanta by Ms Mikakos as they headed to carjack on that day, but it seems the minister's answer to trouble in our youth justice system is to supply pizza and soft drink, and that will fix it all.

Some examples from 2018, taxpayers, in this report card of the Andrews Labor government: in January a teenage girl was beaten by thugs and dragged from her Renault convertible in Frankston as her attackers tried to flee from police. In February a man armed with a crowbar and wearing a dishcloth over his face attempted to carjack a woman's Mercedes-Benz at Donvale. In May a 33-year-old Glenroy man's leg were slashed with a knife during an attempted carjacking at Hoppers Crossing train station car park. Days later a woman was ambushed and hit on the head with a pickaxe during a frightening carjacking at Braeside petrol station at 3.30 a.m. In June this year two teens were arrested in Heathcote after allegedly trying to force the keys from a married couple in a residential street. The teens, allegedly armed with a tyre lever, were also accused of stealing a Mazda from a Melbourne family earlier in the day. In July 2018 a woman had a gun put to her head and was pistol-whipped in a carjacking in Narre Warren South. In August a woman was punched in the face and dragged from her vehicle in Dandenong. This is the Daniel Andrews's Victoria of the day. The things that we are talking about today are things we have never, ever heard of before. That is because Daniel Andrews and his insipid, rorting mob are soft on crime.

There are gangs roaming the streets. In 2015 the Andrews Labor government watered down the Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012 by repealing

the offence of consorting and replacing it with an unwieldy regime that has proven to be ineffective and cumbersome. After the Moomba riots in March 2016, Daniel Andrews said, 'Victoria Police will have everything they need to smash these gangs'. It has not changed; in fact, it has gotten worse.

We have had denials from senior members of the government and the Minister for Youth Affairs, Jenny Mikakos, calling gangs 'associations of young people'. I thought that was the scouts. I thought that was the local football club or cricket club or netball club. But apparently gangs are just associations of young people. I tell you what, Ms Mikakos is Cleopatra. She is the queen of denial, because it is happening in this state and this government is in absolute denial about what is going on. Since the Moomba riots occurred in this state we have seen vandalism in Tarneit, trashing of an Airbnb property in Werribee attributed to the Menace to Society gang, gang violence in Geelong and the death of a young woman at Docklands. Taylors Hill rioting by youths requiring police to inform residents to stay indoors, and mounted horse patrols in the streets. On 13 December 2017 there was the night of violence at St Kilda beach involving around 200 youths. The Chief Commissioner of Police told the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee that charges were proceeding against only two offenders out of 200.

The Crime Statistics Agency details that between April 2017 and March 2018 the largest age cohort of alleged offenders committing crimes against the person was in the 15 to 19-years-of-age bracket. Youth — who is responsible for youth offenders in this state? Do not say to me 'Jenny Mikakos', because she is not responsible. She denies any relationship to this, other than supplying capricciosa and Fanta, which apparently fixes the whole thing.

Under the Baillieu government Melbourne became the world's most livable city. It is now lost to us because the global livability index measures stability in terms of the prevalence of violent crime and the prevalence of petty crime. Well, crime in Victoria is up. In contrast, in Austria carjackings and motor vehicle thefts are down 12.4 per cent and burglaries of homes are down 24.2 per cent from 2014 to 2016, according to Eurostat. This is a bad place to live according to the data, and who is responsible for that? Daniel Andrews and his Labor cronies — that insipid, rorting mob over there.

Energy prices have gone through the roof in this state, and that is what happens when you triple the brown coal royalty rate in the 2016 budget, with Engie facing an \$87 million tax bill —

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

AGL Crib Point gas terminal

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (12:00) — My question is for the Minister for Planning, represented here by Minister Dalidakis, and it relates to the 290-metre floating gas terminal proposed for Western Port Bay. This has been raised in here before, but it was raised with me earlier this week. We know that Australia is the largest gas producer, and perversely we export so much that we now will be importing. So my question is: will the minister confirm that the Crib Point AGL gas import terminal will be subjected to a full environment effects statement process to ensure that the project is carefully scrutinised and opportunities to minimise environmental impacts are identified?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:01) — I thank the member for their question, and I will have that question relayed to the minister in the other place and seek a response within the prescribed time under standing orders.

Drought assistance

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (12:01) — My question today is for the Minister for Agriculture. It has now finally been admitted that East Gippsland is in drought, which it has been for at least 12 and more like 18 months, not three or four weeks. I have had farmers tell me they have refused donations of hay as they have had more than a couple of weeks of hay left and they have reduced their flock down drastically, and there is always another tractor to sell as well. This shows their plight more than anything else and that the farmers are not looking for handouts. They are trying their hardest to make their own way through this mess. So my question is: what quantifiable and relevant subsidies that will actually help the farmers through these trying times will the government immediately enact so we do not have a tragic and avoidable debacle like in other states?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:02) — I thank Mr Bourman for his question about drought and about the support that our communities in East Gippsland in particular are looking for. I thank Mr Bourman for recognising in his question also some of the strategies that our farmers are already putting in place to manage dry conditions, including of course destocking, which is a really important strategy that a lot of people are deploying.

Mr Bourman asserted that East Gippsland has been experiencing drought conditions for 12 months or more.

I would just like to share with the house the circumstances that trigger the use of different language and also the circumstances that trigger the application of different levels of support through the drought policy framework. The drought policy framework is a national agreement that Victoria is a party to, and we were entered into this arrangement by my predecessor, Peter Walsh. This followed a period of quite some discussion nationally about how Australia can best support our farmers and how we can have the most effective drought response. This was before my time, and as I understand, really the period from 2011 to 2014 was particularly active in this area. No doubt Mr O'Sullivan would have had quite a lot of experience and been involved in many of those discussions when he was Mr Walsh's chief of staff.

The national drought policy framework is complemented in Victoria by Victoria's own response, and there was a policy that was formally adopted by the former government in 2014 that has also been adopted by our government. There is no departure from those arrangements as part of the national drought policy framework, so that is I think important context.

The definition of drought that has been used in Victoria for really more than a decade is 'two failed seasons'. If you dig down deeper into that and define a failed season, it is when we are entering spring — so the time of the year that we are really going through in very recent times, or now — with insufficient soil moisture to support early spring growth.

Mr Davis — Roughly the same time every year.

Ms PULFORD — Yes, that's right, exactly; absolutely. You are spot-on. That is right. So the point in time when farmers know whether or not they are having a successful year is very much something that occurs on an annual basis. Extra points —

Ms Wooldridge — I think they know before that.

Ms PULFORD — Yes, exactly, Ms Wooldridge. People know what they have been dealing with, and an accumulated lack of rainfall by its very nature is not something that happens overnight. So we have been providing support to the farmers in East Gippsland for 12 months, and we have been providing quite intensive levels of support to the farmers in East Gippsland since May of this year. As we have entered this spring we have passed the threshold of that definition, and if people want to argue about semantics rather than tangible support then I guess that is their business. So our language did shift in recent times; the amount of distress that people have experienced and the amount of

support and the framework that we have applied have not. It is a continuum from early preparation to a stage 1 response, which we are now applying in northern Victoria, and a stage 2 response, which we are now applying in East Gippsland.

So the next few weeks — really a very rapidly diminishing number of days — remain absolutely critical in terms of the rainfall. Last week I announced the next —

Mr Ramsay — We haven't got to the support programs yet.

Ms PULFORD — I know, I was just getting up to that bit. Anyway, a supplementary?

Supplementary question

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (12:07) — I thank the minister for her lengthy explanation of what a drought is and all that, but we never actually got to the answering of my question. So anyway, bureaucracy and red tape are the enemy of efficiency, and I have had plenty of farmers and regional people tell me about the times they have had to seek help from successive governments only to be drowned in red tape and bureaucratic delays. My question is: will the government commit to reducing red tape and making sure that only relevant and necessary information is required so that help is delivered where and when it is needed?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:07) — Yes, thank you; that is a good segue. The short answer is yes, absolutely, and we always do.

As I was saying, last week I announced a \$5 million support package. There will be absolutely minimal red tape associated with that. I have also written to the federal minister asking him to reduce the barriers to accessing the farm household allowance, and Ms Bath asked about this just recently as well.

As I have indicated to the communities of East Gippsland, we will continue to provide a response at the appropriate time and at the appropriate scale. In terms of subsidies, things like freight and fodder subsidies were agreed nationally to be ineffective, so we are not inclined to use things that are ineffective. We would rather —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms PULFORD — Sorry, Mr Ramsay? Mr Ramsay knows lots about this too. We certainly have a strong preference for using things that are effective, and we

are currently waiting for this next critical couple of weeks of rainfall. While everyone waits to see what will happen next, we are preparing the next stage in the government's response. So we will continue to do that and to support our farmers, as we have always done.

The PRESIDENT (12:08) — Before I call the next question, I would like to advise the house that we have in the public gallery today a visiting delegation from the state of Utah in the United States of America. It is led by Jason Perry, the University of Utah vice-president for government relations and director of the Hinckley Institute. Other key members of the delegation are Keith Grover of Utah, a Republican state senator; Steve Urquhart, University of Utah global ambassador and former Utah Republican state senator; and Jean Oh, managing director of the Hinckley Institute global internship program. I welcome the delegation, and I trust that your visit here is a constructive and worthwhile one.

Native forest carbon stores

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:09) — My question is for the Special Minister of State, representing the Premier. Minister, could you confirm that the Andrews government has on multiple occasions sought assistance from the commonwealth government on the development of measurement and accounting methodologies for the carbon stores of Victoria's native forests?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:10) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question. I certainly know that as far back as the time in ancient history when I was the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change I was very interested in this matter myself. I would believe that from that time to this there would have been a number of occasions when there would have been approaches made by the Victorian government and our departmental agencies in relation to working on models to attribute the value of carbon in terms of what it is actually determined to be within the forest estate in terms of a carbon store, what potential value this may or may not have in relation to carbon trading and what potential value or offset this may have in relation to dealing with the true costs of forestry activities, and the value of conservation measures to protect our forests.

But I will need some contemporary advice to specifically answer her question on how many occasions the state of Victoria has tried to get that degree of collaboration with the commonwealth and provide her with the answers she is seeking.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:11) — Thank you, Minister, for your response. Minister, can you confirm that on at least one occasion an offer was put to the Andrews government by an individual who wanted to purchase VicForests and its rights to log state forests to retain the carbon value of those forests, and why were these offers declined?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:12) — It is a bit of a shame that Ms Dunn did not actually identify who that potential purchaser was and the circumstances by which that offer may have been made as I would be able to be more specific in my response to her. I personally am not aware of that situation. I do not know whether it is a contemporary situation or —

Ms Dunn — It is.

Mr JENNINGS — It is a contemporary situation? Are you driving a consortium to just do that? Is that what you are doing? You have privatised the policy settings of the Greens and are actually trying to establish a consortium for this activity. Well, good on you. It is your version of a public-private partnership, and we look forward to this proposal developing and being considered appropriately.

Native forest logging

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:13) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, in 2006 parts of Kinglake National Park and Kinglake township were burnt by bushfire. In 2009 during the Black Saturday fires this area was the scene of devastating fires that killed 47 people from Kinglake and Kinglake West. This fire also burnt 98 per cent of the national park and much of the surrounding state forest. Why is the Andrews government currently logging the remaining intact native forest in Kinglake, causing significant distress to the local community?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:13) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question. Given the nature of Ms Dunn's question I take the opportunity to express again my deep condolences to the families of people who lost their lives in the significant bushfire events that we have had in this state, particularly in 2009. We are of course all very conscious that we are coming up on the 10th anniversary of such a dark chapter in our state's history.

In terms of the impact of those fires, they were profound on so many people and their families, on their workplaces, on school communities, on communities

more broadly and of course on many industries, including the timber industry. The amount of available resource for industry has been diminished as a consequence of these bushfires. That is something that I think everyone with an interest in these matters is very well aware of. It is certainly well outlined in the timber *Resource Outlook* that was released last year, which apportions the decline in the amount of available resource to a number of factors, this being of course a significant one.

Ms Dunn asks essentially why the government has logging activity underway. I would respond to Ms Dunn by saying that the government works hard to balance environmental and community considerations with its legal and contractual obligations. We work hard to balance the protection of important environmental values with the equally important employment that supports many families, including in communities that Ms Dunn has referred to in her question. So I guess Ms Dunn's question is: 'Why are you logging? I don't like it'. The answer is —

Ms Dunn — Why are you causing distress to those residents in Kinglake? They have suffered enough.

Ms PULFORD — That is really an appalling question in the context of the grief that those communities have experienced.

Ms Dunn interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Thanks, Ms Dunn. You only get one supplementary.

Ms PULFORD — It is an appalling inference that the government is in any way seeking to add to the distress of those communities, and I would hope that Ms Dunn could be a little more sensitive to those communities rather than taking that particular distress and turning it into some kind of political shot on an industry that she would like to see closed down.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:16) — For the benefit of the chamber, I spent a good two years of my life in the recovery efforts from Black Saturday as a Yarra Ranges councillor. I am abundantly aware of the distress and the disaster of that bushfire. My supplementary question is: Minister, over the past year we have seen VicForests log parcels of remaining forest in places like the Strathbogies, the Rubicon Valley, Mount Cole and most recently these Kinglake logging areas. Is the fact that these forests, which in some cases have the lowest possible value use, such as firewood or wood pulp, are being logged a sign that after decades of

bushfires and mismanagement our state forests do not have enough supply to constitute a timber release plan?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:17) — Ms Dunn is essentially asking for an opinion. I have expressed the government's desire and my personal view that the native timber industry and our environmental responsibilities can coexist. That is the government's view. It differs from Ms Dunn's view, but we have legal and contractual obligations that we are committed to fulfilling. We have obligations to support the employment of many thousands of Victorians, and we are committed to those people having jobs and having job security, we are committed to their communities and we are committed to our national, our international and our own responsibilities to protect the environment.

Kindergarten funding

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:18) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, the federal government requested from you in February, May, June, July and August of this year data to help inform policy and funding to increase preschool attendance rates. Does the data requested by the commonwealth exist, and if so, why have you not provided it in full?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:18) — Thank you very much to Ms Crozier for that question. She is really leading with her chin when it comes to kindergarten funding, because what we have seen from the commonwealth government is an absolute failure to consider the needs of Australia's children. In the federal budget we have seen a banking of savings. We have seen the federal government bank the savings from them walking away from their contribution to the 15 hours of kindergarten funding in this country. They absolutely have no commitment whatsoever to investing in early childhood education in this nation.

We know that Simon Birmingham was an absolute failure as federal minister for education. He failed to secure funding for the contribution that the federal government makes to the regulatory costs of policing child care and other early years services in this country. They have walked away from the national partnership agreement on the national quality agenda for early childhood education and care. Nor have they provided funding certainty to kindergartens and families around the nation in relation to four-year-old kinder. What Simon Birmingham did was raise fig leaf arguments about issues as an excuse to not provide Victoria's kindergartens with funding certainty.

In fact the information that the member has is just total nonsense, because my officials have been working with the commonwealth department around these issues for some time. We have been seeking to address the excuses that Simon Birmingham raised in relation to these matters. I went to Wannon recently — I was in the city of Warrnambool — to announce the school readiness funding that kindergartens in the electorate of the new federal Minister for Education, Dan Tehan, will benefit from. I can tell you that whilst they were absolutely ecstatic at the news of the additional funding they will receive from our government through the Australian-first school readiness funding initiative, they expressed their very deep concerns that the federal government is yet to commit to ongoing funding certainty.

So the member can seek to come here and peddle excuses on behalf of her federal Liberal colleagues, her federal Liberal mates in Canberra —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Minister, you are now very clearly debating. I have given you a fair bit of leeway on the basis that the question actually did bring in the federal government relationship with Victoria in this space, so I have provided some leeway in terms of your answer, but the question was specific and it certainly does not need the debate that you are now entering into. Minister, I do ask that you address the specific question.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, President. The member is seeking to advocate on behalf of her federal Liberal mates on this issue, and she is not hearing the concerns being raised by the early years sector right across Victoria about the commonwealth's failure to provide ongoing funding certainty. She should get out there and talk to some kindergartens across Victoria. When she comes out and applauds one-year funding agreements when we have had a series of short-term funding agreements, I can tell you that she is completely out of touch with the concerns that families and kindergarten committees have right across Victoria.

This is an absolute red herring of an issue. We have been working with the commonwealth on these issues for many months, and all we have seen from them is total excuses. They have banked the four-year-old kinder funding as a saving in the federal budget papers.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:23) — Minister, I note that you refuse to answer my question. The commonwealth says that the data has not been

provided, so I ask: will you now provide all of the requested information to the commonwealth in full?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:23) — We have got the member here acting as the great defender of the commonwealth government. She is defending Scott Morrison's cuts as Treasurer to four-year-old kindergarten funding. We have got a new Prime Minister, a new federal minister —

The PRESIDENT — Order! Minister, fantastic debate, but save it for another place. You have a question before you about whether or not you will supply data which, as has been led by the question, has not been supplied for some months. Can you please answer that question without the debate.

Ms MIKAKOS — We have got data published in our budget papers. We have provided information to the commonwealth. We have been working with them on this for some time. What I want to see from those opposite is for them to stand up for Victoria's kindergartens and stand up for Victorian families rather than trying to peddle the excuses of Scott Morrison and Dan Tehan in relation to these issues. We are putting record investment into our kindergartens in this state — Australian-first initiatives in school readiness funding — and what we are seeing from the shadow minister is the peddling of federal government excuses. You are an absolute failure; you are failing to —

The PRESIDENT — Order! Minister, you are sat down.

Youth justice centres

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:25) — My question is again to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, a new staff member in Victoria's notorious youth justice system was recently bashed by an inmate detained in connection with a murder. That inmate has been involved in other violent attacks within the system. In April James Ogloff was awarded a \$569 000 contract over three months, or over \$5000 per day, to teach youth justice staff to undertake risk assessments of violent young offenders. So I ask: was an adequate risk assessment undertaken into the known violent offender who bashed a new staff member?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:26) — Firstly, in relation to this question the member would know, as I have advised her now on a number of occasions, that assaults and any illegal behaviour in our youth justice system are totally unacceptable. They are met with a strong response.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I sat the minister down on the last answer because she effectively was defying my guidance that I wanted an answer to a question. It is very difficult for me to get the minister to respond to a question if there are continued interjections, and frankly where there are interjections she is obviously entitled to go off the track of the question that is asked and do what she likes.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Thanks for the mutterings. Please, the minister without assistance.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you very much, President. As I was explaining, we have put in place a zero-tolerance approach to incidents in youth justice. They are met with a strong response. These matters are referred to police for investigation, and because of that, as the member would understand, it is not appropriate for me to discuss any specific incident.

In relation to the matters that she raised in relation to Professor Jim Ogloff, what I can say to her is that whilst she and her colleagues engaged in a cut-and-paste job of Professor Jim Ogloff and Penny Armytage's youth justice review in their parliamentary inquiry report, we have got on with the work of implementing the recommendations of that review. There was an initial investment of \$50 million that the government provided to implement those recommendations, and they also go to improved risk assessment processes and new classification processes that were not in place under the time of the previous government, when all they were doing was cutting staff, not filling positions and not investing in infrastructure. What I can say to the member is that there are significant reforms underway in our youth justice system as a direct response to the \$1.2 billion record investment that we have made in our youth justice system.

So when the member comes and asks these questions I can assure her that we are putting in place the investment and the reforms necessary in our youth justice system. All she has flagged by way of contrast is a commission of audit that will just see cuts to the public service, cuts to youth justice staff and cuts to programs. We know that cuts are in your DNA. They are in the Liberal Party's DNA, and your shadow Treasurer has in fact said publicly that you are going to put a commission of audit in place.

So we are rolling out these reforms directly in response to the experts' advice, Professor Ogloff being one of

them, and we are going to see a range of new risk assessment processes come onstream in the coming weeks and months. What I can say —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms MIKAKOS — I have said that I am not going to comment in relation to specific matters; I think that is inappropriate. It is important that Victoria Police are allowed to engage in their investigation properly without having editorial comment in this place from those who just wish to politicise incidents.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms MIKAKOS — What I can say to Ms Wooldridge, sitting next to the member, is that there were very serious incidents that occurred with our youth justice staff whilst the previous government was in office, including youth justice staff having their throats slashed. She seems to have conveniently forgotten all of these incidents. She seems to have forgotten about these matters. It is very clear that she was not getting the incident reports, because her chief of staff was ensuring that she was not getting any of these incident reports. She was not getting any of these reports, because she did not want to know about them.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:31) — I note the minister came nowhere close to answering that very simple question, so I ask: Minister, has your department undertaken an investigation into how a new staff member was left to deal with a known violent offender and one that had been detained in connection with a murder, and if so, what were the recommendations of that investigation?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:31) — This is totally puzzling, given I have just responded to the substantive question in advising the member that I am not going to come in here and editorialise on specific incidents, because the member knows full well that when there are police investigations underway it is inappropriate to comment. But I can say to the member that she clearly has not been paying any attention for four years, when I have talked about the types of serious offenders who are in fact incarcerated in our youth justice facilities. Are you trying to suggest now that somehow these are all angels who are in our youth justice system, with the exception of one offender? Is that what you are trying to suggest — that they are all angels and there is just one offender here who needs to be treated differently? Clearly the member has not been paying any attention. We have got bail and sentencing reforms that our

government put in place, and as a result we are seeing more young offenders in custody.

Prisoner court attendance

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:32) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, how many prisoners were not presented to court in contravention of a court order from 1 July this year until last Friday, 14 September?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:33) — I thank the member for his question. I can advise the house, as I did yesterday, that police cells were exploding under the coalition. We had never seen the numbers that they allowed to occur. There were 372 in police cells under Mr O'Donohue's watch when he was minister. Labor has properly planned prison expansion and managed police cells appropriately, and it is clear through our bail laws and extra police that we are putting pressure on the front end of the system.

Corrections Victoria is continuing to work with Victoria Police and the court system to ensure prisoners that are scheduled to attend court can be delivered into police cells, where they are managed before and after the hearings. I went through all of this yesterday. Recently we rolled out the last of the police custody officers to stations across the state, as I said yesterday, freeing up more frontline police. Additionally, the government invested in 2015–16 in the videoconferencing capacity at the Magistrates Court as well as in prisons. This of course ensures that videoconferencing is now the default appearance in court on straightforward matters.

We have also funded early-morning receptions and weekend remand court, and since we came to government we have added nearly 2000 beds to the system and funded over 1200 beds, that I went through again yesterday. There are 700 beds at the new prison at Lara. We have seen an extra 71 beds that have come online recently at the Melbourne Remand Centre. There are 70 beds at the women's prison, Dame Phyllis Frost, that will come online next month. There are 300 beds that will be coming online at Ravenhall before the end of the year.

So there are a number of things that are being put in place as we speak that are part of the government's plan to deal with the increased population that we have seen in our prison system, as opposed to what happened under the previous government, where shipping containers were rushed in. They were not fit for purpose, and we saw double-bunking explode in the corrections system.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:35) — Minister, how many cost orders have been made by the court against Corrections Victoria for the failure to present prisoners to court so far this financial year until last Friday, 14 September, and what is the total quantum of those orders?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:36) — Again, can I indicate that in terms of no-shows the data was only collected at a certain point in the history of this state. But we do know that towards the end of the previous government's term in power we had an extraordinary number of people that did not face court because of the situation. In terms of costs and the proportion of the increase in the numbers in the justice system now and in terms of the detailed information that the member is requesting, of course I do not have that level of detail with me at the moment.

