

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 20 June 2018

(Extract from book 9)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

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)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
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Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
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Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
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
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
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 K. EIDEH

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The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

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	AC	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, Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	RV
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
Elasmr, 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 ⁷	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	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

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 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; Greens — Australian Greens;
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, 20 June 2018

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson) took the chair at 9.35 a.m. and read the prayer.

Mr Ondarchie — On a point of order, President, I seek your guidance on things that happened yesterday in this house during the committee stage of the bill, where at some point during debate when I was asking questions of the minister at the table one of the advisers in the advisers box verbally made it very clear that they were not happy with the type of question that I had asked and were in vehement disagreement. Secondly, at some point through the early part of the debate the minister at the table was receiving answers from the advisers box by the adviser calling out to the minister at the table. I just seek your guidance as to whether that is appropriate in terms of how we do business in this place now.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Ondarchie actually raises an important point in terms of the conduct of the house. This is the first time I have been aware of advisers in the advisers box making audible comments that might interfere with debate or might reflect on debate in the house, and clearly it is out of order.

Interestingly enough, in terms of the minister at the table receiving advice, I have been giving some thought to that. As the house would be aware, we have granted an opportunity for parliamentary secretaries to sit with the minister to advise the minister in some instances where they have some knowledge, perhaps having helped with the development of legislation for a minister in another place, and we have given permission for parliamentary secretaries to actually be in an advisory position. I think it may well be worthwhile us considering in the future actually allowing one principal adviser to sit alongside the minister to save this procession backwards and forwards to the advisers box so that the house committee processes can actually be expedited, but that is obviously a matter to be considered by the Procedure Committee. It is not one that I would seek to introduce myself, but it might well be worth consideration in terms of speeding up those processes.

Irrespective of where we might go in the future, the reality is that advisers in the box are to be seen and not heard as far as the proceedings of the Parliament are concerned, and on this occasion it is unfortunate that that occurred in yesterday's debate. I was not in the chair the time. I think the point is well made, and I uphold the point of order as such. No doubt ministers will take that into account in discussing the processes with their advisers going forward.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Buckley Street, Essendon, level crossing

To the Legislative Council of Victoria:

This petition of the residents of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council the fatally flawed proposed 'road under rail' design at the Buckley Street level crossing in Essendon.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria and state government commit to:

not proceeding with the significantly flawed proposed 'road under rail' crossing at the Buckley Street level crossing in Essendon;

fully exploring Moonee Valley City Council's 'rail under road' proposal, noting this particular design does not include any acquisitions of private property, while meeting the long-term needs of all residents, businesses and users of the area;

providing as much financial investment in the Essendon level crossing removal, as those in marginal electorates (such as the Frankston line);

not proceeding with any proposal without support of the immediate community and consideration of the long-term consequences.

For Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) by Mr Finn (275 signatures).

Laid on table.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan).

Buckley Street, Essendon, level crossing

We, the undersigned citizens of Victoria, call on the Legislative Council of Victoria to note:

1. the Andrews Labor government's preferred approach to removing the Buckley Street level crossing does not have the support of the Moonee Valley Council nor the local community; and
2. the government's decision to proceed with its plans using parts of the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act to exclude council and the community, invoked without consulting or informing council or the community, is the wrong project and the wrong process.

We call upon the Andrews Labor government to pause, listen to council and the community, and redesign the Buckley Street level crossing removal project in line with community expectations with rail under road.

For Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) by Mr Finn (413 signatures).

Laid on table.

Ordered to be considered next day on motion of Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan).

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Perinatal services

Dr CARLING-JENKINS presented report, including appendices, together with transcripts of evidence.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be published.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (09:42) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In moving this motion to take note of this report, I would just like to make a few remarks. I introduced the original motion in this place in 2015 which initiated this inquiry, prior to the exposé of the terrible tragedy at Djerriwarrh Health Services. This inquiry very quickly became a focus and a very important process that we had to go through here in Victoria. Through this inquiry we heard from mothers, health practitioners, academics, researchers, departments and others on the current situation relating to the health and wellbeing of mothers and their babies during the perinatal period.

We found that perinatal services can and so often do provide an exceptional quality of care, but we also saw some serious gaps which have developed. These need to be urgently addressed by the government, whoever they may be next year. These gaps were around the provision of perinatal mental health care, shortages in the perinatal workforce and obvious disparities between metropolitan and regional areas. Quite simply, it is time that we all took care of mothers and their babies in a real way.

The recommendations in this report are wide and varied, from developing a framework for recurrent funding for existing parenting support groups like Olivia's Place and the Babes Project to prioritising public health promotion campaigns to encourage breastfeeding and from establishing a task force of key stakeholders to create a perinatal mental health plan to ensuring that all pregnant women are screened for anxiety and depression in a meaningful way. There are recommendations which focus specifically on workforce capacity, which is a concern that was raised

throughout our hearings, including in regional areas and through submissions as well, and recommendations which focus on the unique gaps identified for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and for culturally and linguistically diverse families. Again I encourage the government to consider each recommendation carefully so that they may improve the lives of Victorian mothers and their babies in a real and meaningful way.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the chair, Paul Edbrooke, and the deputy chair, Cindy McLeish, the members for Frankston and Eildon respectively in the Assembly, who kept us well on track throughout this inquiry; lower house MPs Roma Britnell, Chris Couzens and Marie Edwards, the members for South-West Coast, Geelong and Bendigo West respectively, who lent us their expertise throughout the inquiry as committee members; and last but not least, Bernie Finn, who asked the tough questions when they needed to be asked.

I also would like to thank the staff, particularly Joel Hallinan, who took over as our executive officer early this year and quickly brought the report to life, as well as Rachel Macreadie, Helen Ross-Soden, Pamie Fung and Dr Gregory Gardiner, who ensured the inquiry ran smoothly and the report was written with professionalism and with great care and attention to detail.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (09:45) — I rise to first of all thank the staff of the committee who, as always, have done a sterling job. It is not always easy to keep a committee on the right track, particularly when it is a committee that is not comprised of a large number of members, and they did a sterling job indeed. On this particular occasion we also had a change of executive officer halfway through and that has a tendency to be a tad disruptive, but on this occasion no disruption was experienced and that is a credit to the staff of this committee. They should be very proud of the effort and the work that they put into this report, as indeed they have done in previous reports.

I would also like to commend Dr Carling-Jenkins, because this is a very important issue — the issue of the health and welfare of mothers and babies — and I fear that over recent years it is something that has perhaps slipped under the radar. Perhaps this report may indicate or actually prove that it has slipped under the radar, and that is something that we really have to turn around. I am very hopeful that Minister Woolridge next year will take that on board and work with Minister Crozier to ensure that the welfare and health of babies and mothers is first and foremost with regard to these

sorts of issues. If we do not look after mothers and if we do not look after babies, then we are not just failing them but we are failing ourselves, and I think that would be a tragic situation. I commend all involved and commend the report to the house.

Motion agreed to.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's Reports on —

Follow Up of Selected 2012–13 and 2013–14 Performance Audits, June 2018 (*Ordered to be published*).

The Victorian Government ICT Dashboard, June 2018 (*Ordered to be published*).

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Early childhood language program

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Early Childhood Education) (09:50) — I rise to provide an update to the house on an exciting new early learning program. As part of a \$135.9 million investment in early childhood education in this year's state budget we have invested \$17.9 million for the first state-funded language program ever to be rolled out in preschools. To kick off this initiative I am announcing today that parents, teachers, early years services staff and kindergarten communities will be able to attend a number of information sessions to be held across Victoria over the next two weeks. The sessions will cover how the program will work, funding eligibility and how people can apply through an expression of interest process.

This Australian-first initiative is expected to give 3000 children each year over the next four years the opportunity to learn a language other than English whilst attending a kindergarten program. This program will enable 3-hour weekly language sessions to be delivered in 120 kindergartens as well as enable a further 10 services to become bilingual. Learning languages at kindergarten often results in children learning the language of their grandparents as well as inspiring to them to take an interest in other cultures. It has shown also to improve brain function and in fact English reading and writing skills.

This is part of our government's significant reforms to early childhood education. I would certainly encourage members interested to promote this to our early childhood sector, our schools as well as our local communities to find out more and attend one of these information sessions. There is more information available about the information sessions and their locations on the Department of Education and Training website.

Kilter Rural

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (09:52) — I rise to update the house on a new investment from the Andrews Labor government's Food Source Victoria program. I am pleased to announce today that we are assisting Kilter Rural with some pioneering robotic weeding equipment for its organic tomato farm in Lake Boga. Kilter is the largest grower of irrigated, broadacre organic crops in Australia and is the second-largest grower of processing tomatoes after Kagome. The project has the potential to transform the processed tomato industry and position Victoria as the lead organic tomato processing centre for Australia.

Due to the requirements of meeting organic certification, chemicals cannot be used to control weeds, so the robotic weeding equipment is crucial to growing organic tomato crops. There are currently no organic tomatoes processed in Australia, and manufacturers and retailers wishing to offer products containing organic processed tomatoes must currently use an imported product. But the project that we are supporting Kilter Rural to implement will change that. The government is providing a \$250 000 grant in support of this project. It creates a significant market opportunity for Australian-grown organic tomatoes to be based in Victoria, and we are very pleased to be supporting it.

Small business regulation reform

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Small Business) (09:54) — I rise to update the house on the most recent figures from the Andrews Labor government's measures to cut red tape, measures which are set to save small tourism and retail businesses. Since day one our government has been working to reduce regulatory burdens that for far too long have restricted the ability for small business owners to reach their next milestone. As part of this work we launched the multisector small business regulation review program to erode unnecessary burdens faced by small business in their communities. I am pleased to inform the house that these reforms will save small tourism and retail

businesses up to \$138 million per year. To ensure this work will have the greatest impact across Victoria we are working with local councils across the state to reduce the time business planning decisions take.

Local governments are being supported to deliver outcomes in a timelier and more efficient manner for businesses, cutting potentially months off decision-making processes at the local government level. Tangible changes that businesses will experience include the consolidation of 14 separate business approval forms into a single application, allowing more owners to spend more time on their business and less time tackling a mountain of paperwork. Business owners will also have access to greater up-front support, including a dedicated small business help desk located at each participating council. I am pleased to note these reforms have already been completed by both the Bendigo and the Maribyrnong councils, and work is underway at both the City of Latrobe and the City of Kingston.

While our government has been hammering away on this since being elected, it should be noted that the announcement of the reforms has faced delays of up to six months due to sluggish commonwealth processing funding through the Department of the Treasury. Small businesses, though, are invaluable assets to our community, and that is why this government, the Andrews government, is ensuring that they have the resources they need to grow and create more jobs. I look forward to working with more councils within the local government sector to realise ongoing reforms so that small businesses can get on with running their businesses.

Wyndham multidisciplinary centre

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (09:56) — I rise to inform the house of what the Andrews Labor government is doing to better support victim survivors of sexual assault. On 28 May I was pleased to join with Minister for Police Lisa Neville and Treasurer Tim Pallas to open the Wyndham multidisciplinary centre. The \$10 million site is the seventh such centre in Victoria. The Royal Commission into Family Violence showed us that there is an urgent need to put victims at the centre of service delivery, and that is what centres like this do. This one-stop shop ensures that family violence and sexual assault victims across Melbourne's west have access to the tailored support that they need and ensures there is no wrong door for victim survivors seeking support. This means better, more coordinated services for people in Melbourne's west, including the cities of Hobsons Bay, Brimbank and Maribyrnong. It is also a sign to local

survivors of sexual assault that their community stands ready to support them, and there is now a space where their voices can be heard.

Around 45 detectives, intelligence analysts and training police officers from Victoria Police's family violence unit and the sexual offences and child abuse investigation team will work together alongside child protection staff, family violence workers, sexual assault counsellors and other support workers. This includes workers from the Department of Health and Human Services, the West Centre Against Sexual Assault, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, Women's Health West, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and the Royal Children's Hospital Gatehouse, who will also work within the facility. I acknowledge the support of all of those organisations in getting this centre off the ground. Victim survivors will also have access to forensic medical suites to enable forensic examinations on site and to ongoing support with legal processes, such as support in court and with witness statements.

Having visited all the other multidisciplinary centres I have heard how this cooperative model is invaluable. Victims do not have to retell their traumatic stories to multiple workers. Police also advise that the support provided by sexual assault counsellors empowers victim survivors to make statements to police in order to ensure perpetrators can be held to account. Our budget this year invests \$25 million over four years to better support survivors of family violence and sexual assault by ensuring they have access to counselling. This brings our support for sexual assault services to \$27 million in 2018–19 — a 25 per cent increase since 2014. Every Victorian deserves to have world-best services and to be supported and cared for no matter where they live.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Queen's Birthday honours

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (09:58) — I rise today to extend my congratulations to two senior Gunditjmara men, firstly to singer-songwriter Archie Roach, who was recognised in the Queen's Birthday honours list with an Order of Australia honour for his contribution to Australian culture and Indigenous issues. Until recently Archie was based in Killarney, between Warrnambool and Port Fairy, and he has been a popular and prominent member of our community. Archie was taken from his parents at Framlingham as a child, and through his music and community work he has been a vocal advocate for Aboriginal children and the stolen generations.

I would also like to acknowledge Warrnambool athlete and Aboriginal health advocate Alby Clarke, who is training for another major title. I regularly see Mr Clarke running in the Warrnambool streets, and he is now to run a half-marathon in Alice Springs in October. The impressive thing is that Mr Clarke is 83 years of age. Mr Clarke said:

I did the half-marathon when I was 80 and got through alright, so I am confident I can finish this one as well.

Congratulations to both senior Gunditjmara leaders from my region, Mr Archie Roach and Mr Alby Clarke.

Western Metropolitan Region roads

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (09:59) — Last week I attended the commencement of works on the Dohertys Road upgrade in Laverton North. In attendance were the Premier, Daniel Andrews; the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Luke Donnellan; and the Victorian ALP candidate for Tarneit, Sarah Connolly. This project includes a duplication of Dohertys Road as well as a new bridge over the Princes Freeway. There will be an extra lane built either side of Dohertys Road, upgrades of five key intersections and a new overpass built for the Federation Trail. Over 20 000 commuters use this section every day, and this is likely to increase as the population in the outer west continues to rise.

Dohertys Road, Laverton North, is the first of eight projects that will form the Andrews Labor government's \$1.8 billion western roads upgrade, and it is the first of 21 projects in the full \$4 billion suburban roads upgrade package. This is the biggest investment in suburban roads ever made by a Victorian government. This plan will transform arterial roads across Melbourne, improving the way people move around our growing outer suburbs and improving the roads commuters rely on every day. Furthermore, the western roads upgrade will create over 1200 jobs, generating a new pathway for local trainees and TAFE graduates to gain full-time employment — just another job-boosting, productivity-driving project for the west. I commend the Andrews Labor government on its commitment to upgrading our arterial road network and getting Victorians home safe sooner.

United States Independence Day

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (10:01) — Today is the last members statement that I can make before America's Independence Day, given that we are going into a break. I just wanted to use the opportunity to wish all of our friends in the United States and Americans who are living and working here

in Australia a very happy Independence Day on 4 July. The United States will celebrate its 242nd anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Built on the principle that all men and women are created equal and endowed with unalienable rights, which still in many countries is a revolutionary concept, it is worthy of reflection on this special holiday.

I would like to especially make mention of this given that I have Anna and Shad, interns from the University of Utah, working in my office this semester in a program that I have been involved in for many, many years. Both are descendants of immigrants, and for them it is a special time to reflect and remember their family history. Shad's great-grandparents and grandparents fled to the United States as refugees during World War II and came to the United States in search of freedom, as did Anna's great-grandparents, who came from Scotland.

I, as the shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, along with Shad and Anna, would like to wish Americans wherever they are, including those living and working in Australia, a very happy Fourth of July.

Ethan Zeccola

Mrs PEULICH — I would also like to make mention of Ethan Zeccola, a year 10 student from Cheltenham Secondary College, who is doing his work experience in my office.

Irene Bouzo

Mrs PEULICH — I would like to congratulate Dr Irene Bouzo, the executive officer of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, on a brilliant career and on her retirement, and I wish her all the very best for the future.

Vietnamese community

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) (10:03) — I rise to speak on what happens when you give refugee communities the time to heal, to grow and to become strong. Last week I stood alongside Cr Cuc Lam, the mayor of Maribyrnong, and welcomed 40 new Aussies to their citizenship. Last Saturday I joined Cr Daniel Nguyen, mayor of the City of Yarra, to raise the Co Vang to mark Vietnam Veterans Day. Cr Nguyen is also the executive officer of Tarwirri, a membership body for Indigenous law students and lawyers, and the youngest councillor at the City of Yarra.

I was so, so proud to hear our young Viet-Aussie MC acknowledge, in both Australian English and Australian Vietnamese, that we sought refuge here on land that

was stolen from this nation's first peoples. It was a freezing cold Saturday morning, but we were all there, all in our ao dais, designed for the tropics. We stood on Bridge Road under the Co Vang, reaffirming our language, our culture and our story as refugees and as Australians.

This Friday I will be joining the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association at their annual gala dinner. We will celebrate 35 years of this fine institution and raise money for Rohingya refugees. I mention this incredible work not because we are more deserving of compassion and citizenship than anyone else, but as we head into an election and the usual dog whistling and pandering to xenophobia ramps up I reiterate the Greens' commitment to stand with our diverse communities against any of us being used as political punching bags.

This Girl Can

Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) (10:04) — On 7 June I was delighted to attend — along with my parliamentary colleagues, including you, President — a special event for the This Girl Can Victoria campaign launched by the Minister for Health, the Honourable Jill Hennessy from the other place. The project was jointly developed by VicHealth and is aimed at encouraging women to become physically active regardless of their size, shape, age or background. It seeks to empower women to get fit and not be self-conscious of how they look in public spaces, or even in private gymnasiums for that matter. I think it is a great initiative and worthy of support across all sections and genders within our community.

Northern Community Church CareWorks

Mr ELASMAR — On Wednesday, 13 June, I was invited to tour the Northern Community Church of Christ centre located within my electorate in High Street, Preston. David Toscano, the CEO of the centre, outlined his work-for-the-dole programs which he is currently overseeing with his CareWorks manager, Tamsin Magnay. The programs include hospitality, retail and information technology to name just a few. I congratulate them both for their drive and passion and for really helping people in a very practical and useful way. This training and job placement is vital to upskilling people for future long-term employment.

Greater Geelong crime rates

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (10:06) — I take this opportunity to express my ongoing concern at the increase in crime rates in the Geelong region under this

Labor government. Despite the crowing about their efforts, particularly from the Minister for Police and nodding head, Lisa Neville, total crime is up in this state, including assaults and other violent offences, which are up by 9.5 per cent.

In the Assembly yesterday they expressed sadness at the recent rape and death of Ms Dixon near Princes Park, Melbourne, last week. We are right to feel sadness and anger; others also impacted by violent crimes feel the same. Women and even men walking at night in our cities also feel scared. It is a reality that is unfortunately getting worse. While the Premier expresses his remorse, it is under his leadership that there has been an increase in carjackings, assaults and youth gang violence. Since he came to office attempted murder and manslaughter have gone up by 42 per cent. To the police's credit, burglaries and theft have dropped in the Geelong region only in the last year; however, violent crime such as those lamented by the Premier so publicly have increased dramatically in the region. Sexual offences are up by 41 per cent, robberies are up by 41 per cent and serious assaults are up by 10 per cent. Stalking has increased by 15 per cent.

The police indicate that there are three prisons in the Geelong region which impact the total statistics, yet that is also a sign of the loss of control this government has over safety, not only on our streets but also in our prisons. Look closer. Total crime in Barwon Heads went up from 185 matters to 219 — an increase of 18 per cent. In Leopold total crime went up from 438 instances to 604 — an increase of 38 per cent. Our state, the Geelong region and western Victoria all deserve better than this.

Violence against women

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (10:08) — Like everyone I was shocked and sickened by the brutal and senseless murder of Eurydice Dixon. I extend my heartfelt condolences to her family and friends. Many people have spoken in recent days in the community, in the media and in the Parliament about the underlying causes of violence against women and what needs to be done to challenge them. Women are assaulted and raped every day, mostly by men they know and in their own homes. The culture underpinning this is deep and will take a sustained effort to turn around. We know we still have a long way to go when we hear young men, teenagers and even young boys speaking about women and young girls in disparaging ways and putting them down. Parents, particularly fathers, need to challenge this whenever it occurs. Preschools and schools need to build respect and equality into their everyday activities; many

already do, but we still have a long way to go. I welcome the inquiry by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission into sexual harassment in the workplace that was announced today.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Ms PENNICUIK — I express my profound disagreement with the calls by the Liberal Party to privatise the ABC. This would be a monumental mistake and is not supported by the public. Radio broadcasting started in 1923, and the ABC was established in 1932, with TV starting in 1956. The ABC is a national treasure that is valued by all Australians.

Level crossing removals

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:09) — Today I want to acknowledge the construction workers that have worked on the construction blitz on the level crossing removals along the Dandenong and Frankston lines. There are no longer boom gates at Poath Road, Murrumbeena Road and Koornang Road. The Caulfield end of the Dandenong–Caulfield line now has no level crossings in that stretch of rail.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — Also the new Frankston station opened after a very short period of time. It was an amazing effort by those construction workers to work in shifts around the clock. Their dedication, their skills and their application should be acknowledged by this state and this Parliament. I have heard the interjections. I do not understand; I find it unbelievable that the Liberal Party have this sort of disdain for construction workers — an amazing disdain for honest, hardworking construction workers. I am out there nearly every day talking to the construction workers on the government projects, and they clearly know that the Liberal Party MPs have a disdain towards them, all the way up to the federal government, which has its own police force for you if you are a construction worker as opposed to other people. Anyway, this side of the chamber acknowledges their great work and their skills, and we thank them.

Queen's Birthday honours

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (10:11) — It is with great pleasure that I recognise and honour five constituents from within my electorate, each of whom was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours.

Trevor Noonan has been a tireless worker for the community of Cobram for over 40 years through his involvement in both Apex and Rotary. Trevor also served on the former Cobram Shire Council for 10 years and was a commissioner for the Moira shire.

Kevin 'Gunna' Ryan is a legend in Tatura with 40 years of continuous service to his community. He was a councillor throughout that time, commencing with Rodney shire in 1972 and then moving on to the Greater Shepparton City Council, where he served for many years as deputy mayor. Gunna will always be known as the mayor of Tatura, the jewel in the crown of the City of Greater Shepparton.

Angus McKinnon is a well-respected Shepparton vet and equine reproduction specialist who founded the Goulburn Valley Equine Hospital in 1988. He is a world leader in equine reproduction and now imparts his vast knowledge to the next generation of vets.

Numurkah's Isobel Hodge is a leader in her community in the area of music and beyond. Isobel is the founder of the Numurkah and District Choristers, the Numurkah Singers, singing ensemble Polyphony and the Numurkah Town Band.

Kenneth Moore has been involved in many community organisations in Mooroopna and Shepparton, including the Mooroopna RSL, the Mooroopna Probus Club, the Masons, the Mooroopna Croquet Club and the Rotary Club of Shepparton South.

I thank Trevor, Gunna, Angus, Isobel and Kenneth for their dedicated work in their respective communities and congratulate them on receiving this most prestigious honour.

This Girl Can

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) (10:13) — Along with my colleague Nazih Elasmr I would like to make a statement on the This Girl Can event on Thursday, 7 June, held here at Parliament House. This Girl Can is a powerful campaign launched by VicHealth modelled on the successful UK campaign that encourages women of all ages, sizes and levels of fitness to become more physically active. This Girl Can celebrates and supports Victorian women to embrace physical activity in a way that works for them. While many women know that exercising is important for their physical and mental health, 50 per cent of Victorian women are not getting enough exercise each week. A major reason why women are not trying new activities or getting involved in sport is a fear of being judged or their not being fit enough to start. The

message is that moving and making time for health does not need to be a chore; it can be fun, and there are many options for women to find something that feels right for them.

Australia is the first country in the world to license the This Girl Can campaign, which is based on Sport England's highly successful campaign that motivated 3.9 million women in England to increase their physical activity. After seeing the impact there, the VicHealth team was inspired to introduce the campaign in Victoria. Increasing participation in physical activity has health, social and economic benefits. These benefits include health gains made by preventing chronic disease and improved mental wellbeing with increased social connection. Further benefits include increased productivity and also positive changes made to communities with reduced traffic congestion and safer neighbourhoods.

I congratulate Jerril Rechter and her VicHealth team for the success of the This Girl Can campaign so far and wish them well in encouraging more Victorian women to realise the benefits of embracing physical activity in a way that works for them.

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (10:14) — June is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month and today is Red Apple Day, which has a particular focus on fundraising. Yesterday I was asked why the apple symbol is used by Bowel Cancer Australia, and it is a good question. The apple symbolises the message that bowel cancer is treatable and beatable if detected early. The apple is an abstract of a human bowel. The small hole in the apple is caused by a worm. If detected early and removed, the worm is unable to continue affecting the apple or the health of the tree.

I would like to pay tribute to the work that Bowel Cancer Australia does in raising awareness of the disease, what its signs are and how it can be prevented. I also want to acknowledge the work of Bowel Cancer Australia ambassador Donna Bauer. Donna began helping Bowel Cancer Australia only a short time after her own diagnosis when she was still receiving treatment. Her commitment continues today when fortunately Donna is healthy and strong once more. This morning Donna was raising awareness at the gym of symptoms and changes in our body that we all need to be aware of. These include tiredness; changes in bowel habits, including the presence of blood; and unexplained weight loss. If these symptoms are detected, you should get them checked out as soon as you can.

In recent years, particularly because of the work of people like Donna and Bowel Cancer Australia, we have seen far more attention being paid to this disease, which is what we need to drive down the death rates which are still way higher than they should be. I hope that next year when this day returns that we will see greater oversight and reporting of colonoscopies in this state. Many people are waiting far too long. That is why the number of deaths continue as they do.

Northern Victoria Region kindergartens

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (10:16) — My members statement today is about the kindergartens in my electorate. Of course we want every child in every community to be able to attend a great local kinder. Part of this is making sure that more kinders are accessible. Last week I was delighted that 28 kinders across northern Victoria learned that they had been successful in securing a grant under the Andrews government's inclusive kindergarten facilities program. That included seven in Wodonga, two in Mansfield and five in Wangaratta, as well as in Glenrowan, Whorouly and lots of other communities in my electorate. This is a Victorian-first initiative where kinders receive new equipment such as wheelchair ramps, movable change tables, sensory play kits, adjustable chairs and braille books.

Kinders often find it difficult to navigate funding options for their kids, especially those that are not directly run by councils, which are very used to applying for funding. It is often the parents who are the ones who seek out the opportunities. Benalla and District Preschool Partnership is run by a committee of 10 parents. Karly Duncombe from that organisation contacted me a few months ago about the needs of Benalla's kinders. I encouraged her to apply for funding under this round, and I was very pleased to inform her last week that she had been successful in receiving new equipment and furniture for her kindergartens. I congratulate Karly and her team, and I thank them for their commitment to the little people of Benalla.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The PRESIDENT (10:17) — Members, I would like to make a brief comment in respect of the Queen's Birthday honours list. Obviously a number of recipients have been mentioned already in 90-second statements, and it is a tremendous thing that we recognise the contribution of so many Victorians, particularly those who have received honours for volunteer work within our community.

Out of all of the honours — and I do not depreciate those that have been made to many people for their services to Victoria — a former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Ken Smith, was the recipient of one of the Queen's Birthday honours this year. On members' behalf I extend my congratulations to Ken Smith on that achievement. I think it is a worthy recognition of his contribution to this Parliament and indeed also to the promotion of business, particularly through the Australia China Business Council, to which he has devoted a great deal of time since his retirement from the Parliament.

TOLL FINE ENFORCEMENT BILL 2018

Statement of compatibility

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:

In accordance with section 28 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the charter), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Toll Fine Enforcement Bill 2018.

In my opinion, the Toll Fine Enforcement Bill 2018 (the bill), as introduced to the Legislative Council, is compatible with human rights as set out in the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Human Rights issues

In my opinion, the only human rights under the charter which risk being restricted by this bill are the right to privacy and reputation as protected by section 13 of the charter.

Section 13 states that:

“A person has the right not to have his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence unlawfully or arbitrarily interfered with.”

The East Link Project Act 2004 currently requires an information protection agreement to be in place for the passing of vehicle registration information from VicRoads or its representative to an enforcement agency (usually the Chief Commissioner of Police) or their representative. The Toll Fine Enforcement Bill 2018 removes that requirement.

The Melbourne City Link Act 2004 already allows the passing of this information without an information protection agreement. In addition, the Road Safety Act includes extensive privacy requirements. As a result, I do not believe the removal of the requirement for an information privacy agreement would have a significant impact on a person's right to privacy.

Second reading

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) (10:19) — I move:

That the bill be now read a second time.

At the moment people driving on CityLink and EastLink without paying a toll can receive a maximum of one fine per day, regardless of how many trips are made. This can be found in section 73(4) of the Melbourne CityLink Act 1995 and section 204(7) of the EastLink Project Act 2004.

This bill makes a number of changes to how our legal system handles toll fines. The key change is to make this a maximum of one fine per seven-day period. This sounds like a minor change, but it takes us from a system that doesn't work to one that does.

So what's wrong with the current system?

Under the current system drivers on CityLink, like EastLink, are charged a separate fine for every day of driving without paying a toll. This adds between \$160 and \$367 for every day of driving, and can very quickly spiral out of control.

One of the best ways to illustrate the problems is with a case study put together by a group of community legal centres. Kate lives in Tarneit, is the mother of two toddlers, and had never had a fine before. But then one of her toddlers got sick and needed ongoing hospital care. For months she found herself driving to and from the hospital, as well as working part-time, as well as looking after her other toddler. She struggled to find time to even open her mail. She thought she would just get through this stressful period and sort out the tolls later. When she did, 45 days of driving without paying tolls had become more than \$10 000 worth of fines. To put this in perspective, if Kate had committed a serious crime, like assaulting someone, she probably would have paid a fine that was less than a quarter of this amount.

The current system is also a major headache for our courts.

At the moment half of all fines that have reached the enforcement stage in Victoria are for driving without paying tolls on CityLink and EastLink. And those fines are clogging up our courts.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence report stated that ‘the Magistrates Court is confronting unprecedented demand pressures’. In fact in 2015–16 the court heard 45 834 charges of driving without paying tolls on CityLink. It was the most common charge heard. That year the court heard more than three times as many toll charges as it heard charges of contravening a family violence order. The royal commission expressed frustration that ‘low-level offences’ like driving without paying tolls were taking

up too much court time — time that's needed for dealing with matters like family violence.

The Greens' bill limits the number of fines that can be issued to a driver who doesn't pay their tolls to one every seven days. People will still need to pay tolls they owe. And certainly paying tolls before it becomes a fine will be the more affordable option. Our bill simply makes the fine more proportionate to the offence.

Under our bill a person who drove for a week without paying tolls could find themselves paying a fine of around \$350 — enough to make paying tolls a good idea, but not the \$2500 or so they are currently charged. People facing the court for more serious crimes like shoplifting, assault or drink driving are currently likely to get fines closer to \$1500.

Limiting fines to one every seven days will also bring some much-needed relief to our court system, by limiting the number of cases that end up there at all. If Kate had just received one fine for every seven days, she might have found herself facing a few thousand dollars in fines, instead of more than \$10 000. She might even have been able to find a way to pay this without ever needing to speak to a lawyer.

Let me move now to the details of the bill. Besides the change of one fine in a seven-day period, it also makes six more minor changes.

1. Clauses 4 and 12 of the bill allow the minister to set minimum requirements which toll operators must meet when recovering tolls. This could include, for example, having adequate complaints procedures.
2. Clauses 6 and 14 of the bill allow the court to waive an administrative fee for people facing hardship.
3. Clauses 7 and 15 stop the toll road operators from contacting police if the toll and the toll administration fee have been paid according to the rules in the CityLink and EastLink contracts.
4. Clauses 8 and 17 clarify that VicRoads can pass email addresses and phone numbers to the operators of CityLink and EastLink for following up on unpaid tolls. This will help avoid the situation where people who haven't kept their address details up-to-date with VicRoads, are homeless or are away from their home address suddenly find that they are accumulating weeks or months worth of fines.

5. Clauses 9 and 18 prevent court proceedings from being started for offences which are already more than 15 months old.
6. Clauses 10 and 19 list a series of new areas which may be covered by regulation, including criteria for waiving court administrative fees and the period of time in which records of non-payment of tolls must be destroyed.

To some people in the chamber, these changes may seem oddly familiar. This is because we didn't write them. A group of community lawyers have been working hard on this issue for over a year, from Westjustice to Moonee Valley Legal Service, Victoria Legal Aid, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre and Peninsula Community Legal Centre. The Labor government took their concerns on board, and included changes to toll enforcement in their draft West Gate Tunnel Project Bill. This was published online in December 2017, and Labor says that the bill will be introduced in this Parliament before construction of the West Gate tunnel is complete. This means we might be waiting until 2022 to debate that bill.

Our bill takes the toll enforcement parts of the West Gate Tunnel Project Bill, almost word for word, and introduces them now. This bill enables the toll infringement system to distinguish between those who can't pay and those who won't. It provides for early intervention for those in genuine hardship and frees up our courts to deal with more serious matters like family violence.

We know that these changes to our toll fine system are the right thing to do. They're the right thing to do for people caught up in toll fines. They're the right thing to do to make our courts work. So let's do it — now.

I commend this bill to the house.

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

Debate adjourned until Wednesday, 27 June.

FIREARMS AMENDMENT (SILENCERS) BILL 2018

Statement of compatibility

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) tabled following statement in accordance with Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006:

In accordance with section 28 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the 'charter'), I make this statement of compatibility with respect to the Firearms Amendment (Silencers) Bill 2018.

In my opinion, the Firearms Amendment (Silencers) Bill 2018, as introduced to the Legislative Council, is compatible with human rights as set out in the charter. I base my opinion on the reasons outlined in this statement.

Overview

The purpose of the bill is to amend the *Firearms Act 1996* (the Firearms Act) to include legislative provisions surrounding the conditions and genuine reasons for possession, carriage, use, storage, registration and serial numbering of silencers.

The current powers in the act and the necessity for the change

Whilst the *Firearms Act 1996* authorises the possession, carriage and use of silencers under section 57, the conditions and genuine reasons are set by departmental policy and can be changed/decided upon without external review or consultation.

By formalising the eligibility criteria by allowing silencer possession, carriage and use based on licence type and thereby introducing a permit process similar to that of firearms acquisition and registration into the Firearms Act, the requirements are removed from departmental policy and placed into legislation, providing clear, concise parameters and direction.

The provisions introduced, whilst broadens the eligible circumstances in which a permit can be issued, the provisions tighten the controls around the process, the registration and serial number requirement that will be legislated specifically, providing that each silencer requires a permit similar to a permit to acquire a firearm and registration, rather than one permit that provides no restriction on the quantity.

The proposed outcome also ensures compliance with health and safety legislation.

Human rights issues

Human rights protected by the charter that are relevant to the bill

In my opinion this bill does not alter the existing provisions in the act and as such, will not affect human rights.

In conclusion, I consider that the bill is compatible with the charter.

Second reading

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (10:27) — I move:

That the bill be now read a second time.

Whilst my appreciation of matters non-shooting, fishing and farming has increased exponentially during my time in this place, I still have a bit of work I feel I want to try and deal with in my time here. With the end of the term looming and only one remaining opportunity to present a motion or private members bill, I have to attend to a matter that preceded my time here and was actually one of my motivations for my foray

into politics. Suppressors, silencers, mufflers, cans — they can be known by many names, but they do the one thing: reduce the noise from the discharge of a firearm by containing the expanding gases to a manageable level.

We have EPA restrictions on what noise a vehicle can emit, we have EPA restrictions on what noises we can make in the course of our daily lives, we have restrictions on the noises that can come from a business. It's clear that noise can have an effect on our amenity, so why aren't we shooters afforded the same ability to protect our hearing by the reduction at the source of that noise? We have been told we should wear ear muffs when hunting, but that is totally impractical and just an avoidance of the issue. Suppressors are the answer to the question, but the problem is that recreational shooters cannot have access to one.

If you are a professional shooter, you do have access to a suppressor, should you want one. Under strict rules a professional shooter can get a permit for a suppressor to be used during the course of their business. A professional shooter has to keep a log of how much it is used and if, in the opinion of LRD, you don't use it enough, then the permit is revoked. The way the permit is controlled suggests that these things are so dangerous that if they can't be used enough then they need to be removed, post haste, from the professional shooter. The law as it stands says that you can't have a suppressor without a permit, but in no way, shape or form does it specify the requirements for the permit, leaving it entirely up to the policy of the regulating body, in this case Victoria Police.

The professional shooter's suppressor is to protect the hearing of the professional shooter and to reduce the impact of the shot noise on people or stock — in other words, for exactly the same reasons that a recreational shooter needs one.

Is the hearing of a professional shooter worth more than a recreational shooter's hearing? Does a professional shooter's firearm make more noise than a recreational shooter's firearm? Of course not. Then why is it impossible for a recreational shooter to acquire a permit for one?

As far as I can tell, New Zealand does not regulate suppressors in any way. Whilst they do regulate firearms, they seem to feel that suppressors do not pose enough of a threat to community safety to start banning them or regulating them in such a way that they are effectively banned. In an unregulated situation, if suppressors were going to be a pain point, it would certainly show there.

The United Kingdom is another jurisdiction where we expect the regulation of firearms and accessories to be even stricter than Australia, yet there are instances where you are required to use a suppressor. This is usually due to the proximity of houses and stock, and to be frank, it makes perfect sense if you take out the emotion which dominates the firearms discussion in this country.

The principle of a suppressor and a car muffler are the same. They were actually invented by the same person around about the same time. They capture the gases and slow them down to release them in a manner that causes less noise. As with car mufflers, suppressors come in different designs for different calibres and uses. After all, you wouldn't put a muffler from a Toyota Prius on a Lamborghini and expect it to work, so it isn't logical to expect a suppressor that works on a .22 long rifle to be efficient on a .300 Winchester magnum. Anyone that has heard a car, even a small four-cylinder car, without any exhaust knows how loud they can be and how much R and D the car manufacturers put in to make the cars comply with these laws, give decent fuel efficiency and also give the desired sound, whether that's the barely audible whisper of a Prius or the snarl of a Lamborghini.

Physics plays the lead role in the actual noise generated by a suppressed firearm, and of course the muffler of an internal combustion engine. Whilst the suppressor captures the gases released from the gunshot, then slows them down and releases them, the projectile still is, in most cases, supersonic, and as all supersonic objects do, it releases a loud noise, the supersonic 'crack'. It is a combination of the 'crack' and the uncontained expansion of gases that creates the gunshot we can hear and the gunshot that causes hearing damage, disturbs game and can be irritating for people even some distance from where the shooter is. By containing the expanding gases, we reduce the noise that they emit to a manageable level. A suppressed centrefire is generally accepted to make as much noise as an unsuppressed .22 long rifle, so it is still quite clearly a gunshot, but it reduces the magnitude of the shot so the noise is bearable and doesn't travel as far.

My bill would actually tighten up the requirements for getting and keeping a suppressor, but it would open it up to recreational users. Currently the suppressor doesn't have to be serial numbered and doesn't require a PTA or registration as such. My bill will change this, and a suppressor will be treated for all intensive administrative purposes as a firearm, but the difference is it will be available to all shooters.

The aim of this bill is the protection of hearing. It is telling that there are OH&S laws regarding noise for the workplace yet there are no requirements or, more accurately, there is a legal barrier to protecting your hearing if you are a recreational shooter. That barrier doesn't exist for professional shooters, yet we all obey the same laws of physics.

Hollywood and wilful ignorance and misinformation by those who have a vested interest in keeping their constituents motivated are the enemies of suppressors. The facts do not support the hysteria around suppressors. The facts support the ability of all legal shooters to have access to a device that will do nothing more than protect their hearing.

I commend the bill to the house.

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

Debate adjourned until Wednesday, 27 June.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:33) — I move:

That this house, in accordance with standing order 11.01, requires the Leader of the Government to table by 12.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 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;
- (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.

I am very pleased to move this motion. I will not detail all aspects in relation to the motion, but I want to highlight that the motion is a documents motion where the house would be seeking all documents in relation to the Andrews government's trial of a medically supervised injecting facility. That would include correspondence, briefs and emails between organisational departments such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Minister for Mental Health, the Premier and North Richmond Community Health. It would also include the Department of Education and Training and Richmond West Primary School. We are looking for contracts and service agreements in relation to this facility, and we also think it is important that minutes of consultation with stakeholders are provided as well. That is essentially the core of the documents the motion is seeking.

This is a very important motion because it really goes to the heart of the decision-making processes of the Andrews Labor government surrounding the supervised injecting facility in North Richmond from its genesis to its opening in a couple of weeks time. It is important information that we believe should be available to this house and to the Victorian community. We have canvassed the merits or otherwise of the supervised injecting facility in great detail, and the opinions of all parties have been clearly put on the record in this house. Now, though, we see that it is the duty of this house to further explore the decisions and processes surrounding this policy and this approach of the Andrews Labor government. It is clear that we need to do so. There are still so many gaps to be filled and questions to be answered, and this motion seeks to explore the reasons why Daniel Andrews backflipped on his election policy of not implementing a supervised injecting facility.

What this motion seeks to understand is why Minister Martin Foley made a commitment that no ice would be allowed to be injected at the facility yet the regulations that have subsequently been released allow that to occur. What this motion seeks to understand is why North Richmond was chosen, given that statistics which the government has used to justify the injecting room show that there are other areas of concern across Victoria as well. We want to understand if there are

plans for additional injecting rooms in Victoria. What this motion seeks to explore is why this policy was announced in the midst of the Northcote by-election and whether Daniel Andrews's decision was influenced by the by-election that was underway. We know that the department was asked to come up with announceables for Northcote, and we want to understand if this was one of them. What this motion seeks to explore is what actions the department took upon the resignation of former Premier Jeff Kennett from the review of the injecting facility and what outcomes, measures and priorities have been adopted as part of the review, which will be underway.

This motion also seeks to explore why the facility will open from Monday to Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. I am sure that many in the community believed that this facility would be open 24/7 or at worst maybe have a 16-hour-opening operation, but at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing the minister revealed that it was unlikely that it would be open during weekends and after hours — as if injecting drug users would only seek to access this facility during business hours.

The documents should detail how that decision was made. Who made that decision? Was it the minister, the Premier, the community health centre or the department? Is it due to the funding agreement that has been signed or other budgetary, staffing or security decisions in relation to the centre? Because on this side of the house we do see some very real community safety concerns in relation to this facility. For example, at 3.00 p.m. on a Friday, with a closing time of 5.00 p.m., if we have someone who has recently been injecting within the facility back in the community and unable to be provided the support which was detailed when we debated the legislation, what will be the impact on the community of that? How can we be assured that their issues will be managed and supported when the centre is not reopening until 9.00 a.m. on a Monday? I think these documents should detail what emergency measures and support will be put in place.

We have also heard accusations in PAEC of a heated discussion between the Premier and Minister Foley, where senior departmental staff were present. What was the outcome of those discussions? The Premier was so adamant that there would be no injecting facility, and then he backflipped. Why did this occur? The department was so adamant for many years that there was no evidence to support an injecting facility, having presented to multiple committees and inquiries multiple times, so what changed in the department virtually overnight? We believe the documents that are requested will explore these questions and shed some further light

on the true nature of the decision-making, the information and the timing of this announcement.

This motion for the production of documents also explores the flawed legislation that was passed by this house whereby the incorrect part of the North Richmond Community Health centre was legislated to house the injecting facility. The documents should detail when the Premier was made aware of this issue, when Minister Foley was made aware and when the centre and the department were made aware, or became aware, of this issue and then what future steps are now required to rectify the flaw in the legislation to enable the facility to be where it was originally planned to be.

We have seen the department briefing to the community, residents and businesses turn pear-shaped because the facility is close to the school. I think Victorians have the right to ask what the outcomes of those forums have been. Have the government and the department addressed those concerns or have they turned a blind eye in relation to them?

This documents motion also explores matters relating to the nearby primary school, the Minister for Education and his department. PAEC heard that the only security measures that would be implemented would be to lock the back gate. Now we see additional security and fencing commitments from the Andrews government — at what cost? And who is paying for this? Has that been incorporated as part of the funding that was outlined in detail when we had the debate on the legislation? When was the decision made to provide these extra security measures and did it have anything to do with the terrible performance at PAEC of the minister in relation to exactly this issue?

This motion is an important one for the Victorian community. We all deserve to know the answers to those lingering questions in relation to this facility. Why did the backflip occur? Why were the regulations changed to include ice? Why was the legislation flawed? Why has the flipping and flopping in relation to so many aspects of the policy occurred? Why are Samoan security guards required? What is the impact on the service providers in terms of the operation of the facility?

We believe that Victorians deserve to see these documents that detail the impact, the outcomes, the decision-making processes and the significant issues in relation to this policy. This is a matter which we think warrants detailed examination and detailed investigation, and unfortunately not only in the debate on the legislation but in so many decisions since, information has changed. There have been disparate

positions in relation to even ministers within the government, and there have been inconsistencies and mistakes made along the way. We think it is important to have the information at hand so that full information is available to this house and to the broader community, and I commend this motion to the house.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:42) — This is a call-for-documents motion, a motion that comes regularly to this chamber. The government's position is the same as when the government was in opposition last term — that any call for documents will be respected as long as there are no commercial-in-confidence documents. I cannot imagine there are many commercial-in-confidence documents around this particular issue. Any cabinet-in-confidence documents the government will reserve its right to not hand to the chamber.

I have got to say that respect for this chamber really diminished in the last term of government. In terms of these sorts of calls in this chamber, the previous government — the Baillieu-Napthine governments — refused to hand over thousands of documents related to calls for documents from the opposition and the Greens party in the last term. They refused to hand over thousands of documents.

When there was a call for documents around the controversial project that was the east-west link, the government at the time tabled in this chamber a 12-page short-form business case — 12 pages, which included the cover and half a page of pictures of a tram, and another half-page of pictures of pedestrians. The disrespect for this chamber in that particular issue — if you took the photos out of that glossy brochure, there would have been about three pages of information that the government was relying on in handing that over and fulfilling a documents motion that was moved in this chamber.