Yabbie fishing nets

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:37) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, concerns have been raised about the measurements of the nets your government has handed out through the yabby net exchange program. Can you assure Victorian recreational fishers that they will not be fined if the nets they received do not meet the requirements of the 2018 *Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide*?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:37) — I thank Mr O'Sullivan for drawing to the house's attention a program that we have been running that has been so spectacularly successful that all of the nets have gone very, very quickly, and we have ordered more nets.

Ms Shing — It's a net gain.

Ms PULFORD — Boom, boom, Ms Shing. The change from opera house nets to open top nets is a really important reform and one that has been championed by VRFish and others for many, many years. In fact when we marked the opening of the net exchange just a week or so ago I was told by Rob Loats, the chair of VRFish, that this is something that he has personally sought for a couple of decades. These new types of nets are as effective in catching yabbies; they are, however, much less effective in trapping a whole lot of other creatures that we would like to not see trapped, which is of course a wonderful thing. Platypus are one of the key species that are to benefit from this reform. So this is something that has great

benefits for various creatures that live in our waterways but also for our fishers.

The use of opera house nets has been banned in public waterways for some time, and we recently gave effect to a ban in private locations. The exchange program is about making it easier and without cost imposition for our fishers who wish to change from one net to the other. There are about 45 tackle gear shops —

Ms Wooldridge — Can you guarantee they won't be fined?

Ms PULFORD — It is an interesting question, and I was coming to that. People will be fined if they are breaching the rules that have been in place for many years, and people will be fined if they are found to breach the new rules. That is not new. If people are using these nets in public places, then penalties have applied for a really long time. The new nets and the net exchange are about minimising that risk to people. There are of course fishers who have the old nets in the shed who might mainly fish on private land, where it has not been illegal until very recently. But we would not want a situation where people are confused about what rules apply, so they would not have the net that they use on their own property or a friend's property and then grab that and use it in a public waterway, because they would have always been fined for that. So the exchange and the information campaign running at the moment is about ensuring compliance with the new rules and ease of compliance with the new rules. But our fisheries are quite heavily regulated, and they need to be to ensure the sustainability of both our recreational and our commercial fisheries. Where people believe that there is illegal fishing activity occurring, we would encourage them to call 13FISH, as we always do.

Supplementary question

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:41) — Minister, it is not about the rules; it is about the nets. Minister, can you assure Victorian fishers that the extra 10 000 nets you have ordered will comply with the size requirements specified for open top nets in the *Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide 2018*?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:42) — The nets that are part of the exchange program — so the ones that have gone like hot cakes and the ones that we are ordering to meet all of this demand — are designed to ensure compliance with the new regulations and to ensure widespread use of nets that are much more beneficial for the health of various creatures, platypus chief among them, in our waterways.

East Gippsland drought

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:42) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, when you visited East Gippsland last week you said the region had been in drought for only three weeks. In your answer to Mr Bourman today you also talked about a narrow definition of drought. Do you acknowledge that being told that they had only been in drought for three weeks was not what these drought-stricken farmers needed to hear from their agriculture minister?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:43) — I thank the member for her question. The government has been providing support to drought-affected farmers in East Gippsland for more than a year. We have been providing quite intense levels of support since May this year. The definition that has been used in Victoria about at what point we start describing dry conditions as drought, two failed seasons, is something I outlined just a moment ago. As we have entered this spring we now know that we have insufficient soil moisture to support a successful season, therefore that is two failed seasons. Therefore that meets the definition, and that is when the language changes.

A drought and the development of those conditions, as all farmers know, is something that occurs over a period of time. So I did not say and have never said that we have only been in drought for three weeks. What I have said — and I said this about two weeks ago, so it is sort of more like five now — is that the language that we have used to describe this changed at the point where the circumstances changed.

So right now there are no doubt many, many people in northern Victoria who are concerned about dry conditions and concerned about the apparent lack of rainfall in these early days of spring — in these critical weeks — but we are not yet describing northern Victoria as in drought; we are describing east and central Gippsland as in drought. But the point remains —

Mr Ondarchie — How's the north-south pipeline going?

Ms PULFORD — Well, that is the thing: Labor governments do build important water infrastructure for farmers experiencing drought — we do. We have a significant upgrade underway in the Macalister irrigation district, an area that I believe is receiving a full allocation this season. We have significant water

pipeline projects being rolled out in communities that experienced drought in 2015.

I think what matters to our farmers is consistent national drought policy, and it would be nice to see a little more of that, frankly, from some other jurisdictions. But we have not changed the definition and we have not departed from the drought policy framework that was put in place by the member's own leader when he was the minister. We are applying a consistent approach, one that Victoria was very much involved in the development of nationally. Yes, the language changed about five weeks ago because it became spring.

Supplementary question

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:46) — I thank the minister for her response. Drought in East Gippsland does not provide shocking images of dusty paddocks, cracked earth and bone-dry dams, but nonetheless the impact upon farmers is just as significant. Last week's news that you said to these farmers that they had been in drought for only three weeks certainly spread like a bush telegraph, invoking anger and confusion. Minister, will you now apologise to these drought-stricken farmers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:46) — I am certainly happy to keep describing to people how Victoria delivers drought response. We are providing support to East Gippsland and now to many communities in northern Victoria in accordance with that framework. I have not actually heard that there is any departure from the bipartisan approach to the national drought policy framework, but if The Nationals have got something they would like to tell us on that score I would be interested to hear it.

I was in East Gippsland last week with the Country Women's Association president; the Victorian Farmers Federation president; the member for East Gippsland in the Assembly, Tim Bull; local councils; and a number of farmers to talk about the conditions. I think the point that Ms Bath raised about what a green drought looks like is really important, because the images that are broadcast on television are perhaps different to what people would otherwise think. But what is infinitely more important is the practical effect of low rainfall, and in East Gippsland we have had record low rainfall. That is a very serious business, and that is what we are responding to.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:48) — There are two written responses to questions on notice: 12 872 and 12 873.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (12:48) — In respect of today’s questions I seek a written response to Ms Patten’s question to Mr Dalidakis, only the substantive question — that was the only question posed — in two days as it is to a minister in another place; Mr Bourman’s substantive question to Ms Pulford, one day; Ms Dunn’s first question to Mr Jennings, the substantive and supplementary questions, two days, as it involves a minister in another place; Ms Crozier’s first question to Ms Mikakos, the substantive and supplementary questions, one day; Ms Crozier’s second question to Ms Mikakos, the substantive and supplementary questions, one day; and Mr O’Donohue’s question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary questions, one day.

Mr O’Sullivan — On a point of order, President, I suggest to you that neither question I put was answered by the minister. In relation to whether people would be fined for using the nets, I do not think that was answered, and certainly the minister did not indicate whether the next lot of nets would meet the prescription under the *Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide 2018*. I would ask you to ask her to provide a written response to both questions.

The PRESIDENT — Mr O’Sullivan, I think she answered both the substantive and the supplementary question. She said they have always been fined where there is non-compliance, she said they will continue to be fined if there is non-compliance and she said that the nets were in accordance with the program that has been put in place. She answered both questions.

Mr O’Sullivan interjected.

The PRESIDENT — Well, it might not have been the answer that you want, but she answered the questions.

Ms Crozier — On a point of order, President, in a response that I received from Minister Mikakos to the reinstated question from yesterday regarding the supplementary question — I asked about the number of youth justice officers currently on WorkCover leave or

who have outstanding claims — the minister did not respond to that directly but instead went back, looking at WorkSafe claims from three years ago. We have had 38 serious assaults against youth justice workers this year, so I am sure that that data would be available. I ask that that question be reinstated and that the minister provide an adequate answer.

The PRESIDENT — I will think about that and report back.

Mr O’Donohue — On a point of order, President, I have received a response to a question from yesterday to Minister Tierney that you directed to be answered in one day. The response to the supplementary question says that Victoria Police holds that data and the response has not been able to be provided within the time frame. I would seek your guidance, President, but I would request that the answer to the supplementary question be provided tomorrow in accordance with standing orders where a second minister is required to provide input to the answer.

The PRESIDENT — I will give that one some consideration too.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:51) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and it relates to the northern roads upgrade plans for Fitzsimons Lane. The government announced plans to upgrade this notorious congestion bottleneck in its May budget by installing two sets of traffic lights, upgrading a third set and opening the bus lanes to all traffic. It also — finally — adopted a Liberal policy from 2014 to install traffic lights at Leane Drive in Eltham to improve safety at this dangerous intersection. However, it turns out that these promised upgrades, modest as they are, will not actually take place for another two years. According to the authority’s website, construction will not begin until sometime in 2020. Apparently it will take until then to do site investigations, community consultation, design development and for the contract to be awarded — all this after 18 months and \$1.5 million already spent on investigations. While the government has been spruiking its plans, it has conveniently failed to point out to residents how long it will actually take to be delivered, reflecting the disdain the Andrews government affords to Eltham residents. So I ask: why is it taking so long for this project to be delivered?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:52) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. It relates, again, to public housing maintenance on a property in Ashwood. The tenant had an issue with a curved mesh pipe in the shower recess that is rusty and dripping rusty gunge into the shower and had been doing so for a considerable number of years. This matter was subject to an article in the *Age*, so it is very well known. Fearing the pipe may burst and cost him more money to repair, the tenant called the Box Hill housing office seeking an urgent repair. This was refused. Only if the pipe burst and flooding occurred would the repair be considered urgent. Non-urgent jobs can take months to be rectified. After considerable pressure was applied by the tenant, the housing office relented and sent out a plumber, who immediately agreed that the job needed to be attended to. In the words of the email I received:

‘Oh my God, that needs changing’, he said; followed by, ‘I’ll go get my tools’.

So, Minister, I ask: could you please provide me with advice as to why pipes have to burst before any plumbing repair can take place at a public housing property? Surely this is false economy.

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:54) — My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. It relates to Nolan Street in Ballarat, which members would be aware is adjacent to the railway station precinct in Ballarat. The condition of Nolan Street presently is absolutely abominable. It is breaking apart and it is actually quite dangerous due to the many potholes that are present there. Nolan Street is expected to see a significant increase in traffic movements with the advent of the bus interchange accessing the railway station precinct off Nolan Street. I note that Ballarat City Council are seeking support from the government to be able to achieve investment into Nolan Street. The question I ask is: will the minister work with Ballarat council to ensure that there is appropriate funding made available to the council to upgrade Nolan Street?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:55) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Settlers Run Golf & Country Club is an estate in Botanic Ridge. There is a public road through the golf course which is shared by traffic, including the 792 bus and golf carts. Additionally there is a shared footpath that is used by

pedestrians, including runners, cyclists and parents with prams. Last week I met with a group of concerned citizens who have serious safety concerns about this arrangement. Having seen the course firsthand, I was able to appreciate that these safety concerns are serious. Questions need to be asked regarding the shared use of the road, whether existing speed bumps are adequate and if there should be additional signage. It is evident there are a number of serious and complex safety issues that need to be resolved urgently. Will the minister meet with these concerned residents to address their concerns?

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (12:56) — My constituency question is to the Honourable John Eren, Minister for Sport, in the other place. I was recently invited to visit the East Shepparton Bowls Club and was pleased to meet the committee and many of the members there. The club shared with me their plans to expand their bowling facilities by adding an all-weather undercover bowling green. The club would like to extend the use of the venue to year-round and increased levels of participation.

The club has obtained indicative quotes that would put the total project at approximately \$1.2 million. They have \$600 000 of their own funds that will go towards the project. The club has been self-sufficient and independent of any council or government funding since its inception in approximately the year 2000. The club is a significant contributor to the local community through its support of Indigenous youth and in its capacity as both a social and an emergency meeting point for the nearby aged-care facility, local schools and various ethnic communities. I understand that there are currently no state government grant rounds open. My question is: can the minister provide information and advise on how the club can best progress this proposal?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (12:57) — Many months ago this chamber passed a motion concerning safety in the City of Stonnington. It was directed at the Minister for Corrections on behalf of the Minister for Police, hence my constituency question today relates to those ministers. I seek from them a response as the chamber sought, so what I ask is: when will the response to the chamber be forthcoming? Given the rise in crime — the violent crime that has been evidenced in Stonnington, the serious incidents that have occurred in houses and the serious incidents that have occurred in businesses — I do find it extraordinary that the Minister for Corrections and the

police minister have chosen not to answer these points. If the community looked at the Imp Jewellery footage, they would understand why I brought that motion to the chamber.

The PRESIDENT — Thank you, Mr Davis. That constituency question will be directed to the Minister for Police.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:58) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Minister, you recently promised permanent 24/7 truck bans for specific residential streets in the inner west. There are residential streets in my electorate of Eastern Metropolitan Region that have been included by VicRoads in the road network for B-double trucks, placarded loads and oversized loads. The neighbourhood that has suffered the most are the residents on Rosanna Road in Rosanna and Heidelberg. Minister, will you commit to applying 24/7 truck bans to Rosanna Road?

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (12:58) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it relates to safety concerns on the Midland Highway between Mooroopna and Stanhope. Over the last several months VicRoads have completed safety works on the Midland Highway between Mooroopna and Stanhope. The end results of the works have left local motorists who use the road on a daily basis with the view that the supposed upgrades have made the road even more unsafe and difficult to navigate, especially at night.

Locals believe the new centre wire barrier and the left-side steel railings make the road quite narrow to drive on, and the fog lines can barely be seen in some places at night. The newly installed 'Keep left' signs are not reflective and at night disappear into the lights of oncoming traffic. The excessive red reflectors in the centre of the road are very distracting to drivers, and already parts of the highway shoulder are breaking down. Will the minister instruct VicRoads to undertake consultations with local motorists about their concerns and implement further works to make the Midland Highway between Mooroopna and Stanhope safer for all road users?

The PRESIDENT — The question is all right, but I am sort of imagining the minister running along beside the car asking the questions!

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (13:00) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Health. The physical state of the Footscray Hospital is a disgrace. The buildings are pushing Third World standards. It is an outrage that any health facility could be in such an appalling condition in a First World country. Despite the best efforts of doctors and nurses, who are doing an extraordinary job under the circumstances, health outcomes for my constituents are clearly being impacted in a deleterious manner. Minister, when will the Andrews government start work on the new Footscray Hospital?

Western Metropolitan Region

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) (13:00) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. If you drive along Hyde Street in Yarraville at the moment, you will see temporary signs saying, 'Truck curfews enforced'. Recently the local Labor MP appeared in local news coverage saying cameras and sensors have been installed. It is sad that it is even news. People in Yarraville know that trucks regularly defy curfews, rumbling past primary schools at pick-up time and passing houses while people are trying to sleep. Mr Noonan's announcement is not about helping those people. The cameras are to make sure trucks detouring around the West Gate tunnel roadworks stick to the correct detour. Minister, what are your plans to make 'Truck curfews enforced' not a temporary sign on one street but a reality across the inner west?

The PRESIDENT — That concludes constituency questions and now is an appropriate time to adjourn for lunch.

Sitting suspended 1.01 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Debate resumed.

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (14:03) — As I continue my end of term report card for the Andrews Labor government, I note the forced closure of Hazelwood and an onshore gas ban which have tripled the wholesale electricity price. Victorians are now paying \$300 more for electricity and \$500 more for gas every single year. There was the \$388 000 rort of taxpayers money to fund the Labor Party campaign. It has come out today in the Ombudsman's report that the government has spent around

\$1.3 million to stop the report from coming out — this insipid, rorting government.

The port of Melbourne under the Andrews Labor government is no longer the number one port in the country. There is no South Yarra station in the Metro project. The unpromised sky rail is eating into people's backyards. Nobody voted for Labor's sky rail. Property values of residents abutting the sky rail have been affected forever. Labor gave up the privately funded floor of the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre. This was private money to support the Victorian health system, and Daniel Andrews's Labor says, 'No, we don't want your money'. School cleaners were sacked, eight contracts were given out and the schools are filthy. Mum and dad businesses lost their money because they had contracts until 2020, but the government said, 'No, we're cancelling them'. Some of those little family businesses bought new polishing machines and new cleaners, but the government said, 'Bad luck for you, we're cancelling them. We're giving them to our union mates. They'll run the school contracts'. The schools are not as clean as they used to be.

There has been \$25 billion worth of budget blowouts, including \$6.2 billion on the West Gate tunnel project, \$2 billion on the metro rail tunnel, \$10.8 billion on the north-east link and \$3.3 billion on level crossing removals. Others that featured blowouts include the Victorian Heart Hospital, the Frankston line stabling at Seaford, the Hoddle Street upgrade, the Casey Hospital expansion, the Ballarat line upgrade — it goes on and on and on. There are 12 new or increased taxes, despite Daniel Andrews saying he was not going to do that. There is the abolition of the construction code — the unions are running rampant in Victoria now; they are having a picnic. There is the Safe Schools program that I know Mr Finn has got very strong views on, as many of us have. There are extra tolls in the north and south-east because of the West Gate tunnel. The renewed Myki contract — they got it wrong in the first place, so let us go around again. That was all to do with Daniel Andrews.

Rural and regional Victorians are losing under the Victorian Labor government, which axed the country roads and bridges program and allocated that money to the safe country hamlet of Mulgrave. Labor has halved funding on agricultural export promotion in the 2018–19 budget. There has been a large increase in crime in rural areas. The Murray Basin rail project is \$100 million over budget. The government has squandered the money from the proceeds of the port of Melbourne which were reserved for regional infrastructure. They have axed the council flying

planning squads and they have axed regional sittings of Parliament. But I tell you what, Matthew Guy is going to bring them back. Matthew Guy is going to take the Parliament to the people.

Homelessness is increasing in this state. Small business confidence is the worst in Australia. The desal is still costing Victorians \$1.8 million a day or \$600 million a year when it is not even running. The Labor government have mucked up the original intention they had for the Waverley Park estate with the high-tension powerlines out that way. They think it is okay to transport dogs in ministerial limousines. They have failed, failed, failed in this term, and the bad report card says there is one other cracker in all of this — they created an upside down triangle, put 'Vic' in the middle and charged Victorians \$20 million for it. I can ask my granddaughter to do it, and she can do it with Microsoft Word for two bucks. They did an upside down triangle, put the word 'Vic' in the middle and hit the taxpayers for \$20 million. This rorting, insipid government has to go.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (14:07) — I am pleased to rise and make a contribution to this motion on the failings of the Andrews government. I start by pointing out that the Labor Party has been in power for 15 of the last 19 years. The ills in terms of infrastructure and the failings in terms of taxation all fall at the feet of the Labor Party. Daniel Andrews was elected in 2002 and was a minister for most of that period until 2010. Save for the four years when the government changed, the state has been managed entirely by Labor.

But we have seen this government take the mismanagement of Labor to a new level. There was the \$1.3 billion bill for not building the east–west link, an extraordinary decision to cancel a contract despite an election promise that it would not cost one cent. 'It will not cost one cent', Daniel Andrews said. Well, it cost \$1.3 billion. There is the extraordinary increase in electricity charges which is hitting Victorian businesses and families like a sledgehammer from the side, and that is entirely due to Labor's decisions. It is entirely due to the decisions of the Labor Party. There was the closure of Hazelwood following the WorkSafe investigation, but most importantly there has been the imposition of a whole set of new taxes.

Then we hear the Premier say, 'It's all due to privatisation'. Let me tell you: Labor started privatisation with its sale of part of Loy Yang B to Mission Energy. So let us not hear any lectures about privatisation. And while he is lecturing about privatisation, he is selling the titles office at the same

time. What an extraordinary hypocrite he is. There are always advantages and disadvantages, which can be weighed up in individual circumstances, on how you run government services and the involvement of the private sector. That needs a case-by-case analysis, but one sweep one way or the other is not an intelligent way to approach it.

Then there was the attack on the Country Fire Authority (CFA). What an extraordinary attack on the 60 000 CFA volunteers that was. It is clear that Labor and the Greens are entirely beholden to the firefighters union. They are doing their bidding.

Dr Ratnam interjected.

Mr DAVIS — Yes, Dr Ratnam, we saw the poster on the door of the office of one of your members, downstairs in the old offices. It was a big United Firefighters Union poster smack bang on the door. So do not claim that there are no clear links there. There are clear links, and I reckon they are donors too.

Let me be quite clear about the mismanagement by Labor of population growth. When Daniel Andrews lost the election in 2010 and was asked why he lost, he said he failed to plan for population growth. That was his excuse. He failed to put the infrastructure in place. That was between 1999 and 2010 when Labor was in government. He credited the failure to manage population growth and the failure to manage infrastructure — they are his words, not mine — to Labor losing government in 2010. It is like a general trying to fight the last war. He thinks that any infrastructure you undertake is what is required and we should build infrastructure at any cost, no matter whether it is good value or not.

Even good-quality infrastructure projects need to be managed properly, prudently and within budget. Level crossing removals are a good idea. We support the concept of level crossing removals. We funded a number in government and we strongly support that approach, but the level crossing removal project is now 60 per cent over budget. When they went forward and said it was going to be a \$5 billion project with no business case, what did the Auditor-General say? He said it was risky to proceed without a business case. Those were his words, not mine; he used the term 'risky'. And so it has been proven. It is 60 per cent over budget and still climbing. They are somewhere north of \$8.1 billion now. The minister will not release the level crossing removal costs before the state election. I think the community have a right to know about these level crossing removal costs, they have a right to know where the budget is on the Metro project and they have

a right to know where the deals are at with Transurban. We still have not seen the Transurban variation agreements, and they have signed off on the West Gate tunnel.

This chamber took a different view. We said that the planning scheme amendment should be removed, but the government then went and gazetted a new planning scheme amendment the next day. What a defiant and undemocratic act. The Planning and Environment Act 1987 clearly gave the power to this chamber, or indeed the other chamber, alone to remove that planning approval, but the government went forward the next day and gazetted another planning scheme amendment. It is very clear now that the project has proceeded so far that it would be irresponsible to stop the project. We are faced with the fact that the project is proceeding.

We know that there is going to be a smashing toll put on Victorians and those who use the current CityLink roads — the current CityLink roads, not the new one. No-one has a problem with a toll being put on a new road, but we do have a problem with the extension of the toll deeds into the 2040s. Those variations to toll deeds are required to be tabled under the Melbourne City Link Act 1995, and the government has refused to table those toll deed variations, knowing that this chamber has the power to disallow those toll deed variations within six days of them being tabled. The government has hidden those and has refused to bring them forward. What an act of secrecy, what an act of defiance of the law and what an act of defiance of democracy that is.

Why would they be worried to show those? I can give one reason: Mr Finn's electorate includes the Sunbury area. Families and businesses from there come into town down the Tullamarine Freeway. That is a tolled freeway, and that is a freeway that will be smashed in terms of charges under this government's new toll deed variations. The agreement is, as far as we know, for a 4.25 per cent increase beginning in 2019 — notably the year after the election. In 2019 the toll will go up by 4.25 per cent, and it will escalate every year by 4.25 per cent, so that will smash families. If you do the compounding of that, it is more than a 50 per cent increase over that period — more than a 50 per cent increase in tolls that will be paid by those who use the current CityLink roads.

All those in the south-east of the metropolitan area and those who come from the country will be similarly smashed by those tolls. People coming from the west through the tunnel and onto the Monash will be hit by those tolls, those massively increased tolls, which will be 4.25 per cent up year on year on year. Which

families are seeing their family budgets go up by 4.25 per cent? You look at the impact that will have on families, some who use the tollway twice a day to get into and out of work or those in small business who use it to move around. These are very, very big hits to the budget, and that is straight to Transurban's bottom line. This government does not want to table those toll agreements. It is extraordinary.