The way this chamber was abused by the previous government because of the 20-plus-1 rule which they had — the abuse and the disrespect shown in this chamber — was unbelievable. From the number of references to committees raised, I think there was one successful one. I congratulate the Greens on that, if my memory serves me correctly. There was one successful reference to a committee from a Greens MLC — I think it was by Ms Pennicuik — in the last period of government. One reference to a committee was successful in this chamber.

I am sure that in the future there will be a lot of outrage from the Leader of the Opposition if certain things do not turn up. This is the outrage: 'The disrespect shown

to this chamber is amazing', she will be saying. Well, we as a government witness it every day now when the committee stages of bills are turned into a farce. In this period of government the committee stages have been turned into an absolute farce, because all the opposition can do — and it is a bit sad — is ask really weird questions over and over and over again to push out committee stages and to slow down the legislative program. When the opposition get up and say, 'We won't oppose this bill', sometimes they mean, 'We actually think this bill is important and should go through'. There are a number of those bills queued up on the notice paper now, and they are denying the benefits of those bills to the people they represent.

The Liberal-Nationals coalition have continually shown disrespect to this chamber, whether they are in government or in opposition, and I am sure there will be outrage as there was before if any documents described in any documents motion cannot be delivered by the government because of the responsibilities that those ministers, the government and the executive have to this state. I am sure there will be all sorts of outrage, but in this case the government will not oppose this call for paperwork. The government never does oppose a call for paperwork, but it has always been up-front about the need for there to be some consideration of that paperwork by any government. As I said, when we were in opposition we respected that the previous government had to put certain considerations on certain parts of documents and documents where it was not in the best interests of the wellbeing of the state and the wellbeing of the people who reside in this state for them to be delivered to this chamber.

This is the Wednesday conspiracy motion. There is always a big conspiracy around this. To pick up the interjection made by my colleague Ms Symes during Ms Wooldridge's contribution about people dying in the streets around this particular area and taking up the argument from Ms Wooldridge about there being a change of heart because of the Northcote by-election, I cannot reconcile that sort of thinking. I have been in this chamber a long time, and I checked with Ms Springle that the safe injecting facility policy has been a policy of the Greens party since I have been here. It has been a policy of the Reason party since they have been here. But getting back to the Greens party, the contest in Northcote was a contest between the Greens and Labor. That is the way people saw it — as a contest between the Greens and Labor.

For Labor to align themselves with a Greens policy did not give voters a point of difference. If it was all about politics, wouldn't the government have a point of difference and go out there and say, 'We're not going to

embrace safe injecting rooms. Vote for us, because that is the point of difference between us and the rivals in this particular seat'? But no. During that period of time there was a change of policy because the government had to accept that the status quo was no longer acceptable whereby in this particular part of Melbourne people were sometimes ill affected and even died from overdoses in people's front yards around the school precinct. The government accepted that the status quo was no longer acceptable and this trial had to go ahead. We hope this trial, as has happened in Kings Cross in New South Wales, does save lives. This has been proven in the trial in Kings Cross.

As far as changing policy is concerned, I think that is what governments and parties should do if there is evidence for a change of policy. I accept that the Liberal Party has not changed any policy since the 1950s. We saw that only yesterday. The treaty bill came in here and they said, 'We don't support that because we didn't in the 1950s'. They did not support the change in the labour hire regime, because in the 1950s people could be abused at their work. 'We're happy to maintain the status quo', they said, because they do not change their opinion on anything.

They have actually been a bit wishy-washy on this issue. They said they supported the safe injecting room trial, but then the guys that have taken over their party, who all look like Agent Smith in the Keanu Reeves movie *The Matrix* — all those young Libs look like Agent Smith, with their slicked-back hairdos and their sunglasses; they are all clones, aren't they, the Bastiaans or whoever they are — have got even worse in changing their 1950s outlook. They are actually going backwards. We could be heading for the early 1950s instead of the late 1950s the way the new Agent Smiths have taken over the party. As far as these Agent Smiths are concerned, people in their ranks of the calibre of Bernie Finn are not right enough for their particular breed of Liberal Party. I think that is incorrect. I think Bernie Finn should be right enough for any party that wants to be on the right. So I am happy to defend you on that, Mr Finn, because I have never met anyone more right — more to the right, not right!

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr LEANE — For Hansard, can I put on the record that I actually hiccupped in between. As far as the safe injecting room trial, it was unacceptable for the status quo to remain and I think the government needed to have the courage to accept that at least a trial has to go ahead. We have had people overdosing in this particular area. I know that there are concerns around the

proximity to a school, but the school actually supports it because they do not want to see the status quo remain. They do not want to see people unfortunately in the throes of an overdose right near their particular facility.

Getting back to conspiracies, those opposite have dropped the conspiracy that the playgroups have had to stop and move. I did not hear that one in here today. A couple weeks ago that was the conspiracy: the playgroups had to stop and move and kids would not be able to play anymore. That is not true; they have been accommodated in other ways. There is not an issue with any call for documents, but I think this is just another way for the opposition to scaremonger again. And that is their thing: to scaremonger about everything.

Those opposite will not accept that the state's crime rates have gone down. Even though the Crime Statistics Agency is independent and actually pointed out that the number of offences in the state and in all areas of Melbourne has dropped in nearly all categories. They do not want to accept that. They seem to have made up their own statistics, which is interesting and sad. The state of denial the opposition is in is actually quite concerning. I think it should be concerning for all of us. Some of them might need a bit of a holiday, a rest or a recharge, because there is some weird desperation and you can smell the stench of it coming from the opposition. As the election gets closer I suppose we should expect more scaremongering. The government will not oppose this call for paperwork. The government stands by its decision to go ahead with this trial, even if it had a different position earlier. The government has to do the right thing and change its position from time to time when the evidence and expertise points out that that position needs to be changed.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (10:55) — I do not normally rise to speak to documents motions because I let the rest of you do that, but this one was such an intriguing documents motion and it is certainly obviously on an issue that I have been passionately and intimately involved in, not just during my time in Parliament but for decades I have been a supporter of supervised injecting centres. Certainly I was probably more than a supporter of this one, but also the author of the first legislation that was brought to this house for it.

Looking at this documents motion, it is far more detailed than ones I have seen before. It certainly reads more like a court subpoena or a case direction notice than a documents motion. I am also not sure to what end it is directed, because we have had two inquiries into this. We have had an upper house inquiry into the establishment of a supervised injecting centre and we

have had a joint committee inquiry into drug law reform that heard extensively on this issue. We now have an expert panel that will be led by Professor Margaret Hamilton, and I seriously wonder what this motion can really add to the really expert advice that we are getting on how to run the centre and how it will be established. Professor Hamilton, who would be well respected by just about everyone in this chamber, or in this Parliament actually, has got 45 years experience working around drugs and alcohol. She will be overseeing the review of this and I must say I put my faith far more in her than in the Liberal Party or even in any of us in this Parliament. I would defer to Professor Hamilton, I would defer to the expert panel that has been established to make sure that this works, to make sure that people's lives are saved and to make sure that it meets the desired objectives that were recommended, not by one coroner, not by two coroners but by three coroners.

It was recommended by the Australian Medical Association, it was recommended by the head of addiction medicine at St Vincent's Hospital, and I could go on. The list is in the dozens. Every single expert organisation in Victoria supports the establishment of this centre and they are involved in ensuring that it operates successfully, it saves lives, it reduces drug overdoses and it provides a gateway to health and social assistance. I think this is one of the wonderful things about where this centre is located. The clients of this supervised injecting centre pilot are the clients of the North Richmond health centre. They are already going there, they are already getting their needles there and they are already getting some primary health care there. We hope that by getting them into the supervised injecting centre that we will actually direct them through other doors of the North Richmond health centre — other doors that will lead to drug treatment, other doors that will lead to addressing some of the underlying health issues that many of the people who will be accessing this centre suffer from.

We also hope and are very confident that the number of overdoses happening in people's front yards and happening in front of young children will be reduced and will, with any luck, actually disappear. We know that in other jurisdictions we have seen a reduction in ambulance call-outs by up to 80 per cent, and I think New South Wales is a very good example of that. We have seen it in Canada. They cannot open their supervised injecting centres fast enough. It is bipartisan there. They are opening them at a rate of one a week in Toronto, in Ottawa, in Vancouver, in certain towns in Alberta and even in some regional cities, where they know that this type of centre saves lives.

This documents motion is asking for all sorts of information — notes, departmental notes — like we somehow need to see this information to make sure that the experts are doing it right. Well, frankly, I think the experts are doing it right. And this is a trial. This has got considerable oversight. We have got a review panel. We have also got an expert panel that is setting this up. My understanding right now is that it will be open seven days a week. In Sydney, when they opened it, they opened it seven days a week, and they opened from 10.00 a.m. until 10.00 p.m. initially. After a number of years they realised that the cohort actually wanted to use the centre from 7.00 a.m. and did not want to use it at 10.00 p.m., so they actually changed the service provision — they changed the hours of opening.

I know there are a number of us in this chamber who have been to see the supervised injecting centre in New South Wales. We have spoken at length to its director, Dr Marianne Jauncey, who explained that to meet the needs of their cohort they needed to be flexible. In actual fact what they found was that people who largely inject heroin want to do it in the morning and in the evenings they are actually not that interested in doing it; that is the time they are going to sleep. So we need to be flexible with this. We need to meet the needs of the cohort. We do not want them injecting outside. I for one believe that the people who have been providing services, who have been providing needles to the people who inject drugs in the North Richmond area, are best placed to make those decisions. I do not think it is the place of this chamber to do that. I can only think that this motion is to create some sort of scaremongering in other parts of Victoria, because it certainly will not scare anyone in North Richmond that this is opening. It may scare them that people are trying to stop it from opening and are trying to stop it from running effectively, efficiently and according to what the experts recommend.

As I said at the beginning, I found this a very curious documents motion. I cannot imagine that any of this information is necessary to this house to ensure the well running of this centre, which will be opening in the next couple of weeks — prior to the deadline in this documents motion. So it will be up and running — and, I suspect, very successfully — right from day one. I am not of a mind to oppose the documents motion. I just cannot see the purpose of this, and I would really call on us to read the two reports that have already been done on this issue — the Legislative Council's own Legal and Social Issues Committee report and the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee report, which I think are both excellent documents. They provide all of the data, research and information

that we would need to ascertain the effectiveness of and the urgent need for a centre like this. One hopes that we are not using this as a fishing exercise to make erroneous statements about what is a very needed and popular pilot program for a supervised injecting centre.

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (11:04) — I am not quite sure that I have too much to add today, because Mr Leane and Ms Patten have prosecuted quite eloquently probably a similar case to what I will, and I would hate for this chamber to waste its time on something that I am quite disappointed we are still having to prosecute the case for. As Ms Patten has pointed to, there have been two substantive inquiries in this term of government on this issue, one specifically about this trial. I do not know that you can get more of a policy exploration than a whole inquiry on one trial in one community. Having sat on that inquiry myself, it was robust and came to the conclusion, through an evidence base and through community consultation, that this pilot is needed. It will save lives. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind about that.

From my perspective, as I said, it is disappointing that we are here in this chamber debating this. I listened to Ms Patten, who spoke very well on this, and she is reprosecuting a case that we started prosecuting two years ago. If we are having to go back and do this after two years and after two inquiries — the drug law reform inquiry was a substantial inquiry; there was a study tour globally of drug law reform around the world — and if we are going to disregard these pieces of substantive work, what is the point in doing them?

Anyway, what I would say is that the Greens are longstanding supporters of improving transparency and accountability in government. There is absolutely no doubt about that. We generally in the past have supported documents motions for the very principle that this Parliament and the members of it deserve to know how the decision-making process happens within government to ensure that it provides the best outcome for the public which we represent in this place. But having said that, we also are in support of governing for the public good, and this trial is very much for the public good. We know that not just through these substantial inquiries and reports that have resulted from that but from talking to the people of the community in North Richmond. We know that from talking to the people at the school who support this trial and the residents around this area that support this trial, because they, like a lot of people in this place, see drug addiction and drug misuse as a health issue and not a security or law and order issue.

So I am not even going to go down the trail of crime statistics going up and crime statistics going down, this, that and the next, because I actually think it is conflating two very separate issues. What we are looking at here is a health issue. This trial will save lives, and I do not think there is actually any doubt about that.

I just want to point to a couple of things that Ms Wooldridge said in her contribution to her motion around why this facility is needed in Richmond. Well, I think you could look at the report that the Legal and Social Issues Committee did into this very issue in this very community to see why we need this trial in this community — because the deaths were skyrocketing and will continue to skyrocket until this facility opens in the coming weeks or months; I am not quite sure we are going to get any more information than we already have on that. As I have said, the school does support the trial because they are the ones living this — seeing drug misuse in the streets.

Those of us that were on the committee actually walked the streets and we saw the results of how much drug taking there is on the streets of North Richmond, how adversely that must impact on schoolchildren, the staff of the school and the local residents, how dangerous it is that you have so many used and discarded syringes in the streets and what sort of environment that is for children to be in every day on their way to school and on their way home from school, and for the residents living there. So in terms of need, I think that this well established.

As I said, this is not a security issue, so while I accept that the trial will need to be well-managed, will need to be coordinated and there will need to be liaising with the local community, with the school and with the other community facilities around the centre, all of that is manageable. Any kind of policy implementation or rollout is going to require transition, and I would be hopeful that the government, the health centre and all of the stakeholders involved in this rollout will be managing and coordinating that in a thorough fashion.

I do not want to go into too much detail about why I think this motion has been put forward today. It is the second motion on this issue in two weeks. It is a case that has already been well prosecuted. I could only speculate about the motivation of the opposition as to why they have decided to go down this road, but I do actually think in this case — and I would not say this about many documents motions — this is a waste of the Parliament's time, and I might just leave it there.

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (11:11) — I would like to speak in relation to the motion today and at the outset note that this is an issue which goes far beyond the substance of the challenge which is seeking to be addressed in tackling the use of intravenous drugs within our communities. It is in fact an issue which has been the battleground for people from all sides of the political spectrum for generations now. Anyone who has ever lived in a community where intravenous drug use is prolific will understand that it is very easy to attach a narrative, to draw in all sorts of other philosophical and political arguments on the basis that it is an emotive subject matter. What we are seeing here with this documents motion is a further effort to engage in politicisation of a health issue, of a community issue, of an issue which continues to rip families apart, to tear at the structure of communities and to create ongoing and enduring challenges and problems, fallout and a vapour trail into future years for people as they try to rebuild their lives through addiction.

What we also see in the context of drug use within our communities is the impact on the community at large as a consequence of a proliferation of used and discarded syringes, of the adjustments that residents need to make to their everyday lives in removing taps from their front gardens, in checking whether there are drug users or indeed people who may have suffered overdoses before walking their children down streets. We know from the parliamentary inquiry that these things are devastatingly all too common in the area where the supervised injecting centre will be located. They have been the basis upon which the North Richmond Community Health centre and various parts of that community have come together to advocate so hard for a solution which seeks to rise above the political narrative that is all too easy to make and to roll out in a place like this.

Parliament can often be a rather sanitised environment in which we talk in theory about the things which create heartache and heartbreak in the communities that we have been elected to represent. Every single death to drugs is an absolutely terrible tragedy. We know, whether personally or professionally in the context of the parliamentary inquiry, for example, that the ripple effect felt by families, friends and the wider community is impossible to overstate. We also know — and numerous reports, inquiries and research pieces will confirm this — that drug addiction and its causes are in fact a really complex health issue. They are an issue with no single solution.

What we do know, however, is that as part of an integrated jigsaw of component pieces to address the scourge of drugs and drug-related death in our community, medically supervised injecting rooms have

significant benefits. What we do know in relation to the Kings Cross injecting centre is that overdose deaths in the area have been reduced. Over 6000 overdoses have been addressed in that locale, without a single death. The centre has also reduced the number of dirty needles in public places in that jurisdiction by almost half and it has contributed to an 80 per cent reduction in ambulance call-outs. We know this because people in that jurisdiction have had an opportunity to gather data detailing the benefits of this centre, not just for people addicted to drugs who are utilising the centre but also for the broader community.

In listening to the North Richmond community we have also engaged with numerous expert bodies and individuals, including the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the ambulance employees of Victoria and their representative bodies, the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, the Penington Institute and the Alcohol and Drug Foundation. Tragically and yet necessarily we have heard from the Victorian State Coroner about the lives lost to addiction and the circumstances in which those lives have been lost and those tragedies have unfolded. These losses include people from all sorts of backgrounds and they speak to the devastation that is indiscriminate in the way that it cuts a swathe through the lives of so many.

Yet within this sanitised environment of the Parliament it is too easy to return to politics, it is too easy to return to a narrative that in fact ignores the reality of the situation being felt by this community. It is too easy to go down the path of lines of questioning such as those which were explored at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings at length in numerous ministerial presentations in the course of this year's discussion of the budget. It is too easy to go back to pointscoreing, to go back to creating a gotcha moment and to go back to something which delivers on a political agenda and which delivers not a greater insight into the causes of addiction, not a greater response in the context of lives lost to addiction and not a greater understanding of the importance of preserving and enhancing community and public safety but which seeks to achieve ends which do not in fact relate to these real-world life tragedy issues themselves.

We are not going to oppose this motion, but it is important to note that the scare campaign is continuing. It is not coming from government, it is not coming from the residents who live in and around the North Richmond Community Health area, it is not coming from the people who work at or attend the primary school and it is not coming from those who might otherwise have a direct and personal reason to

campaign against a medically supervised injecting centre. It is coming from people who have as their driving motivator another purpose entirely. And that is a great shame. It is a great shame that in spite of the research which indicates that medically supervised injecting facilities at Kings Cross have saved lives and have reduced risks to community safety, this is something which for certain political purposes is driven by the coalition not to happen in our backyard. The great tragedy is that in saying this the coalition ignores the fact that it is already happening in our backyard — and we must do something about it, because too many people have been lost already.

The parliamentary inquiry has noted that the scourge of drug use in our community is at its epicentre an issue which must be tackled from a health perspective. Additional steps that can be taken to provide internal security, to have strict protocols in place and to begin a trial of a medically supervised injecting room in North Richmond from the middle of this year will in fact enable us to walk the talk on the issues that matter and have the difficult, challenging social conversations that must be had when, rather than walking away from a problem, we lean into it. Separate entrances and exits are really important. Internal walls in this facility are really important. Ongoing and close consultation with the City of Yarra is really important. What is not important is the political shrapnel that is shot from one side of the chamber to the other, across news conferences and across public hearings on the budget to try to drive up a sense of fear around what this injecting centre means.

We are boosting resources to Victoria Police within the Yarra local area command. There will be additional resources on the front line from 1 July this year — some 13 of them. We are also introducing new laws to tackle heroin dealers and organised crime groups that are involved in trafficking drugs. The safety of our community is not a factor which has, as some might claim, been ignored in this debate. It is the driving force behind the decision to introduce this legislation. It is the subject of the processes that have been undertaken to create zero tolerance for unsafe behaviour, not just in the injecting room but also to deliver that in the communities — to deliver it in the community of North Richmond; to deliver it for the kids who attend that school and for the parents, teachers and staff at that school; and to deliver it for the people who wonder every day whether their son, daughter, wife, husband, mother or father might in fact overdose and die without them ever being able to receive the help that — but for a medically supervised injecting facility — might enable them to live.

In providing a high level of care to people and providing high-level wraparound services we are trying to tackle at their core, through a jigsaw approach, the very things that underpin addiction and the very ways in which it arises and runs unchecked to the point where lives are lost. We are under no illusions about the fact that this is hard work. This is hard and multifaceted work that needs us to be sophisticated in our understanding of the challenge, that needs us to be innovative in the ways in which we tackle it and that demands that we are compassionate as to the consequences and the effects upon members of our community; on the partners, friends and colleagues of addicts; and on the addicts themselves.

I note that there have been so many assertions about the impact of this injecting facility and the medically supervised component of what it will deliver that are too easy to trot out as commentary in the popular media. It is astonishing and indeed rather a tragedy that this is the basis for the narrative from the opposition. It is a wilful blindness as to what is happening in this community. I would implore those who sit in this chamber — those who do exist in a world which is perhaps detached from the grimy alleys and from the ditches and gutters of North Richmond and from the primary school where, again, people have fought for too long to remove discarded and used syringes lest they cause enormous health problems or grave fears for children — to consider with a mature and open mind what this means around preserving safety and being better in the social contract that we offer to all Victorians.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (11:26) — I thank people for their contribution, and I thank the government for continuing the policy of not opposing documents motions. We have had from a number of speakers a reiteration in relation to the logic of the policy in the first instance. As I said at the outset, this is about the implementation of the policy. The opinions and the views were debated widely and in detail in this house when the legislation was in the chamber, and we also had a motion last week. This documents motion is very much in relation to an assessment, an oversight and an evaluation and shining some light and adding some transparency in relation to how this policy is being implemented, not revisiting the policy itself. I certainly hope that the government responds in the spirit of ensuring that those documents are available so that we can have a full assessment and the ability to understand some of the very many decisions that have been made, changed and made again and are ultimately being implemented in relation to the injecting facility. I commend the motion to the house.

Motion agreed to.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (11:28) — I move:

That this house, in accordance with standing order 11.01, requires the Leader of the Government to table by 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 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.

This motion has its origins in a small footnote in an annual report, and I have spoken previously of this matter in this chamber. The Parks Victoria 2016–17 annual report on page 40 includes a footnote that explains — and I will quote from it in part — that what is being referenced is a 'transfer of assets (Junction Oval) free of charge to Cricket Victoria'. The language around that is, on my reading anyway, somewhat confusing and a bit clumsy.

I asked about this in the committee phase of the Parks Victoria Bill 2018 on 24 May, because on the research I had done I could not find any other reference to, for example, what the quantum was and any other terms of this transfer of assets. Mr Jennings was responsible for taking questions during the committee phase on the bill, and he gave a couple of answers, I think, during that period.

He said initially:

The way that I read this footnote is that there is the saving to Parks Victoria on the basis of what is described as 'transfer of assets (Junction Oval) free of charge to Cricket Victoria', which is exactly what you have said. But I am advised that at this point in time there has not been a transfer of assets; there

has been a leasing arrangement entered into. In fact the assets are maintained by Parks Victoria, and that reduction would be on the basis of the operating expenses of maintaining that asset; it would be a saving to the organisation. That is how I understand that footnote. I think it may not be expressed in the way that gives you or me satisfaction, but I am advised that that would be the case, and I am seeking confirmation of that.

There was a further explanation that was provided sometime later when some questions were taken on notice during that committee phase, and I received a response on 4 June. To spell it out, the question was:

... what is the nature of the assets that have been transferred to Cricket Victoria, as outlined in the 2016–17 annual report?

And the written response I received said:

On 30 June 2016, a lease was signed between the Victorian government, the Victorian cricket association (Cricket Victoria) and Parks Victoria for the redevelopment of Junction Oval as the Victorian Cricket and Community Centre.

Although I do note that the day after that centre was publicly opened under that name, it was very quickly renamed the CitiPower Centre.

I go on. The response says:

Under the lease, Cricket Victoria owns the buildings and structures situated on the premises for the term of the lease to facilitate the redevelopment of Junction Oval in accordance with approved plans. On expiry or termination of the lease, the buildings and structures return to Victorian government ownership. For accounting purposes, the transfer of assets to Cricket Victoria is recognised as an expense in Parks Victoria's 2016–17 audited annual financial report.

When this response was provided — and I note fairly quickly after the committee phase, and I am grateful for that — it was with the offer:

... let me know if you need anything further.

I did go back immediately on 4 June and ask how long the lease is in operation, but I have not had a response to that query. Junction Oval of course sits in Albert Reserve, which is very valuable and much-loved public space. It concerns me that it is still not completely clear whether or not public assets have been quietly given to a third party, in this case an elite sporting organisation.

The second explanation I have had, which I quoted from earlier, suggests that this is for the term of a lease and that it is not just a right to use facilities on an exclusive basis during a lease but it is actually a transfer of ownership, which, unless there is some error in the language, seems to be an unusual term for an agreement of this nature.

There has of course been quite a bit of largesse towards elite sport, particularly the AFL, from the Andrews government. I cannot help but be struck by the fact that this happens while many suburban sports teams are frankly going without. We have recently had a situation where the government has announced \$300 million worth of funding for Etihad Stadium, which the AFL bought for some \$200 million. The vision there is to change it so that there are bars and cafes and in fact a 1500-seat ballroom for the Brownlow Medal. I cannot help but be struck by the contrast between this vision and what I see in some of the sports clubs that I know.

There is a sporting field not far from my electorate office which uses a shipping container to store its gear, and it is had that there for a couple of years now. There simply is not space within its existing facilities to keep the various sporting teams' equipment within the envelope of the building, so that shipping container has been sitting there. The building itself is in pretty dire straits as well. The change rooms are awful and there are insufficient facilities for women and girls to change, and this is having a big effect on who can use that sporting club and when.

This issue of women and girls having access to facilities at local sporting grounds is an issue all over my electorate. I know that is something that Ms Crozier has been very actively involved in, and it is a huge issue for many families at a time when we want to be encouraging as many people as possible to be participating in organised sport. There is a huge push at the moment to encourage girls to continue in organised sport well beyond their school years, because we know from research and possibly from personal experience that many girls stop participating in organised sport when they leave school, if not before. I noticed in my community lately, particularly over the weekend, that there were notices up about a women's hockey team, encouraging people to sign up. This is quite new, and it is good to see that sort of interest and activity on the level that it is at the moment.

I also want to mention, in relation to that, Felicity Frederico, the former mayor of Bayside, who has been very, very active not only as a participant — and she certainly did not give up when she left school — but also as a mayor of Bayside. She has been a very active participant in sporting clubs and organisations over many, many years. She has been instrumental in making the case for this change, and she deserves credit for that. That is a slight digression from the issue at hand, but I make the point to emphasise how important it is to be ensuring that the public has proper access to sporting fields and facilities and that we look after the public spaces that we have.

There has been very little on the public record in relation to this matter of this apparent transfer of assets for what appears to be a specific but non-specified time publicly. As I said earlier, I think this is an unusual arrangement to give ownership for the lifetime of the lease, not just usage. Most of what is on the public record has come about because I have asked questions, and I guess that is at the heart of what I am doing today. I think that, particularly given that this is an arrangement that the government is a party to, it is appropriate for the Parliament to know more about its terms, and it is on that basis that I am today moving this motion, which I commend to the house.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (11:36) — I also rise to speak on the motion moved by Ms Fitzherbert, and I indicate that the government will not oppose the motion, consistent with our position on providing documents when the house seeks that the government provide documents in relation to projects and various other matters of public interest. As Mr Leane said in his contribution on the previous motion, this government has been more than flexible and helpful and prepared to bend over backwards to provide information to opposition members every time a motion has been moved to seek documents. That is in contrast to the record of the opposition when they were in government in the last term where every single motion calling for documents moved in the house was opposed by the then Liberal-Nationals government. The Labor government, when asked to provide documentation in relation to various projects, do oblige. It has become a practice where a member will have a question about a matter — and I think Ms Fitzherbert in her contribution said there have been communications between herself and the government in relation to this matter, and that is her right to do so, and I appreciate her interest in this matter — that information will come through.

I was trying to find the silver bullet in this motion, and I will hear from Ms Fitzherbert as to whether or not there is a lease or a sale of assets, but my understanding is that it is a lease. I stand to be corrected. I am sure the minister will formally respond after the motion is carried in this house and the information will be supplied to the member.

I just want to take a bit of time to look at what we are talking about here. I am a bit confused about the coalition's approach to investment in sport. On the one hand they are criticising the Andrews Labor government in relation to our significant investment in sport in Victoria. We know that the state of Victoria is the major capital of sporting events in Australia. We have world-class facilities, which are needed to attract

the best-of-the-best events. Cricket is one of them. We have known for years that Cricket Victoria has been looking to find a home to grow the sport, to nurture their players, to field teams to compete in the national competition and to provide an avenue that is well placed for our young and next best cricketers to play for the Australian team. We all know that the Australian team these days need help to get back onto the winners list. One of the ways of getting back onto the winners list is to invest in sport from the grassroots, not just community cricket but also state cricket, because the state team is where the membership of the Australian team will come from. That is where good cricketers get identified. That is why we make no apology for investing in sport and investing in cricket, because cricket has become one of the fast-growing games. Many kids are taking up that game.

I will go through the various investments the Andrews Labor government is putting into cricket. I think Ms Fitzherbert touched on the AFL as well, and I will come to that too. Aside from the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the Victorian Cricket and Community Centre is the only Victorian ground that is fully compliant with International Cricket Council (ICC) regulations to host first-class cricket matches. Even in the last Parliament the then government spent a fair bit of time talking about the redevelopment of Junction Oval. It was just talk about what they were going to do with it. So this topic is not new. The Labor Party made an election commitment that it was actually going to do something about it and get it done.

Ms Crozier — So did we.

Mr MELHEM — You did; you are right. You did talk about it but we delivered it. We actually did it. You talked about it. I was here; I was in this Parliament. You were just talking about it, but we actually did it. That is the contrast between the Liberal-Nationals and the Labor Party. We do not just talk about things, we do things. We deliver things; we get things done. That is why \$25 million was invested, and Cricket Victoria, to their credit, put in \$15 million. If you tally that up, there was \$40 million to redevelop Junction Oval and it is now a state-of-the-art facility that is compliant with international standards so our state teams and everybody else can play there. And it is fair enough. An organisation like Cricket Victoria will say, 'Okay, we're going to put in \$15 million. Thank you for your \$25 million. We would like some long-term arrangement. We want to be able to call this place home'. To me there is nothing unusual about putting it together and giving them a lease, even a long-term lease, to make sure that it is their home now and it is going to focus on delivering cricket.

I am just looking at an article from the *Herald Sun*, and I do not read the newspaper very often. It talks about Victorian cricket being just three months away — that was before the opening in March this year, so it goes back to December last year. The first paragraph states:

Victorian cricket is just three months away from officially opening its \$40.8 million weapon in the fight to keep the best talent out of the clutches of the AFL, and flood the national teams with Bushrangers.

I think that is an excellent opening from the *Herald Sun*. It is the most read newspaper in Victoria in comparison with its counterpart, the *Age*. It is basically giving a description of how important that development is for Melbourne and Victoria. It goes on:

More than a decade after the idea was first generated, the redeveloped Junction Oval will begin hosting training sessions for Big Bash teams the Stars and Renegades in late January before the first ball is bowled in a Sheffield Shield game on 3 March.

It has some great pictures about how wonderful the facility is and says it boasts 56 new indoor and outdoor practice wickets, male and female change rooms, a huge gym, three recovery pools and medical suites that cater for every player need. It further states:

One heritage-listed grandstand has also been totally redeveloped, with the second to be done at a later date, and along with the open areas the Junction could easily accommodate around 2000 fans.

Basically it is not a question about whether the redevelopment was needed. Let us all agree on that, and I think we all do agree. The only difference is that we made it happen and the previous government did little more than just talk about it.

The redevelopment of Junction Oval will see a new administration facility, high-performance facilities and accommodation facilities to host visiting cricketers from country areas, and the redeveloped oval will be used by cricket all year round. Also there are broadcasting facilities and other requirements to meet Cricket Australia's standards for first-class cricket venues.

The facility will also cater for community cricket, including the current tenant, St Kilda Cricket Club. The redeveloped grandstand, which I talked about earlier, will host Cricket Victoria's community cricket programs, including its successful Harmony in Cricket programs. This is not just about being a headquarters for Cricket Victoria. It has actually become the hub and the home of cricket — apart from the MCG, which is a national icon and is basically the home of Cricket Australia for our major games and the AFL. At least

now cricket in Victoria will have its own dedicated home. We believe that investment was very worthwhile.

It is important that the Andrews Labor government continues to invest in community cricket facilities. Since 2014 the Victorian government has invested \$31.7 million towards 165 community facilities across the state, ensuring cricketers have access to high-quality infrastructure and development opportunities, including the community cricket program, so we are talking about investing in not just Cricket Victoria and the organisation itself. It is very important that we actually invest in community sports programs, in this case community cricket, because without investing in community cricket at the local level there is no point just investing at the state and federal level. A \$10 million election commitment to the community cricket program from the government's \$100 million Community Sports Infrastructure Fund was made by the government at the 2014 election, and Cricket Victoria and Cricket Australia confirmed the additional commitment of \$1.2 million each, totalling \$12.4 million, towards the program.

Councils are also eligible to access funding toward cricket infrastructure projects through the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund for grants of up to \$100 000 per project. Since 2014 the community cricket program has supported a total of 72 infrastructure projects through the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund, with a total project value of \$22.9 million. It is very important to note that these include approval of funding towards the development of three regional cricket hubs in Ballarat, Wodonga and Hamilton. Again, that shows that you do not just look at finding a home for Cricket Victoria in Melbourne but that it is important to actually invest in the major hubs in regional Victoria.

Through the partnership with the local government authorities cricket clubs can continue to access funding to develop new or upgrade existing cricket facilities through the major facility or minor facility category of the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund and the \$15 million Female Friendly Facilities Fund. That is the other thing. We are investing in female sport and have created a female fund so we can encourage our females to play a major role in cricket. We know the Victorian and Australian female cricket teams are doing extremely well. They are competing very well at the national end and on the world stage, and in some cases they are putting our men's teams to shame. That is why I think it is very important that as a government we continue to invest in female sport. I will come back to the investment in the AFL Women's (AFLW) league, which I believe has taken off like there is no tomorrow.

It is a wonderful thing to encourage all our citizens, male and female, and our own kids to be active and to play sport. In order to do that you need to invest. You need to give certainty to organisations that are actually sponsoring these sports so that they are able to plan forward and are able to invest in resources and infrastructure to make sure that they deliver the service. In this case it was very important that the Victorian government invested in a state-of-the-art facility at Junction Oval. That investment will assist in making sure that Cricket Victoria can do its job to promote the game, to promote our kids and to give them the best chance to play sport. Hopefully some of them will make it onto the state team or the national team and play on the world stage. That is why we make no apology for encouraging sports in Victoria.

Regarding the recent investment in the AFL, I think Ms Fitzherbert talked about Docklands. We are investing in redeveloping Docklands to make it better and bigger so that we are able to attract more people to participate in sport and attract more visitors, and also to secure the AFL Grand Final for Victoria until 2056 — I need to check the date, but I think it is for the next 30 or 40 years. That is a great outcome. Ms Fitzherbert talked about the Docklands redevelopment probably being part of the future of hosting the Brownlow Medal events. I reckon that is a great event as well, and we should keep that in Melbourne instead of pissing it off to the Gold Coast, Sydney or another state that decides it wants to claim it. I think it is all about Victoria's trademark of being a major events centre for sport. We are the sports capital of this country. We should invest and continue to invest. The return is there.

Let me talk about some of the funding that the Andrews Labor government has provided for many cricket events across the state, from international events to all-abilities championships: the 2015 national All Abilities Championships at suburban grounds across Melbourne; the Geelong Carnival of Cricket at Simonds Stadium in Geelong; the 33rd National Blind Cricket Championship at Princes Park and Fawkner Park; the National Disability Cricket Championships from 2016 to 2019 at various venues in Geelong; the 2017 International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cricket League in Bendigo; a Big Bash League double-header at Simonds Stadium in Geelong; a T20 international cricket double-header at Simonds Stadium in Geelong; the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015; and the ICC World Cup T20, including games hosted at the Junction Oval.

We made our election commitment and we have delivered on it. The Junction Oval was redeveloped and a partnership was forged with Cricket Victoria to

encourage the sport, to grow the sport and to get more events into Victoria. It is a \$25 million investment by the Andrews Labor government, which was matched by \$15 million from Cricket Victoria, to deliver great outcomes and to encourage people to come to Victoria and have more events in Victoria.

In the 2018–19 budget we kicked in \$484.4 million plus a new \$100 million community sport loan scheme. This is the biggest-ever investment in women's and community sport. I think Ms Fitzherbert talked about community sport, and I agree with her that we need to do more in that space. That is why we are putting in these investments: to make sure local sport is given a chance and that our kids are able to kick a footy at the oval and participate in junior sport. Whether it is AFL, whether it is soccer or whether it is cricket, I think it is very important that we provide that facility, and the 2018–19 budget investment of \$484 million provides that.

I was talking earlier about our investments. The arrangement with the AFL is to keep the grand final at the MCG until at least 2057, so I was out by one year — it is not 2056, it is 2057. Also the AFLW package that the Victorian government provided for sport and recreation will be a game changer. It not only addresses the sport and recreation needs of our community but it maintains Victoria's pre-eminent position as the ultimate sport capital. The list goes on and on.

When I was reading the motion I thought there must be something hidden in it. The opposition is looking for a silver bullet or a shifty deal that has been put in place for the Junction Oval. They think there is something untoward about our policy. I have not heard anything to lead to that conclusion, so I am struggling with that idea.

The government's investments in sports facilities are not just for the Junction Oval. I will go through some of the others. We have invested over \$750 million in major stadium facilities around Victoria, including \$75 million for stage 4 of Kardinia Park; \$62 million for the State Netball Hockey Centre; \$271 million for stage 3 of the Melbourne and Olympic parks precinct; \$15 million for the Eureka Stadium redevelopment; \$25 million for the Junction Oval redevelopment, and I have talked about that; \$225 million for the Etihad Stadium redevelopment, which is coming up; \$12 million for Moorabbin Oval stage 1; \$10 million for the Victorian home of golf and national high performance centre; and the business case for the completion of Eureka Stadium, stage 5 of Kardinia Park and the Knox Basketball Stadium redevelopment.

The Andrews Labor government investment in sport is unmatched by any other state, and the reason for that is that, as I said earlier, we are the major events city, we are the major events state, we are the sports capital of Australia, and we want to keep it that way. We want to encourage organisations like Cricket Victoria to invest in Victoria and to invest in first-grade cricket, and that is why we have partnered with them at Junction Oval. That is why we were happy to give them a lease — to make sure they can call that oval home for many, many, many years to come, and so the community can enjoy first-grade cricket in Victoria. Our kids can actually dream that they will be able to go and train at a first-grade facility and make it to the state team and hopefully to the national team. That is something we are proud of. We are proud of what we have achieved in the sports space.

With these comments, I want to commend the Premier on his leadership in relation to sport and I also want to commend the Minister for Sport, John Eren, on what he has done in relation to major events and sport. I want to congratulate both of them on the good effort they have put in. I am proud to call myself Victorian. We are the capital of sports and major events, and we want to keep it that way — unlike the other side, who just talk about it.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (11:58) — Thank you, Mr Melhem, for leaving me about 30 seconds to commence my contribution on this very important motion that has been brought forward by Ms Fitzherbert today, which calls for a range of documents with regard to the redevelopment of the Junction Oval. The Junction Oval has been there for a long time, and I think everyone agrees that it has been an important part of the community for many decades.

The motion put forward by Ms Fitzherbert calls for a range of documents. She has got five themes with regard to those documents, and the first of those is a copy of the lease of 30 June 2016 pertaining to the Junction Oval and any subsequent changes to that lease. I think it is actually a document that should already be public. We should not have to be moving a motion in the Legislative Council for the release of that document given that we are talking about public land. It is certainly the view of the Greens that these sorts of documents should always be on the public record in any case. This document should already be on the website of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The PRESIDENT (12:00) — I just wanted to mention to the house that I indicated earlier this morning congratulations to Ken Smith, a former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, for his gong in the Queen's Birthday honours. It was remiss of me not to mention at the same time that former members of this house Helen Buckingham and Lee Tarlamis also received awards in the Queen's Birthday honours, and I extend congratulations to both of those former members and commend them for the work that they continue to do on behalf of Victoria.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ministerial accountability

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (12:01) — My question is for the Special Minister of State and relates to government transparency and accountability — something I know he is very keen on. Other Australian jurisdictions, including Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT, have policies of open ministerial diaries, where information about the Premier's and the ministers' movements and meetings is published online. They are open and accountable to the public. In a parliamentary term where we have had a lot of ethical breaches — and I feel that we have been dogged with this from both sides of Parliament — and in a week where we are likely to be debating strict new donation laws in the house and where the government has also introduced a bill to improve parliamentary standards, I would ask: why has the government not enacted similar reform to ministerial diaries, where this would clearly promote greater transparency?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:02) — I thank Ms Patten for her question. In terms of the relative priority that has been given to open access to ministerial diaries, this has not been a priority of the government's legislative agenda up until this point in time, but at no stage have we ruled out that initiative being considered. Indeed you might recall that during the course of this term on many occasions in the first year of this term when I was asked whether the government was going to introduce political donation reform my answer then during that year, and the subsequent year, was that the desire of the Victorian government was to achieve national harmony of donation reform. Indeed that would be our preference, but we would always reserve our right to introduce that as a state-based system if we were not satisfied that the balance and the totality of transparency mechanisms were in place. As you know, we then decided to take action as a state in the absence of that national

agreement. I give that as an example of how we recognise that there is a continual need to improve the transparency around the accountability regime.

We have introduced other reforms. There is a bill on the notice paper in the Parliament now in relation to the audit legislation. There is also a bill in relation to further refinements of whistleblower protections and protected disclosures that has been on the notice paper for quite some time in this chamber. The government does accept the need to increase transparency and accountability. We have not elevated the issue that you have raised that is on the table today, but we certainly have not ruled it out and we continue to be alive to what are improvements that we can make in the name of improving the community's confidence in the way in which ministers and governments acquit their responsibilities.

What you have put to me is consistent with our idea that we are actually trying to remove doubt in the community about whether there is undue influence through corporate or individual influences that might be brought to bear in relation to government decision-making. That is something that is at the heart of the donation reform. What you are calling out today is consistent with the logic that may lead to that in the future, and I will certainly be happy to talk to my colleagues about whether that is something that we may consider in future reforms.

Supplementary question

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (12:05) — Thank you, Minister. I was not going to ask a supplementary but you mentioned the idea of it being nationally consistent, so by way of supplementary I ask: has that issue been raised at any Council of Australian Governments meetings, or will you raise it?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:06) — In fact I recognise that in the nature of your question you indicated that there is a national momentum in a number of jurisdictions for this reform already. In fact in a sense I was saying that the preferred position of the Victorian government is national harmonisation about the way in which these mechanisms work. You will also be aware that in both this jurisdiction and the commonwealth jurisdiction during the last few years there has been quite a contested view about the availability of ministerial diaries, and in fact that has actually seen proceedings in the courts. It is much better for that not to be a feature of public life and for that not to end up in courts, so it is better to have a clear frame and a clear, consistent way across jurisdictions to deal with the matter.

Men's health

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (12:06) — My question also is for the Leader of the Government Minister, in Victoria men disproportionately suffer from physical and mental health problems and have a lower life expectancy. The rate of male deaths is higher than that of female deaths in illnesses such as skin cancer, liver disease, Parkinson's disease, lung cancer, heart disease, lower respiratory disease and stroke, and, sadly, is up to four times higher in suicide. What is the government doing to close this gap?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:07) — This is not the first time during the course of this term that Mr Young has asked a question about the health and wellbeing of men and emphasised it over the health and wellbeing and needs of women in our community. I find it extraordinary, really, that he chooses this week to call out that issue, because there are many, many ways in which the government tries to address the concern about health. In fact not only have we invested in emergency care, in terms of additional resources within our health system in relation to activities that are designed to alleviate mental health or emotional preconditions or lifestyle conditions that may lead to the adverse health outcomes that Mr Young has called out, but ours is a government that recognises its obligation in terms of investments, in terms of programs and in terms of community engagement. In fact consistently it has been this government that has recognised the need to invest in those programs, and that has been the case in the last 20 years to my knowledge of Victorian government activities in this area.

I think there are always going to be certain medical conditions that men are more likely to be exposed to than women. In fact exactly the opposite applies in relation to the situations and the unfortunate circumstances of preventable illness and death that all of us should dedicate our commitment to providing appropriate resources and programs to support.

If Mr Young is particularly focusing on the prevalence of suicide as being a concern that he is putting on the public record and calling out the government's interest in this issue, I welcome that. I think we should as a community rise up and look at the ways in which we can support vulnerable members of our community who are at risk of suicide, of self-harm, who actually may suffer isolation and alienation and may have to emotionally deal with those issues every day. If he is calling that issue out, then I am very happy for us to pursue that conversation and that consideration. I am certain that my colleagues within the government will

be very interested in any initiative that comes from any section of the community in relation to preventing suicide into the future. I would welcome the Parliament's consideration of those matters.

Supplementary question

Mr YOUNG (Northern Victoria) (12:10) — Thank you, Minister, for your answer. I am somewhat perplexed by your confusion as to my timing of this question, because the minister may not know that last week, between 11 and 17 June, was actually the 16th International Men's Health Week. So I ask: what did the government do to support this?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:11) — In relation to any specific activities, off the top of my head I do not know what the activities were that were supported by the health portfolio last week or other aspects of the government's program that was rolled out last week, but I am certain that there would have been activities, events and programs that were highlighted during the course of that week, and I will seek that advice from my colleague.

Native forest logging

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:11) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, the Andrews government via VicForests has been making payments of standdown money to forestry contractors in native forest logging. My question is: how many payments have been made, how many forestry contractors are involved and for how long will these contractors be stood down?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:12) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question and her ongoing interest in the operations of Victoria's native timber industry. I will take on notice the very specific detail that Ms Dunn is seeking and provide a written response. But I think if I can take the opportunity just to provide some context, VicForests and their contractors are bound to fulfil contractual obligations and also have a very serious set of obligations and responsibilities that they take very seriously in relation to protecting biodiversity and environmental values. I imagine the circumstances to which Ms Dunn is referring very much relate to the intersection of those issues. I will provide further information if I can about the standing down of contractors, if that is indeed occurring as Ms Dunn asserts, within the limits of my ability to provide information that might otherwise be tied up in confidential commercial contracts.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:13) — Thank you, Minister. Minister, I refer to your answer yesterday to my supplementary question without notice. You said:

The updated allocation order will provide the timber industry with operational certainty which it needs and which VicForests needs to fulfil contracts that already exist.