We have seen a failure of our transport system too. We have seen a decline in the performance of our rail system. We know that the most recent figures released for August show very clearly that the Metro Trains Melbourne lines are tracking at 91.6 per cent punctuality, down from more than 94 per cent under the previous government. The number of cancellations on all lines of Metro was 2131 in the month of August, up from just a bit over 1100 in the November 2014 period, the last period of the previous government. So the cancellation changes are very significant: 1.9 per cent under the coalition in that November period and up to the most recent figures here with 3.2 per cent of metropolitan trains cancelled under the Daniel Andrews government.

If you look at V/Line, the performance decline is much more severe — very severe indeed. Punctuality has fallen from 90.8 per cent down to 86.9 per cent. The number of trains cancelled has gone up from 36 per cent in the month of November 2014 to 265 in the month of August 2018 in the most recent set of monthly figures. If you look at the year-long average for V/Line in 2014, it was 106, and in this last month, it is 272, a very significant cancellation rate. That is a monthly average much more than twice the cancellation rate. If you look at the percentage cancellations over a 12-month period under the previous government it was 1.8 per cent, and 3.3 per cent is the cancellation rate of V/Line services. Those who are users of V/Line know that they are being smashed in terms of reliability and punctuality. You only need to go to Twitter and Facebook to see what people are saying about V/Line performance. This has not been prioritised by Minister Jacinta Allan and Labor. They do not care about country Victorians. They do not care about country people. They are city-centric, and they are prepared to smash the quality of transport in country Victoria.

I note one recent Twitter commentary, 'Geelong Rail Fail (2@linefail)':

Hey @VLine: Geelong will I be unblocked? I have spent \$,000s with you & missed kids milestones because of your service. I know some of your trains are Soviet era, but you don't have to silence dissent like the Ruskiies do you? C'mon comrade, the peasants are revolting!

That is just one little sample, and I could go on with many more from people who are V/Line users and are actually seeing their service diminished — seeing the reliability, the punctuality and the comfort of their service diminished — because this government does not care and will not take action on these points.

I had somebody come to me the other day pointing out that in the metropolitan area there are lots of small examples of where the government is not really intervening to make sure service is what it should be. My colleague David Hodgett in the Assembly points out:

The newsagent has closed at Ringwood East shopping strip, and hence there is no longer anywhere to purchase or top up a Myki card.

The IGA purchased the Tatts agency part of the newsagent and have inquired about the Myki side, however PTV have told them that they are still looking into it.

This has been going on for over 10 days ...

And he goes on — an entire shopping strip where you cannot buy a Myki card.

If you look at the Frankston area, I have a communication from Sharon Kermath, barrister at law:

Letting you know what is happening in Frankston area. Replacement buses in Carrum to Frankston because of the railway crossing removals. People were thrown out of buses because they had bikes and a valid ticket. They allow prams. Bikes allowed on trains not on replacement buses. This is disgusting service from the Andrews government there is no plan nor service.

Please do something about this. People are being discriminated. Make it media knowledge. Help Victorians.

These are just simple examples that come through with great regularity about the decline in the quality of our metropolitan rail service, the decline in the quality of our bus services and the decline in the quality of our V/Line services in country Victoria.

I say also Labor have been a crooked government — frankly, a corrupt government. In 2014 they took that money from the people of Victoria, from taxpayers. They stole it — make no mistake — took it, and you cannot call it anything else. But then they say, 'Oh, we've been caught. We're going to pay it back'. I reckon the next bank robber might try that approach too. 'Oh, I robbed the bank, but I've been caught. I'll give the money back'. Well, beauty! That is just bad news. It is crooked. Were you one of the beneficiaries?

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr DAVIS — Were you a beneficiary? This one was. This one signed some of those documents. How many did you sign? You ought to come clean on how many you signed. You ought to come clean on what you did with the money. You ought to come clean on what you knew. The whole thing was crooked. The red shirts thing was crooked, one of the most corrupt things we have seen in public life.

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Mr DAVIS — I tell you what, you signed it. You should not be a minister. You should have stood aside because of what you did. You signed the blank forms. When did you sign those blank forms? Why did you sign them?

Ms Mikakos interjected.

Mr DAVIS — What crooked behaviour from you. How crooked can you get? You have signed blank time sheets and used money from the Parliament, from the taxpayer, to fund Labor's campaign. You are up to your neck in it. Labor is crooked, corrupt and wrong to take public money in this way. The Greens have not done what they should have done on this. They claim to be for transparency and openness, but they wanted to sweep it all under the carpet. We know why, because they want to be in coalition with the crooks in the Labor Party. That is the truth of the matter.

Debate adjourned on motion of Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

PUBLIC LAND USE

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (14:23) — I move:

That this house —

- (1) notes that —
 - (a) this government has failed to properly manage public land in regional Victoria with some public land categories being outright neglected;
 - (b) the creation of national parks and other parks with similar levels of protection has a negative impact on many traditional bush users and residents of regional Victoria;
 - (c) the value of public land is in its use and that restricting access for recreation on public land diminishes the connection people have with those lands and the public's ability to assist in management;

- (d) the government has failed to listen to recreational user groups of public land and their concerns about public land being locked up and inaccessible;
- (2) calls on the government to —
 - (a) reject any recommendations by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council that would change public land classifications to a more restrictive category;
 - (b) review the national park status of the Barmah forest national park and the river red gum national park;
 - (c) rule out the creation of the great forest national park; and
 - (d) fix the access, boundaries and signage of the 200 state game reserves in Victoria.

I am very proud to be moving my motion, which is numbered 613 on the notice paper today. I would firstly like to say that I consider myself very fortunate to hold the last spot that will be allocated to the crossbench during this term of Parliament to conduct business in this house, and that is all down to the good fortune of random scheduling. It has been wonderful over the last four years to see those crossbench items that have made it onto the agenda and that have been discussed in this place from various angles and different points of view, and they have been on various topics. It is amazing to see how different the important things are to people, and seeing a collection of those has well been worth it.

The reason I am moving this motion today is because it is an important issue to me. Like many of the other issues that have been brought here, which have significant importance to individuals, this is a topic that in a general sense I have talked about many times from various angles in relation to many different issues. I find that I cannot pass up my last opportunity to put a motion to this house and to touch on this topic again — that is, the importance of and the use of public lands.

Public lands are very important in this country. We live in a fortunate country, in that we are wealthy, free and able to do many things that you just cannot do elsewhere around the world. You just cannot do it. We can go out into publicly owned lands and partake in various activities, various recreations. We can choose to be involved in clubs or associations that get together and socialise while they are doing it. We can choose to go out and lose ourselves in a remote wilderness in our great state of Victoria. We can choose to do that; we can choose to just go and sit in some quiet place. We can choose to do that, to cast a line and do some fishing. We can choose to do that in the form of hunting. We could get into a vehicle and go boating or four-wheel driving. We could even jump onto a horse and take

advantage of some of the public lands in this state. There are many, many different ways in which people can get out and enjoy the bush, enjoy our waterways and enjoy our coasts, and it is great to see the diverse range of things that people enjoy doing. That is what is so great about it — there are so many activities that are taking place all at once.

I am moving this motion to again shed light on a few issues surrounding the use of public land, and I will read it out again:

That this house —

- (1) notes that —
 - (a) this government has failed to properly manage public land in regional Victoria with some public land categories being outright neglected;
 - (b) the creation of national parks and other parks with similar levels of protection has a negative impact on many traditional bush users and residents of regional Victoria;
 - (c) the value of public land is in its use and that restricting access for recreation on public land diminishes the connection people have with those lands and the public's ability to assist in management;
 - (d) the government has failed to listen to recreational user groups of public land and their concerns about public land being locked up and inaccessible;
- (2) calls on the government to —
 - (a) reject any recommendations by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council that would change public land classifications to a more restrictive category;
 - (b) review the national park status of the Barmah forest national park and the river red gum national park;
 - (c) rule out the creation of the great forest national park; and
 - (d) fix the access, boundaries and signage of the 200 state game reserves in Victoria.

There it is, spelling mistake and all, and I will touch on that spelling mistake later when I explain what it is. No-one has raised it with me so far. I hope it is not because no-one has read my motion and that it is just a little tricky one that has slipped past many people, but I will touch on it.

National parks are one form of public land that we have in this state, but there are many others. National parks are usually at the forefront of discussions around the issues that we bring up, but there are many others. There is such a diverse range of public lands in this

state that it can be quite confusing. We do not have a very simple structure at all. It is somewhat confusing about where you can go, where you cannot go, when you can go and when you cannot go to certain places, what you can do in those places, who you can be with, where you can take your dog — that sort of thing. It is really confusing, so it is great to see so many people out in these places in spite of that.

I want to share a couple of examples of the connection that I have had with these places through the pursuits that I have tried throughout my life and over many years with both family and friends. Some of my fondest memories are actually of spending time out in the bush and spending time with my family. They are really significant parts of my life.

One of my fondest memories is of being out shooting with my father and grandfather at a place called Gaynor Swamp. A long time ago Gaynor was really popular for quail hunting. In recent years I have not done a lot of quail hunting there, but certainly a few years back when I was a kid it was a really great destination for it. There was a lot of quail harvested out of that place. I distinctly remember one particular day, and it will never escape me because it is so vivid in my mind. It was when I was only young. I cannot remember exactly how old I was, but I am assuming I was old enough to shoot. My father handed me his shotgun because it was my turn to have a go. It was the first time that I had ever put up a gun on a quail. Quail hunting is one of the most exciting and exhilarating forms of hunting you can do, and it is wonderful that we have so many opportunities in Victoria to do it. It is a great experience. It is a rush, and quail are such a delicacy. They are so delicious, and to be able to go out and harvest them wild and eat them —

Mr Finn — Fiddly, though.

Mr YOUNG — They are very fiddly to eat. You have got to know how to cook them right, but they are very enjoyable. I will never forget the first quail that I shot. It was with my grandfather's shotgun, which he had handed to me — a Beretta 55 under and over. He handed it to me and said, 'Off you go'. I was a little bit nervous and did not really know what I was doing. I had done a little bit of shooting before, as you can imagine, but I had never put up a gun on a quail. We went for a bit of a walk. It was not through stubble, it was through some long grass, and it was not very long before a quail took off in front of me. They make a funny sort of purring noise as they take off. It is a wonderful experience in itself putting up a few quail, and I put the gun up and pulled the trigger. That moment for me is something that is just so vivid in my mind. It was such a special connection that I had with

the day, and I remember everything about it — the weather and my grandfather being there. He does not hunt with us anymore, but I will never forget him being there that day. It was just so great, and that was at a little swamp called Gaynor. It is in the middle of Victoria. There is nothing really special or spectacular about it, but it has left such an impression on me.

Another experience that I vividly remember is one that happened when I finished my apprenticeship. I quit my job, because I decided that I could make a bit more money somewhere else as I was not an apprentice anymore. I was offered work, but I thought, 'Stuff it'. I had not had any time off since I had started my apprenticeship, so I decided not to start work for three weeks. My father and I jumped in the car and spent three weeks travelling across the state. We went west first and travelled all the way across the state, hopping to and from various swamps and lakes and creeks. Fortunately it happened to be during the tail end of duck season for that year. Dad and I hunted in a dozen destinations over those couple of weeks, staying a few nights here and there, swagging it on the ground — rolling up, going somewhere the next night. It was a wonderful experience. It was just Dad and me. It is probably the only time that Dad and I have been away together for that long. It was really great.

But this is not about my experiences per se. I had to take the opportunity to share a couple of those, but through the course of the last four years I have been fortunate enough to talk to so many people about what they do out in the bush and what they do in parks, how they spend time away with their families and friends, enjoying time away from work, away from the rat race, away from all of those stresses that otherwise present themselves in their lives. There are so many ways that people do that. There are so many things that I do not do. People have shared their experiences with me that I have loved listening to. I adore those stories. It goes all the way from people who go skiing out on a lake with their families to people who do a little bit of fossicking and prospecting and to people who ride their horses through national parks, where they can, and through state forests and the like. The way we use our public land is really eclectic.

Because of that diversity, there are often a lot of conflicts around use. The reason we have moved this motion today is that we want to highlight some of those conflicts, which I do not believe are being managed properly. We recognise that there are some places where certain activities cannot occur — that is just par for the course. Hunting is not appropriate for everywhere, but hunting is appropriate in many places where it currently cannot occur. The same goes for a lot

of other activities. People have vastly different opinions on this, but I feel that lately we have got to a stage where people's opinions on what other people should not be doing are outweighing people's opinions on what they should be doing. We have become a state of banning things. We see it in other aspects of life, but it really annoys me with regard to public land because we have a firm belief that public land is for the public. Public land is to be used. I have said it many times, and I have said it in here: the value of public land is in its use, it is in its connection — it is how we become a part of these places. I feel that if we stop using these lands, if we stop being involved with them and being connected with them, we will lose their value and we will stop caring about them. There are so many people who share that sentiment.

What we have seen is a gradual move in our style of managing public land. We have had some pretty severe changes to management style lately, and a lot of it is early in its development. We are seeing management plans popping up for various pieces of public land where the language is changing. The language is changing in terms of dispersed camping. That is probably the number one example that jumps out at me — dispersed camping. We want to move away from dispersed camping and bring everyone into a little area that can be monitored and controlled and charged for. You will have Parks Victoria having a booking system where you have to pay a fee to go in and camp in these places. That takes away from your ability to just go to your favourite spot that you have been going to for decades, probably with numerous generations of your family. We are bringing it all back into one area. Along the Murray River there are numerous examples of this creeping in. One great example is a management plan for Lake Boort, which I have talked about before, which wants to ban camping around the whole lake and bring it all into one localised area at the top of the lake near the town, so you lose that lack of proximity to the town and you lose a lot of the experience of going to these places.

The management styles are really starting to change. We want to see them move away from this notion of stopping people from doing things and move towards an effort to make sure that everyone can do what they want to do in conjunction with each other. I come back to hunting because hunting is one of those issues that people talk a lot about in this space. There are places that are public places, such as our parks, where hunting is not appropriate. There are small parks and there are parks that have high visitation where hunting simply just cannot occur, and we get that. We do not advocate for hunting to happen in those places. But there are so many areas of our national parks that are very large

spaces, which have very low visitation rates and a plethora of game and invasive species occupying those areas, which could be hunted. However, because of the way in which we manage national parks, there is a blanket ban. It does not make sense. You can literally have a state forest here and a national park next to it with exactly the same scenario — the same set-up and the same number of invasive animals — but you can hunt in one and you cannot hunt in the other. That does not make sense.

State game reserves are another really interesting example. We have 200-odd reserves in this state called state game reserves. The first lot of them were actually purchased through licence fees that came from hunters. We decided that we were losing wetlands at too harsh a rate, so we decided that we should purchase some of those pieces of land to preserve them. They became the first state game reserves. However, while state game reserves are available for the hunting of certain species during respective seasons, you are not allowed to hunt pests in them. This is something that we have been calling on for quite a while, and it has not been addressed by the government. We really look forward to that changing. They are the issues around the types of park and how that can have an impact on what takes place there.

We have seen a lot of issues within the management of parks in terms of closures. Closures are a contentious thing because there are often reasons for them to happen, and we understand that. Damage to bridges and access roads and things like that happens and flooding happens. There are a lot of reasons why closures occur. But it really gets up people's noses because it takes so long to fix these issues. It takes so long to get on top of these issues, and the whole time that we have got a track closed or a bridge damaged or something like that, people cannot access those places that they enjoy accessing. It is something that needs to be worked on. We have been very disappointed with cuts to the budgets of managers of public land, because this impacts their ability to get on top of those issues, so we would like to see that addressed.

Another thing that has happened and we have advocated on before is a management style where management of a piece of public land is given over with some sort of exclusivity. This is not just exclusivity of use; it is exclusivity of the actual management of it. The best example of it is the Winton Wetlands, a place that I hold dear to my own heart. It is really unfortunate that we have got a situation at the Winton Wetlands where a committee of management has control over how the place is managed. Through no other reason than the fact that they do not like certain

things, as far as I can tell, they have decided to ban a whole range of things that historically have happened there. Those kinds of exclusive management styles are just simply not appropriate. They do not include everyone's perspective, they lock out other opinions and they are keeping people out of public lands.

There are a lot of people talking to me about this motion being very anti-national parks. It is not so much anti-national parks; it is just anti-national parks the way they are. I get that national parks are important; I get the importance of preserving these areas, but also, like I said before, we have to be able to access these places and use them and feel connected to them.

The national park debate has been really interesting over the last few years. It has become very obvious in the way it is going forward — and it is always going forward; everyone is always pressing forward to create new national parks — that no-one is ever stopping and saying, 'Hang on a second. Let's just have a look at the situation and whether we've got problems with the national parks that we've got, whether there are other ways of managing them that can be implemented'. It has become really polarised, this push for national parks. It is one of those debates that I have noticed has been very city versus country. It is really obviously city versus country, and it is unfortunate because there are a lot of organisations and individuals who constantly campaign for more national parks. They are very good advocates, they are very good at what they do, but they are all city-driven. They all come from inner-city Melbourne. When you look at the groups that are out campaigning against national parks and against restriction of access to those places, they are regional people. They are the people who live out in those areas. They are the people who are going to be affected by proximity. They are the people who are going to have tourism to their local towns affected. They are the people who just like to go out and enjoy the places where they live; that is why they live there. They are the ones who are going to be affected, and they are often the groups that we find are advocating against the creation of more national parks.

It is something that I have seen creep into politics. It is not very often that a politician will stand there and say, 'We don't need any more national parks'. It really does not often work that way. I love it when it does because it shows real courage to say these days — the way politics goes — that we need to stop just going with whatever everyone else is doing. Often there will be a creation of a new national park and you will get all the pollies turning up and having their photos taken and getting in on the action. There is no-one standing there saying 'No' and going against it. So the way in which

the debate around national parks has gone really needs to change. We would like to see some change on that. We would like to see more reviewing of current national parks and less reviewing of public lands with the aim to turn them into national parks.

The reality is that it cannot keep going. You cannot keep doing it. You cannot keep having more national parks. You cannot keep turning state forest into national parks. We are going to run out. It just does not work that way. There is a finite amount of land in Victoria, and we have to stop somewhere. The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) actually put up some figures recently, which were really interesting. They criticised the government on their rate of park establishment, and I thought that this was curious. When you look at the material that they put out, they pointed out that this government has created fewer parks than the Baillieu-Napthine governments, the Bracks-Brumby governments, the Kennett government, the Cain-Kirner governments, the Thompson government and the Bolte government. It has created fewer parks than all of those.

But the VNPA have actually gone one step further. They have gone and collected some data. They have gone and looked at some numbers. I have got those numbers. Looking at the source I am not really convinced by them, but I will use them because they are from Wikipedia. The VNPA have put this number here as the benchmark. They are saying that they want this government to be better than all the previous ones in the creation of parks. The benchmark was set by the Cain-Kirner governments, who in their time in office created 1.961097 million hectares of parks during the 10 years that they were in office. The VNPA actually break that down into a nice, easy figure. They broke that down into 511 hectares per day in office. They pointed out that they are the benchmark.

I did some calculations of my own — I got my figures from a Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) report instead of Wikipedia — and the total area of Victoria is 22 760 000 hectares. That area does not change. That is the size of Victoria. It is not going to grow. No matter how many national parks you want, that amount of land is not going to grow. Out of the 22 million-odd hectares of Victoria, 8.8 million hectares are already public land. That means 37 per cent is already public land. So if we were to have this government try to do what the VNPA seemingly wants them to do and create more parks than all the previous governments — with the benchmark being the Cain-Kirner governments — at a rate of 511 hectares a day, then in only 74 years every single square metre of Victoria would be a park. Now, that is not sustainable.

You cannot do that. It does not work. That includes the place I am standing right now. Every property, every household, every farm would be a park if we were to go down the path of creating more parks than the previous governments. It does not work.

You can even apply that to the debate around the types of parks. We need a diverse range of parks. If we are going to move forward and continue with this system where national parks are the way they are, we need a number of different parks because they exclude a lot of activities. But if we are going to create 355 000 hectares every term of government, like the great forest national park proposal, that is only going to last so long. There is only 8.8 million hectares of public land. If we turn 355 000 hectares of them into national park every year, we are going to run out. It is not sustainable. I am surprised an organisation like the VNPA do not know the meaning of the word 'sustainable'.

Now, you might be thinking that this criticism of the government by the VNPA is actually a ringing endorsement of them in the context of my motion, which is against the creation of more national parks. Well, that may be the case. It may be the case that this government has created fewer national parks than all the previous governments, but something this government has not done is told us that it is deliberate. They have not come and said, 'We've created fewer new national parks or any other type of park because we don't need any or because we're reviewing them or because we don't want the great forest national park'. It is particularly the case with that park. There have been numerous opportunities for this government to say they are not going to do it, but they have not done it. So whilst this may sound like a ringing endorsement of the government on my behalf — saying that the VNPA is criticising them for not creating parks — they are not doing it deliberately. They just have not managed to get around to it. That is something that we have looked for some certainty about in various ways — Mr O'Sullivan put up a motion to the effect; I have had motions to the effect during this term of Parliament — and so far the government has not ruled out the creation of the great forest national park. That should be concerning for everyone in the Central Highlands who likes to use the bush for their recreational endeavours.

The VNPA carries on about more national parks. That is what they do. Good on them. That is their thing. They can do what they want. That is great. But let us just remember that they are very city-based. In fact they have just got political too. I have been looking at some of their stuff over the last couple of weeks. They have just started getting political in the lead-up to this election. They have kicked off their campaign. You

would think it would be in the area where the great forest national park is going to be so they can campaign in that local area and get people on board. No, they kicked off their campaign in Brunswick, which is a bit of a head-scratcher for me. I do not know why they would be kicking off their campaign in Brunswick, because there is not a lot of room to create national parks there. But that is what they do.

They advocate for more national parks, whereas VEAC are not supposed to be advocating exclusively for more national parks. That is not their goal. That is not what they are there to do. They are there to assess public lands and make recommendations on them, whatever they may be. But it has become a bit of a joke. It has absolutely become a joke when every time a VEAC investigation is called for we all know the answer. We can predict the answer.

The most recent one is the central west investigation by VEAC. If we look at the numbers, they paint a perfect picture. It is a very big document, but there is one graph that paints a perfect picture. If we look at the public land use category, what is current and what is recommended, there are currently 22 000 hectares of national park in the area that has been investigated under the central west investigation, and the recommendation is to up that to 72 000 hectares. There are zero conservation parks, and they want 5246 hectares. There are 5264 hectares of regional park, and they want to boost that to 23 000 hectares. With state forests, which are always the bridesmaid, they get left out, with a grand total of 89 000 hectares existing now recommended to be pulled down to only 10 000 hectares.

Of those types of public land, state forests are the ones that are most used. They are the ones that have the greatest range of recreational activities, and a number of them take place in that area. So to suggest that 80 000-odd hectares of state forest should be turned into national park perfectly illustrates the direction of VEAC. When you want to create a national park, the government simply gives them a reference to look into a certain area and they will come up with the recommendation.

The second part of my motion is a little more specific than the general sentiment in the first part, which is just about taking note. The second part of my motion calls on the government to do a few things, the first being what I have just spoken about in relation to VEAC recommendations. I have outlined a little bit about why national parks are more restrictive than other forms of land tenure. The second part of my motion calls on the government to reject any of those recommendations

coming from VEAC that are going to move to a more restrictive category.