So my supplementary question, with that in mind, is: could you please advise the house how standdown payments accord with the provision of operational certainty to the forestry industry, and is it a fact that you are running out of wood?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:14) — I thank Ms Dunn for her further question. Ms Dunn well knows the pressures that the industry has experienced and the longer term forecast that VicForests published last year that indicated that there would be a reduction in the available native timber supply.

This manifested itself, as members would no doubt recall, in the offer of available resource to the Heyfield mill which was not in keeping with what the former government had promised the former owners of the mill and the company's subsequent decision, based on that offer of a supply that was lower than they had been led to believe they could expect, to sell the mill. I think all members would be well aware of how that ended. The Victorian government, in its determination to protect and save jobs at every opportunity, purchased a stake in the mill. The timber that has been made available to that mill is the same quantity of timber that was made available to the former owners, but it was a reduction in the resource outlook that demonstrated the decline in available resource for a whole lot of different reasons — fire, possums, lots of different reasons. That document is a public document, and members who follow these issues closely would be well aware of its contents and its seven-year forecasts. The resource outlook, though, certainly demonstrates a stabilising after that drop-down that we were dealing with last year.

Crown Casino

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (12:16) — My question is for the minister representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gambling and Liquor Regulation. Last week I asked the government for an explanation about why Crown Casino has been allowed to operate electronic gaming machines that would be illegal anywhere else in Victoria. The government's

response was to pass the blame to the previous Parliament, stating that it was the previous coalition government that entered into a new licence agreement with Crown that applies until 2050. However, it was this government in 2015 that continued to allow most of the floor area of Crown Casino to be specified as a designated area that allows for limitless loss machines to operate. Given the government has the power under the legislation to alter the size of designated areas, why has the government not acted to reduce the harm of gambling by reducing the number of these machines operating at Crown?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:17) — I thank the member for her question. Without accepting the preamble, I will certainly pass the substantive nature of the question on to the minister in the other place and seek a response.

Supplementary question

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (12:17) — Thank you, Minister. My supplementary is: did the 2015 designated area regulation that the government passed result in more limitless loss machines being allowed to operate?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:17) — Again, I thank the member for her question. Again, without accepting the premise in her question, I will pass it on to the minister in the other place.

Lara prison expansion

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:17) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, you announced on 25 January that a new maximum-security prison would be built in the Lara prison precinct. Your media release on that day said:

Land will be purchased by the Andrews Labor government, as part of plans to significantly expand the Lara prison precinct ...

Minister, now 147 days since this announcement, has the government executed contracts for the purchase of the land for the new prison?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:18) — I do thank the member for his question. The government is in the process of procuring land, so it would be inappropriate for me to go into further detail. But I am confident that this will be concluded this year. What I can say is that we must act now to ensure that we are planning for the projected growth in our prison population, and we look forward to engaging with the local community on this project as it progresses.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:18) — I take it from the minister's answer that land is yet to be acquired and contracts are yet to be exchanged or signed by the government to purchase the land required for the new prison, despite 147 days having passed. I ask by way of a supplementary: Minister, the budget papers reveal that \$10 373 000 of capital is to be spent by 30 June this year in relation to the new Lara prison — which is the end of next week. Minister, was this budgeted expenditure for the purchase of the land in this financial year?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:19) — I thank the member for his question. As I said, in terms of the land those negotiations are underway and are going to be finalised fairly shortly. In terms of other aspects of that expansion there are aspects such as the security and emergency services group, which is currently housed near that location and which operates at the other prison facilities, that will be expanded to also operate and be deployed at the new facility, and a number of other facilities are underway with planning for upgrades.

Lara prison expansion

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:20) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, the maximum-security 400-bed Macquarie prison in New South Wales opened last December, costing the taxpayer approximately \$190 million to build or approximately \$475 000 per bed. Minister, why is your proposed new 700-bed prison at Lara going to cost more than twice as much, or \$1 million, per bed to build?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:20) — I thank the member for his question. The key driver when it comes to cost efficiencies in private prisons has been identified by the Auditor-General as shift patterns. While corrections are always looking for ways to ensure the efficient management of our public prisons, keeping staff safe and ensuring the secure operation of our prisons is of a high security —

Mr O'Donohue — By way of point of order, President, to assist the minister, she may be unaware of this but the new Macquarie prison in New South Wales is a state-built and managed prison. It is not private; it is state built and managed.

The PRESIDENT — That is not a point of order.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, President. This government makes no apology for having a prison

system, and a prison system in the public sphere in particular, that has a number of services and a level of services to prisoners that are not there in other jurisdictions. We have a proud history of ensuring that we have a wide range of services, wraparound services and services in a whole range of areas, whether it be in terms of drug and alcohol programs or whether it be in terms of domestic violence and anger management courses. A whole range of courses and medical facilities are available in our prison system that simply are not available in other prison systems in this state. We believe that we have got the right approach. In terms of other key performance indicators, our system compared to many other jurisdictions is significantly improved, and we make no excuse for wanting the best possible circumstances in what is a very, very difficult and complex environment for staff as well as those who are contractors that come in and provide the allied services to ensure that there are sufficient services in terms of people's health needs, but not only that, in terms of their rehabilitation, including TAFE delivery at our prisons.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:24) — Minister, if I understood your answer correctly, the reason why the capital build in Victoria is more than twice that of New South Wales is the superior services that are provided to prisoners in the Victorian prison system. Minister, how many prisons have you visited in other states?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:24) — I do thank the member for his question. The fact of the matter is that in terms of capital investment in prisons we make no apology for the cost. We want state of the art in terms of the build in our prison system, because it is a well-known fact, and those opposite may choose to be ignorant of this, that the built environment does have an impact in relation to the way the prison operates and indeed assists in the rehabilitation of prisoners. That is the case not just here but of course around the world.

The fact of the matter is that I am the Minister for Corrections in this state. I have attended a number of meetings with my colleagues from other states. Rest assured I have attended and visited and met with many prisoners and staff at all of our facilities in Victoria, and I will drive to ensure that we have got state-of-the-art facilities and services so that we do not have to continually readdress this situation.

TAFE courses

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:26) — My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. Minister, will students enrolling in the 30 priority courses for semester 2 in 2018 be eligible for free TAFE once it commences in 2019?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:26) — I thank the member for her question. This policy initiative that was contained in the recent state budget is operational as of 1 January 2019. That is in the budget papers. This is a question that has been asked time and time again, and the answer does not change. It actually becomes operational on 1 January. This question was asked at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearings, and I gave the answer there. The reality is that for those courses that will be provided free of tuition payment, they will require the TAFEs to be in a position to be able to have a number of foundation pillars to cement what will occur in terms of enrolment. That means in terms of facilities, in terms of timetables, in terms of teachers and in terms of a whole raft of capability and capacity issues. Planning is underway at the moment, Ms Bath, very important planning, to ensure that this fantastic initiative, that is supported by every community that I visit and my other colleagues visit, is available to students on 1 January 2019.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, I am just wondering if the minister needs some help with the question again, because the question was actually very specifically about students enrolling now for courses and whether they will be eligible for the so-called free TAFE in 2019. I ask you to bring the minister back to answering that question, which is about students who are enrolling now for next year.

Ms Shing — On the point of order, President, it seems unfortunate that Ms Wooldridge chose that moment to get to her feet on a point of order seeking to bring the minister back to answering the question when that is in fact precisely what the minister was in the process of doing.

The PRESIDENT — At best that is an observation, not a point of order.

Ms Shing — It was further to the point of order.

The PRESIDENT — Except it was not a point of order, it was an observation. We do not have observations, we have points of order. Ms Wooldridge's intervention was also arguably not a point of order; it was an attempt to actually restate the

question. Minister, if you could continue, please. I think you do understand the question. Whilst you have put quite a bit of context around it, the question is basically whether people enrolling now for second semester will qualify under the free TAFE when it starts next year.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, President. I think I have been very clear. It applies as of 1 January 2019. That is what was asked at PAEC and that is what has been asked in the community, and it is the same answer. There is not a shifting date. The date remains; it is 1 January — and people are looking forward to that. People are interested in seeing what the further 10 free courses are going to be, and as I outlined to the house in response to a question asked by the Greens on the last occasion, there is a consultation process underway, co-chaired by the Victorian skills commissioner and the deputy secretary of the higher education and skills group in the department. This is underway, and that will form the basis of the discussions that will be held with industry and the community as to what the next 10 courses will be, and then people can make a fully informed decision and select one of 30 courses that will be available free of tuition come 1 January next year.

Supplementary question

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:31) — Minister, your answer is cold comfort for many students who are making decisions now, in semester 2. My supplementary question therefore is: a student enrolled in the diploma of accounting at Federation TAFE has been told that he will not be eligible for free TAFE because once he starts in semester 2 he is deemed to be a continuing student. He is now planning to defer his studies until 2019. Minister, what advice have you received on what your free TAFE announcement will mean for people in semester 2 enrolments?

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT (12:32) — Mr Dalidakis, an early lunch — 15 minutes.

Mr Dalidakis withdrew from chamber.

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:32) — I just cannot help it, but with the mention of cold comfort I think about those very cold four years that the previous government was in power, when they drove TAFE into the ground — when there were thousands and thousands of students in this state denied access to the courses that they wanted and denied courses that lead to real jobs in the Victorian economy. I can tell you, Ms Bath, that the National Party continues to be completely bereft. You have not made one policy announcement in terms of your support for

free TAFE. You have not done anything in this area. All you have done is whinge and whine on the sidelines and not even accept that there have been millions and millions of dollars spent on Federation Training.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

The PRESIDENT — Mrs Peulich, you are lucky to be asking this question. You were very close to joining Mr Dalidakis for lunch.

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:34) — Thank you for your consideration and compassion, President.

My question is for the Minister for Training and Skills. The latest apprenticeship commencement data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) shows that apprenticeship and traineeship commencements last year slumped by a further 16.1 per cent from 48 315 in 2014 to just 36 900 last year. Given the drastic decline in apprenticeship numbers on your watch, why have you placed caps on providers who are delivering preapprenticeships and apprenticeships in high-needs skill areas?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:35) — I completely reject the notions contained in respect to the last point that Mrs Peulich was attempting to make. The fact of the matter is that in terms of the latest NCVER report, it does show a decline in the number of apprentices in Victoria, and I would draw your attention to the fact that this is happening nationally — across the country this is the case. This is not a problem that is unique to Victoria at all. It is happening across all jurisdictions. Getting people to commence and complete apprenticeships is not new, and the states and the territories nationally are dealing with it in different ways. We are absolutely focused on delivering and providing genuine training that provides pathways to employment. We are not looking for quick fixes like the financial incentives used in the past by the commonwealth that are unsustainable and do not effect sustainable increases in apprenticeship numbers.

What we do care about is making sure that we have an apprenticeship system that is functional and is of high value. That is why we invested \$43.8 million in the most recent state budget. That money went to things like reintroducing trade papers, which are a passport to skills, that demonstrate that people have got the acquired skills and are job ready. We are making sure that we have independent assessments. So we are rebuilding quality back into the system after it was trashed under the previous state government's policy with respect to apprenticeships and indeed vocational

training in general. Also a pool of money is being set aside to provide for greater innovation and up-to-date materials for apprenticeships.

With respect to apprenticeships, we are providing that wraparound service for the system. But not only that, we are providing 18 preapprenticeship courses free of tuition, and that is to give people a taste of what a full apprenticeship is like. This is a way of encouraging people to seriously think about undertaking a full apprenticeship. We are very, very proud of that. But not only that, we also have brought about major reform under Minister Merlino, where apprenticeships will be absolutely revamped in the school system. If people cannot get excited about that, then they are not interested in apprenticeships and they are not interested in education in this state.

What is happening in terms of the school system and the encouragement of young people into apprenticeships I think is going to be transformational. It is a way of making sure that young people at a very early age, one, get to complete secondary school, but they also get to work towards an apprenticeship, and they do it in a very embedded way. It is not tokenistic, and it is in lock step with industry and local employers. This is really exciting. This is a game changer. It is also about making sure that we put greater emphasis and greater value on apprenticeships and are not wishing and hoping something might change.

Supplementary question

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:39) — Just noting that of course it was Labor that closed technical schools under the previous Labor government. It was Labor that deregulated vocational education and training, which actually saw a fall in the TAFE numbers. Thank you to the minister for confirming the latest apprenticeship commencement data, which shows a huge plunge in the number of apprenticeships.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs PEULICH — Absolute cuts. Minister, it has now been over a year since the federal coalition government offered Victoria an injection of hundreds of millions of dollars to grow apprenticeships. When will you place people before party politics by signing onto the Skilling Australians Fund and remove your cap on providers?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:39) — Thank you for the question, Mrs Peulich, but the fact of the matter is that the commonwealth's Skilling Australians Fund does have some significant

flaws. I also should mention of course that there was \$60 million ripped out of this fund by the commonwealth in its recent federal budget. That is money that is owed to this state. This is owed to this state. The fact of the matter is that the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister on 7 June this year. We have outlined some of the concerns that we have with the Skilling Australians Fund. We are wanting to be involved in negotiations, and we are absolutely committed to Victoria getting its fair share and a good deal out of the new arrangements that have been proposed. So what we want is to ensure that there is proper alignment between what our initiatives are.

Appropriation (2018–2019) Bill 2018

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:40) — My question is to the Leader of the Government. For eight sitting days the government has elected not to schedule debate on the appropriation bill, so I ask: will the government assure the house that it will schedule debate and committee consideration on the budget prior to 30 June?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:41) — The answer is yes.

Supplementary question

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:41) — I ask the minister: will he also assure the house that the house will have the opportunity to vote on the third reading of the bill, noting that last year the government elected not to put the bill to the final consideration by this house?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:41) — That is really up to the opposition and other non-government members, because the timing of the committee stage and the timing of the second-reading debate is really in the non-government parties' hands.

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (12:42) — On today's questions I seek written responses to Mr Young's question to Mr Jennings, the substantive and supplementary questions, in two days; Ms Dunn's question to Ms Pulford, the substantive question, one day; Dr Ratnam's question to Mr Dalidakis for a minister in another place, the substantive and supplementary questions, two days; Mr O'Donohue's first question to Ms Tierney, the supplementary question, one day; and Mr O'Donohue's second question to Ms Tierney, both the substantive and supplementary questions, one day. I point out that the minister actually spoke quite a bit about services whereas in fact it was the capital spend

that was at issue in terms of that question. Rather than services it perhaps went more to facilities and if there was to be a discrepancy in funding models or the delivered prisons. Also Mrs Peulich's question to Ms Tierney, both the substantive and supplementary questions, one day. That is it.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, just following up on Ms Bath's question, the point of order that I made and your restating of the question for the minister, I do not believe the minister actually answered the question about whether students enrolling in semester 2 could actually have free access in 2019. I ask you to reinstate the question so that that question can be answered to give clarity to students who are enrolling now.

The PRESIDENT — The minister did answer that question. The minister said that the program starts on 1 January next year. That is a very clear statement. In other words, for those enrolling for second semester the answer is no. The program starts next year. It is similar to many programs that come into force and effect: you do not get an early start on a program before it starts. The minister was quite clear, I think, in her answer, and I will not reinstate it.

Ms Lovell has raised with me, also with regard to the Minister for Training and Skills, a question that I reinstated in respect of the possible need for some of the TAFEs to repay funds because they had incorrectly engaged in practices that were not covered by the funding arrangements with the government. In the answer to the question in this house, I felt the minister did not appropriately answer that question. I note in the written response that I requested that in fact there has been the same equivocation, if you like, in terms of answering that question, which I think is a fairly simple question to answer. I must say I am concerned that on a number of occasions questions are put that I think are very clear in terms of the information that is sought and they come back as a bit of an editorial without those questions being answered. Certainly the house's expectation that it should receive information that is relevant, is apposite to the question and is factual is not being realised by some of these answers.

In this situation I cannot reinstate it another time. I suggest that probably the next course of action is a freedom of information request for this information. But I would have thought this information sought by Ms Lovell in her question was actually fairly straightforward and ought not have encumbered her as a member of this place such that she should have to pursue a freedom of information application. What is happening in terms of funding of these various agencies

and educational institutions under Victorian government budgets is a relevant matter for the information of this house, and I think wherever possible ministers need to ensure that they do respond in accordance with our expectations, as I said, about being factual, about being apposite and certainly about being relevant to those questions.

In this case, it is my view that the question asked by Ms Lovell on 8 June was not satisfactorily answered. As I have indicated, I cannot reinstate it a second time under our standing orders, but I would ask the ministers wherever possible to demonstrate a courtesy to the house in providing relevant information, especially when I think that it is pretty straightforward — in this case whether or not other TAFEs did have to refund money. That is something that I think the house deserves a proper answer on.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:48) — My question is to the Minister for Public Transport, and I refer to the government's recently released business case documents for the north-east link project. Appendix I outlines complementary projects that could be included within the scope of the north-east link and refers to both Watsonia and Greensborough railway stations. It recommends additional car parking at Watsonia of about 60 extra spaces, and I quote:

... to facilitate loss of parking at Greensborough railway station as a result of Hurstbridge rail line upgrade stage 2.

Greensborough railway station has over 200 spaces, but the car park is full from early morning each and every morning and these vehicles sometimes have to be parked up to as much as a kilometre away. Residents feel very strongly about this issue, as we recently saw when Banyule City Council planned to install paid parking meters. I therefore ask the minister to detail exactly how many car parks would be lost at Greensborough and which car parks will go under the stage 2 upgrade of the Hurstbridge rail line.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (12:49) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Lily D'Amrosio. Since the formulation of a consultation report into waste-to-energy technology last year, I have become more aware of and concerned about the waste storage issue in Melbourne and the fact that we need a multifaceted approach to dealing with it.

I was excited to see the new initiative employed by the Hume City Council in the creation of a 300-metre stretch of road. This road was created using an additive which contains plastic bags, printer cartridges and glass bottles. Melbourne recycling company Close the Loop discovered the additive, and even they are stunned by the results. Further testing will take place. My question for the minister is: how can local councils in my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region get involved in this trial and form a part of the rollout, should that prove successful?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:50) — My question is for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation. Make a Difference Dingley Village is a small family support agency in south-east Melbourne providing food parcels, grocery vouchers and financial support to families in need. The organisation recently funded a financial counsellor for a six-month trial, and there has been huge demand for the service. Make a Difference asked the minister about funding this role beyond 2018, only to be told that funds for financial counselling managed by Consumer Affairs Victoria are fully allocated up until 2021. The minister advised that clients should be referred to existing services in the area. The problem is that those services cannot cope with existing demand, and there is little point in referring people to a service that cannot help them. Given the modest amount involved and a clear need for this service, can the minister increase the allocation for financial counselling to enable Make a Difference to continue to provide financial counselling?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (12:51) — My matter is for the attention of the Minister for Police, and it concerns first the claims today that this was a quiet night for police. I note that Neil Mitchell had details — and that is welcome — of what sort of quiet night it was. One of the incidents that greatly concerned me was the existence of a man with a sword moving around the Patterson railway station. My question to the minister is: what risk did this pose to the community and will she detail the response by the police, save any matters around the court case itself? I note that in the Bentleigh electorate crime is up 70.3 per cent over the term of this government and first responder numbers have been cut in that period.

The PRESIDENT — Is Patterson station in your electorate?

Mr DAVIS — It sure is. It is in the Bentleigh electorate in the lower house, if you'd like to know.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:52) — My question is directed to the Minister for Public Transport. Some constituents of mine are really interested in the trial of the new Myki where you can use it on Android phones or iPhones. I note that this trial will lead towards people being able to actually use the barriers at train stations with their iPhone, having downloaded an app. I understand that this trial is going to be limited to some industry players but that in the coming months there will be a limited trial open to the public. The constituents of mine are interested to know from the minister how members of the public can become part of this trial, because they are quite interested and keen to get involved.

The PRESIDENT — Mr Leane, try it again on adjournment.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:53) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it is in relation to the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society, whose members were unsuccessful in their application for membership of the north-east link community liaison group. The consequence of that is that there is no community organisation officially represented on the community liaison group to advocate for the preservation of the natural values in the Whitehorse municipality in the face of what will be substantial destruction by the north-east link works. My question is: will the minister intervene to ensure that the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society has representation on the north-east link community liaison group?

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:54) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Police, and it relates in part to the recent crime stats that have been released which have revealed a 135 per cent increase in home invasions, a 91 per cent increase in motor vehicle thefts and a 494 per cent increase in resist or hinder arrests in Ballarat. This is all in light of the number of frontline police protecting our community. So the question that I would ask of the minister is: will the minister at the very least restore the numbers of frontline police in Ballarat to the levels they were at when Daniel Andrews came to office?

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (12:55) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Training and Skills and is with regard to the free TAFE announcement from the 2018–19 budget. It has been raised with me by young people in Mildura in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region. Skilled workers are in demand across regional Victoria, especially in Mildura. The recent budget includes the biggest training and skills investment in history. To ensure that cost never stops people from getting the right skills, we have made priority TAFE and preapprenticeship courses free to help close the skills gap and get people in Mildura into work. Mildura is expected to see a significant boost in jobs across the construction, tourism, hospitality, transport and logistics sectors as it is experiencing rapid growth caused by the expansion of the horticultural sector, for example. Can the minister share with my constituents in Mildura how the new free TAFE initiatives will help young people in Mildura into work and how it will help students who have been struggling financially in my electorate of northern Victoria?

The PRESIDENT — I should have accepted Ms Shing’s constituency question on milk prices. It is not a constituency question, and therefore it is out.

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (12:56) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Public Transport. Last week I was contacted by one of my constituents, who forwarded to me a letter he had sent to the minister detailing his recent experience travelling on the train from Kyneton to Southern Cross station. His train, which originated from Echuca, was late leaving Kyneton and his return service arriving back in Kyneton was also late. My constituent described the cleanliness of the train as a disgrace, with so much grime all over the exterior of the carriage that passengers were unable to see out of the windows. The constituent found his journey to be the same as his previous experiences — old and filthy rolling stock, the ride so bouncy he was unable to read and unpleasant smells emanating from the rest rooms. My constituent has written to the minister on two occasions, in February and October 2017, complaining about his train experiences, and he laments that no improvements have been made to the service. Will the minister provide a commitment to address the issues raised in my constituent’s letter and improve the quality of the passenger rail service between Kyneton and Melbourne?

The PRESIDENT — I call Ms Shing, on the basis that I have ruled out two questions.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (12:57) — Thank you, President. My question is for the Minister for Agriculture, and it relates to the setting of milk prices by Saputo in relation to the Warrnambool Cheese and Butter Factory Company and the milk price arrangements going forward for those who have done it really tough following the reduction in milk prices in the last couple of years. Feedstock prices have gone up across Gippsland, they are enormously important to being able to provide feed supply —

Ms Lovell — Do you know what the opening price is?

Ms SHING — It is \$5.75 — and it is really important that we are in a position to be able to assist. The question that I have for the Minister for Agriculture is: how can farmers be assured of ongoing support from the state government while federal government discussions are continuing about how to assist dairy and other primary producing farmers throughout Gippsland to meet the soaring costs of production?

The PRESIDENT — That is another good adjournment item. It is not a constituency question.

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (12:58) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I have today been approached by another company in Melbourne’s west that is facing devastating impact as a result of the construction of the deeply flawed West Gate tunnel project. This particular company has shared my experience as chairman of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee — they could not find out exactly who is in charge of the project either. It is exceedingly difficult to receive an acceptable answer to very reasonable questions when we do not know where those questions should be directed. When companies in Melbourne’s west face going to the wall, it is more than a fair thing to know. On behalf of western suburbs businesses I ask the minister: who exactly is the individual overseeing the building of the West Gate tunnel project?

Sitting suspended 12.59 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Debate resumed.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (14:02) — As I was saying before question time and the lunchbreak, the first part of Ms Fitzherbert's motion is calling for a copy of the 30 June 2016 lease pertaining to the Junction Oval and any subsequent changes to the lease to be released to the public. As I said, it should be a public document in any case, without needing a motion of the Legislative Council. In other jurisdictions these types of documents are freely available to the public, particularly when, as in this case, it relates to public land. The public does have a right to know what leasing arrangements have been entered into with regard to their public land.

I just digress a little bit to speak about the event that is held just down the road from the Junction Oval every year, which of course is the Australian Formula One Grand Prix, which I have been raising for many years as to the exorbitant costs of that race to the people of Victoria. Last year it cost the people of Victoria close to \$70 million and in the previous five years it cost the people of Victoria around \$60 million, so that is \$370 million in the last six years. With another five or six to go, we can look forward to the same amount of public money being squandered on the grand prix — up to around three-quarters of a billion dollars in that time, and that does not even refer to the 15 years prior or the hidden costs. This is an event for which the arrangements between the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, Formula One international and the Victorian government are completely secret. None of the contracts entered into by either side of politics with regard to that event have ever been released to the public, and they should be, considering the exorbitant amount of public money that goes into them.

In terms of returning to Ms Fitzherbert's motion with regard to Junction Oval, we know that the government has contributed \$25 million to the redevelopment, with the other \$15 million coming from Cricket Victoria and Cricket Australia. That is just about all we know. That is about all that is on the public record. If you look at the media release put out by the Premier on 3 March, it does go to that level of funding from the government and then talks about what the redevelopment will mean in terms of the headquarters for Cricket Victoria, upgraded facilities and a medical and rehab centre for cricketers. The ground will be able to be used all year round for cricket, and it will host a premier cricket club, the St Kilda Cricket Club, Sheffield Shield matches for the Victorian men's cricket team and matches for our Victorian women's cricket team. The press release also

says it will be 'a cricket hub for the community with education facilities for visiting schools'.

While I would certainly like to see that developed, I notice that the last part of Ms Fitzherbert's motion — the fifth part of her motion — calls for ministerial briefings and all correspondence, including emails and contracts, about community access to what will be known as the CitiPower Centre. I think everybody in the surrounding community is very interested in the level of community access to and community use of these new facilities, which are in fact on public land, and I agree with Ms Fitzherbert when she says that there is very little information on the public record regarding the lease or the use of the centre by the public.

Ms Fitzherbert also calls for ministerial briefings and 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. I am not quite sure whether Ms Fitzherbert will be successful in getting every single email, but I certainly think briefings and significant or key correspondence should be able to be released.

Ms Fitzherbert is also asking in her motion for contracts along with assessments and analyses of the value of the buildings and fixtures. Again I think that is information that should already be in the public realm and it should not require a motion of the Legislative Council for that information to be public. Again I make the point that in other jurisdictions information such as leases, costs, analyses of public facilities et cetera are already public documents. In the United States, for example, in most places they would already be up on the website.

Lastly, Ms Fitzherbert calls for ministerial briefings and correspondence, including emails and contracts, about the use of the name CitiPower Centre. I think that is important because we are talking about public land which is now being coopted by a corporate interest in terms of its naming. I think that is always a concern, and the public is entitled to have that information.

I want to briefly go to what Mr Melhem said in his contribution. He was not sure if the arrangement was a lease or not a lease. He thought it probably was a lease, but he was not quite sure. He was not quite sure if the arrangement was a lease arrangement and how that worked in terms of the so-called 'ownership' during the

term of that lease. I think that is important information that the public is completely entitled to have. He said he was sure the minister would respond to that question once this motion is passed. I am not really sure why the minister has not responded to that or made that information public already.

I thank Ms Fitzherbert for bringing the motion forward today. I think it is important information that should be in the public realm — or most of it, the majority of it. With those remarks, the Greens will support the motion.

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (14:10) — I will respond just very briefly. I thank everybody who has contributed to this debate. I just have a few comments in response to some of the comments that have been made. To pick up from Ms Pennicuik's comments, I thank her for highlighting the issue of community access, which I think is critical to this and is not terribly clear at this stage despite one of the names for the Junction Oval now being the Victorian Cricket and Community Centre. Secondly, I thank her for highlighting Mr Melhem's confusion about whether this is a lease or not. I will confess that I was heckling slightly when Mr Melhem spoke. When he was discussing aspects of the lease — or maybe not the lease — I was asking, for instance, how long the lease was, which I note he was studiously avoiding.

He did comment that Cricket Victoria needs a long-term arrangement. Be that as it may, we would like to know what that arrangement is, and in the specific way I have itemised in my motion. Mr Melhem talked around the issues in his contribution a lot. It was good to hear about aspects of government funding for sport and so on. He quoted the *Herald Sun*, he quoted media releases, but he did not go anywhere near talking about the core of this motion, which is about the arrangements that involve giving assets to a third party that are in fact public assets. While I am interested in what he read in the *Herald Sun*, what I would really like to know is what is not in the *Herald Sun*. That is outlined in this motion. I commend it to the house.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMES AMENDMENT (UNLICENSED DRIVERS) BILL 2018

Second reading

Debate resumed from 23 May; motion of Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan).

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (14:12) — I rise this afternoon to make a contribution on Dr Carling-Jenkins's private members bill, the Crimes Amendment (Unlicensed Drivers) Bill 2018. We in this place are tasked to improve the lives of Victorians. One of our tasks and one of the ways to do that is through legislation. We make laws in this place every time we have a sitting week. Government bills implement the policies they are elected on or respond to an emerging social need. Other bills arise from the evaluation of programs and funding allocations or advice from departments, public sector agencies, public servants, business, community organisation, or indeed community members. Then there are bills that propose to fill gaps or loopholes that emerge from a single event or series of events in our state. Dr Carling-Jenkins's private members bill is sadly one of those, and the event involved a 13-year-old boy.

Jalal Yassine-Naja lost his life on 14 March 2017 after being hit by an unlicensed driver while skateboarding — a very normal activity undertaken by a typical teenager. Following a police investigation the driver was found not to be at fault and was charged in relation to driving whilst unlicensed. She was sentenced to 80 hours of community work pursuant to a community correction order. I personally was truly impacted by this incident and the words of Jalal's mum following the loss of her son when she called for parents to hug their kids every day and pleaded with people to drive carefully. My heart breaks at this family's loss, and I understand their desire to pursue changes in the law following this tragic incident.

The bill we have been asked to consider today amends the Crimes Act 1958 to insert two new offences: unlicensed driving causing death, with a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment; and unlicensed driving causing serious injury, with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. The offences would be located within Victoria's serious driving offences in the Crimes Act. The government does not question the sentiment and the intent behind Dr Carling-Jenkins's private members bill. We are not in a position to support it in its current form, because the operation of the proposed new offences needs to be carefully thought through to avoid any unintended consequences. There are a few issues with the private members bill that I am advised could be problematic if implemented as it is currently written.

The offence contained in the bill would probably not apply if the driver was not at fault. The proposed offences would not achieve the aim of punishing an unlicensed driver who was not a fault for the death or serious injury of another person. Under the principle of

causation, to be convicted a court must be satisfied that the driver caused the death. A court could not find that a person had caused a death or serious injury where the evidence indicated that the person was not at fault.

Further, the fault element of the offence is unclear. The bill does not state a fault element. A fault element is a thing such as intention or recklessness. As a result the courts would be left to work out the fault element themselves. Courts may read in a requirement that the prosecution proved that the accused was driving dangerously, potentially making this offence no different from the existing dangerous driving offences.

The burden of proof to establish the defence: the defence contains a reverse onus, and that is that to avoid conviction for the offence an accused must prove that they were driving safely in addition to any other matters that they have to prove. It is generally considered unfair for an accused to prove why they should not be convicted of an offence and raises issues under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Scope of prior licensed offences: the bill creates a defence if the person can prove that they have previously held a licence which has not been cancelled because of driving offences if they were driving safely. This defence would mean that a person who actively refused to renew their licence could escape conviction for the offence if they were driving safely.

I would just like to point out that my advice in relation to other jurisdictions is that no other Australian jurisdiction has an offence of driving unlicensed causing death or similar. All offences in other Australian jurisdictions involving driving causing death require some negligence or carelessness on the part of the driver that led to the death.

In the UK it is an offence to cause the death of another person by driving a motor vehicle on a road without a licence, while disqualified or while uninsured. The UK offence was initially interpreted as not requiring that the person be at fault, so they could be convicted merely if their car had been involved in an accident in which a person died. In one case, a heroin-affected driver swerved onto the wrong side of the road and died when they struck another car. The other driver, who was uninsured on a provisional licence, was charged despite being entirely faultless. The court found that, although charged with the offence, the driver could not have been convicted.

It is the government's view that the best way forward is to refer this bill to the committee, because we are

absolutely committed to the worthiness of its intent, but for the reasons I have just outlined there are some concerns about its effect if it is implemented as is. For that reason I propose a reasoned amendment, and I am very happy to have that circulated now.

I move:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in their place 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the proposals contained in the bill have been referred to the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee for inquiry, consideration and report by 22 August 2018'.

The consideration of the content of this bill by the appropriate parliamentary committee will enable the issue to be examined in detail and will assist the government working on looking at further measures to deter and respond to unlicensed and other unsafe driving.

It is appropriate to mention in my contribution that the government has not ignored issues related to unlicensed driving. Last year we passed new laws around unlicensed driving, including increasing penalties for certain offences, to better reflect risks and to ensure consistency with other penalties. Currently, under the Road Safety Act 1986, unlicensed driving and driving in breach of a licence condition have the same maximum penalty of 25 penalty units and three months imprisonment. However, these offences differ in both seriousness and risk.

The Transport Legislation Amendment (Road Safety, Rail and Other Matters) Act 2017, which passed in December last year, will separate the offences of unlicensed driving and driving in breach of a licence condition to provide more effective deterrence, to more appropriately reflect the level of road safety risk and to align with best practice sentencing policy in Victoria. The maximum court penalty for unlicensed driving will increase to 60 penalty units or six months imprisonment. These provisions will commence by default on 1 November of this year.

The government certainly appreciates community concern regarding cases involving driving resulting in death or injury, and this is particularly so following Jalal's death. That is why the Minister for Police, the Honourable Lisa Neville, has recently directed the Department of Justice and Regulation to investigate the need for new offences for unlicensed drivers who go on to kill or seriously injure others. Our focus is strongly on addressing the behaviour of people who decide to drive while unlicensed and the serious consequences that can result. The *Community Safety Statement 2018/19* also commits the government to reviewing the

operation of laws relevant to the suspension and cancellation of driver licences for people charged with serious traffic crimes, including those which have resulted in death. There are a number considerations to take into account when crafting an appropriate offence and sanction to capture unlicensed drivers who are involved in an incident that results in death or serious injury.

As the member's bill clearly shows, there are significant challenges that must be worked through, and the options must be examined to ensure any new offence covers the type of offending that Dr Rachel Carling-Jenkins is attempting to cover, whilst also mitigating unintended consequences, poor outcomes for family violence victims and unintended consequences for plea bargaining. Notwithstanding these challenges, the government is looking at the possible options, and indeed I believe the work of the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee would be a most valuable asset to inform that work.

Dr Carling-Jenkins's second-reading speech says:

Ms Yassine does not want her son's death to go unnoticed ...

We owe Jalal every effort to ensure that any gaps involved in the law that did not produce an acceptable community outcome are addressed. This private members bill highlights the concerns, and I very much thank the member for bringing to the house this important matter and of course for her support of the family of Jalal and providing them with a voice in this Parliament.

Indeed I hope that the house supports the referral of this bill to the joint committee. This proposal has been sought in consultation with Dr Carling-Jenkins, and she has indicated her support for this pathway.

In the event that this referral is not supported, for the reasons outlined, the government is not in a position to be voting for this private members bill, but it does commit to Jalal's family and the Victorian community that we will continue the work relating to offences for unlicensed drivers.

Thank you, Dr Carling-Jenkins, for bringing the bill to the house.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (14:23) — I am pleased to speak on behalf of the opposition, the Liberal and National parties, in relation to this extremely important issue that Dr Carling-Jenkins has brought to the house today. As I have said in this place before, often when commentators and other people talk about justice, prisons, courts and police, it gets reduced to money: how much is a new prison going to cost, how

much is a new police station going to cost, how much is a new court complex going to cost? Of course all those issues are very important. Where money comes from and how things are paid for are obviously very important.

What we do not consider in the way we should, I think, is the cost of crime, not in a monetary sense but in a human sense — the cost to the victim, the cost to the family and the cost to friends and loved ones of someone who has been impacted by crime. It is very difficult to quantify those costs, because those costs can be immense. What is the cost of not being able to sleep at night-time for fear? What is the cost of not feeling safe to go out at night-time for fear of something happening? Or in this tragic case that the Parliament is considering today, what is the cost of a young life lost, a young life cut short, far too early, with little real consequence and little real understanding of how this has all happened?

The upending of so many lives — of the life of a mother who has lost her precious son — what is the cost of those things? Of course there is no cost that we can really attribute, but we do know that what this bill is seeking to do is to at least find a consequence, and for that the opposition supports the intent of this bill. We would be happy for this bill to pass this place, but we note the discussions Dr Carling-Jenkins and the government have had about a referral to a committee, so we will not oppose that referral as well.

Referring back to the consequence, there was great community outcry following the tragic death of Jalal on 14 March 2017 when the driver was sentenced to 80 hours community service. It is not normally my practice to reflect on individual cases, because we are a Parliament, we are not a court — I was not in the court when that decision was arrived at, and of course I have not been apprised of all the facts — but it is very hard to reconcile the determination to order 80 hours of community service when Jalal at the age of 13, as Ms Symes said, was riding his skateboard and lost his life.

Dr Carling-Jenkins has brought this bill to this house, and I congratulate her for that. But I particularly want to congratulate Jalal's mum, Olivia, because she is the one who has driven this whole issue. I have not been in this position, but unless you have been in the position of having lost a loved one in this sort of circumstance you do not really understand the grief, the loss and the pain. To be able to absorb all that unexpected grief and pain and then mount a community campaign for change is absolutely remarkable. Olivia is an incredibly strong and courageous woman, and I pay tribute to her for

what she has achieved. In preparing for today's debate I listened to some clips from 3AW in which Olivia was interviewed, demanding change. She was quoted in the daily newspapers demanding change. Of course our job as parliamentarians is to make change for the betterment of the community. I again pay tribute to Olivia for her courage in being able to, at one of the most difficult times anyone can imagine, absorb that and then go out into the community and demand change.

For those of us who are in this place, we get quite familiar with the workings of government and how change is made, but of course if you are not on the inside like we are government is an amorphous, complex, difficult thing to navigate and to advocate to. So to have the capacity and the presence to be able to see a bill before the house is a great credit to her, but of course it should only be seen as a first step in delivering the legislative change to hold perpetrators to account — to ensure that there is accountability. That is what I think this bill is seeking today.

We support the intent of the legislation. It is a very simple bill. I hope the committee process that the bill will go through when and if its referral passes this place will lead to further highlighting of these issues but also, importantly, further refinement, if that is required, of this bill.

I note the comment of Ms Symes that the Minister for Police has also asked for work in this space, and I hope that work is of a sufficiently advanced nature that it can have a real input into the committee deliberations and considerations so that before this Parliament is prorogued, before we go off to the election campaign, this legislation can pass this Parliament, these laws can be changed and improved so that there is accountability, there is deterrence and there is a recognition of the tragedy that sits behind this bill that we are debating today.

I said before that Jalal's mum, Olivia Yassine, is a courageous woman, and indeed so are so many of her family and friends. It was a privilege to attend the rally on 15 April on the steps of Parliament. It was a cold, wet day. The rain held off just long enough to allow the rally to take place. At that rally Olivia spoke, other family members spoke and longstanding victims of crime advocates like George Halvaxis also spoke. Again, these things do not just happen by turning up. It takes hundreds of hours of work, of commitment, of dedication and of passion, all at a time of grief and loss.

With those words, the opposition welcomes this bill. We look forward to detailed consideration by the

committee, the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee, and we look forward to the report being tabled on or before 22 August so that this bill can be improved, if needed, and it can pass the Parliament.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (14:34) — I rise to speak on the private members bill, the Crimes Amendment (Unlicensed Drivers) Bill 2018, brought to the Parliament by Dr Carling-Jenkins. This bill, as Ms Symes and Mr O'Donohue have already spoken about and as indeed Dr Carling-Jenkins has mentioned in her second-reading speech, has come to this place because on 14 March 2017, 13-year-old Jalal Yassine-Naja died after being hit by an unlicensed driver as he was crossing the road with his skateboard. I extend my condolences to his mother, to the rest of his family and to his friends. Everybody who knew him, I am sure, is grief-stricken by that tragedy. Of course it is always a terrible tragedy to have a young person killed in an accident in that way, effectively leaving home in the morning and not coming home in the evening, so I extend my condolences to them. I cannot imagine what it would be like to lose a child in that way, but I certainly have had contact with other people who have, and in my years in this place I have had similar issues brought to me and they are always very heartbreaking to have to deal with.

I agree with Mr O'Donohue that Olivia Yassine has been very courageous and very consistent in raising this issue in the media and in the community and in gathering the support not only of her family and friends but of members of the community — and clearly of Dr Carling-Jenkins — in bringing this issue to the Parliament for the attention of the Parliament. I too have looked into the background of the issue, and I did listen to the interviews on 3AW — the interview with Olivia Yassine and also with the police and with David Galbally, who provided legal advice on why events took the course they did.

Earlier this year the unlicensed driver was sentenced to 80 hours community service for unlicensed driving plus additional charges, which were unrelated to the tragedy in which Jalal lost his life. Basically the summary of this is that the police determined that the driver was not driving recklessly or dangerously and that the cause of death was accidental. The driver was therefore charged under section 18 of the Road Safety Act 1986 with driving while unlicensed and sentenced according to the current sentence for that offence, which of course is a summary offence with a maximum penalty of 25 penalty units or three months imprisonment, or in this case community service.

The police, as I said, did not determine that the driver was driving recklessly or dangerously and determined that the cause of death was accidental and so did not charge the driver with either culpable driving under section 318 of the Crimes Act 1958 or section 319 of the Crimes Act, 'Dangerous driving causing death or serious injury'. Had the driver been driving in such a way as to be charged with culpable driving or dangerous driving, those are indictable offences that would have been tried before a jury in a higher court. Most probably that driver, had they been charged with either of those offences, would have received a custodial sentence. I was not able to ascertain whether that has been the case in the past, but I would assume that it has been in other cases where a person may have been an unlicensed driver and also there was enough evidence for the police to charge that person with culpable driving or reckless driving, so that person would have gone through the higher court with regard to that charge.

As I said, I listened to the commentary on 3AW. It was very interesting. The police pointed out that there is a gap — in their view and the legal counsel's view — between a person just driving unlicensed and being picked up by the police, for example, for driving unlicensed and being charged for that as a summary offence and being sentenced for that, and then the situation that this case brings to light where a young person lost their life. The problem of course was the lack of evidence to bring on the higher charges — the indictable charges.

I have had a look at the bill, and this bill in essence creates a new offence under the Crimes Act. To follow section 319, which is the dangerous driving offence, this bill will create a new offence for a person who drives a motor vehicle and who knows or is reckless as to whether they are an unlicensed driver and who causes serious injury by driving a motor vehicle, with a five-year maximum term of imprisonment, or causes a death by driving a motor vehicle, with 10-year maximum term of imprisonment. They are similar to the indictable offences of culpable and dangerous driving, which have penalties of up to 20 years imprisonment attached.

Interestingly, though, the bill provides that the new offences would not apply to a person who had previously held a licence and the licence was not suspended for a driving offence and at the time of the death the person was driving with reasonable care. This does raise a concern for me in terms of the aim that Dr Carling-Jenkins is trying to achieve here, in that I believe the provisions of the bill as written now would not apply to the driver of the vehicle that was involved

with the accident that happened in March this year. This was also raised by the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee in their report on the bill. They point out on page 2 of their report:

This defence exempts a person who once had a licence, lost it for a non-offence reason (such as letting it expire) and drove carefully.

I think there is definitely a case for the provisions of this bill and in fact the issue in itself to be more carefully looked at, and so the Greens will be supporting the amendment put forward by Ms Symes that the bill be referred to the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee for inquiry, consideration and report by August this year.

Changes to the law such as this do need to be looked at carefully to ensure that the provisions are appropriately structured to achieve the aims that they are purporting to achieve and also have no unintended consequences in the courts which would only serve to further traumatise the people who are involved in the events that occurred.

I also agree with Ms Symes that the issue of fault is an issue that courts turn their minds to, and they also turn their minds to aggravating circumstances and mitigating circumstances in any case, as they are required to under the Sentencing Act 1991. I note that Ms Symes said — and I know — that the Department of Justice and Regulation are looking at this issue as part of a wider range of the state's driving laws, but I am not sure whether that would be appropriate to be included in that wider review. Nevertheless at the moment all parties here have agreed that the best course of action with regard to this particular bill is to have the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee look at it.

I would also suggest that organisations such as the Law Institute of Victoria, the Sentencing Advisory Council and the Department of Justice and Regulation itself be invited to provide submissions to the committee and/or appear at hearings so that committee can ask them questions about how these provisions may or may not fit into the statutes as they are written now.

So once again, condolences on my part and on behalf of my Greens colleagues to Olivia Yassine and her family for the loss of their son, brother, cousin. We will be supporting the amendment put forward by Ms Symes.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (14:45) — I rise to speak today on Dr Carling-Jenkins's Crimes Amendment (Unlicensed Drivers) Bill 2018. Being on the crossbench gives me a little bit of latitude to say

things like this: I am actually appalled that it has taken something like the death of Jalal to bring this issue to a head. That is not a shot at this government or previous governments; it is a shot at all governments.

This should not ever have been allowed to get to the point that we have a bill that needs to go to a committee to flesh out the details. Road trauma is probably the leading violent killer in our society and we have armies of lawyers for all sorts of things, and I think over times gone by someone should have picked up on this. I was actually listening to Ms Pennicuik on one of her points about the lack of dangerous driving and whilst I appreciate that, in the end a boy was killed by an unlicensed driver. I am not across all the intimate details, but as I understand, the driver drove away and then came back. Now, from my time in the police I know that once you drive away, that is hit-and-run. Whether you come back or not is immaterial. Whether that is an aggravating cause I am not entirely sure from a legal point of view, but I think it is quite a poor outcome to do that. I do not know about anyone else, but if I had the misfortune to hit anyone, whether it was their fault or my fault, I would stop, get out and deal with it.