I have had a bit of a conversation around that point. That conversation was sparked by the Liberal Party flagging that they are going to move amendments to my motion. They seek to delete parts of it, the part about rejecting recommendations by VEAC being one of them. It has been put to me that they cannot possibly do that because they have to have a different view to mine on VEAC, and they cannot reject any recommendation from VEAC. I would like to make the point that this is a quite specific call on the government. It is a quite specific line, and it is in regard to recommendations that would change the public land classification to a more restrictive category.

I am not saying that VEAC cannot do an investigation and rightly come up with an answer to this problem, being 'We need to achieve environmental outcomes in this area, but we must do it in conjunction with the current land use that is taking place or the current recreational activities that are taking place', because there are many ways in which you can do positive things to achieve environmental outcomes without impacting on the activities that are taking place. I am not saying that if VEAC came up with those sorts of things, they could not be looked at and could not be accepted. So to want to oppose my motion based on that is somewhat confusing, and I think it is running from the issue that VEAC always goes one way, and we want to see that stopped.

Item (2)(b) of my motion is where my spelling mistake is, and I will just explain that. These two areas get a specific mention in the motion because of the advocacy that I have had from the areas, Barmah National Park being the most prominent. I have had over the years numerous people come to me with issues around the way in which that place is managed. It seemed to change from a state forest to a national park. Early on in this town I attended a rally around the use of firewood from the area, because there are people up there who literally rely on firewood to heat their homes and the government has banned it. That is causing some serious issues.

A lot of people up there who were a bit on the fence about the creation of the national park the whole way through were coaxed by the notion that there would be an increase in tourism: 'We're going to do some really great stuff in this area to boost tourism and bring people here, including ecotourism'. They were sitting on the fence about the issue and said, 'Okay, we'll go with this. We'll let it roll for a while and see what happens and see if the tourism picks up'. Well, it has not, and

these people have since been contacting me and hopefully others to say that this is just ridiculous: 'We've got a national park now. You've stopped us using it. You've stopped us accessing it. We can't do all the things that we used to do. We can't go in there and hunt pests and improve on that. We can't take firewood. You said you were going to improve tourism'.

One of the biggest tourist drawcards there are the Barmah brumbies, and the government has come up with a plan to eradicate them. So one of the most prominent things that would draw people to the place the government is going to get rid of. That does not really work for tourism in the area, so these people are furious at the way in which this park is being managed. That is why this one gets a special mention in my motion, where I am calling for a review.

The next one is where the spelling mistake is. It is actually supposed to say 'the river red gum national parks' rather than 'the river red gums national park'. It is actually a collection of national parks in the north of the state running along the Murray, Goulburn and Ovens rivers. They are the Gunbower, Hattah-Kulkyne, Lower Goulburn River and Warby-Ovens national parks and also part of the Murray-Sunset National Park, so they cover a lot of kilometres and a lot of river frontage. This collection of national parks, which are referred to in the *River Red Gum Parks Management Plan* — and that is why they are put together, because they are treated as one as far as the management plan is concerned — when they were created caused a whole range of issues, again for recreational users and duck hunters in particular. I know full well how frustrated they were at how much riverfront was no longer accessible for hunting. It is another one that has been in for a while, and I think it is time, given the issues we have around national parks, to have a look at them. That is good governance. You put something in place and give it a little bit of time and then you review it. If it is achieving the outcomes it is supposed to achieve, then fine, but quite frankly we do not believe it is and maybe we should be reviewing possibly its status as a national park, but certainly the way in which the rules around national parks are applied there.

That is the part of my motion that the Liberal Party have flagged that they are going to try to amend and take out. I am a little bit perplexed by that. I do not think that having reviews on these types of things is a bad thing; I think it would be a very good thing to do. I hope that it is not the case that the Liberal Party does not want to have reviews on this, and I hope that the National Party will voice that opinion to them, because this is a really big issue for the northern part of the state. I just want to try to alleviate a couple of those concerns.

The next part of the motion calls on the government to rule out the creation of a great forest national park. I have already talked about this a little bit. As I mentioned before, Mr O'Sullivan has put up a motion to that effect, and I have put up a motion to that effect, and the government once again has an opportunity to put on the record that they are not going to create a great forest national park. We vehemently oppose it. It is going to create so many problems for recreational users in those areas. People are screaming out against it. People from those areas are screaming out against it; that is the important part. We are not interested in listening to the campaigns of the VNPA in Brunswick. They are irrelevant to the creation of a great forest national park, but the people from those areas are screaming out against it. I know people will try to rebut that point by saying that there are locals in those areas who want to see it happen. There may very well be, but from my experience for the most part the advocacy against it is coming from those areas, from those organisations and from those groups that are living in the country. They are the ones that want to see the great forest national park proposal die.

In summing up, I would just like to point out that this is not particularly an anti-national parks motion. This is an anti-national-parks-the-way-they-are motion. They are not working to achieve the outcomes that we think they should be achieving. They are not working. People are being locked out of them. People are being excluded. We do not want to see that. We want people to be able to get out and enjoy them. We want people to love our wild places and to be able to go hunting, fishing and camping and to do those things with their families — not just do those things that are greenie-approved activities, dictated by people in the city.

That is the way we are going. We are going down this path of very select groups being able to access them. It is even worse than that. We are going down the path of only being able to go into these places when you are part of a state-sanctioned activity, and that just seems ridiculous to me — absolutely ridiculous. The VEAC report has a part in it about hunting where it says that hunting may still take place as part of a controlled program managed by the government. Well, it is just not necessary. We do not want to become a society where the only time you go out of your house is to go to a government-organised event. This is a free country. We should be able to go out and enjoy those places freely, of our own volition, when we want to, not when the government says we can. That is why we have issues with the way in which these places are being managed, and that is why I have put this motion to the house today.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (15:00) — I am pleased to speak on behalf of the government on Mr Young's motion. I am happy to agree with some of his earlier sentiments that the crossbench have enriched the debate in this house, particularly the scope and the different types of issues that they have brought to this house to be debated. In saying that, I have to flag to the house that the government will not agree with Mr Young's take-note motion for reasons which I will allow outline soon, but I do want to state that the government will not support opposition amendments to this motion. We are not great believers in other parties and other individuals moving amendments to motions by other MLCs unless the mover of that motion agrees to those amendments or it is the mover of the motion that wants to amend that motion when they are on their feet, and a lot of times that might be due to goal dates being out of date because the motion has taken a while to get to the chamber for debate. So we will not be supporting those amendments.

We oppose some of the sentiment in Mr Young's motion in that we do not agree that the government has failed to properly manage public land in regional Victoria within some of the public land categories, and we do not agree with calling it outright neglect. I think a rule of thumb for government commitments is where they are prepared to put funding into certain areas. I just want to cover some of the extra funding that this government has put towards park management to refute Mr Young's claim that there has been neglect. Firstly, in terms of over 3000 parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria, this government has provided over \$70 million in the 2018–19 budget to improve management of parks and services provided to visitors and, very importantly, to secure 130 park ranger positions. On top of that there was over \$56 million in the 2015–16 budget and over \$38 million in the 2016–17 budget. That funding delivered 53 new ranger positions — ongoing staff to increase visitor services, to remove weeds and pests and to provide more education programs. Other initiatives included over \$30 million for the Grampians Peaks Trail and over \$5 million for waterway infrastructure, including repairing Kerferd Road, Seaford and Dromana piers.

We have also ensured that Parks Victoria can provide more access for even more people, particularly those with disability. Earlier this year Parks Victoria were awarded a gold medal at the RACV Victorian Tourism Awards for providing accessible nature-based tourism experiences for people of all ages and levels of ability. Just one example is the internationally award-winning Changing Places facility for people with severe physical disabilities at Arthurs Seat State Park, which opened in 2016. I have a good friend, Woody Marriott,

who has not got a disability and actually runs a tourist agency for people with disability. I know from discussions with him how important it is. These sorts of facilities like the Changing Places facility may not sound like a lot, but they are very important for people of all abilities who want to be able to access our parks. I think that is a very important thing.

It is important to put on the record that in the last term of government one in 10 Parks Victoria workers were terminated. One-tenth of the workforce at Parks Victoria was terminated during the last term of government. So the government shows a commitment around when they are prepared to increase funding and increase personnel and, importantly, as I said before, increase the number of rangers, who do such important work.

Mr Young did describe the amount of public land in the state. It is true that about a third of the state is public land, and half of that is state forest. These areas are very important to provide the sort of tourism that I spoke about before but also to conserve our native plants and animals. We have had a number of debates here around that in this term, and I think everyone would agree that that is a really important thing to be doing.

Mr Young touched on concerns around recommendations from the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC). VEAC is an independent statutory authority which provides independent advice to government about Victoria's public land estate.

Mr O'Sullivan interjected.

Mr LEANE — I find the interjections a bit surprising, because there is a long history of a bipartisan approach of support towards VEAC's engagement in providing recommendations on how a range of recreational activities are to be balanced across areas of public land. VEAC recently released its *Central West Investigation: Draft Proposals Paper* to continue its program of consultation before providing recommendations to government in 2019. This government can assure the community that existing well-loved recreational activities will be protected. In terms of the central west investigation, VEAC themselves recommended that four-wheel driving, trail biking, horseriding, mountain biking, bushwalking and camping continue in the investigation areas. This means of course that Victorians can keep enjoying the recreational activities that they are doing in what is a beautiful part of Victoria, I have got to say.

Mr Young's motion, paragraph (2), refers to reviewing national parks and ruling out the creation of a new

national park. I am not going to question Mr Young's intent and his —

Mr Dalidakis — But he is not even here. It is his own motion.

Mr LEANE — His buddy is here. He is listening. I am not going to question Mr Young's intent on the part of his motion that calls on the government to review the status of two national parks and rule out the creation of a new national park. As I said, I have sympathy towards his intent. I was accused of having too much sympathy for the intent of Ms Dunn's bill two weeks ago, but I actually have sympathy towards that intent. However, the government's position is that it opposes this motion completely. We are not going to be weaselly and try and move any amendments; we are just going to oppose it.

Mr Young's motion refers to the great forest national park. I think the coalition need to come clean. There was an article not long ago — a few months ago — in which it was said by one of Matthew Guy's close friends that he quietly supports the establishment of this national park. The friend said that Mr Guy loves nature and gets into the bush every chance he gets. I think this is a good thing.

Mr Ondarchie — Name that person.

Mr LEANE — It was an environmentalist friend; I cannot remember the person's name. The environmentalist friend said Mr Guy secretly supports the establishment of this national park. Mr Guy has not come out publicly and denied that. If Mr O'Sullivan wants to get up and beat his chest about not supporting the establishment of a new national park, he is not really reflecting the leader of his coalition. The leader of his coalition needs to come out and deny the statement that he supports the establishment of that particular national park. He does not have to deny everything about that article. I think we are all lovers of nature. It is great that he gets out and scoops water out of a stream and all that sort of stuff when he gets down on one knee. I think that is a beautiful thing. I think it is a great thing that he loves nature, and I think it is a great thing that he has got a friend who acknowledges that Mr Guy gets into the bush every chance that he gets. I call on Mr O'Sullivan to clarify the position, spare us all the chest beating and the weaselly attempts to move amendments —

Mr O'Sullivan — Do you support it, Shaun?

Mr LEANE — No, we actually oppose this motion. As I said, we have sympathy towards the intent of the mover. I think we have had two weeks where the

Greens party has moved a bill in support of establishing a national park and we have had the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party move a motion not to support that national park, so maybe the government is in the right place where we want to make sure that everyone can enjoy our public open spaces as best they can.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (15:12) — We have had a wacky contribution from Mr Leane — a very strange contribution, you would have to say.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DAVIS — No, I am not surprised. I have heard many of his contributions, and they are almost always wacky, but this one was right up there. I was very, very confused about what he actually meant.

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr DAVIS — He is one of the rorters. You actually signed for the handing over of several thousand dollars worth of public money. You signed time sheets, I think to help Nick Staikos in Bentleigh, didn't you? That is what you did. Crooked, corrupt, wrong, just outrageous —

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr DAVIS — You did these crooked things, and you need to be held to account for the crookedness that you and Labor indulged in. That is what you did. It was \$2000 — more than \$2000 in fact I think was the amount you signed forms for. I will just check.

Mr Leane interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Order! After Mr Davis's contribution you two can have a cup of tea and discuss this. I ask Mr Davis to go back to the motion.

Mr DAVIS — Acting President, I was provoked and thought it important to respond, given the strange contribution and the red shirt antics that this member has gotten up to over the last period.

Mr Young has brought a motion to the chamber that notes that this government has failed to properly manage public land in regional Victoria, with some public land categories being outright neglected. The Liberals and The Nationals have no objection to many of these paragraphs, and I will work my way through them in a systematic way. There is no doubt that public land management in regional Victoria has been neglected. The government has not put the resources in in terms of park support and park management. They

have not put the resources in in terms of fire management. They have not put the resources in on a whole range of different fronts to get the outcome that the community would want from the use of our public lands.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr DAVIS — Well, you are one of the few on the government's frontbench that is not one of the rorters. You are actually one of the few that is not a rorter, and I have to say you are one of the few that is actually entitled to speak in this chamber, in my view. This one over here signed the forms.

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr DAVIS — Did you sign them illegally? Did you sign them without knowledge?

Mr Leane — On a point of order, Acting President, I hate to break Mr Davis's heart, but any casual employee forms that I signed were after they did the work in my office. I am sorry to break your heart. After they did the work, at the end of the pay period —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Thank you, Mr Leane. Please have a seat. That is not a point of order at all.

Mr O'Sullivan — I raise a point of order, Acting President. Mr Leane, what was the work that they did? Can you tell that to the chamber, please?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr O'Sullivan, that is not a point of order.

Mr DAVIS — On a different point of order, Acting President, the member has said to the chamber that he did not sign for people who moved outside his office, but in fact Shaun Leane actually signed —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr Davis, this is not a point of order. Continue with your contribution on the motion.

Mr DAVIS — Acting President, perhaps you could advise me on how I can take up the matter of a false statement which is at odds with the Ombudsman's evidence.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — By substantive motion, Mr Davis. Also you may be able to make a contribution in reports.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — That will not be an option, because the government decided to close down the chamber early because they do not want to table the annual reports. I know what they are up to and why they are doing it. The 233 annual reports that are due to be tabled under the Financial Management Act 1994 by the end of October and the 25 reports from the universities and the alpine resorts —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Order! Mr Leane! Mr Dalidakis!

Mr DAVIS — If I can continue here, making the point that the government has decided to close down the chamber early because it wants to avoid the annual report for the department that would deal —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — No, no. The chamber, to my knowledge, has always sat in the month before an election. Indeed this will be a huge period of time — nearly two months, in fact more than two months, of time — when the chamber will not be sitting. The clear purpose is to make sure that key reports, like the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) annual report and the Parks Victoria report, are not tabled.

This motion would be improved if those reports were in the public domain. There are the decisions that the community could make on national parks as we come towards the election, and the management of national parks would be improved if the Parks Victoria report and the DELWP report were actually on the table. We will see whether they get tabled tomorrow, but my suspicion is that they will table the good ones tomorrow and hold the other ones until after the state election so that whoever is in government then will get a tranche of very nasty reports and nasty surprises in terms of DELWP and in terms of Parks Victoria in relation to this specific motion.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr DAVIS — Actually, we did not. We tabled our reports before the election, but your government in previous times has form on this, Mr Dalidakis, so some of us have seen it before and are interested to see whether they are going to try and pull that swiftie again.

Paragraph (1)(b) of the motion states:

the creation of national parks and other parks with similar levels of protection has a negative impact on many traditional bush users and residents of regional Victoria ...

I think that that is true. Where excessive numbers of national parks are created and where national parks are not operated in a way that is inclusive of many users, in fact the levels of protection will lead to a negative impact on many traditional bush users and residents of regional Victoria.

Paragraph (1) of the motion also states:

- (c) the value of public land is in its use and that restricting access for recreation on public land diminishes the connection people have with those lands and the public's ability to assist in management —

which is also undoubtedly true and a legitimate point that Mr Young has made —

- (d) the government has failed to listen to recreational user groups of public land and their concerns about public land being locked up and inaccessible ...

These are very legitimate points that Mr Young is making. And the recent —

Mr Dalidakis — When was the last time you got out of Kew?

Mr DAVIS — I get out of Kew all the time. I go all over the state, and I do that with great regularity — meeting my colleagues, meeting communities, meeting councils, meeting others and hearing exactly what is going on around our state. That is important to understand.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Mr DAVIS — I know that you used to be employed by the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, but you have turned your back on the timber industry. We know your outrageous behaviour in rejecting the timber industry. We will just know whether you end up creating the great forest national park and whether you actually sack all those timber workers. You make the decisions to close down the timber industry, and the way you are going it looks like your government has done a deal with the Greens and with a number of other groups to close down significant areas of land to public access for a whole range of points, including —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — I know you two want to be in coalition. I know that is what it is all about. The Labor Party and the Greens want to be in close coalition. Dr Ratnam is already putting on the record what she wants. They are already trying to pencil in their portfolios. Which one will have the environment? Which one will have agriculture? Imagine, Mr Dalidakis, the damage that would be done to the

timber industry in short order if Dr Ratnam or Ms Dunn were the minister for forestry, or the Treasurer or any other senior position — the minister responsible for the environment. Imagine Ms Dunn as minister for the environment. That is a prospect —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr Davis, I request that you reduce the amount of pointing that you are doing, as per the President's comments in this chamber.

Mr DAVIS — What is important here is that VEAC, the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council, has brought down a set of recommendations. I understand better than most in this chamber the history of VEAC going back into the 1970s. Dick Hamer was a very good friend of mine. We understand the history of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council and its importance, but we also understand that VEAC has in many respects lost its way. Its balance and its even-handedness have been diminished in recent years, and that is a concern. It is a loss to the state, and I think we need to be quite honest about what has gone here.

That diminishment of the independence and of the open-mindedness and community focus of VEAC is, I think, a loss to the state, but that is the truth. VEAC has become less independent than it once was and much more a creature of the Labor government — the Labor government that has appointed its board, the Labor government that gives it its riding instructions, the Labor government that is in many respects giving the directions.

I understand the concerns that many in country Victoria feel about the proposals to create Pyrenees and Mount Buangor national parks. I understand the concerns that have been put on the record by a number of members of the National Party and a number of members of the Liberal Party. They are concerned about what that will do.

Mr Dalidakis — Which ones? Name them?

Mr DAVIS — Mr Walsh in the Assembly, for example, has had quite a bit to say about this. Ms Staley, the member for Ripon in the Assembly, has had quite a bit to say about this. Let me give you an example about what Ms Staley has recently had to say about this, because she has been a champion of bush users. She has been a champion of those who would seek to make sure that the rights of those who want to access national parks and state parks are not unfairly and unreasonably diminished.

In recent days there has been an annual general meeting of the Prospectors and Miners Association. That was

held in Beaufort, and a number of people were there. In fact a number of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party were there, and I know that Ms Staley was there, and she put the position of the Liberals and Nationals very, very clearly. She made it clear that we do not support the creation of the national park in the Pyrenees or the Mount Buangor national park. It is not our position that we support those.

The impact on the bush users is the main reason for that. It is clear that the restrictions that it would place on hunting, on dog walking, on prospecting, on horseriding and on some aspects of agriculture are significant, and those impacts mean that it is not supported by the Liberals and The Nationals in that sense. We are actually clearly opposed to that. The meeting was held in Beaufort, and I note that there was no member of the Labor Party there despite being invited. There was no member of the Greens there despite being invited. You could not be bothered to go and put your case to community groups. It is all very well to slink away and hide instead of actually going forward to put your case in an honest forum. They would not turn up. They took the day off. They stayed home. Mr Dalidakis stayed in Melbourne that day; he did not want to go either.

Mr Dalidakis — What was the date?

Mr DAVIS — I can tell you it was in the last two weeks, and it was the Prospectors and Miners Association of Victoria annual general meeting in Beaufort.

Mr Dalidakis — What was the date?

Mr DAVIS — I can't tell you the date, but I can tell you it was in the last two weeks.

Mr Dalidakis — Give me the date.

Mr DAVIS — I can find the date for you, but I know it was in the last two weeks, and I have had a number of reports from the meeting. I know that the Shooters and Fishers were there. There was no Labor and there were no Greens present at that meeting. So let us be clear: they have deserted the field. In fact Ms Lovell just made the quiet point to me that the Greens candidate in Shepparton claims to be a brown. That is her phrase. I find that interesting in itself.

My point here is that the Liberal Party and the National Party oppose the creation of those two national parks given the economic and social impact on the local communities. The local community has a legitimate right to have its views heard. Those matters of economic and social impact on the local community

need to be considered in addition to the environmental and social impact more broadly. The local community has got to have a say, and the failure of Labor and the failure of the Greens to attend the forum is a significant strike, I think, against them. It is true that if those two parks — the Pyrenees and Mount Buangor — were brought forward, there would be a significant reduction in public land that is available for hunting, for dog walking, for prospecting and for horseriding. I note that many in the community want to see those points held to the fore.

The second point of Mr Young's motion:

calls on the government to —

- (a) reject any recommendations by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council that would change public land classifications to a more restrictive category;
- (b) review the national park status of the Barmah forest national park and the river red gum national park;
- (c) rule out the creation of the great forest national park; and
- (d) fix the access, boundaries and signage of the 200 state game reserves ...

I am going to start backwards here and look at the last point. We actually agree with that. We need clarity of access, we need better boundaries and we need better signage in the 200 state game reserves across the state. We do actually need to do the work to improve that signalling for the community about what land uses are actually allowed in a particular location. That is a legitimate point that Mr Young has made.

He has also asked for the ruling out of the creation of the great forest national park. We are very familiar with the great forest national park in this chamber. Ms Dunn has talked about it endlessly — I think that is probably a fair description — to the chagrin, if I can put it that way, of the Minister for Agriculture, who has been asked again and again about the great forest national park, about gliders and about possums and other creatures that inhabit that area of that state. I understand the legitimate points that are made about our fauna, but I do nonetheless understand that you do not always get the best outcome in terms of protection by the declaration of a national park. The declaration of a national park in very many respects restricts usage and restricts the assistance that can be provided in the management of those areas.

In terms of the long-term fire prevention in many areas, what we tend to see is that we have poor management of fire in our national parks over a longer period, and over that longer period we then see the risk of catastrophic bushfires occurring, which can sweep

through very large extents of that terrain and put at risk much of the flora and fauna in a catastrophic way. Proper land management, thoughtful land management and land management that is focused on the best long-term outcomes sees proper fire prevention measures put in place in a rolling way that actually sees burning undertaken.

It is very clear from the work of the royal commission, the report of which was tabled in this chamber back in 2009, that our land management practices had slipped. It is very clear from the evidence that was brought forward to the bushfire prevention inquiry. The Environment and Planning Committee of this Parliament, which I chaired, had an enormous amount of evidence presented to it about the failure of land management and the failure of fire management over a longer period. That failure of land management and that failure of forest management over a longer period of time is a great concern. We have seen those catastrophic fires, we have seen the damage they do in terms of life and property, but equally we have seen the terrible damage that they have done in terms of the flora and fauna of our major areas of forest. Ruling out the creation of the great forest national park in no way says that you are not in favour of preserving flora and fauna; it just says that you want a better management system and you want better access and you want better involvement of those who use the forest in that management.

The point I would make here is that the coalition has been very concerned about the government's direction with the great forest national park. It is clear from the rumours that have come out and have been widely reported in the newspapers that the government intends to pretty much close down logging in this state, that it intends to move away from any hardwood logging and intends to move over a 10-year period at the loss of tens of thousands of timber worker jobs —

Mr Dalidakis — This is your new timing clock.