I think given the resourcing that the crossbench generally does not have a lot of, it is not a bad idea to send this off to committee. Obviously the committee is not going to re prosecute the case. The case has been heard and the punishment made, but I think it would be really good to flesh out the issue and to come up with some ways around this, where there is at least justice and accountability so that someone does not kill someone else, drive away and then get 80 hours of community work.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (14:47) — I will make some very brief remarks in summing up debate on this bill. It has been my pleasure to bring the Crimes Amendment (Unlicensed Drivers) Bill 2018 to debate in this house. This bill, as we have all spoken about, is motivated by the value of Jalal Yassine-Naja's life and thus we call it Jalal's Law. Jalal's life was taken too soon by an unlicensed driver, and this bill seeks to fill the gaps in our legislation that the loss of Jalal has highlighted. It will bring about a legislative change to insert significant penalties when an unlawful road user causes death or injury.

I would like to thank Ms Symes, who made a contribution on behalf of the ALP government. I particularly noted her comments on the initiation of the Minister for Police, Lisa Neville, on an investigation around unlicensed driving, which I really appreciate and which will become part of this investigation, the

options for which are being explored. I also thank Ms Symes for her expression of support and commitment to Jalal's mother, Ms Olivia Yassine, and to the community that is surrounding her.

I thank Mr O'Donohue, who contributed on behalf of the Liberal-National opposition. I actually wrote down 'government' —

Mrs Peulich — It is an omen.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS — Yes, maybe. I thank him for highlighting the cost of a young life cut short without real consequence, which this bill addresses, and for acknowledging the outcry within the community as a result of the community service-based order handed down in this case. I thank him for acknowledging the Justice for Jalal campaign initiated by Olivia Yassine, which quite clearly has inspired this bill.

I also wish to thank Ms Pennicuik, who made her contribution on behalf of the Greens, expressing her sympathy for the family, analysing the bill as we have come to expect from her — a great analysis of the bill — and for her support for the referral.

I wish to thank Mr Bourman, who presented on behalf of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, and in fact really on behalf of the crossbenchers on this side of the house, for his perspective on road trauma, being an ex-policeman, and for his sympathy for the death of Jalal, which has inspired this bill. I thank him for his support for the committee process. I also think I should acknowledge that many of the contributions have made reference to Neil Mitchell's 3AW program in bringing this issue to light in the wider community. I think Mr Mitchell was in fact the first one to coin the term 'Jalal's Law', so I will acknowledge that as well.

I believe the move by the government to investigate this bill through the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee is a positive step. It will enable Jalal's family to be heard, it will enable Jalal's community to be heard and it will enable Jalal's voice to be heard. It will also enable the questions raised in this place today, especially from Ms Symes on behalf of the government and from Ms Pennicuik, to be explored and answered. The date of 22 August enables the report on the bill to come back to this house prior to this house rising ahead of the November elections, so it is very good timing. I thank everyone in this place for their support for this bill and for their support again of the family and the supporters surrounding the family. I commend this reasoned amendment and this bill to the house.

Amendment agreed to.

COST OF LIVING

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (14:52) — Before moving my motion, I congratulate Dr Carling-Jenkins on the matters which the house has just dispensed with. It is good to see the house coming together on these important initiatives in response to what is clearly a gap in our laws.

I regret having to move this motion, but I do so because it is important to refocus our attention on things that really do matter and to provide an opportunity to members of Parliament to place on the record the concerns that I am hearing about, that many of my colleagues are hearing about and that many of our candidates are hearing about as they are moving around talking to people in their communities in the lead-up to the state election. The messages are remarkably consistent. Therefore I move:

That this house notes the serious impact of the rising cost of living on Victorians, their families and businesses, and including but not limited to the escalating costs of —

- (1) electricity and gas;
- (2) housing affordability;
- (3) child care;
- (4) transport;
- (5) council rates and charges;

and calls on Labor members to stand up for their communities and local businesses rather than just pay lip-service to ‘delivering for all Victorians’.

I guess if there is one issue that is most commonly mentioned by everyone, it is the cost of electricity. By housing affordability, I mean the decline in the affordability of housing. There are also the increased costs of child care and the increased costs associated with transport, both on the road in terms of petrol prices and tolls as well as public transport. I also refer to increased council rates and charges. The introduction of the government’s rate cap has not stopped residents and ratepayers being charged ever-growing amounts for their annual rates. I also call on Labor members to stand up for their communities and local businesses rather than just pay lip-service to delivering for all Victorians.

The reason that I concluded with that last phrase in the motion is that that is the government’s latest slogan — delivering for all Victorians. I hope those opposite realised by talking to some Victorians out there who are hurting that their previous slogan did not resonate. Certainly it struck many, many raw nerves. The previous slogan was ‘Getting things done, making

things fair’. There is a recognition that there are things that are happening. All you have to do is look around the city to see the mayhem and mismanagement that is being created by getting things done — and often it is getting things done in such a way that causes enormous angst in and negative impacts on the community, or by simply doing the wrong thing. Sky rail is a case in point.

Across the length and breadth of my electorate, not only on the Caulfield–Dandenong line, sky rail has destroyed people’s peace of mind, is ugly and does not improve the amenity of our suburbs, let alone the sand belt on the Frankston line, our most beautiful coastline that I am very privileged to represent in this Parliament together with other members. It is difficult to imagine that we have built these multistorey constructions — pylons nearing 25 metres — adjacent to the length of our coast. They are an abomination, especially given that this was not something that Victorians voted for at the last state election. They voted for level crossing removals, and the reason they voted for level crossing removals was that it was a program that the former coalition government started.

I remember raising time after time, for example, the issue of the level crossing at Clayton, which is very close to the Monash Medical Centre. I was sick and tired of seeing ambulances stuck there, often for 10 or 20 minutes, and often with very dangerously ill patients in the back, not being able to get to their destination. I began calling for level crossing removals, and indeed we did that. We committed to removing the Springvale level crossing, and we were even applauded by a longstanding member of the ALP and a member of the Greater Dandenong City Council, Cr Angela Long. As mayor she said, ‘We have been waiting for this to happen for 45 years’. It was funded, it was designed and it occurred under a Liberal-National government. It was opened by former Premier Denis Napthine, and we earned the accolades of everyone in the community.

That is unlike what is happening along the sand belt, where previous policy has encouraged — and there has obviously been some consternation, but I think the community has been adjusting to it — densifying areas around transport nodes and building higher apartments with multistorey developments along those shopping centres and hubs. Suddenly, without any consultation, because it actually did not go through cabinet, they find that they are going to get a sky rail — a 25-metre sky rail — running past their multistorey gorgeous apartments along the sand belt, along the coast. So there you are sitting in your box with your partner —

Mr Leane — Are you going to dig down next to the bay?

Mrs PEULICH — Absolutely I am going to dig down. What is that?

Mr Leane — Are you going to dig down into the ocean?

Mrs PEULICH — We did. We actually funded, planned and designed it. Just look around the world, Mr Leane. Engineering has progressed beyond the Neanderthal standards that you subscribe to. Just think about it, look around the world and take those blinkers off. Anything can be done. Come down to my neck of the woods and talk to the community. Many of them are actually engineers, and they have devoted hours and hours to try to convince the government of the folly of their ways. In actual fact, Mr Leane, I would be happy to put on a sausage sizzle and invite the community to come and speak to you so that you can tell those engineers who have spent a lifetime of dedicated service on major projects that they are wrong and you are right.

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, Acting President, my understanding is we are on a motion that relates to cost of living, yet the member's contribution seems to be exclusively about the sky rail project. I ask you to bring her back to the motion that her colleagues have actually brought to this house.

Mr Ondarchie — On the point of order, Acting President, isn't it ironic that someone who talks to a wide range of issues in debate when responding to questions in the house now objects to this. The convention in this place is that the lead speaker does have capacity to deal widely with the motion before the house, so we should allow that to proceed.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Ondarchie — We can talk about conventions if you like, like sitting on Good Friday — those who support multifaith and then want to sit on Good Friday.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Order! Thank you Ms Mikakos and Mr Leane. I am on my feet, members. Order!

Mr Finn — On the point of order, Acting President, I can only endorse what Mr Ondarchie has said. There is a longstanding practice in this house that lead speakers have a wide-ranging ambit to speak on their

motions. Mrs Peulich is using that, as is her right, in my view, and I urge you to uphold her right to do so.

Mrs PEULICH — I do not need to speak to the point of order because I was actually making opening remarks about the government's chief slogan, pointing out its inaccuracy and the reason why it has ditched that particular slogan for its new slogan. They were going to be my opening remarks, and I thank members for their contribution to the debate but I can assure them that I will get to the issues that they are raising.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Ms Mikakos, I will not uphold your point of order on a number of points. One is that obviously the lead speaker does have a significant amount of time to make a contribution, and I am sure there will be wideranging debate on this particular matter. Also it is quite difficult for members to make their contributions and not take up interjections when they come in consistently from the other side of the chamber. I would encourage members not to make interjections and also not to take up interjections.

Mrs PEULICH — Thank you, Acting President. I think the interjections themselves show how out of touch Labor members are, which is the reason why they had to ditch their main slogan that they clutched onto like drunks clutching onto a light pole, 'Getting things done, making things fair', because guess what? They have certainly not been making things fair. They have been making things fair, and lavishly so, for their political mates, their factional allies and their bosses in the union movement, but they certainly have not been making things fair for the rest of Victorians. So Labor has certainly shown its ineptitude at managing its own costs and has therefore failed to control the cost of living for Victoria's growing population. They have demonstrated time and time again a lack of commitment to the reduction of those increasing pressures on the cost of living.

Now, it does not surprise me, because if you actually have a look at the background of Labor MPs, you would be hard-pressed to find anyone with any private sector experience, so managing significant projects of the nature that this government has committed to is obviously something that is alien to them. Typically speaking we know that when Labor governments are elected they end up mismanaging and wasting a lot of money, all of which is borne by the taxpayers — by Victorians — who as a result of that suffer, for example, from rising government fees and charges as well as of course a whole range of cost-of-living pressures that I will come to in a moment.

For example, in Victoria the state government is the only instrumentality that I can think of that has an automatic indexation of all fees and charges across all sectors every 1 July. They do not actually need to justify those increases, unlike many other businesses. The background of Labor MPs does not actually prepare them well for management in government. They are great at opposition, they are great at tearing things down, at criticising, at mobilising, at using trolls to shape and massage public opinion, but they are actually not good at delivering, getting things done or making things fair. Now, of course, that has been subsumed by the slogan, 'Delivering for all Victorians', which indeed is something that they have not done. The reason why they have not been delivering for all Victorians is their close links to the union movement, the favouritism that we see in their policies and the rorts that we have actually seen unfold day in and day out.

Mr Finn — What about the CFA? Do you want to talk about the CFA?

Mrs PEULICH — We will get to all of those rorts and the reasons. The costs that are wasted on many of these is actually money out of the public purse, money that could be dedicated to delivering high-quality services, high-quality education and more infrastructure. There is a backlog of \$2 billion, for example, in the Casey area for roads. The issues that absolutely everyone raises all the time are congestion and roads. It takes people up to 2 hours to get home after work and about the same time to get to work. That is 4 hours in travel, part of which could actually be spent either recreating or spending time with family. In addition to the time and the incursion that that makes on family life, it costs people money. Fuel costs money as well as making pollution. If we had less congestion on the roads and better connectivity, we would actually have less pollution. All of the research shows that 15 per cent of our pollution is generated through transport.

Labor does not blink when it comes to pursuing policies which reduce competition and punish the private sector. Even during question time today the Minister for Training and Skills made it quite clear that they did not sign up to the federal funding for increased apprenticeships because it required them to also allow the private sector to participate. This government is so hostile to the private sector, and all that they are doing is basically moving all of their resources to look after their union mates, who are their masters. Look at every single inaugural speech of every single Labor Party MP elected here: they first pledge their loyalty to their union masters. We pledge to serve the people who actually elect us into office.

Labour hiring laws — we have debated that this week. The impact that is going to have in terms of cascading through the economy will be horrendous. The higher education changes — the Labor Party campaigned at the last state election about how we cut TAFE. Well, the reason why TAFE numbers were cut was they deregulated and opened up the sector to private operators, and the reason why they did that back in 2009 when they were in office was they actually wanted registered training organisations that are affiliated with the union movement to be able to get the funding. They cannot have it both ways and then say, 'But TAFEs are losing money', because it was their scheme. That is why they designed it, and that is why it happened. I do not mind any government or any party being criticised for things for which they are actually responsible. This government and the Labor Party fail to accept responsibility for the failing policies that they have been responsible for which have cost our young people opportunities over many, many years, especially in the education sector.

Sky rail construction, which I have mentioned, led of course to the compulsory acquisition of land and businesses along the Frankston line, putting out of work quite a large number of people when in actual fact Labor could have worked with the federal government to develop a long-term plan to electrify the line to Baxter — to extend it — and to not close and punish those businesses that stood in the way of their sky rail.

Until recently the government has been attempting to take over family-run bus companies — until the bus companies made it clear they had 21 buses they were going to use during the election campaign. They were going to nationalise it and seize control of their assets. Now, where do we hear that in the Western world? They have taken over school cleaner contracts. They have put school cleaners out of business because what they wanted them to do was to merge into larger entities so they could pick and choose and actually select their mates — people who are more amenable to unionised workplaces. Never has there been a party that is more hostile to the private sector than the Victorian Labor Party.

Where does the list stop when it comes to punishing small businesses and favouring union mates, who are getting the lion's share of benefits from Labor? Let me just remind people of some of those most horrendous examples in the history of our great state. I am just reading off my iPhone some of the rorts and scams that have delivered for Labor and its union mates and not for Victorians: Daniel Andrews's and Labor's multimillion-dollar red shirts rort and benefits — and still no-one has been sacked; Daniel Andrews backing

Peter Marshall and the United Firefighters Union against 60 000 volunteer firefighters; Daniel Andrews and Labor punishing small business in favour of unionised workplaces; and a \$10 million grant gifted to Trades Hall — money that they do not have to spend on their own repairs.

Of course we also found through the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption deals being done between unions and big business to the detriment of the workers that they represent. Having read the evidence, the Australian Workers Union did a deal to move \$300 000 from a company into their own coffers. All they had to do was come up with some ingenious ways of doing that, and the ingenious ways were to pay for training that was never delivered, to pay for advertising in the union magazine that never ran and to pay for spots at a union ball which were never taken up. These are just some examples of the sorts of rorts this government and this party engage in. Of course there was also the disgraced former Labor Speaker and his deputy, who scammed the public purse, and there was the disgraced former Labor Minister for Corrections, Minister Steve Herbert, who resigned for having his dogs chauffeured in his ministerial car across the state. These are all examples of the disregard that Labor has for standards and for representing the people who elected them in order to help their mates, whether it is within the party, whether it is within their faction or whether it is within the union movement.

Just in terms of a bit of context, greater Melbourne's population has grown by 2.7 per cent, which is faster than any other city in Australia, making it one of the fastest growing cities in the developed world. When Labor was unable to cope with Victoria's growing population, the consumer price index of Victoria increased by 2.2 per cent last year compared to 1.3 per cent across Australia, meaning that Victorians are paying more for the same goods, services and utilities that they rely on. Utility prices are the biggest concern of the businesses, families and individuals that I have spoken to over the last few months. They remain among the most important factors in the cost of living, with utility prices increasing by 13 per cent last year alone. However, the Labor government has done nothing but offer Victorians \$50 as hush money for visiting a price comparison website in an attempt to absolve concerns about rising utility prices.

Pensioners and self-funded retirees are hit the hardest by increases to the cost of living. Pensioners experienced an increase in the cost of living of 2.2 per cent last year, and self-funded retirees saw an increase of 1.8 per cent. Both of these groups have a limited and

preset amount of savings and do not have the ability to maintain their current quality of life if the cost of living continues to increase at this pace. The other big issue that is constantly raised with me is land tax — the crippling effect of land tax on businesses and on the investments of self-funded retirees, who derive no money from the state but have put aside money in order to look after themselves in their old age. The land tax burden is punishing and in many cases leaves the older person with no option but to sell rather than pay unaffordable land tax bills, and the same applies to businesses. While Labor continues lining the hip pockets of their union bosses, they demonstrate that they are out of touch with the most important issues influencing the cost of living in Victoria.

This is a government concerned with social reform and indoctrination and trying to break the back of their political competitors through the legislation that we will be debating no doubt tomorrow or perhaps the next day on electoral and donations reform, where they get to keep everything they have got and get some more while everyone else is thrown to the wall. No doubt those debates will be illuminating. They are more concerned about those things than resolving the impacts of the rising cost of living experienced by Victorians. I think the most disconcerting thing is the use by the current government and by the union movement in particular of trolls and propaganda to convince Victorians that Labor puts people first. There is example after example where that is just not the case.

The intent of this motion is to provide, as I said before, an opportunity for MPs to air the concerns of their constituents and their communities. There are five areas that the government needs to focus on if they are to reduce Victoria's cost of living, as I have mentioned: electricity and gas prices; housing affordability; and the third is childcare costs. I actually started out in my political life as a childcare activist, and we forecast at the time the rising cost of child care. We campaigned for either tax deductibility or subsidised child care. However, even now the cost of child care is actually giving some families no option but to use unregulated and backyard care. We saw an example of that recently where a little girl was at home alone — a latchkey kid — while the home was being burgled. That is not an uncommon story, of children being left at home alone or —

Ms Shing — What does this have to do with anything?

Mrs PEULICH — The cost of child care — the rising cost of child care — Ms Shing. You may not understand that, but it is a huge concern to families.

Ms Shing — No, no — a child being left at home —

Mrs PEULICH — A latchkey kid in preference to —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Order! Continue, Mrs Peulich.

Mrs PEULICH — There are also transportation costs and, finally, council rates and charges. Just coming back to electricity and gas, the increase in the electricity price is the result of ineffective leftist energy policy from the government that allowed the Hazelwood power plant to close, and we saw that —

Ms Pulford — You do know that's not true, don't you?

Mrs PEULICH — Well, we did see that press release put out by Mr Southwick, our shadow minister for energy, from Engie saying that indeed the additional tax was a factor in the determination of their future. Since the closure of the plant electricity prices have increased 16 per cent and the state's power generation capacity has reduced by 20 per cent. Even worse, Victoria's wholesale gas prices have doubled over the past two years. Victoria was one of the cheapest states for gas prices, but under the Labor government our neighbours have outpaced us and in Western Australia prices have decreased over the past two years.

The three things that Victoria had to its advantage and which gave us a great economic opportunity and activity were cheap energy, good transportation and labour, and unfortunately we are missing out on all of those three fronts, which makes us probably one of the least competitive states in Australia. As a result of that businesses are either shutting down or moving offshore, which of course means that we also lose local jobs. Victoria was one of the cheapest states for gas prices, but of course this is now no longer the case. The government continues to oppose conventional gas exploration and mining. There was an inquiry that I was involved in. Of course all of us oppose fracking, because in Victoria we actually do not need fracking, but the opposition to conventional gas mining and exploration is one of the causes for escalating gas prices, and the Liberal-Nationals coalition has indicated its opposition to this policy.

The Salvation Army estimated that Victorians will be paying \$300 more this year in electricity prices, and the Andrews government response is a \$50 bribe to try and make the problem go away without actually providing solutions. Small businesses are hit the hardest by hikes

in electricity prices. The owner of Doyles Bridge Hotel in my electorate, Mr Robbie Beaton, recently explained that the hotel's power bills have tripled over the last year from \$8000 to \$24 000. Another business in Dandenong that I heard about had its power bill increase from \$750 000 per year to \$1.5 million per year. That is just off the bottom line, and ultimately what it means is job losses. They are looking for ways to cut costs, and jobs are often the first to go, which is most regrettable. I have heard, however, since then that the government has actually contacted the energy company that Mr Beaton's businesses uses and has convinced them that they actually need to do better, so they have offered him a deal. Why did it have to take a media exposé and the opposition doing a presser to get some action from the government? The increase in electricity prices means that this business has to sell 120 more pots of beer per day to satisfy increased operation costs.

In true Labor fashion the Andrew government is placing undue pressure on small business. They are unable to unionise. It would be ridiculous for this government to assume that any business could cope with their overhead costs increasing threefold. One of the responses that I have also received on this particular issue is from Geoff Gledhill, the Liberal candidate for the Assembly electorate of Mordialloc. He said:

Put simply I am very concerned about the growing number of electricity 'horror stories' local businesses are sharing ...

and he again recounts the experience of the Mordialloc hotel.

Or the major independent supermarket operator whose power bill knocks nearly 50 per cent off its net profit! These figures mean lost jobs, not lost profits! Mums, dads, brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles, all from Mordialloc, all looking for a job.

I think that sums it up very well.

Mr Darrel Taylor, who is the Liberal candidate for the Assembly electorate of Keysborough, was also out on the hustings talking to small businesses in the Noble Park area, a very neglected part of what used to be the Labor heartland. Let me tell you they are not as rusted on now as they have been in the past. He says:

Businesses in Springvale South have had energy price rises of over 70 per cent in the last 12 months this is from our last weekend street walk.

They have to absorb the cost they can't handle too much of it means job losses looking for cheaper providers and savings wherever they can —

including of course having to sack people.

Just to let you know, the feedback that I get is that any price rise from small retailers like takeaway shops is that they get complaints from the customers and they are forced to find cost-cutting as much as possible prior to price rises.

You can see that in some shopping strips, including Bentleigh, there is an increasing number of vacant shops, and I think that does not augur well for economic activity.

In terms of housing affordability, the stories that I hear on so many occasions are concerns of families about how their adult children will ever be able to buy into the housing market. We know that housing affordability is negatively impacted by a range of factors, including the increasing cost of construction. This happens a lot, in particular when the government is actually creating jobs through its own infrastructure construction, which soaks up all of the labour force. It basically means that people who are trying to get things done — to build their own houses or even have simple repairs done by tradesmen — are paying through their teeth or not being able to get tradesmen to do the job. They are certainly paying huge increases.

The cost of infrastructure delivered by government has also increased monumentally, so the value for the dollar is a lot less than it has been in the past because these companies can charge exorbitant prices through enterprise bargaining agreements and union deals that are negotiated as part of the deal with the companies.

Unaffordable land tax bills, increased rates, the cost of downsizing — all of these have a negative impact on housing affordability and, in particular, the cost of downsizing. I have spoken to a lot of empty nesters who might be pensioners who simply cannot afford to move out of their own house and into a smaller property. So you have a lot of people living in homes who are mismatched to the size of their homes because it is punitive for them to actually move.

Housing prices in Melbourne's suburbs rose by one-third last year. Home loan repayments eat up an average of 34.1 per cent of the typical Victorian family's income. This signifies a 9.5 per cent increase in the same measure from one year ago. The problem, however, does not stop at home owners. Rental prices also increased at an average of 4.2 per cent last year. Renters commit an average of 30.3 per cent of their income to rent each month. The connection between rising housing prices and the 11 per cent increase in Victoria's homeless population each year is clear and certainly warrants special attention in relation to this issue.

With proposed public housing expansions, Labor has, in my view, also misdiagnosed the problem. The public housing problem is substantially also a result of the cost-of-living problem. Unfortunately Labor's stamp tax concessions for first-time homebuyers is also artificially inflating prices of homes in desirable areas. For example, in Casey the median house price rose from \$565 000 to \$620 000 in the final six months of 2017, during which time 912 first-time homebuyers purchased a house. Downsizing becomes less of an option for people. On land tax, a constituent by the name of Paul Dipnall contacted me about — and I will use his quote — 'crippling land tax increases that are destroying people's lives and futures'. With our planning laws and land availability, all of these are contributing factors to the issue of housing affordability.