Mr DAVIS — Acting President, I do not know what the minister thinks he is doing, but this is quite a serious matter. You may think this is an amusing matter, but it is actually not an amusing matter; it is a serious matter.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr Davis, please just ignore Mr Dalidakis.

Mr DAVIS — The coalition has obviously got great concerns about the great forest national park. We also, as I have said, have issues with the points in paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b). We reject the idea to:

reject any recommendations by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council that would change public land classification to a more restrictive category ...

Let us think about this. It is possible that at some time in the future VEAC may come forward with a recommendation that is plausible, sensible and balanced. There may be some greater restriction in some areas and some change in other areas, and there may, on balance, be a better outcome for the management of our forests. We think that that is just a bit too strong. Whilst I understand the intent of what Mr Young is seeking to achieve, it is true that it is not something that the opposition could support.

In terms of the review of the national park status of Barmah National Park and river red gums national park, we think that that is also a bridge too far at this point, which is not to say that there are not very legitimate criticisms that can be made about the management of both of those parks. There are genuine issues about the quality of the management and there are genuine issues about the outcome of that management. In that context the opposition will seek to move amendments, which I would appreciate the clerks and others circulating, if that is possible. I move:

1. Omit paragraphs (2)(a) and (2)(b).
2. In paragraph (2) renumber "(2)(c)" to "(2)(a)" and "(2)(d)" to "(2)(b)".

Mr DAVIS — With those amendments we will seek —

Mr Melhem interjected.

Mr DAVIS — I think Mr Melhem is suffering from last-day syndrome.

Mr Melhem — You did say something about the red coats.

Mr DAVIS — I have a high regard for the red coats, Mr Melhem, unlike you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Thank you, Mr Davis. You may proceed.

Mr DAVIS — The amendments seek to omit —

Mr Dalidakis — On a point of order, Acting President, I believe the member has misled the chamber. He only has a high regard for himself.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — I am not even going to respond. Mr Dalidakis, please! Mr Davis, please continue.

Mr DAVIS — I think the syndrome is spreading, and the last-day syndrome has obviously got a significant grip on some in the chamber.

What I would say is our amendments are very straightforward. They seek to omit paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b). As I said, one of those paragraphs calls for the rejection of any recommendations — and I hasten to repeat the word ‘any’ — of VEAC, and the other paragraph calls for a review of the national park status of Barmah National Park and river red gums national park. Ms Lovell and others have made the point that there does need to be some sensible focus on better outcomes in those forests, but in this circumstance we will seek to omit paragraphs 2(a) and 2(b), and I ask for the chamber’s support. In conclusion, I make the point that Mr Young has brought this motion in good faith. It has some significant merit to it. We cannot support all of it, but we can support the vast majority of it.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (15:36) — It is good fortune in fact that we are considering this motion today and a gift, yet again, that we are talking about protecting natural and cultural heritage in Victoria. I think there have been a few motions before this house that were very similar to the one before us today. I must say, I never tire of talking about how important our national parks are and how important our environment is. So I thank Mr Young for his motion in that respect.

There is a bunch of issues of course that the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party raise with this motion, and I will endeavour to comment on them as we go through, but firstly I would just like to pick up the points made in relation to the amendments proposed by Mr Davis. I am not actually quite sure when Mr Young got notice of these particular amendments —

Mr Davis — He did, and he referred to them.

Ms DUNN — Mr Davis, I said that I was not sure when that occurred. However, there is generally a convention of this house that amendments are circulated to parties so we are aware of them before the debate starts. That simply did not happen in this case in relation to the Greens. We did not see this amendment before it was given to me by the red coat earlier in Mr Davis’s contribution. It is my understanding that there is no agreement with the mover of the motion, Mr Young, to support these particular amendments, and there has of course no notice been given to the Greens in relation to that.

Although we have issues with Mr Young’s motion, we certainly will not be supporting the amendments put by Mr Davis. It is the right of members to bring to the

house issues that they think are important, and we should be debating those matters that they think are the priority for the house.

Firstly, this motion claims that the Andrews government has failed to properly manage public land in regional Victoria, with some public land categories being outright neglected. In relation to this point Mr Young is spot-on. This government has indeed failed to properly manage much of the public land in regional Victoria. The category that comes most to mind is state forest. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and her department have been negligent in failing to prosecute their role as regulator of native forest logging in this state. Time and time again we have seen the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning fail to take action when there have been clear breaches of the logging code of practice. They allow statutes of limitation to expire, they fail to collect evidence and bury the investigations under bureaucracy instead of taking them to court.

Mr Young is also spot-on in that this government has failed to fully reverse the cuts to Parks Victoria that were made by its predecessors. While some national and state parks are adequately funded and resourced, others have been neglected. The further the park is from Melbourne the less funding it seems to get.

A prime example of neglect is the Nyah-Vinifera Park on the banks of the Murray near Swan Hill. This park is only a decade old and came about through many years of campaigning by the local community, including Indigenous custodians. All of its initial basic infrastructure has fallen into disrepair. Signs have fallen over and dirt tracks have been rutted, so access by vehicle is challenging and there are weeds and young eucalypt saplings everywhere due to a lack of overbank watering. This park is overwhelmed by campers during the popular Easter long weekend, which brings thousands of dollars to the north-west, yet it does not have a single toilet facility or any other infrastructure to deal with the visitor numbers.

It is true that the Andrews government has failed to be a proper steward of public lands in Victoria. As a state we must do better. The Greens will always stand up for protecting the natural environment and properly resourcing Parks Victoria so that we can enjoy the environment both now and for generations to come.

While the Greens may agree on the statement at the start of this motion’s text, the logic of the motion then proceeds to fall apart. The Shooters and Fishers go on to claim, and I quote from the motion:

the creation of national parks and other parks with similar levels of protection has a negative impact on many traditional bush users and residents of regional Victoria ...

This assertion is false. I note that in the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) *Central West Investigation: Draft Proposals Paper*, a document that seems to be giving Mr Young quite a headache, it states on page 1:

Four-wheel driving, trail bike riding, mountain biking, horseriding, car rallies, camping, bee keeping and dog walking in specific designated sites, can all be accommodated in national parks.

The Shooters and Fishers very well know that plans for the great forest national park allow the continued pursuit of many recreational activities in specified areas. This is spelt out in the comprehensive proposal for the great forest national park.

Of course Mr Young's motion refers to traditional bush users, yet it completely ignores the wishes and interests of Victoria's original bush users — the many Indigenous clans across Victoria. There is no recognition of Indigenous values in Mr Young's motion. There is no recognition of their stewardship of the land. There is no consideration of the fact that none of the First Nations whose traditional lands cover the Central Highlands region have given permission for the state government to log and sell native forests.

The only traditional bush users that Mr Young can be referring to here are his preferred type of bush user — extractive bush users such as prospectors and duck hunters. Mr Young then doubles down this favouritism for this type of user because he goes on to claim, and I quote from the text of the motion, 'the value of public land is in its use'. Mr Young has let it be known with this statement that he thinks there is no value in nature beyond what humans can extract from it. He thinks there is no intrinsic worth to be had in an untouched paradise like the old-growth forests in East Gippsland, that there is no intrinsic beauty to a flock of endangered migratory birds flying above a wetland and that if a beach lies untouched, it would be a waste not to be able to drive all over it with a dune buggy.

Mr Young could not be more wrong. The value of public land is not in its use. The value of public land, if we must look at it through an economic frame, is in its existence. These wild parts of this state have been there for millennia before the land was even given the status of being a state — well before Mr Young's ancestors or my ancestors arrived on boats. We must conserve those areas simply because they exist.

Mr Young goes on to claim that if we do not allow extractive use in our public lands we will not include people in their collective management. It is true that many of our public lands have been mismanaged, but some of the worst mismanagement has been precisely the type of extractive use that Mr Young prefers. Our state forests have been overlogged, and as a result we have pushed many endemic species close to extinction. There are some challenges that face public lands in state and national parks. Introduced pests such as deer, rabbits and feral cats can be found in some areas in many of our parks. We have failed to control them. The impacts of climate change can already be felt through more severe weather events such as extended dry spells, exceptionally intense rainfall and more intense bushfires. It is the responsibility of the state through its government to reduce the impact of these threats and to rehabilitate areas of public land that have been neglected. But banning the creation of national parks or state parks is not the way to do that.

Blaming the parks management system for failings which at their heart are caused by decades of under-resourcing is what Mr Young and his ilk are about. They claim the symptoms of under-resourcing and funding cuts are inherent to park management. Well, they are wrong. We can have world-class parks that attract visitors from near and far and create thousands of jobs, if we invest in them. We can have natural wonders saved for generations to come, if we care for them. We can have many recreational activities exist side by side with the original traditional bush users, our Indigenous clans, if we involve them in the creation, planning and management of our parks.

What Mr Young fails to appreciate is that the prime, mutually-exclusive activity that takes place on public land is native forest logging. You cannot do any type of activity in forests when there is a logging exclusion in place. You cannot drive on a road that has been requisitioned for a logging coupe. You cannot enjoy the trees or nature of a logged coupe because it is a wasteland. Where the Shooters and Fishers have failed their namesakes is in failing to recognise the terrible impacts of logging on the natural values that Shooters and Fishers purportedly enjoy.

We all know that the best way to lock people out of public land is to create a timber harvest safety zone. It is those things, those instruments, that lock people out of public land. It is certainly not the creation of national parks. We know that logging in the Rubicon Valley will have a major impact on the Snobs Creek hatchery, which provides fingerlings for recreational fishing across the state. We know workers at Snobs Creek have been gagged from publicly commenting, yet Mr Young

has been completely silent on these impacts and has failed the recreational fishing community.

The second part of this motion starts by calling on the government to reject any recommendations by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council that would change public land classifications, including the creation of a national or state park. Clearly Mr Young has been spooked by the *Central West Investigation Draft Proposals Paper* released last month by VEAC. Clearly their approach of investigating the comprehensive set of values of these public lands and their diverse values to the broader community is not something that Mr Young is a fan of.

Mr Ramsay — You want to lock up 79 000 hectares.

Ms DUNN — And judging by the interjections, it would appear that Mr Ramsay is not a fan either.

Mr Ramsay — Correct.

Ms DUNN — The Greens welcome many of the recommendations in the proposals paper, particularly the proposal for an increase of 61 000 hectares in protected areas and a reduction in areas of state forest. We urgently need to increase protected land for our precious plants and animals. Habitat is being lost at an alarming rate, with more and more species on the brink of extinction. The Greens welcome VEAC's recommendations to substantially increase the protection of important habitat with new national parks and protected land. We agree with VEAC that the implementation of these recommendations would be a major step towards a comprehensive, adequate and representative protected area system in Victoria.

The Greens outright reject the opposition of Mr Young — that we do not need national parks. National parks are vital to the protection of critical habitat and are important places for all Victorians. The Greens also reject the claim that recreational hunters should be allowed into national parks. Decades of research show that recreational hunting is ineffective in managing feral species like deer, and allowing amateur shooters into national parks is dangerous for people.

Mr Ramsay — Who is going to shoot the deer?

Ms DUNN — There is a thing called professional shooters, Mr Ramsay. The Greens policy is to use professional, humane and evidenced-based controls for invasive species and to invest in research to find new and better ways of controlling pests and invasive species. The Labor government has not invested in this research and has not done enough to protect our

environment and farms from invasive species. The Greens call on anyone in Victoria who cares about our environment to respond to VEAC's draft recommendations that put pressure on all sides of politics to deliver a strong set of final recommendations to Victoria's next government.

However, in relation to those recommendations, we oppose the draft recommendations that specify that areas of Mount Cole and Mount Lonarch should be left open to intensive logging, particularly considering the impacts this would have on the popular Beeripmo Walk and the Wimmera River. The fact that logging would be slated for this area continues to show just how desperate VicForests is to find timber. It is logging these important conservation areas that represent biomes that are now scant in this state. And to think the logs that would be extracted from this forest would be of low value — not for use in appearance-grade timber, not for use in furniture. Firewood and pulpwood is all you will get out of Mount Cole and Mount Lonarch.

Mr Young's motion then takes a turn towards the Murray River and once again shows his true colours as someone who does not care a whit about the values of heritage and the aspirations of the traditional custodians, the First Nations people of this land. He calls for the Barmah National Park and the river red gums national parks to be delisted despite the fact it took years of campaigning and petitioning by local leaders to get those parks created. He wants that community legacy wiped out. Why on earth would we be reviewing national parks when they are providing such ecological fortunes to people and the ecology of those regions? It would be a retrograde step to reverse the status of those regions that are currently national parks.

Mr Young must have some pet peeve that these parks were created, yet I cannot see why, because the Labor government of the time did a dirty deal in 2010 whereby 40 per cent of the new river red gums parks were left open for duck shooting so Mr Young could go about his cruel pursuit. The Murray River national and state parks must not be delisted. They must stay as parks. They must be properly resourced. Duck shooting in them should forever be banned. The parks must receive proper overbank watering to save these unique ecosystems. The state government must take proper care of these parks instead of underfunding them and failing on past commitments made to the local community.

Mr Young's motion then returns to familiar territory for this house — that is, Mr Young's tone-deaf opposition to the community-led proposal for a great forest

national park. If Mr Young is so interested in ensuring that recreational activities can take place on public land, then he should come out and support the great forest national park, a proposal that has broad support in the community, including among many small businesses in the Central Highlands that would have a great deal to gain from an increase in visitors that the park would attract.

There are five key reasons why there should be a great forest national park. Number one, biodiversity: it would provide conservation of near-extinct wildlife and plants after decades of overlogging and the impacts of the tragic 2009 bushfires and it would certainly provide refugia in light of any future fire events. Number two, water: for the protection of the water catchments of Melbourne and the Latrobe and Goulburn-Murray river systems. This is the largest area of clean water and catchment in Victoria, and it is significant in providing security to the food bowl and Melbourne's community. Number three, tourism: this is one of Victoria's richest ecological assets, and these magnificent forests have not yet been included in a state plan to encourage tourism. Our rural towns want and need this. Four, climate: these forests store more carbon per hectare than any other forests studied in the world. They sequester carbon, modulate the climate and act as giant storage banks to absorb excess carbon when they are not logged. The financial opportunity in carbon credits is significant and would be an opportunity for this state, rather than logging and trashing those carbon stores. Number five: they are places of spiritual nourishment. These forests have been described as a keeping place by the traditional owners, a place to secure the story of the land and places of spiritual nourishment that we pass on to future generations. There is no price tag on the value nature brings to mental health and spiritual wellbeing.

It is incorrect to say that the great forest national park is a whim of people in the city and does not have local support. Indeed the great forest national park was born out of locals looking for an opportunity and a future post the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009. It was locals who came together and looked at what could be a vision for their area as they stood there lamenting the enormous losses that fire caused in their region. There are many locals in the area deeply embedded in the aspiration for a great forest national park. They live in the region; they are not city-based. They are certainly pleased to see that their friends in the city take up their causes, because they know that the opportunities are enormous in regional Victoria for a great forest national park, whether that is economic opportunities or ecological opportunities.

In relation to this motion, the Greens will not be supporting it. I know that comes as a surprise to you, Mr Young.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms DUNN — Clearly other members in the house are very surprised to hear that as well. We will not be supporting this motion, and we look forward to a day when we can celebrate the creation of the great forest national park.

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (15:56) — I will not speak too long in my reply to debate on this motion. I will just quickly thank the members who contributed and say how predictable the Greens contribution was. It was truly a delight to sit here and tick all the boxes of the things I knew they were going to say. Their rhetoric is nothing if not consistent.

Just to take up one point, once again, while trying to point out my biased views on what activities are acceptable or not, the Greens contribution by Ms Dunn illustrated that they are the ones with the biased views, because when responding to my comment about the value of land being in its use, Ms Dunn put it to us that that is somehow a bad thing. Obviously we have a very different view, but they claim I said there is no value in it when it is not being used; that is not in fact what I said. It is a misrepresentation of what I said, and to suggest that it cannot be used in its natural state is wrong, because one of the very first things I said in my contribution was that many people like to go out to these places and just sit in the quiet and enjoy them as they are. It is literally something that I said.

So, once again, the Greens have only listened to the bits that they wanted to hear. They have not listened to everything. Again, they have demonstrated that they want to nitpick and choose who gets to do what. They are about banning things and restricting people. They are not about the inclusion of all of the things that we have talked about today. They just want the things they do not like stopped.

The other thing I want to touch on is the fact that throughout my contribution I have missed out on talking about state game reserves, which is fitting because that is the whole point. State game reserves have been forgotten by Parks Victoria, the land manager responsible for them; they have been forgotten for many years. So it is fitting that I did not get enough time to talk about them before.

But I would have to say that my record in this place has probably well and truly covered off the issues around state game reserves, and we hope that in the future we

can make some headway on their management, on fixing them and on restoring them to a state that they should be in and that they deserve to be in. They are wonderful places, and hopefully we can have some significant change into the way they are managed. The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party have attempted to do that.

We have attempted to make amendments to the operation of the Game Management Authority to make it a better authority, to make it bigger and to be able to take on more important roles. Part of that is our policy of having state game reserves managed by the Game Management Authority. After all, they are pieces of public land and their intended purpose is for hunting. So it makes sense that the regulatory body, the statutory authority, that manages hunting would have a crucial role in their management, but we would also like to see the actual role in their management sit with the Game Management Authority.

On that, I would like to once again thank everyone for their contributions and commend the motion to the house.

The PRESIDENT — Mr Davis has moved two amendments to Mr Young’s motion, and the first one is a test for the second one.

House divided on amendment 1:

Ayes, 16

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

Noes, 24

Bourman, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Patten, Ms
Carling-Jenkins, Dr	Pennicuik, Ms
Dalidakis, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Dunn, Ms	Purcell, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)
Eideh, Mr	Ratnam, Dr
Elasmar, Mr	Shing, Ms
Gepp, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Springle, Ms
Leane, Mr	Symes, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Tierney, Ms
Mikakos, Ms	Truong, Ms
Mulino, Mr	Young, Mr

Amendment negatived.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 20

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

Noes, 20

Dalidakis, Mr	Patten, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Dunn, Ms	Pennicuik, Ms
Eideh, Mr	Pulford, Ms
Elasmar, Mr	Ratnam, Dr
Gepp, Mr	Shing, Ms
Jennings, Mr	Somyurek, Mr
Leane, Mr	Springle, Ms
Melhem, Mr	Symes, Ms
Mikakos, Ms	Tierney, Ms
Mulino, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Truong, Ms

Motion negatived.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

The Clerk (16:13) — I have received the following letters from the Attorney-General. The first letter:

I refer to the Legislative Council’s resolution of 25 July 2018 which, among other things:

- (1) notes the failure of the Leader of the Government to comply, to the satisfaction of the house, with the resolution of the Council of 23 November 2016 requiring the Leader of the Government to table in the Council certain documents relating to the weekly briefing compendium sent from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services; and
- (2) requires the Leader of the Government to table the documents required to be tabled by the resolution of the Council of 23 November 2016 that have not already been tabled.

The government has identified 25 documents as falling within the scope of the Council’s order of 25 July 2018. It has assessed these documents against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council’s power to call for documents and the government’s approach to claiming executive privilege.

The government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to 21 of the documents in part, on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedule refers to the documents in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

A further letter from the Attorney-General:

Order for the production of documents — Cricket Victoria lease of Junction Oval

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 20 June 2018 requiring the Leader of the Government to produce to the house by 2.00 p.m. on 4 July 2018 a copy of all documents in full, concerning the Andrews government's agreement to give Cricket Victoria ownership of buildings and fixtures at Junction Oval for the duration of its lease ('the agreement'), including —

- (1) a copy of the 30 June 2016 lease pertaining to Junction Oval, and any subsequent changes to the lease;
- (2) ministerial briefings and all correspondence, including emails, relating to the agreement, between the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Sport, the Premier, the Minister for Planning, the member for Albert Park, Cricket Victoria and Cricket Australia, and their lawyers and agents;
- (3) all contracts, assessments and analyses of the value of the buildings and fixtures;
- (4) ministerial briefings and all correspondence, including emails and contracts, about the use of the name Citipower Centre; and
- (5) ministerial briefings and all correspondence, including emails and contracts, about community access to the Citipower Centre.

The government has identified 289 documents falling within the scope of the Council's order of 20 June 2018. It has assessed these documents against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege.

The government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to 38 of the documents in full and 61 of the documents in part, on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedule refers to the documents in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

A further letter from the Attorney-General:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 6 June 2018 requiring the Leader of the Government to produce to the house by 2.00 p.m. on 19 June 2018 the following:

- (1) a copy of all documents in full, concerning the Andrews government's decision to provide a long-term concession for the Australian Football League (AFL) to locate its headquarters on a parcel of waterfront land in Docklands, including —
 - a. all correspondence, including emails, relating to this concession between the Department of

Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Sport, the Premier, the Minister for Planning and the AFL, its lawyers and agents;

- b. all contracts, assessments and analyses of, in particular, but not limited to, the value of the land;
- c. all assessments, opinions or commentary provided by the Victorian valuer-general and/or the Victorian Government Land Monitor;
- d. all ministerial briefings; and

- (2) similarly, the arrangements struck by the Andrews Labor government with the AFL concerning Etihad Stadium, including financial and other arrangements, and including, but not limited to, any long-term leases and the detailed provision of this concession and including the delivery of (1)(a) to (d) above.

In the time available, the government has not been able to fully assess all of the documents falling within the scope of the order. However, the government has identified the funding and commitment deed dated 13 April 2018 between the state of Victoria and the AFL (the deed) as the key document and has assessed the deed against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege.

The government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to parts of the deed on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedule refers to the deed, in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

A further letter from the Attorney-General:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 20 June 2018 requiring the Leader of the Government to produce to the house by 2.00 p.m. on 17 July 2018 a copy of all documents in full, dated from 1 February 2017 to present, concerning the Andrews government's trial of a medically supervised injecting centre, including —

- (1) all correspondence, including briefs, emails, letters and typed and handwritten departmental notes, relating to the medically supervised injecting centre between any of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Mental Health, the Premier and North Richmond Community Health;
- (2) all correspondence, including briefs, emails, letters and typed and handwritten departmental notes, relating to the medically supervised injecting centre between any of the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Education, the Premier and Richmond West Primary School;

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- (3) all contracts or amended service agreements between the Department of Health and Human Services and North Richmond Community Health;
 - (4) all contracts or amended service agreements between North Richmond Community Health and any service providers, including syringe suppliers, construction, waste disposal and security contractors;
 - (5) any correspondence to and from the Department of Health and Human Services relating to the drafting of the regulations;
 - (6) all reports or minutes of consultation with stakeholders including at residential, business and community stakeholder forums;
 - (7) all ministerial and department secretary briefings or memos; and
 - (8) a schedule of documents not produced on the basis of executive privilege.
- (5) the electronic presentation of the 3D modelling showed to residents in the Level Crossing Removal Authority's one-on-one consultations;
 - (6) the minutes, agendas and correspondence of the community consultation panel chaired by Mr Stephen Dimopoulos, MP, member for Oakleigh;
 - (7) assessments of alternate models of level crossing removals considered by government; and
 - (8) the full business case for the government's announced sky rail option, or such of the business case that has been completed to date.

In the time available, the government has not been able to fully assess all of the documents falling within the scope of the order. However, the government has identified 165 documents that are within the scope of parts 3 to 7 of the order and has agreed to provide these as the first tranche of documents. It has assessed these documents against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege.

The government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to 101 of the documents in full and three of the documents in part, on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedule refers to the documents in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

A final letter from the Attorney-General:

I refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 24 February 2016 requiring:

that, in accordance with standing order 11.01, a copy of all documents created or referred to since 4 December 2014 relating to the level crossing removal project Caulfield to Dandenong project proposal be tabled in the Council by 12 noon on Tuesday, 22 March 2016, including but not limited to —

- (1) any sound and vibration attenuation studies and shadowing studies;
- (2) any directions given to research organisations regarding the make-up of focus groups and the product of any such research;
- (3) details of submissions and comment either for or against elevated rail;
- (4) de-identified copies of all Level Crossing Removal Authority communications with the community;

I also refer to the Legislative Council's resolution of 1 November 2017 which, among other things, reiterates the Council's order of 24 February 2016 and requires those documents be provided in full by 14 November 2017.

On 20 June 2016, the Attorney-General wrote to the Council to invite members of the Council to attend a presentation of the 3D modelling shown to residents to satisfy paragraph (5) of the order. The presentation took place on 27 June 2016.

The government has identified a further 1582 documents falling within the scope of the Council's order of 24 February 2016. It has assessed these documents against the factors listed in my letters to you of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016, which note the limits on the Council's power to call for documents and the government's approach to claiming executive privilege.

The government, on behalf of the Crown, makes a claim of executive privilege in relation to 35 of the documents in full and eight of the documents in part, on the basis that their disclosure would be contrary to the public interest on one or more of the bases described in my letters of 14 April 2015 and 29 April 2016. In compliance with standing orders 11.02(3) and 11.03(1)(a), the attached schedule refers to the documents in respect of which a claim of executive privilege is made.

The PRESIDENT — Just in respect of those production of documents communications from the Attorney-General, further to the Clerk's reporting of the letters from the Attorney-General in relation to production of documents I wish to advise the house of the following. The electronic version of these documents will not be available for at least another day. During the period the electronic documents are being checked, further end of Parliament processes around the tabling of other papers, including annual reports tomorrow, must take precedence. The hard copies for all documents returned by government referred to in the letters just read by the Clerk are available for viewing only in meeting room 3 on the ground floor. An attendant is on duty in new meeting room 3, near meeting room 1 on the ground floor, and the documents will be available for viewing until the rising of the house this evening.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Ms Wooldridge (Eastern Metropolitan):**

That this house notes that after four long years Victoria is beset with problems caused by Premier Daniel Andrews and his Labor government and Victorians are now faced with —

- (1) the highest crimes against the person offence numbers in Victoria's history;
- (2) sentences and a bail system that do not meet community expectations;
- (3) a youth justice system in crisis;
- (4) rising electricity prices due to Labor's forced closure of Hazelwood power station;
- (5) increasing traffic congestion on our freeways and in our suburbs;
- (6) a \$1.3 billion bill for not building the east-west link;
- (7) the betrayal of 60 000 Country Fire Authority volunteers and their communities;
- (8) six ministers and six Labor members whose actions are under police investigation;
- (9) 74 cancer beds axed at a cost to taxpayers of \$100 million;
- (10) a broken education system and a vocational education and training system with ongoing cuts and reduced enrolments;
- (11) watered-down planning protections;
- (12) sporting organisations and community clubs forced to take out loans;
- (13) farmers and regional communities being ignored and funding cuts for local country roads;
- (14) an ice injecting room;
- (15) blowouts in public housing waiting lists and dental waiting lists;
- (16) 14 straight negative Sensis small business index results;
- (17) no plan to manage Victoria's population;

and further notes that Premier Daniel Andrews has presided over a dysfunctional, rotting and morally corrupt government plagued by infighting, mismanagement, favouritism and crisis focused only on itself and not on Victorians.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (16:22) — I am pleased to rise and speak in relation to this motion on the failings of the Andrews government. I congratulate my colleagues who have spoken extensively about the many issues that are identified in this motion and the many issues that flow from this

motion. Given there are those that wish to speak on this motion before the 5 o'clock deadline I will keep my remarks relatively concise, to a couple of the main topics.

I concur with the comments that others have made about crime and the out-of-control nature of crime under the Andrews Labor government. It is no surprise that when you weaken the sentencing regime, you legalise breaching bail by juveniles, you cut police numbers per capita, you turn the Victoria Police Academy into a ghost town and you send the wrong signals to criminals that crime goes up. Daniel Andrews loves to talk about the police he has funded and the things he is doing. He had his head in the sand and was asleep at the wheel for more than two years. I went out to the police academy twice in the early stages of the current government, and both times there was virtually no-one there except police looking for people to train. But of course they were no people to train because one of the first decisions of Daniel Andrews was to stop the successful recruitment of more police.

Police numbers per capita went down, frontline police at stations were pushed to breaking point and crime started to surge out of control. As Police Association Victoria have said in recent weeks, there are 190 fewer frontline police now than five years ago, but Victoria's population has grown by more than the size of Tasmania in that time. It is no wonder that we have a law and order problem, and it is the crimes that keep people awake at night.

The Minister for Police, Lisa Neville, said, 'Victorians don't feel safe in their own homes', and she is right. Lisa Neville also promised that the Bellarine police stations would be open 16 hours a day. She has failed. Did she knowingly lie or has she just not been able to deliver as a minister? Either way she has misled her own constituents and she has misled the people of Victoria. She has failed as a police minister, she has failed terribly, and Victorians have paid the consequence. I echo the comments that others have made about the serious impact of violent crime and the impact on victims of crime and innocent Victorians. We have got to reconfigure the justice system to put victims at the centre of it rather than being an afterthought, as they have been on so many occasions.

Of course the red shirts issue just goes to the heart of the disgraceful nature of this government — a government, a party, that will do or say anything to win or retain power. That is their objective. It is not to improve the lives of Victorians. It is not to deliver a better society. It is not to work for the benefit of the community. It is to win and retain power. That is the

modus operandi of Labor, and they will do anything they think they can get away with. As John Lenders said to the Privileges Committee, he was wilfully blind to what were the consequences. They submitted the invoices, and they were paid. Honestly, this is a man who had been a minister for years and years.

We were told the east–west link was not worth the paper it was written on. We were told it would not cost a dollar. Some \$1.3 billion to \$1.4 billion later and Victorians are still paying the price. That key piece of infrastructure would now be completed or close to being completed had that contract not been ripped up.

Mr Mulino interjected.

Mr O'DONOHUE — Dr Mulino interjects. Well, one of the upsides of being a relatively high-cost economy with a regulatory regime with low sovereign risk is that the benefits of certainty help to offset the higher cost that comes from a developed modern economy. But with what Daniel Andrews has done, with what Dr Mulino and his colleagues have done, we have the high cost but now we do not have the regulatory certainty. We now have the sovereign risk issues as a result of the tearing up of that contract — a terrible, terrible decision.

I just want to focus for a few minutes on the corrections system. When the coalition government left office in November 2014 consistently there were under 100 prisoners in police cells each night because of the prison expansion program that it had delivered, and prisoners were being presented to court. Yes, there had been some challenging periods following reforms to the parole system, but when we left government there were consistently under 100 prisoners in police cells each night and prisoners were being presented to court. We left a forward infrastructure legacy of an additional roughly 2000 prison beds to be delivered. There was the new Ravenhall prison, a 1300-bed prison; the new Karreenga annexe at Lara, a 300-bed prison; and extra prison capacity at various other prisons that came online.

The Andrews government have had the benefit of that extra capacity and the benefit of that forward planning, and they have done nothing. The biggest thing they have done in the corrections system in four years is to rebuild the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC). That is the ultimate self-inflicted wound — \$100 million or more of taxpayer dollars to fix a prison that was completely and utterly trashed by the prisoners of the Metropolitan Remand Centre. I just want to say that in addition to the financial cost there was the impact on a number of prison officers who were on duty that day

and that night who have been left with deep physical and psychological injuries. I just want to acknowledge them and pay tribute to them for their courage and the things they did to try and maintain the order in that prison as those 1000 prisoners took part in the worst prison riot in Victoria's history. But unfortunately that is just symptomatic of a corrections system that is in chaos and that continues to go from bad to worse.

Who will forget that in 2016 at Fulham prisoners were growing marijuana plants; 24 marijuana plants were found in the prison garden. You would expect prisoners to be growing some tomatoes, maybe some pumpkins or maybe some oranges in the prison garden. That is good; it gets the prisoners doing some work and growing some food. But they were growing marijuana plants. It was just a one-off chance that the prisoners were caught. Of course there was a prisoner at the same prison who was keeping his pet snake in his prison cell.

And who would forget the prisoners at Marngoneet that were forming on the oval to go on a riot because they wanted more money and they wanted Foxtel? They were getting ready to riot because they were demanding their Foxtel. I mean, who is in charge of the prison system? It certainly is not Minister Tierney. It definitely was not Minister Herbert, because he was too worried about Ted and Patch, wasn't he? He was focused on Ted and Patch. Minister Scott, to his credit, took on the role for a few months. Of course Minister Noonan, the gentle man and pleasant man that he is, was the minister who failed to prevent the MRC prison riot.

We also had the sex offenders at the Hopkins prison caught making child pornography. You could not make this up. Of course at the Barwon Prison, supposedly one of the safest and most secure prisons in Victoria, they went on strike for a short period. Prisoners going on strike at a maximum security prison! Again, I just ask the rhetorical question: who is in charge of the corrections system in Victoria, because it certainly is not Minister Tierney or any of her predecessors. It is not just the opposition saying that this is bad. The new corrections commissioner, Emma Cassar, told Neil Mitchell last week that recidivism is going up. We heard a lot from the Labor Party about the issue of recidivism and how we are going to get reoffending rates back down and how it is terrible and this is bad and that is bad and we have got to fix it all. Well, here we are on the eve of the election and the corrections commissioner herself has said that recidivism is going up. On any measure, any analysis, the corrections system is in much worse shape now than it was four years ago.

I commend the motion. It is clear from this motion that the failings of the Andrews Labor government have been significant and vast and have left Victorians in a worse place than they were four years ago. Nowhere is that more evident than in the cuts to crime prevention funding, in the failures in the police space and in keeping the community safe and in the failure to manage the corrections system and the accelerated revolving door of justice that we have in Victoria.

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (16:33) — I am pleased to rise and speak on the motion before us today. Despite the spin from the government, there is a huge amount that has happened on the watch of the Andrews government, and because of its own actions that is simply shameful. Some of these are listed within the motion: the highest crimes against the person offence numbers in Victoria's history; sentences and a bail system that fail community expectations; a youth justice system in crisis, with breakouts, violence and riots; and electricity prices which are rising because of Hazelwood closing in particular, and that happened because of the government's own policies of higher taxes and delivering on an earlier campaign promise. We have increasing congestion and public housing waiting lists have blown out. Months ago it was reported that we had some 37 000 applications — which means 82 000 people, of whom 25 000 were children — and we know that the rate was increasing at that stage by about 500 people per month.

Taxpayers money to the tune of \$1.3 billion was paid for not building the east–west link, after Labor told us the contract was not worth the paper it was written on and that cancellation would not cost a cent. On infrastructure I want to add the government's practice of asking people what they think and then totally ignoring it. In my electorate we have seen that in a number of places, in particular with the proposed Anzac station. Local residents made their view quite clear: a slight change in the location of the station would save trees and reduce delays for motorists as well as reducing the impact on residents.

There is of course sky rail, and Daniel Andrews did not tell people before the election that an elevated rail line would cut through their suburbs, right up against residences, overshadowing them and meaning more noise for people close to the line. This is not exactly something that was explained in any detail at all before the election.

While we are talking about infrastructure, there is also the proposed Parkville station. The government has ignored the University of Melbourne in relation to the effect of electromagnetic interference (EMI) on medical

and research equipment in the precinct during both construction and operation. EMI was left out of the environment effects statement for the Melbourne Metro project, it was left out of the contracts for Melbourne Metro and it appears that this issue is still unresolved, even as the building work continues.

We also have the extraordinary situation of Labor members and staff under police investigation by the fraud squad. We have seen a very long process through this Parliament of Labor trying to avoid scrutiny of its actions, all the while saying that the rules had been followed and with Daniel Andrew saying he takes responsibility for what has happened — all while exactly the opposite was happening. He did not take responsibility for it. He challenged the Ombudsman's authority to examine the claims of rorting that originally came from a Labor whistleblower. He took that to the Supreme Court, then to the Court of Appeal and then to the High Court, and he lost every time — and he used taxpayers money to fund it.

When the Ombudsman was finally able to investigate, it was only when that report was on the brink of being released, when people knew they had an adverse finding against them and knew what was coming, that the story suddenly changed. Since then it has all become John Lenders's doing. He was apparently — according to Labor — the evil mastermind behind it all, and Daniel Andrews knew nothing, even though he was a former state secretary of the ALP, he had overseen many campaigns in the past and he was on the ALP campaign committee. Yet somehow he expects people to believe that it was absolutely nothing to do with him, he did not know anything about it and he acted in good faith.

Then there are the 21 Labor members who participated in the rorting of taxpayer funds, many of whom signed blank time sheets for people who were out campaigning, knocking on doors and asking for votes for the ALP — all on taxpayers money. These people call themselves leaders in our community. They thought it was all okay because John Lenders apparently told them it was. We know that some people within the Labor ranks questioned the practice — Mr Jennings and Mr Somyurek appear to have done so — but a raft of their colleagues in the Assembly will not even answer questions on their actions.

In the Ombudsman's annual report released today it has been revealed that Labor's attempted cover-up of their red shirts rort has cost taxpayers nearly \$900 000. Staff costs for the Ombudsman were some \$744 862 and external legal costs were \$133 993. The figures I have just quoted do not include the Parliament's costs or the

government's total costs. It was an extraordinary and very selfish waste of taxpayers money for blatantly political purposes.

I want to focus on a couple of other areas that have been of great concern to me in terms of the government's performance. We saw the Peter Mac Private cancer beds axed. Level 13 could have been treating people now, but it is not, and the last I heard it was still largely vacant. Apparently private care for cancer patients is a bad thing in a public hospital, but not at the heart hospital, which includes a private facility as part of the government's own planning. That planning has been a bit slack. We have seen changes in the amount that has been allocated to the heart hospital. There has been money in the budget; there has been money out of the budget.

One thing is clear though: it was promised before the election and we are nowhere near seeing anything starting. It has never been properly explained, and I would love to know why it is that Daniel Andrews makes a distinction between cancer patients and heart patients in terms of the provision of private services. I think the real answer is simply that the Premier is behaving in a way that is truly petty, not wanting to continue with Peter Mac Private because it emerged under the previous government. It emerged from Peter Mac itself. The government of the day was supporting its plans because it knew they made sense. Peter Mac wanted to use an otherwise vacant and unfitted floor for private patients, which would have provided additional capacity in the system and an income stream for Peter Mac, just like the Royal Women's Hospital and Frances Perry House. Sadly, that was not to be.

Something I have spoken on a number of times in this place is colonoscopy waiting lists, which have literally been ignored by this government. Colonoscopies are not an exciting thing. They are things that people do not really want to talk about. I find myself talking about them a great deal. But they are a fundamental diagnostic tool for our second most lethal cancer, yet this issue was not even on the radar for the Minister for Health. In June of last year I used the adjournment debate to ask the health minister to start reporting colonoscopy waiting times. To this day she has not responded to that adjournment matter and the action that I sought.

As I have outlined in this place and elsewhere, after some months I made an FOI request of the Department of Health and Human Services, which responded that they collect waiting list information for surgical procedures in public hospitals but colonoscopies do not fall within the scope, therefore the department does not

have documents or data relating to colonoscopy waiting lists.

So finally in February of this year I went to individual hospitals, based on the ones that publicly report on their gastroenterology clinics. Some of the figures that were revealed are truly shocking, particularly when you consider the danger in delaying a colonoscopy when it is clinically indicated, as it certainly is for people who are in category 1 waiting for a colonoscopy. We have seen big increases in the number of people on waiting lists at Western Health. The waiting list went up by some 2000 people — 2111 people — over the last two years, and the average wait time at Western Health in February was 266 days, compared to less than that some years beforehand. The median wait for a colonoscopy at Western Health has now reached 150 days, but there were many people on that list who had waited for hundreds of days, and in some cases there people who had waited for years. Only a fraction had waited less than 30 days.

Peninsula Health was another hospital where I was able to discover that there were dreadful dangerously long wait times for many category 1 patients. Remember, these are people who clinically should be seen within 30 days. I counted 248 people who were category 1 and waited longer than 30 days. Patient 15 was 41 years old, category 1 and had been waiting for 194 days. Patient 29 was aged 21 years, category 1 and had waited for 134 days. Patient 37 was 20 years old, category 1 and had waited 123 days.

Then there is category 2. This is the category where people should be waiting ideally no more than 90 days. I counted 50 people who were classified as category 2, who had waited a year or longer for a colonoscopy and were still waiting. Patient 342 was 77 years old and had waited 974 days. Another patient who was 63 had waited 700 days. Another patient aged 53 had waited 387 days.

I know, as I said earlier, that colonoscopies are things that people do not want to talk about, but they are at the front line of cancer detection for bowel cancer. It took me a few months, a bit of money and a lot of perseverance to get these figures, and it is beyond me why someone else had not done that before, particularly someone who is running the health service and who had literally turned their back on this.

It is good to see that there has been some money allocated for some of the most urgent cases. We have not seen reporting on this. I would very much like to see that. And the money that was allocated was actually in contingency from the previous financial year. It

could have been allocated earlier if anyone had actually just taken an interest. The only reason why the health minister did take an interest is that it ended up in the *Herald Sun*. It was a bit embarrassing, and she was trying to head off a negative story. I think the handling of this issue for our second most lethal cancer has been nothing short of negligent.

I would hope that in the next government we will see public reporting of what waiting times are. That is something that this side of the house is committed to. Generally what gets measured gets done. When we have reporting, these lists and these kinds of blockages get the attention that they need. I will conclude my comments here and commend the motion to the house.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) (16:43) — I am pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, which notes some of the many failures of the Andrews government over the last four years. Of course it is a litany of failures that members of the Victorian community are experiencing on a day-to-day basis as they move about the community, as they fight congestion to get to and from work, as they battle crime in their own streets and as they are at risk of crime in their own homes.

The Victorian community is suffering after four years of the Andrews government. It is appropriate that we have a motion like the one moved by the Leader of the Opposition today which notes just 17 of the significant policy and implementation failures which have occurred under the life of the Andrews government.

Early today I listened with interest to the contribution made by the Deputy Leader of the Government, Ms Pulford, and indeed the contribution made by Ms Truong for the Greens party. Both of those members in their contributions to this motion seem to be living in a parallel universe. We had the Deputy Leader of the Government suggesting that many of the elements of this motion were untrue, and Ms Pulford touched on a number in particular, including:

- (4) rising electricity prices due to Labor's forced closure of Hazelwood power station ...

Well, as members of the Victorian community know, under the life of this government we have seen astronomical increases in retail electricity prices, and those increases in retail electricity prices can be slated home directly to the policy decisions of this government which led to the closure of Hazelwood power station. There is no doubt that the actions of this government in tripling the royalties on brown coal and

imposing the renewable energy targets have directly led to the decision to close Hazelwood power station.

Despite the nonsense which came from the Premier and the nonsense which came from the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change as to minimal retail price increases as a consequence of the Hazelwood closure, all Victorian consumers have seen massive increases in their electricity bills with such a large proportion of Victoria's generation capacity being taken out of the national network — out of the east coast electricity grid — forcing up prices across the entire east coast of Australia but particularly in Victoria. That is a direct consequence of the policies of this government — policies, I might add, which will have no impact on climate change. We have the government running around with a badge, 'We're trying to fix climate change'. Nothing the provincial government of Victoria is ever going to do will have any impact at all on changes to the global climate. Nothing this government can do — nothing the Australian government can do — will have any impact on climate change as a result of energy policies in Australia or Victoria. The posturing by this government has led to massive increases in electricity prices for Victorians with no benefits as a consequence.

We saw Ms Pulford comment on paragraph 14 around this government's decision to introduce an ice injecting room. Ms Pulford said that was a lie. Of course the reality is that facility is now operating in Richmond. It is a facility which the Premier initially said the government would not introduce at all — there would be no injecting room under the Labor government — but then he backtracked to say they would set up an injecting room; however, its use would be restricted and drugs like ice would not be able to be used in that facility. Of course when it opened we saw in fact that ice users were able to access and use that facility.

So, far from Ms Pulford's suggestion that raising this issue was a lie being the case, it was in fact the government that misled the people of Victoria, that lied to the people of Victoria, in firstly saying there would not be an injecting room and then saying that ice would not be allowed in it, when we now see that very thing occurring in Richmond before our eyes.

The final point Ms Wooldridge makes in her motion is in relation to the lack of a plan to manage Victoria's population. This issue goes to the heart of this government's failure. We are now seeing more than 150 000 people come into Victoria each and every year from interstate migration, from overseas migration and from natural population increase — 150 000 people or thereabouts — which is unprecedented in Victoria's

history. And 90 per cent of that increase is settling in Melbourne, which is putting enormous pressure on our transport infrastructure, our energy infrastructure, our public utilities and our workforce, and is having day-to-day impacts on the lives of Victorians. What this government has failed to do is manage that.

The government has been the beneficiary of enormous windfall revenue in things such as stamp duty, land tax and even payroll tax — far above what was budgeted — as a consequence of the population growth and the flow-on economic growth. What we have not seen the government do is implement a plan to address that population growth, to manage that population growth or to encourage population growth in regional and rural parts of Victoria rather than having 90 per cent of it concentrated in Victoria. These are the major policy failures which have long-term consequences for Victoria.

The government's failure to address population growth over the last four years is a significant one because the changes in policy settings that are required to ensure we do see a dispersed population growing in Victoria take time to implement, and we have lost four years under this government. We have seen the government focused on the short term. We have seen the government focused on self-interest, as this Parliament was made very aware of last sitting week when in an unprecedented and reckless decision the government chose to dump 80 000 pages of documents in the Legislative Assembly — cabinet documents, documents relating to legal advice — for its own political purposes, which has raised any number of concerns for individual Victorian citizens who had their personal information, medical information and bank account information disclosed through the documents dump. We saw the overturning of conventions related to cabinet in confidence and we saw the overturning of conventions related to legal professional privilege all because it suited the political interests of this government.

That demonstrates what sort of government we have and what sort of Premier we have when their focus is on playing political games like that even when it conflicts with very well established conventions and practices of good governance and good government in this state. It would rather play games like that because it thought they were in its political interests — though they blew up in its face — rather than deal with the key policy issues which are of concern to the Victorian community, such as addressing population growth and the infrastructure and cost-of-living implications that flow from having not addressed and put in place a considered and long-term population strategy.

Likewise we have seen front of mind for Victorians the blowout in crime — the fact that Victorians in their homes are no longer safe, Victorians on the street are no longer safe and Victorians in their workplaces are no longer safe. It is an absolute dereliction of duty by this government that it has allowed a situation to develop where thugs in our community now believe they can act with impunity in destroying public facilities and attacking members of the community on the street, in shopping centres and in their own homes with the belief, unfortunately accurate, that they will get away with it. This government has stood by and allowed that to happen. Some of this government's first actions were to repeal things such as the move-on laws and to weaken our bail laws, and we are now seeing the consequences of that.

The list of items that Ms Wooldridge has outlined in her motion is just a snapshot of the failings of this government. They are manifold and they are serious, and in a little under 70 days the people of Victoria will have an opportunity to pass judgement on this government. Victorians deserve better, Victorians can have better and the way in which Victoria can be improved is with the election of a Matthew Guy government in 64 days time.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (16:52) — I rise also to very briefly make a contribution. This is the last debate of a motion of opposition business for this particular term of Parliament, so it is very appropriate that we have an opportunity, however brief, to reflect on the failures of the Daniel Andrews Labor government and of course the problems that Victorians have experienced as a result of this government being completely and utterly focused on serving its sectional and political interests and mates, be they factional mates or be they union mates, at the expense of Victorians and Victoria.

The word 'rorts' is one that has got a lot of currency in the media. Much of it focuses on the narrow definition of rorting that emerged as a result of the exposé that indeed Labor was rorting electorate office budgets. As a result of that we saw a number of people arrested, six ministers placed under investigation when in actual fact they should have stepped down or been sacked and a lot of public money — a lot of departmental money — being spent on obfuscating and trying to block this inquiry. Unfortunately Labor colluded with the Greens to block a proper inquiry by the upper house by forcing an inadequate compromise position, which was not one that satisfied us, to refer the matter to the Privileges Committee, which was obviously ill-equipped in terms of its powers to investigate the misuse of electorate office staff entitlements.

But the roting is far broader than that. Indeed it includes various rorts and scams, and every day we learn of a new one, because this government is very, very clever at roting and scamming at every possible opportunity across every portfolio in order to serve its political interests and to save its own political skin. We know, as I said, the Daniel Andrews Labor government's multimillion-dollar red shirt rorts and benefits. It is not just the money that has been exposed by the Ombudsman; it is indeed the benefits that accrued as a result of stealing an election by a very narrow margin in a handful of seats.

If you read the 2014 Labor state election review, they acknowledge the on-the-ground game, which I presume refers to the red shirt rorts scam, as well as the role of the unions in that win. Indeed they say how important it is to keep the unions mobilised by bringing forward legislation that mobilises and incentivises the unions to become involved and to invest in a Labor win. We have seen that play out over the last few weeks of this parliamentary sitting. Daniel Andrews of course also backed Peter Marshall and the firefighters union against something like 60 000 volunteer firefighters, and the Greens supported that. Indeed they blocked the splitting of a bill that would have given all firefighters, be they volunteer or otherwise, protection against employment-related cancers when indeed that was obviously a priority that should have been and could have been delivered by this government.

Daniel Andrews and Labor at every opportunity punished small business because small business is difficult or impossible to unionise. Anywhere from 75 per cent to 95 per cent of new businesses — figures vary — are started by people from multicultural backgrounds. They know how hard they have to work and what sacrifices they need to make, and they are resistant to being coerced and unionised.

Labor likes to create these larger bodies that they can dominate with their union mates and harass into compliance and therefore, as I said, manage those dynamics for their own political interests. We saw that with their taking over of school cleaning contracts and also with their attempts to nationalise or take possession of the bus companies, which were obviously private assets. It must have been horrifying, I think, to people around the world who saw this attempt to nationalise something that clearly was not a government asset.

There was \$10 million granted as a gift to Labor's union mates at Trades Hall for a refurbishment. If anyone else did that, there would have been screams for the Premier of the day to stand down. A royal commission into unions exposed union corruption. A

former union organiser and state MP faced police charges. We also learned of the scams that occurred between big business and the union movement, an agreement that worker conditions and remuneration be sacrificed in return for the illegal transfer of money to unions. In this instance it was through the purchase of advertising that never got a run in the union magazine, the purchase of training that was never actually delivered and the purchase of tables at very expensive annual union gala dinners. I know that they recently had a very lavish one at Crown, where many of the lifetime members of the union movement got freebie tickets, and now we know how they were paid for.

Disgraced former Labor Speaker Telmo Languiller and his former deputy, Don Nardella, who actually lived in Mordialloc and still does, were forced to resign after roting \$130 000 from the public purse. We also saw, for example, the disgraced former Labor Minister for Corrections, Steve Herbert, resign for having his dogs chauffeured in his ministerial car across the state. Any one of these items should have led to the demise of this government, but this government continues to rot relentlessly.

Recently as shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs I had the pleasure of attending the Victorian Multicultural Commission awards for excellence presentation to some very worthy recipients to acknowledge their work in that sector. But I was shocked and stunned to see the Honourable Hong Lim, a paid member of the government and Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Asia Engagement, receive a special award as a serving MP from his former employee, Robin Scott, currently the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I would have thought that there are many, many other worthier recipients of special awards than a former boss. If that is not a rort, I do not know what is, and if I have the honour of serving as Minister for Multicultural Affairs after 24 November, I will make sure that the rules are changed so that no serving MP can receive an award of that nature and displace genuine members of the community so that we do not see yet another Labor rort. That will not continue under a future Matthew Guy government.

Congestion, crime and the cost of living are all issues that plague and bother the south-east, and I hope that the south-east will deliver a change of government.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:00) — I rise to speak on the budget papers 2018–19 and the budget for the Department of Health and Human Services and in particular for housing and homelessness. I have spoken in this house before about the deplorable state of homelessness in Victoria under this government and its failure to address it. In 2014 when I was the Minister for Housing, the street count in the City of Melbourne found 142 people sleeping rough in the City of Melbourne. I felt that figure was still too high, and I was working very hard to reduce that even further, but what we saw in the next two years when the next street count was taken was a blowout of 74 per cent to 247 people sleeping rough in the City of Melbourne. In that same count area the 2018 street count found 210 people sleeping rough, which is a reduction on the 2016 figures but is still a 48 per cent increase in the number of homeless persons sleeping rough in Melbourne's CBD since 2014. The amount of people who are sleeping rough is very visible, and this government is failing to address that.

What really concerned me this week were the figures released by the Council to Homeless Persons that show that Shepparton is number one on the list of homeless people in regional electorates, with 372 homeless people in the Shepparton electorate. The figures from the Council to Homeless Persons also show that more than half of the top 20 worst electorates for rough sleepers are in regional areas of this state, and this government is certainly failing the most vulnerable of all in our state when it comes to homelessness and public housing.

The public housing waiting list in this state has increased from 34 320 applications in December 2014 to 37 996 now. That is an increase of 11 per cent. But even worse than that, in Shepparton there has been a 97 per cent increase in the number of applications on the public housing waiting list. There were 537 applicants on that list in December 2014; there are now 1059. When we talk about applicants, every applicant is a household, so this means a family and a lot more than 1059 people. That is an increase of 522 families on that list, bringing it to 1059 families in total and a 97 per cent increase. That is a disgraceful figure.

Even more concerning than that are the number of people on the early housing — or priority housing, as they call it now — waiting list in Shepparton. In

December 2014 there were 109 applicants on that list; there are now 420 applicants — 420 households and 420 families. So there has been an increase of not only 311 families on that list but also an increase of 285 per cent in vulnerable families who are waiting for priority access to public housing in Shepparton. There are 420 of them. That is a lot of applicants waiting to be housed, particularly when this government is not adding to the public housing numbers in Shepparton. This is what is really driving those homelessness figures in Shepparton, the lack of access to public housing. We have seen very little, if any — and probably not any — new acquisitions in Shepparton under this government, and that is in stark contrast to what we added when we were in government. When we were in government we built 12 new homes — the St Georges apartments — in Purcell Street. We provided 44 new apartments when we bought an aged-care nursing home that was attached to the Mooroopna hospital and converted it into social housing.

We built the youth foyer, a 40-bed facility that is really kicking goals for young people who were at risk of homelessness and disconnecting from their education, and that has provided a wonderful opportunity for many of those young people to turn their lives around. One young girl told me her story of how she was homeless and about to drop out of school and she now has a job. She is employed, she goes to TAFE and she intends to go on and do a degree at La Trobe University. That has really changed her life.

In addition to that, we also rebuilt the Miller homes, with 36 brand-new apartments, and purchased a number of spot-purchase homes throughout Shepparton to add to the public housing properties and social housing properties in Shepparton to provide access to housing for vulnerable Victorians.

Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee: sustainability and operational challenges of Victoria's rural and regional councils

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:05) — This will be my last opportunity to speak to reports in this chamber. From the outset I do want to say I have enjoyed participating in both the upper house committees and the work they have done and also the joint parliamentary committees. One of those committees I have been involved in is the Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee. We tabled a number of reports, but the one which I want to speak to tonight is the *Inquiry into Sustainability and Operational Challenges of Victorian*

Rural and Regional Councils. Given that you are in the chair, and I note that you have been a past mayor of Moyne, Acting Chair Purcell, you would understand some of the difficulties some of those rural and regional councils are facing in respect to their long-term sustainability, obviously the workload that is being put on them by a significant cost shift to services from state government to local government and the irregular funding streams that come into regional councils, particularly from the federal and state governments.

Through the inquiry we heard loudly and clearly that particularly rural and regional councils — and we acknowledge that in the country roads and bridges funding program there are about 41 disadvantaged councils — have limited capacity to raise money other than through rate revenue and through the financial assistance grants, or FAG grants as they are known, or state grants to run their respective municipalities. Obviously many have significant road assets and small populations, so they rely on their ratepayer base for funding. One particularly large — not in numbers but certainly in financial terms — proportion of their ratepayer base is the farming community. Many times I have raised in this chamber the matter of what the inequity is in the current rating methodology that we have in this state that actually unfairly burdens the farming community in respect to the capital improved value rating that is used because farmers require large tracts of land — production land — to run their businesses. Invariably that production land, particularly in those areas that abut development areas, has a quite high value. The revenue from their business is the same as the sort of revenue generated from a local milk bar, yet the milk bar may well pay \$800 to \$1000 in rates and, as we have seen in the last 12 months, many farmers are paying \$40 000 to \$50 000 in rates for very similar income generation from their asset.

The system is not fair, and I note it was announced at the breakfast which was run by the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) at the Windsor on Tuesday that the VFF is demanding a moratorium on all future rate increases until the state government commits to, as they say, ‘demolishing and rebuilding Victoria’s broken rating system to ensure a better deal for farmers’. President David Jochinke said the VFF is ‘continuing to receive reports of annual rate increases exceeding 40 per cent for some farmers’, and this is what I am hearing through my office as well. As far as the VFF is concerned, they want to draw a line in the sand before farms are rated out of existence.

This is consistent with what we heard through this inquiry, particularly from the farming community in respect to the hardships that farmers are now facing

with these significant increases in rates. I have to say, luckily for many of course that is being consumed by a significant increase in stock prices and grain prices, except for those areas facing drought. But I can assure you once interest rates go up and some of those commodity prices go down, rates will form a considerable part of the expenditure of the business.

I understand why the VFF wants a moratorium and I understand why the VFF wants a review — I have been calling for it myself. I know the coalition has committed to a review of local government rating. I think there is a general understanding from all sides of politics that the current system is not working, particularly for rural and regional councils. They do not have the capacity to raise revenue through car parking and other means that their metropolitan cousins do. We have to somehow make a much more equitable model or introduce a more equitable model that does not overburden one part of the ratepayer base and also provide funding — consistent funding — to make these rural and regional councils sustainable and viable in the future.

That is the first task for the next Parliament: to introduce a new local government rating model into Victoria that is fair and equitable for all ratepayers and allows local councils to provide the services that are required of them by their communities.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (17:11) — I rise today in relation to the budget papers 2018–19. I want to make some comments about public housing in my electorate and in particular about Park Towers, which is in South Melbourne. Tenants have raised a number of concerns with me, which I have in some instances spoken about in this place before. They have discussed their concerns about crime in their home — in particular, violent assaults against people and drug dealing. They have asked for security guards during the day as well as during the night. They currently have night-time security guards but not daytime, and they have been asking for daytime security guards for about a year, on my count, but have had no result. I am not sure why, because we learned during the inquiry into the public housing renewal program earlier this year that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) spends about \$11 million per annum on security in public housing, and that is on security guards.

I have raised this with the Minister for Police, who responded that there are a number of initiatives in place

to combat crime on the estate, including Operation Shrine, which is an operation comprising members of the South Melbourne police station, Port Phillip criminal investigation unit, the divisional response unit, the frontline tasking unit and the multicultural unit, and this is supposed to provide a visible and covert police presence enabling the targeting of recidivist and associate offenders residing in and around the Park Towers estate.

Ms Crozier has raised in this place the issue of district nurses and Park Towers and has told the chamber that at one stage district nurses were, for issues of safety, visiting in pairs and then in trios, and then Ms Crozier understands they were not attending at all because of safety concerns. I note that this is a suggestion that the minister for housing did not deny in his response, so I assume that Ms Crozier's information is, as usual, correct. This is a terrible outcome for everybody, not least of all the residents who need nursing care in that building, and we know that many of the residents in that building have some quite complex needs.

The tenants have outlined their security concerns in their magazine, which is called *Tenant*, they have written to the minister for housing, who is of course their local member, and both he and I have been present at a meeting of around 60 tenants to talk about their safety concerns. The answer, apparently, from the minister is not security guards during the day; it is renovations in the foyer, and these have taken a while to get started. While waiting months for these to get started, the tenants have actually taken legal action against the minister for housing in VCAT to stop this building work. Last week they were in VCAT as the government succeeded in substituting the director of housing as the respondent in relation to this instead of the minister, although the tenants tell me they are aware that the minister is making the decisions on this front, so they do not understand why he is not the respondent, and they make a good point.

Through its lawyers, the department has told tenants that they will proceed with the contested building works, despite the fact that the legal proceedings continue. This is causing a loss of space, because what is going to be built immediately are the builders site offices and also their storage area, and in addition to this the tenants group has been told by DHHS that it is not allowed to manage its common rooms, which are in a similar sort of area to where the building work will be. These are rooms that are used by tenants for a range of purposes: group meetings, socialising and on occasion some tenants rent these rooms so that they can, for example, have a child's birthday party. But now DHHS is taking over that area. The tenants feel

that this is unreasonable and it is a loss of autonomy. It is also a loss of income, and they do not believe that it will provide as smooth a service in terms of enabling people to use the common rooms in their own building, but most of all the tenants feel that they are being poorly treated because they have spoken out about crime on the estate and have asked for what I think is a quite sensible response.

This time four years ago the member for Albert Park was writing to tenants and asking for their support in an election and was telling them that the Labor Party would not sell public housing. Now, several years later, he has of course overseen a large sell-off in public housing. It is not to judge whether or not public housing should be sold; it is simply that you should not be going to people in your electorate and making claims that are simply not true after the election. I imagine that it will not be so easy for the member for Albert Park to campaign with tenants this year, especially at Park Towers.

The thing is they have made a very simple request. They have asked for an extension of an existing security guard service which they have at night. They want it during the day, and given the photos that they have shown and published that show blood-filled elevators after there has been an attack on individuals there, given what we know about the call-outs of emergency services to that area, it is an absolutely reasonable request to ask for that service to be expanded. I support them in their quest.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (17:16) — I would like to speak this afternoon on the 2018–19 state budget. In doing so I want to reference the seat of Mildura in relation to the spending of money up there and the allocations that have been made not only in this current round of state budget funding but also where that will lead to in the future. I have been working very closely with the member for Mildura, Peter Crisp, who does a great job up there in Mildura. He is one of the hardest working members of Parliament that I have seen in my time of involvement in politics. He does a terrific job in representing the people of Mildura, and I certainly hope that he will be there for the next four years to do so.

What Peter Crisp has been able to do is work very hard to ensure that there have been some really good outcomes in the seat of Mildura. Probably one of the most significant and certainly the highest in value is the money that was made available in the budget — by this

side when we were in government last time — of \$450 million for the upgrade of the Mildura rail line, the Murray Basin rail project. I must say that the federal government played a role in that as well. Between Andrew Broad, the federal member for Mallee, and Peter Crisp, the member for Mildura, they were able to secure that \$450 million, which has gone a long way to upgrading the Mildura rail line.

It is a credit to both of them, and I do thank the current government for not stripping that money away that we allocated it in the budget and for allocating it to that project, although I understand it is potentially \$100 million over budget and that a whole range of problems have occurred due to using second-hand rail lines and a whole range of other things in terms of the sleepers.

Mr Davis — From 1928.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Exactly; they were from 1928, the sleepers are substandard, a lot of the pins are already falling out and the sleepers are cracking. So there are some problems there, but we will hopefully try to fix those when we get back into government. On top of that, Peter Crisp on 24 April announced \$80 million for the upgrade of the level crossings along the Mildura line. The idea is to get rid of those level crossings. I think there are about 137 crossings between Mildura and Melbourne, and that will certainly pave the way for the return of passenger rail for Mildura. So Peter Crisp has allocated \$80 million to that in terms of an election commitment, but what is disappointing is the Andrews Labor government has not matched that commitment should Labor win the next election, which is rather disappointing.

Also Peter Crisp on 26 June announced \$350 000 for the Robinvale sports club for change rooms, and again the Labor Party has not matched that commitment. Peter Crisp announced \$10 million on 23 August for the Mildura sports precinct, and that has also been matched by Andrew Broad and the federal government. The local council will also make a contribution of around \$7 million or \$8 million towards that project. Unfortunately the Labor Party has not matched that commitment.

Peter Crisp announced on 28 August some money for the residential drug and alcohol rehab facility. I think it is around \$8 million, from memory, and again the Labor Party has not matched that commitment. What they said they would do is wait until they got a candidate before they would start to make their commitments. They now have a candidate, Tony Alessi, but still there have been no announcements for

the Mildura electorate from this city-centric government and its city-centric Premier.

I look forward to going up to Mildura in the coming weeks and months and making further announcements which will be beneficial to everyone in Mildura, but unfortunately there is no other party and there is no other candidate up there who has made any commitments for the seat of Mildura, other than Peter Crisp. So I think the people in Mildura should be very thankful for what Peter Crisp has been able to put on the table in election commitments, and that will go a long way to helping the people of Mildura in the future. I only wish that the state government would come out and match those commitments or just match one of those commitments. That would be a good start. Let us try and see if we can match one of those and then come out and match the rest of them now that the government have got a candidate in Mildura.

Family and Community Development Committee: services for people with autism spectrum disorder

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:21) — I rise this afternoon to speak on the Family and Community Development Committee report into the inquiry into services for people with autism spectrum disorder of June 2017. This is a substantial document and one that I helped put together as a member of that committee. It was a great honour to be involved in this particular investigation, and at the very beginning I want to congratulate Ms Wooldridge, who was the person who proposed that the Family and Community Development Committee investigate autism. It led to a most interesting couple of years and a very, very worthwhile report. I want to congratulate the chair at the time, Maree Edwards; the deputy chair, Cindy McLeish; Paul Edbrooke, who is currently the chair; Chris Couzens from Geelong; Emma Kealy from Lowan; Roma Britnell from South-West Coast; and Suzanna Sheed from Shepparton, who all participated in this inquiry and did a particularly good job.

One of the first questions that is asked in this report is: what is autism? I have to say that is a question that is often asked by parents who have a newly diagnosed child. What is autism? I have a 17-year-old son with profound autism, and I have to say that when he was diagnosed some 15 years ago I had heard of autism but I did not know what it was, I did not know anything about it and I was given a brochure and told to go home and work it out myself. That is not the ideal situation.

So it was my very great pleasure this week to announce, along with Mr Guy, the Leader of the Opposition in the

other place, that if elected in November we will provide a \$2.4 million grant to the peak autism body, Amaze, to expand their autism helpline so that it is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is an assumption sometimes that these problems occur during the day and that you can ring a doctor or you can ring somebody during those business hours. It is not the case. Normally the height of anxiety and the really difficult times occur very late at night or even during the night. When a child refuses to sleep it is very, very difficult indeed, so I think that the money that we will put into this helpline, if we are elected in November, will be very, very good indeed.

Living with autism is a struggle, and a lot of people have wondered over the years, particularly in recent years, how they can make a contribution to making life a lot easier for people with autism. I am delighted to say that, having taken all that into consideration, the Guy government will set up a Premier's autism advisory council, which will involve representatives of various people in the autism community, whether they be carers, educators or people with autism themselves — people who actually know what they are talking about. They will be able to communicate with government at the very highest levels. That is something that I am particularly excited about, and that is a first for Victoria and something that I think is going to be a winner as well.

Flexibility of course is extremely important in the education of children with autism. To try and put any child in a box is difficult enough; to try and put a child with autism into a box is impossible. Unfortunately our education system has not recognised that and has not understood that. The system has to change to enable those children to get a proper education, and I look forward to that happening.

The support for small groups right throughout the state — country and city — is that we as a government will be providing \$500 000 over the four years to support these groups as a part of the autism support group fund. So I think that is also going to be very, very helpful for groups normally run by parents of children with autism. It will be a very, very good thing indeed and very helpful for the community.

Privileges Committee: matters relating to misuse of electorate office staffing entitlements

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:26) — I rise to speak in the very last statements on reports for this particular term of Parliament, and I look forward to rejoining the Parliament, hopefully with a new government that will lift the standards of public

administration above what we have been mired in and maligned with in terms of Labor's misuse of public funding in particular, widely known as the Labor rorts.

I would like to make a few remarks on the inquiry into matters relating to the misuse of electorate office staffing entitlements and commend the authors of the minority report of that committee for defending their position and the interests of democracy in Victoria. Those authors include Luke O'Sullivan, Northern Victoria Region; Gordon Rich-Phillips, my colleague from South Eastern Metropolitan Region; and Mary Wooldridge, Eastern Victoria Region and Leader of the Opposition here in this chamber.

I think what is really important to understand is that this was the wrong committee to investigate and try and fill in the gaps in knowledge of the red shirt rorts. The Ombudsman was able to inquire into the rorts involving members of the Legislative Council as a result of the resolution of this house, but only half of the picture was exposed. The Ombudsman did not have the power to investigate the other half, being the Legislative Assembly, and therefore the Legislative Council felt that a select committee was perhaps the best vehicle to try and gather the full range of evidence and to expose the level and extent of rorting that took place. Clearly a code of conduct for members of Parliament, which predominantly relates to matters of avoiding and managing conflicts of interest, was not the appropriate yardstick for identifying or dealing with matters of misuse of public funds, and therefore that was irrelevant to the inquiry.

The lack of contempt findings against members of Parliament involved in the scheme, in my view, does not indicate no wrongdoing, because the instrument used was the wrong one. It was an instrument that was forced upon this chamber in particular by the Greens not voting to support a proper committee to get to the bottom of this matter. Of course now we have the Victoria Police fraud and extortion squad investigating. That is the only path that is available, and I certainly hope that it is not going to be a slow process. We need to see some resolution of this. We hope that there is not undue pressure being used on the Chief Commissioner of Police and those undertaking the investigation to go slow and to delay action, because so far we have had no-one sacked and no-one charged, despite the fact that there have been extensive rorts, and some of the costs of that were exposed by a further annual report of the Ombudsman. The Honourable Daniel Andrews, and I use the word 'Honourable' advisedly, was clearly aware. He must have been aware, because there was a person who, as was stated in evidence given to the committee —

Mr Davis — Who told him.

Mrs PEULICH — Yes, a person who in actual fact worked in his office. The Honourable Gavin Jennings had also authorised payment of many, many days for a field organiser —

Mr Davis — They share an office.

Mrs PEULICH — They share an office. Indeed there would have been a joint manager who would have managed the papers.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mrs PEULICH — That is right. If we also read the Labor Party's review of their 2014 state election, there are a number of other people who could shed light on this and who the police need to investigate or at least talk to. One of those is Roland Lindell. He worked in Mr Lenders's office and indeed would have managed a lot of the details there. Janice Munt was a caucus liaison officer. She, I am sure, could shed some light on that. The state secretary of the ALP, Noah Carroll, could shed some substantial light on that particular matter. Indeed there are —

Mr Davis — Janice Munt's close arrangements here should not allow her to go on the RACV board.

Mrs PEULICH — I was absolutely shocked when indeed I saw Ms Munt's nomination for the RACV board. Given that she in fact shares accommodation with a former Deputy Speaker who claimed to be living somewhere when in actual fact he was living in Mordialloc all along, I do not think she is an appropriate choice for the RACV board. Can I say that I did not put her on my sheet. The rorts affair can only be resolved by voters at the forthcoming state election on 24 November.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (17:31) — I want to make a number of points today, particularly relating to the state budget outputs for the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and also the transport component of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. In particular I am concerned today to have seen the tabling — finally — of documents relating to sky rail. This was a motion that was moved in early 2016. It is now late 2018 and a tranche of these documents have finally been tabled. It is an incomplete tranche, but there are some bombshells in it.

One of the things that my eye was drawn to quickly as I started to work through the thousands of pages of documents, which include individual submissions, was the overwhelming number of submissions opposed to the sky rail. People are outraged. They are outraged that it was sprung on them. The Community Tender Advisory Panel (CTAP) minutes are there, and these have not been in public in full before. I have a version of them that I obtained through FOI, but it appears there is additional information in these CTAP documents.

CTAP met in the latter part of 2015 to look at the bids on the sky rail. The CTAP documents are the actual minutes and agendas of the meetings of that community tender advisory panel, chaired by Steve Dimopoulos, the member for Oakleigh in the other place, or 'Sky Rail Steve' as he is known colloquially by many —

Mrs Peulich — And not affectionately.

Mr DAVIS — Not affectionately at all, because he is clearly up to his neck in this. I was particularly shocked to see the minutes of a meeting — one of the very final meetings — which was held between 4.00 p.m. and 8.00 p.m. on 26 October 2015 at Viney Street, Clarinda. There were only seven people — Papaya, three officials from the Level Crossing Removal Authority, a government probity officer, Brett Summers and Steve Dimopoulos. There were 15 apologies. All of the community members were apologies and yet decisions were made at this meeting. The minutes said that Brett Summers advised CTAP members that the feedback received from the meeting would not be provided to the two proponents as there was not enough time to incorporate it into their bids. The feedback would be provided to the successful proponent to incorporate in their design refinements. The whole purpose of the CTAP, in theory, was to put information to the bidders. This is a really significant disavowal of their key purpose.

We know that Steve Dimopoulos owned property in Carnegie, which he sold. It was reported to this Parliament and tabled in March 2016. Goodness knows when he sold that property. It was on his register of interests in 2015, but now we see him as a member of CTAP, disavowing the community's view — rolling over the community — meanwhile apparently selling his Carnegie property. Insider information would be the kindest thing that you could call it. He was acting to gain a personal advantage from the position he had as the head of CTAP.

I am very concerned by what I have seen in these minutes. I am very concerned that the government has held off tabling them for such a long time. They had

plenty of time to table those minutes. Mr Dimopoulos needs to come clean on his involvement. Did he sell that Carnegie property in the knowledge that a sky rail was being built? We know that the *Herald Sun* published a story on 9 January 2016, but the government did not officially announce the sky rail until the first week of February 2016. Sometime either just before that or near that time Mr Dimopoulos sold his Carnegie property. What happened to the value of the property after that announcement of the sky rail? Honestly, this is just outrageous. Did he fill in a form that laid out all his interests? I have a version of those forms but not in these documents. It is interesting, but it seems that it has been left out of these documents.

The FOI set that I have on this requires a probity statement to be made. I note the presence of probity advisers at some of these meetings, but did the probity advisers require Mr Dimopoulos to set out what he owned, where he owned it, what he was disposing of and when he was disposing of it? I do not know, because we do not have his probity statement. We only have the blank one that everyone else — all the community members — was required to sign. I say that his behaviour in this is crooked, I say it is outrageous, and I think there is a lot to explain.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms TIERNEY — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Shepparton radiotherapy services

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:36) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Health, and it relates to the establishment of radiotherapy services in Shepparton for cancer patients who require this life-saving treatment. The action that I seek from the minister is that as a matter of urgency the minister provide an update on what steps the government has taken to establish a radiotherapy facility in Shepparton, including the current status of negotiations with private health provider GenesisCare to enter into a public-private partnership that will provide the funding to ensure that all patients will be able to access any planned radiotherapy services in Shepparton.

Members will be well aware of my advocacy for radiotherapy services to be established in Shepparton to service the needs of Goulburn Valley cancer patients requiring this life-saving treatment. Stage 1 of Goulburn Valley Health's redevelopment, which is currently underway, does not include the establishment

of radiotherapy services at the hospital. Over the last 13 months I have provided the minister and the house with the personal cancer journeys of local patients forced to travel long distances from loved ones to receive radiotherapy.

In November 2017 a private care provider, GenesisCare, secured a \$6.95 million federal government health program grant to establish a radiotherapy facility in Shepparton. The minister's responses to my numerous calls to enter into a public-private partnership with GenesisCare to bring radiotherapy to Shepparton have been inconsistent to say the least.

To a question I asked on 12 December 2017 the minister's answer of 6 February 2018 said that discussions were continuing with GenesisCare about a partnership into the future. To a question I asked on 15 December 2017 the minister's answer of 24 May 2018 said that the Victorian government would work closely with whoever provides radiotherapy services in Shepparton. To a question I asked on 30 November 2017 the minister answered on 24 July 2018, saying that the department was currently undertaking an analysis of the best options for providing radiotherapy in Shepparton.

It is now nearly 12 months since GenesisCare received their licence, and we have heard nothing from the minister on plans for radiotherapy in Shepparton. Goulburn Valley cancer patients continue to travel away from their families to receive their radiation treatment, and this minister and the Andrews Labor government have done nothing to assist them to access services locally, either now or in the future. Therefore the action that I seek from the minister is that as a matter of urgency the minister provide me with an update on what steps the government has taken to establish a radiotherapy facility in Shepparton, including the current status of negotiations with private health provider GenesisCare to enter into a public-private partnership that will provide the funding to ensure that all patients will be able to access any planned radiotherapy services in Shepparton.

Kilmore schools road safety

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (17:39) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Luke Donnellan, and it relates to the safety of students at Kilmore Primary School, St Patrick's Primary School and Assumption College. Last year the government funded upgrades to the intersection of Conway Street and Kilmore-Lancefield Road to improve safety, by

providing more turning room for large vehicles, such as school buses. Further works included pavement rehabilitation works along Conway Street, near St Patrick's Primary School and the Country Fire Authority station. These were welcome improvements. However, concerns remain for the safety of students as they walk to and from school every day. There are several housing estates in the neighbourhood and more and more families are moving into the area. We certainly want to see as many kids as possible walking, riding and scooting their way to school.

There are two little people in the gallery right now who are constituents of my electorate; they are also constituents of my house, and they attend school at Kilmore. They travel on the bus, but they have many friends that live nearby, so I know firsthand the concerns that local parents and teachers have. I can also confirm that we are so very grateful for the hardworking school crossing supervisors that protect our kids every day on the busy street in that precinct. School crossing supervisor Mr Doug Whitbourn has requested support for the installation of 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing lights on the Kilmore-Lancefield Road to add to the safety of the crossing. Further, I have had representations from parents who have suggested other road treatments to increase safety in the area.

The information I seek from the minister is for him to ask VicRoads to do an assessment of the precinct and to provide expert advice to the community on the best ways to improve the safety of the area and any available funding streams. I would also like to receive advice from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) in relation to any community grants that may be available to the schools or the parent groups in relation to safety awareness or other programs that the TAC might be able to advise that community of.

Victorian Electoral Commission student enrolment

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (17:42) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Special Minister of State, and it relates to the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC) direct enrolment of students onto the electoral roll. The VEC had been doing automatic enrolments since 2010, and it was actually a great service. They sent out a 17th birthday card to students, and then when the student turned 18 years they would be directly enrolled onto the electoral roll. But this process stopped a couple of years ago. The VEC stated that this was due to the fact that they became overwhelmed with a whole range of electoral matters and they really could not keep up with

the direct enrolment process that they had done previously.

They are reinstigating direct enrolment now, which I am very pleased about. As we know, they get that information from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. But what they have decided to do is only directly enrol students at the end of term, after they have done all their exams. So all of these 18-year-olds will miss out on voting in this election unless they enrol themselves.

The action I am seeking from the minister is for him to ask the electoral commission to go back to their regular process of automatically enrolling students when they turn 18 years rather than doing it in a bulk lot at the end of term when the Australian tertiary admission rank scores come out. This will obviously enable students to be enrolled for the upcoming November election.

Barwon Downs borefield

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:44) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Water, Lisa Neville, and pertains to overextraction of groundwater. Barwon Water has been pillaging groundwater from the Barwon Downs borefield in the Otways for over 30 years. The overpumping has resulted in once-perennial creeks and swamplands running dry, including the upper Barwon River for extended periods.

Some of the environmental and ecological impacts of this overextraction are that platypus, blackfish and trout have died out; the Big Swamp wetlands and other wetlands have almost dried out; many artesian bores in the region have stopped flowing; and drying wetland low flows to creeks and the Barwon River have turned acidic due to acid sulphate soil exposure. In 2016 a massive fish kill in 30 kilometres of the Barwon River occurred due to the acid and heavy metals released. This year there was another fish kill in the upper Barwon. Spontaneous combustion peat fires are occurring in the drying swamps, which are of particular concern considering the increasing severity of our summer bushfire season.

The riparian rights of over 100 farms in the Otway Ranges have been disrupted with perennial creeks becoming ephemeral and stream banks drying out. There are indirect impacts on the riparian rights for the farms downstream along the Barwon that have less water flowing past their land for stock and domestic use. Barwon Water carts water to at least one major farm, which is an acknowledgement that their overpumping has led to a localised drought.

The Barwon Downs borefield relies on aquifers 300 to 600 metres below ground, which were once artesian, with pressures some 10 metres above ground. However, overextraction over many years has led to pressure elevations 50 metres below ground. In the 1980s the environmentally safe annual extraction was assessed at 4000 megalitres per year, and in the 1990s this assessment was lowered to 1500 megalitres per year, but Southern Rural Water, the resource manager, granted a licence to Barwon Water to extract 20 000 megalitres per year.

The licence has come up for renewal, and the decision-maker is the Minister for Water and member for Bellarine, Lisa Neville, MP. There is a great fear in the community that Barwon Water will press for continuation of the 20 000-megalitre-per-year licence or another amount well above the safe yield of the aquifer system. There is also a great fear that they will seek to continue the outdated conditions that have no regard for the social, environmental or economic impacts of overextraction.

The minister announced on 9 August 2018 that Barwon Water would be legally mandated to implement a remediation plan, but it appears that this focuses solely on acidity in Boundary Creek. It is as if Barwon Water is admitting culpability for only a small portion of the total impacts that overextraction has had on farms and the environment. The action I seek is that the minister listen to the community in the region and cancel the existing extraction licence, desist from issuing any further extraction licence to Barwon Water and, given the environmental impacts, conduct an independent inquiry into the impact of past extraction.

Footscray Hospital

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:47) — I wish to raise this evening on the adjournment a matter for the Minister for Health. I do not know if the minister has visited Footscray Hospital of late, but I can assure her, even if she has not, that it is in a disgraceful physical condition. It is old, it is falling down, it is decrepit and it is everything that you would not want a hospital to be. It is, as I say, a disgrace. Years ago it should have been ripped down and rebuilt, and it is a blight on this state that it remains in the condition — and deteriorating, I might say — that it is to this day.

I was absolutely staggered this morning to learn that there are reports that medicos at the hospital are worried that any plans for the rebuilding of the Footscray Hospital will be put on hold, that it just will not happen and that the money that might be allocated for the Footscray Hospital rebuild will be directed to, perhaps,

marginal seats where votes are more important than the health of the people of Footscray.

We know that Footscray is not a marginal seat. We know that people in Footscray have voted Labor for many a long year, but let me tell you that Labor voters need health care too, and I am sure there will be a good number of people in Footscray who will see the irony of a Liberal MP getting up and defending the right of Labor voters to be looked after in a decent hospital. I am doing that because no Labor MP will. No local representative of the people of Footscray will get up and defend their right to have a decent hospital. It is despicable that this situation exists, and I am very, very hopeful that we might be able to turn this around after the election, with the election of the Matthew Guy government.

I am asking the minister to do one thing before the government goes into caretaker mode. I am asking the minister to announce the date on which the rebuild will begin. It is a very simple request. I just want to know, and it is not just me. I am asking this on behalf of tens if not hundreds of thousands of people throughout the western suburbs: when does the government intend to start the rebuild of the Footscray Hospital? I have said this on a number of occasions over the time that I have been in this house, and I will say it again now: it is time for this thing to be built. It is time for this hospital to be brought up to a decent and manageable stage.

Gender Equity Victoria

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:50) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Women. Gender Equity Victoria (Gen Vic) is the Victorian peak body for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of violence against women. Following its launch earlier this year Gen Vic recently announced #vicvotesequity, a 100-day campaign leading up to the Victorian election. The campaign includes priorities for government action covering four key areas: advancing gender equity, promoting women's sexual and reproductive health, preventing violence against women and supporting the development of a sustainable peak body.

The Andrews government has presided over some important gender equality initiatives during this term of government that have been welcomed by the Greens and across sectors working with and in support of Victorian women. *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy*, the state's first gender equality strategy, was a milestone. The establishment of Gen Vic was another, and this week a citizens jury is deliberating on an exposure draft of a gender equality

bill that sets out requirements for planning, promoting, setting targets for and reporting on gender equality. We are seeing progress, but there are some real concerns around the pace of this progress, the framework for action and the transparency of this work. For example, we are yet to see a plan for bedding down gender analysis in policymaking and budgeting despite promises over the past 18 months that this work is underway.

Gen Vic's campaign leading up to the election highlights a number of these issues and outlines specific proposals and commitments for government action. The Greens are proud of our strong track record on gender equity, and we are proud to be pledging our support this week for Gen Vic's priorities for government. I am pleased to note that the minister has also taken the Gen Vic pledge. The action I seek from the minister is that she sets out the Andrews government's plan to put this commitment into practice, if re-elected, across the four priority areas. In the interests of transparency and accountability, I would also ask that this plan be made public.

Child gender transitioning

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (17:52) — My adjournment matter this evening is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, and it relates to the government's position on parental responsibility when their child is transitioning from one gender to another. I know this has been raised in the media and in various circles within our community, but it has also been raised directly with me by a number of concerned parents. I have been told that the Victorian Labor government's approach will be the same as in the national Labor Party's manifesto, where it states, and I quote:

Acknowledge these harms, when suffered within the family, as domestic violence against the child.

Families and parents are very concerned that the love of that child, no matter who it is, could be subjected to a criminal charge. Therefore on behalf of those parents out there who are somewhat confused in relation to what the government's approach is and what it might do, the action I seek is for clarification from the minister as to the Andrews Labor government's approach towards parental rights and responsibilities when a child is transitioning and whether in fact a parent who has concerns or does not agree with the child's view toward their gender may be subjected to the criminal codes of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008.

Sandringham College

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (17:54) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Education in the other place, and it is in relation to Sandringham College. This is an outstanding school in my electorate, in my community, which I know extremely well. There are around 1100 students at the school. I could describe it best, I think, as a great school with brilliant teachers and poor physical facilities. In fact more than 3000 people associated with the school have recently signed a petition calling on the government to fund better facilities for the school. That figure was achieved in some days, which is an extraordinary result. The school looks very much like the high school that I attended many years ago, and in fact it has a virtually identical library. What it has not had is enough maintenance of the facilities that it has, and it has also experienced some unfortunate fallout in financial terms from the redevelopment of Beaumaris Secondary College, which is a former site of the school. It was formerly part of the school.

I have obtained a pretty thorough briefing from parents from the school who have indicated that they think that people choose to enrol at Sandringham College in spite of the unacceptable state of its facilities. They say that the wellbeing and safety of students and teachers has been compromised. The unacceptable working conditions include exposed wiring, holes in ceilings, asbestos in buildings, tripping hazards, leaking plumbing, unsanitary bathrooms and literally a broken glass ceiling. In addition, the sporting facilities are not fit for purpose, and the local council has decided that the oval which it previously used is unsafe and will not use it. The school advises that temporary quick fixes are unsound financially and are also reckless. One example of this is the installation of temporary beams to prevent a roof falling in in an asbestos-ridden building.

The other issue which has come up is that the closure of the Beaumaris campus, formerly part of Sandringham College, means that the school has taken on the financial obligations of maintaining contracts for teachers and a principal who were formerly at Beaumaris. Sandringham College continues to pay those teachers and a number of outstanding long-term contracts that were made prior to the petitioning off of Beaumaris. This includes a \$37 000 per year bus contract. This has limited the ability of the school to maintain its remaining contracts. The school has been unable to retrench staff even if it wanted to, and it has been forced to take out a workforce bridging loan to meet its costs, which are being paid out each year. The school, because of the loan it has been forced to take out, expects that it will not get its term 3 and 4 funding

and also expects to have an overdrawn cash position of around \$440 000 by the end of this year.

The action I am seeking is an urgent injection of funds into the school for two things: to address the disadvantage it has experienced financially because of the Beaumaris redevelopment and to address the maintenance backlog that is so obvious to anyone who visits the school.

Foster care

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:57) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Families and Children, and I raise it on behalf of a wonderful lady called Heather Baird. She is the founder and director of A Better Life for Foster Kids, a Victorian-based charity that looks after the needs of children and advocates on behalf of carers — both foster and kinship carers — of children in out-of-home care (OOHC).

She raised an issue with me in relation to a letter that she sent on 31 June this year to the minister. I will go into the response in a minute. In August this year the minister responded, or the minister's department responded. That is fine; her letter has been responded to. The issue she raised is around the application of the Aboriginal child placement principle by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The letter says:

... the Aboriginal child placement principle (the principle) mandates that Aboriginal children in OOHC must be placed with extended family —

first —

an Aboriginal foster carer —

second —

or as a last resort, with a non-Aboriginal carer.

She goes on to say that as there is usually quite a lack of Aboriginal foster carers — in fact she cites a statistic of 3.8 per cent in Victoria — usually children are placed in an extended kinship carer arrangement.

Her concern relates to the fact that if only 3.8 per cent of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care are placed in an Indigenous foster carer arrangement but there is this requirement, DHHS is attempting to place upwards of 80 per cent of these Aboriginal children in permanent care with extended kinship carers. She does not have a problem with that, but she raises that as an issue. The issue is that, if the national rate of kinship carers is under 50 per cent, then there are a lot of

Indigenous children needing to go into extended family care. She is concerned, and her focus is always on the wellbeing of the child.

The minister responded. The minister's response goes into a lot of the department's policies, its developments and some of its initiatives, but it does not address the statistics that Mrs Baird raised. My request is that the minister actually go back to this document, and I can forward it on. The request is that her office investigate the statistics that are laid out in this comprehensive letter and respond to those statistics in relation to the best practice and best outcome for those children in a very vulnerable situation.

Dingley Village golf course development

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (18:00) — The matter that I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Sport in another place. It is in relation to the apparent failure by the government to release the final recommendations and framework report in the process of *Planning for Golf in Victoria*, which was due in the fourth quarter of 2017. There is certainly nothing on the website, and if it has been released, a number of stakeholders who have contacted me have not been able to locate it.

The Victorian government's Planning for Golf in Victoria Task Force issued a discussion paper in June 2017, which suggested that the proposal to rezone Kingswood golf course in Dingley Village was a done deal, describing the site as 'being redeveloped'. The Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips raised this matter on my behalf as a constituency question, citing that over 8000 objectors made submissions to Kingston council during the advertising of the proposal. Some of you may have also seen the coverage on *A Current Affair* of the backlash to the proposal to redevelop this pristine environmental asset for housing.

The government's own discussion paper suggests that this will go through despite mass opposition from the community and members of Parliament who represent the area, as well as the Liberal candidate for Keysborough, Darrel Taylor, who is doing an outstanding job. This issue is causing enormous concern. I understand that there is now a local push to have this land put into the green wedge, which would protect this high-quality open space and environmental asset from destruction — if the residential rezoning is defeated, that is. This would expand the green wedge.

Labor's approach to planning for golf courses has been haphazard at best. The government's own Planning for Golf in Victoria Task Force appears to have failed to

report back with a final recommendation and framework report, which is described as stage 4 of the process in the *Planning for Golf in Victoria: Fact Sheet 1* and which was, as I mentioned before, due in the fourth quarter of 2017.

‘Next steps’ on the government’s own planning website in relation to golf in Victoria states that:

Feedback on the discussion paper is being collated and will inform the preparation of the final golf strategy, which will support golf to be sustainable and grow into the future.

On the government’s engage.vic.gov.au website, this is shown as being due in 2018.

What I would like to know is whether the Labor government is deliberately waiting until the last week of Parliament to release its response to minimise public scrutiny. Indeed Labor’s platform on the issue of the urban growth boundary appears to have weakened from its *Plan Melbourne: Refresh — Discussion Paper* in 2015, which states on page 4:

The existing urban growth boundary will be locked down ...

I note that this government’s *Plan Melbourne 2017–2050*, at policy 2.1.1, states:

A permanent urban growth boundary will be maintained to contain Melbourne’s outward growth.

This language is considerably weaker than the government’s position in 2015, stating that the existing urban growth boundary will be ‘locked down’. This is a moving feast, no doubt; however, it does present an opportunity to expand the green wedge to protect the Kingswood golf club, and I call on the government to release the framework to assist in this process.

Responses

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (18:04) — There were 10 adjournment matters this evening. The last was from Mrs Peulich to the Minister for Sport, and it was in relation to examples of recreational land use in her electorate. The matter raised by Ms Bath was for the Minister for Families and Children, and it was in relation to Aboriginal child placement issues and correspondence that has been entered into. There was also a matter raised by Ms Fitzherbert for the Minister for Education in relation to facilities at a school in her electorate.

There was a matter raised by Ms Crozier in relation to the parental rights of parents of a child who is transitioning. There was also a matter raised by Ms Springle for the Minister for Women in relation to Gender Equity Victoria commitments and those

commitments being put into practice. Mr Finn raised a matter for the Minister for Health in relation to Footscray Hospital. That will be referred to Minister Hennessy. Ms Dunn raised a matter for the Minister for Water seeking that the minister cancel existing extraction licences.

Ms Patten raised a matter for the Special Minister of State. It was in respect of the electoral roll, seeking that the Special Minister of State ask the Victorian Electoral Commission to return to a past practice of enrolment.

Ms Symes raised a matter for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety in relation to the installation of 40-kilometre-an-hour flashing lights and an analysis from VicRoads in terms of some safety concerns that she has as well as information around Transport Accident Commission community grants. Ms Lovell raised a matter for the Minister for Health in relation to updates in respect of radiotherapy services in Shepparton.

I have written responses to adjournment debate matters raised by Mr O’Donohue on 9 August, Ms Patten on 23 August and Ms Fitzherbert on 7 September.

Mrs Peulich — On a point of order, Acting President, my apologies for the error, I am advised I should have been referring this matter to the Minister for Planning. If I could ask Minister Tierney to redirect that, that would be most appreciated.

Ms TIERNEY — Not a problem.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) (18:09) — In regard to Ms Crozier’s question about the justice officers who are currently seeking WorkCover leave and have outstanding claims, the President has decided that he will request that a further written response be provided to that question. In regard to Mr O’Donohue’s question without notice to the Minister for Corrections about police cell numbers, the President will not seek a further response to that.

The house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 6.10 p.m.