I have spoken about child care. Childcare costs in Victoria are among the highest in the world. They are directly influenced by the ever-increasing cost of living. There is no denying that childcare costs have substantially risen in the last decade and have risen under the Labor government, with few subsidies, of course, and few reforms in the sector. It is expected that by 2020 Victorians will be paying in excess of \$175 per day in childcare costs alone. After that, it will not be long until Victorians are paying \$200 a day for child care. This is higher than most neighbouring states. Certainly many people who do not earn that much have to make a tough decision whether to continue working or to look after their children, especially if they have more than one in care. The numbers are rising. The high costs of child care and overall living have meant that more children are actually ending up in unregulated care. I think there is also an impact on foster care. If foster carers are not able to place children into child care when they need to, it certainly can impact on their decision to foster children, and we know how much of a problem that is.

On transportation, there is the cost of congestion. It has been well established by the study conducted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission that the cost of congestion in the south-east is punitive. There is the cost of fuel, the cost of public transport and the cost of tolls on users who are paying for roads they do not use, as will be the case with Monash Freeway users, who will be slugged for a longer period of time for tolls in order to pay for a road on the other side of Melbourne. It is just not fair, especially given that already the cost of transportation for many of those is punitive in terms of both time and money.

Public transportation costs have risen exponentially since the Labor government took office, increasing by 4 per cent from 2014 to 2015, and they have been rising since. Daniel Andrews, for example, and his Geelong region MPs cancelled the east–west link, saying that it would not cost taxpayers a single dollar, but it has ended up costing \$1.3 billion and counting. The Andrews Labor government have refused to answer whether or not they will implement new tolls or increase existing ones. The Labor government has also targeted taxidivers, and we know how many of them are distraught and looking for answers.

Council rates and charges: 29 of the 31 councils in Melbourne have plans to increase their council rates at the maximum of 2.25 per cent, the rate cap. However, the cost shifting continues. Councils will be increasing rates beyond that cap due to waste collection costs. Waste collection costs are not capped like council rates, and because China is no longer receiving Australian recycling imports, communities will be paying more this year in local rates. The cap will also be usurped by higher property revaluations. Therefore within the City of Melbourne 57 per cent of ratepayers will pay more than the state cap. Substantial cost shifting continues, placing additional pressure on local government, and councils feel the pressure to deliver infrastructure that the state government fails to do. Councils also pay the state levy for landfill, and of course they get very little in return.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the exponentially rising cost of living in Victoria is leaving citizens with a strong sense of anxiety and uncertainty about not just the future but their present as well. Since the Andrews Labor government took control, citizens have felt more insecure financially and concerned because of the increase in the cost of living: 27 per cent of Victorians listed the cost of living as one of their greatest concerns — and the Andrews Labor government has not given the issue more thought than, as I said before, the \$50 rebate for utility costs.

Only the Liberal-National coalition can stabilise costs, because it has a greater ability to manage projects, manage money, not waste money and certainly not preside over the sort of rotting that we have seen in this state under Daniel Andrews. The failed economic policies of the Andrews Labor government are obviously a huge contributing factor, and that is why what is needed is a change of government. This November it will be pertinent to remember who in this government has a history of listening to Victorians and proactively providing solutions. Having been here and seen many governments come and go, could I say that the only party that I think is in the best position to

deliver for all Victorians is the Victorian Liberal-National coalition. With those few words, I commend the motion to the house.

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (15:27) — It is a pleasure to rise to speak on the cost of living and to begin by addressing some of the significant shortcomings of the contribution that has preceded my own. I would like in the first instance to tackle what has been referred to by the previous speaker as propaganda in a number of elements of delivering on improvements to the cost of living for Victorians not by looking at what is stated to be propagandist in the context of looking to persuade someone of a view through the selective use of language on facts, but by just using the facts themselves.

The facts themselves are as follows. We have seen a population increase of about 2.4 per cent in the last year. We have seen record growth across Victoria since 2014. We have seen record investment in relation to infrastructure and services. We have seen the development of multiple frameworks to assist Victorians not just with finding, securing and maintaining employment but with making sure that they can secure, for example, their first home and that they can secure access to services and facilities, including in sport, in culture, in the communities, in the context of public spaces and in the context of being able to do things as simple as paying their registration in instalments versus paying it in one fell swoop.

What we hear from the other side in debates like this is constant dog whistling in relation to certain key issues — pet projects, if you will, of the opposition — in seeking to actually try to distract from the enormous progress that has been made in Victoria since the Andrews government was elected in 2014.

The fact is that we have come across from a stultifying, desperate and stagnant base of no progress whatsoever to the biggest infrastructure investment in this state's history. For those opposite it might be convenient to have a think about how we stack up in relation to infrastructure investment when it compares to an icon of those opposite, Mr Jeffrey Kennett — or some of those opposite; some of them are very stropy with him at the moment. But putting the Liberal Party's internal matters to one side, it is interesting to note that in fact the infrastructure program under this government has outstripped by at least double that which was undertaken by the former Premier of this state. We have done it with fair terms and conditions, we have done it with minimum wages and opportunities for people to gather skills and we have done it with opportunities for people to secure employment, and the figures — let us

go back to facts again — stack up in the order of at least 320 000 new jobs created in this state since 2014. They are all facts; that is not propaganda.

You talk to the people who are actually getting the benefit of this. You talk to the people who are getting the benefit of local content in major projects or who are getting the benefit of minimum numbers of apprentices and trainees. You talk to people who are getting the benefit of stamp duty relief — first home owners, first home buyers' builds — and you will actually see that these things are making a substantive difference. They are making a substantive difference because people are in fact able to offset the competitive advantage that others might have by virtue of their age or their bank balance to enter or remain in the property market at the expense of people who want to break in for the first time.

What we see is a record investment in the issues that make a profound impact on people's capacity to hold down employment into the long-term and to have dignity in doing so. Just yesterday we saw the labour hire legislation pass this place. What we saw was a commitment to make sure that workers would have a fair safety net of minimum terms and conditions of work, and that will in fact translate to a fair wage for those workers. And yet those opposite, who want to carp and moan about the cost of living, in fact are missing the point when they vote against legislation like this. They are missing the point because for them it is just far too easy to go back to the lowest common denominator: workers — bad, industry — good, and industry should be prioritised over all worker interests. What this means —

Mrs Peulich — Industry and jobs go hand in hand.

Ms SHING — I will take up that interjection — thank you, Mrs Peulich. Industry and workers go hand in hand. It is a real shame, then, that those opposite do not see fit to invest in workers to make sure that they have jobs that enable them to participate in the labour market. We have seen 320 000 new jobs since Labor came to government and record investment in TAFE and training — free TAFE. Those across the chamber hate free TAFE, they hate public transport and they hate anything that improves the opportunities for Victorians across the entire state to benefit from the dividends that we have managed to secure through sound and prudent economic management. They hate it, and what they do is they then start whingeing and moaning and making things up on issues like gas supply.

Let us talk about gas supply and let us talk about the issues in relation to the moratorium. Let us talk about gas prices: the fact of the matter is that two-thirds is exported. The fact of the matter is that onshore conventional gas has, as at the most recent survey, about 110 petajoules in it. Do you know how much that is going to give us? About six months. And do you know what that is going to deliver? Not nearly as much as the offshore reserves that exist in Kipper Tuna Turrum and other sites within Bass Strait and the commonwealth waters.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms SHING — Do you know what we are actually doing? We are in the process of making sure we are shoring up commodities. We are not wilfully blind to the reality of what is happening when companies like Engie take a decision — and let us get back to facts for a moment, Mrs Peulich — to close because that is their global movement away from coal —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Order! I cannot hear Ms Shing. Please continue.

Ms SHING — There is a first time for everything. Thank you for that, Acting President. I will endeavour to speak up. What we do see is companies like Engie and like AGL making decisions to pull out of coal-fired power. It does not stop —

Mr Ondarchie — Because of your coal tax.

Ms SHING — Do you know what? I will pick that up, Mr Ondarchie. It is the first thing you have said that I have felt like commenting on for quite some time. The thing about the coal tax that you keep on talking about is that in fact we are continuing to see coal-fired power being developed. You should come down to the Latrobe Valley some time and have a look at what it is that the former coalition government did for transition and development prior to Engie's decision to actually pull out of coal-fired power and prior to the closure of Hazelwood. You did not put \$266 million into it, did you? You did not put any support or assistance into it when the mine was on fire, did you? The whole town where I live was blanketed in smoke, and you were AWOL.

Do you know what? What you deliver is puffery and hot air, and if it were recyclable and renewable you would have come up with an entirely new source of energy all by yourselves. You have opposed increases to minimum wages, you have opposed fair terms and conditions for workers and you have opposed security

for people in some of the most vulnerable conditions that we have seen within the industrial framework in this state. You have opposed getting outcomes for issues that have made a difference to people being able to do their work in the private sector and in the public sector. You have voted against a Fairness Fund and any sort of return for taxidriviers. You sat there; you passed the numbers.

What we are talking about now in the context of being able to tackle the hard work is that you are allergic to it. You are allergic to hard work. You cannot actually get anything done, and do you know what?

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms SHING — There is nothing like knowing you have scored a point than to hear big, juicy laughter from those opposite, who have got nothing left in the tank by way of substance.

What we see in the context of spending infrastructure money is that \$13.5 billion has been spent in regional Victoria since 2014.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms SHING — Read the budget, people. It is there for all to see. We have invested in water security so people do not have to cart water. We have invested in providing better assistance in first-mile and last-mile supply chain logistics for primary producers who want to be able to export. We have invested record amounts of funding in schools, education, TAFE, training and universities. We secured and maintained, through our prudent financial management, the AAA rating in an environment where we also secured the biggest investment in infrastructure that this state has ever seen in one term of government. You know what? There is a saying: without the sunshine, you cannot see the dust. And do you know what? There is a lot of sunshine in this state since people have actually started investing in everything to build the state's prosperity into the future. There is a lot of dust from those opposite who cannot actually come up with anything other than a cute three-word slogan that is based in ridiculous propaganda, scare campaigns and nothing of any substantive benefit.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Order!

Mr Melhem — On a point of order, Acting President, Mrs Peulich spoke for a considerable period of time, with no interruption —

Mr Ondarchie — What's the point of order?

Mr Melhem — That is my point of order, Mr Ondarchie. I would like to listen to Ms Shing without interruption from the other side. Give her the same courtesy we gave Mrs Peulich.

Mr O'Sullivan — On the point of order, Acting President, clearly Ms Shing was speaking to this side of the chamber rather than going through the Chair and inviting interjections from this side of the chamber in terms of her contributions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — I ask members to allow Ms Shing to make her contribution in silence, and I ask Ms Shing to address the Chair rather than directing her comments across the chamber.

Ms SHING — It would be a delight to be able to talk directly to you, Acting President, and not to have to deal with the rabble that is part of this discussion to date. What I would like to say in relation to the cost of living goes very much to the things that make a difference every day to Victorians. That includes what you pay for your public transport pass and the fact that we have made sure that there are significant savings for people who use our public transport network. We have had, from 1 March this year, regional passengers who buy a 28 to 69-day Myki pass paying the same reduced rates as those on a 70 to 325-day Myki pass, saving regional transport users up to \$1696 a year, and being able to benefit about 13 500 regional customers who purchase 28 to 69-day passes at least once a year.

Being able to tackle rate capping — something which, shock horror, those opposite were forced to vote for because they had no other option — has meant that for the first time we have had transparency in a fair-go rates system whereby councils of comparable size and scope are able to be compared with other councils around Victoria to make sure that residents and ratepayers know exactly what they are getting themselves into when and as they choose to live in these particular locales. It is really interesting to note that those opposite carp and quibble about every little thing that might be designed to return a dollar or more to the pockets of Victorians, whether that is through time saved, whether that is through energy costs —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr Finn and Mr Ondarchie, please allow Ms Shing to make her contribution without interjection.

Ms SHING — whether it is through our being able to invest \$48 million in the power saving bonus and set

up the Victorian Energy Compare site, which means that seven out of 10 Victorians who are paying too much on these bills will be able to access this site with information provided by third-party retailers to ensure that on average people are saving \$330 a year on their power bills. No, you will not hear that from the opposition. What you will hear them talk about is, in propagandist terms, a bribe. You know what? It is actually important to incentivise people to do the work necessary to make a difference to their everyday bills, fees and charges.

What we have also provided is a record level of assistance to the public healthcare system to make sure that people who need help can get it when and as they need it, irrespective of where they live. We have invested in hospitals, in healthcare services and in bush nursing centres for those people who do not live in metropolitan Melbourne, an area which those opposite are fixated with, but who live in some of the furthest reaches of our state. We have invested in being able to deliver lower costs of operation for these important pieces of infrastructure. The Greener Government Buildings program has meant that we are in a position to be able to move to renewable energy — that is an allergic reaction I am hearing over there from the opposition — to bring down those costs. We are driving investment and innovation to the state to make sure that we are able to diversify our economy and to make it shine on the national and international stage. What we are seeing is Melbourne and the rest of the state continuing to thrive.

As a regional member, it has been a refreshing change to think that we have moved away from the terminology used by former Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett when he talked about regional Victoria as the toenails of the state and to now see that over four years there has been \$13.5 billion allocated to this particular part of the state. What we have seen is a record investment in the things that people can do to enjoy life and participate in their community without necessarily needing to incur costs. These are things that relate to issues around participating in sport or being able to get involved at a local level. Again, to go back to Gippsland — to go back to the shires that have benefited significantly from transition and development — \$85 million has been invested. As well as that, we have seen female-friendly facilities being developed. We have seen a record investment of \$240 million for community and grassroots organisations. We have seen an investment that does more than the hyperbole that might be spouted by those opposite.

It actually delivers substantive change and improvement. It is not about standing up and blasting hot air into the ether to try to make it count for something. It is about triple bottom lines. It is about a better public school system. It is about making sure that the Victorian School Building Authority and the Level Crossing Removal Authority and all of the work going into the West Gate tunnel have time saved and money spent and productivity improved and that this continues to be the focus of our investment. It is about partnering with industry and with workers. Those opposite, try as they might, cannot walk away from the fact that industry is booming here in Victoria. Those opposite cannot walk away from the fact that every part of the state has been transformed for the better as a consequence of this ongoing work. We know that this work goes on — and must go on — and that transformative change is something that will take years to create and to drive and to push the momentum on. We are not by any stretch of the imagination allergic, as those opposite are, to the hard work required to deliver these sorts of positive changes.

We have got a low unemployment rate. We are working on the best possible opportunities for young people to be able to participate in the job market. We have got a record investment in the sorts of things that challenge and change people's capacity to participate in managing labour market and workforce engagement, including, and this is a really important point, the record investment in family violence reforms and implementing recommendations that allow people to actually get the support and assistance they need without needing to go broke in order to do so. We have got the assistance and the support necessary to allow people to continue to work wherever possible to get what they need, to get on their feet. For these overwhelmingly female victims and survivors this is incredibly important work.

We have done inquiries into insecure work. We are looking at issues that underpin the nature of precarious employment — the nature of living from pay cheque to pay cheque. These are things which, again, those opposite appear to have some sort of allergic reaction to. When it comes to it, the cost of living, including adjustment for inflation, is something which will continue in the course of every economy over time to change and to rise. What we need to do is continue to ensure that we put in the investment, the assistance and the government intervention when necessary to minimise the impact of this on individuals, on business and on industry, to provide industry and business with the opportunities to be dexterous, to evolve, to diversify and to expand, including through technology and

through investment and export markets, to be their very best.

What we see, through innovation, through the digital economy and through assistance to small business and the payroll tax deductions for regional businesses coming down to a record 2.425 per cent in Victoria, is the lowest rate of payroll tax in regional Australia. Again, if this is not speaking to a reduction in the everyday impost of cost of living for people who are doing it tough and who need as much assistance as they can get, then I do not know what is. But those opposite will not tell you about that. Those opposite will make up their own narrative. They will talk about bribes, they will talk about propaganda, they will talk about unions and they will talk about how much they hate the Socialist Left or the trade union movement, and these will be the bingo words, if you will, for the way in which the business of the opposition is conducted. It is their bottom line.

Let me summarise for those who have not been listening: 320 000 jobs; record low payroll tax for regional businesses; first home buyer grants and builders grants and the removal of stamp duty for first home buyers, including initiatives and incentives for people to move to regional Victoria; and the development of decentralised public sector employment in regional centres to make sure that we can manage our population spread, that as we incorporate the 4 million people who will be born in Victoria or move to our state between now and 2050 we maintain an equality and an equity of life and a capacity to participate in our communities. What we have seen is an ongoing effort to make sure that the entire state thrives. For our farmers and primary producers and assisting them in times of drought and times of challenge, particularly around issues like milk price drops, we have seen ongoing efforts to tackle those challenges and to provide assistance. It is not easy, but government was never meant to be easy.

Those opposite, however, might be best suited to opposition. For them three-word slogans are the order of the day. For them substance is a harder thing to deliver. We know this because we saw that when they were last in government. On that basis, the motion that has been put today has no basis and has no substance, and the government will not be agreeing to the components or the premises upon which it is based. What I would encourage people to do is to look at the employment rate, to look at the numbers of investments that have been made across education and training, and assisted skills development, to look at what has gone into infrastructure, to look at what is happening on public transport and to look at the areas where Labor

does not hold seats but where Labor has invested record amounts of money. There is a record education budget and a record public transport budget in regional areas — areas where people might otherwise not expect to get anything because they are such safe coalition seats. There are a number of examples in this regard. These are areas where in fact investment has happened. This has happened across the areas of mental health, across the areas of general health, across the areas of infrastructure, including sporting grounds, and across issues such as government hub development and business and industry infrastructure and support for growth.

We now have a series of key opportunities, because the momentum began some time ago and it shows no sign whatsoever of slowing down. I commend the work that is being done by this government. I commend the work that is being done by industry. I commend the good faith and the groundswell of confidence that everyone from Moody's to Standard & Poor's to the major peak bodies have indicated publicly. They have support for the direction of this state. I look forward to those opposite perhaps picking up on some of the facts I have shared this afternoon rather than the propaganda.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (15:51) — I rise to speak to the motion proposed by Mrs Peulich. First let me say that the Greens too are very concerned about the rising costs faced by many Victorians, including in the areas of energy, housing, child care, education and transport, amongst many others. However, this motion seems to be more concerned with pointscore and political posturing than genuine debate, as exemplified by the lack of a genuine solution in this motion. Let us first look at energy. If Mrs Peulich was genuinely interested in tackling the rising energy costs and wanting to bring them down, this motion would be asking for the acceleration of renewable energy infrastructure and interrogating and exposing how the privatisation and deregulation of energy, both generation and distribution, is giving rise to what is often referred to as the gold plating of our poles and wires, adding to increased costs being borne by all Victorians.

If this motion was serious about addressing the rising costs of housing, it would be pointing out and it would be pointing at the federal coalition and its inaction on tackling negative and capital gains tax concessions that we know are pushing first home owners out of the housing market. How about everyone in this place instead committing to inclusionary zoning for a minimum percentage of affordable housing in new apartment complexes? If you were serious about tackling rising housing costs, if you were serious about

affordable housing, you would not have spoken against our motion to stop the sell-off of public housing land that is genuinely going to affordable housing in this state and you would instead support the Greens policy to build at least 40 000 new public housing homes across this state in the near future.

If this motion really wanted to tackle transport costs and the rising costs of transport as borne by so many people, it would address the lack of investment in public transport and the bipartisan commitment to big expensive toll roads that lock people into expensive car journeys every single day.

If you were genuinely interested in tackling the rising costs of education, you would commit to low-cost fees for all TAFE courses rather than just some and you would support the reduction in parent contributions for school fees, for example.

Maybe the coalition at all levels of government in this country should commit to increasing the minimum wage and increasing the Newstart allowance if they are really committed to addressing the cost-of-living issues faced by so many Australians.

Without a genuine response to these issues that I have raised, this motion remains hollow and seems to be about pointscoring and posturing and an unquestioning belief that the private sector is going to deliver these magical cost savings and this cost-of-living pressure relief that you seek in your motion. For all these reasons outlined above and canvassed in the contributions prior to mine, we will not be supporting this motion.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (15:54) — I am very disappointed to hear that Dr Ratnam has declared that the Greens will not be supporting this motion, but it is not entirely surprising, because it is clear to me that there are not many Greens who actually sit around the kitchen table at night wondering how they are going to pay their bills tomorrow. In my view, and in my experience I have to say, you have got to have a fair bit of wherewithal to actually think about voting for the Greens. You have to have a fair bit of the folding stuff to think about voting for the Greens, because at that point in time you throw caution to the wind. I have said this before, but I just wish I had the sort of money that I would need to vote for the Greens. I never would, but I wish I had the money. That would be a very, very good thing indeed.

Of course before Dr Ratnam's contribution we had Ms Shing and her dust — and what a dust storm it was; a dust storm of some moment. I grew up on a dairy farm, and I know what sort of dust that was. I have

smelt that before, let me tell you. It is rather sad that Ms Shing gets up in this place talking about people who sprout propaganda. She said, 'All these dreadful people sprout propaganda', yet she gets up here and for 25 minutes gives the Labor manifesto straight out of the ALP website on what is going to happen at the next election. So a little bit of consistency would not go astray from Ms Shing, particularly when you consider the comments that she made about the taxi operators.

I suggest to Ms Shing that she might like to go out and have a chat to the taxi operators and ask them what they think — who they hold responsible for the desperate straits that they find themselves in. Ask them who they hold responsible for destroying their business. Ask them who they hold responsible for destroying their livelihoods. Ask them who they hold responsible for destroying their lives and indeed leading some people to take their own lives. Ask the taxi operators who they hold responsible for the outrage against them over the last 12 or 18 months to two years. Ask them who they hold responsible, and Ms Shing will find out very quickly it is nobody on this side of the house that they hold responsible. Indeed, we went to great lengths on the Economy and Infrastructure Committee to put forward a conciliatory proposal which we believed was going to be in the best interests of everybody involved. That was rejected out of hand by Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan, and the taxi operators are never going to forget that and they are never going to forgive that. Let me say to Ms Shing: the taxi operators are coming to get you at the next election, and by 24 November this year you will know what the taxi operators think of you — of course through you, Acting President. I am quite looking forward to that.

My understanding is that Ms Shing has had some professional involvement in the past with a bloke called Rob Hulls. Did you work for Hulls at all?

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr FINN — No? There are so many Labor hacks over there it is hard to know which hack has worked for which hack. That is the part that we have trouble with. The Premier himself has never had a real job in his life. Is it any wonder he does not understand about the difficulties that average families feel? He has never had a real job in his life; he has never had to worry about this sort of thing at all. He never had to sit around and worry about how they are going to pay the gas bill or the electricity bill, or how they are going to pay the bills to send the kids to school. These are things that do not enter the Premier's mind, because he has never actually lived in the real world and he most certainly does not live in the real world now.

Families throughout this state are struggling; they are battling. I know what that is like. I have been through that many, many times, when I have sat down and, looking at the pile of bills on the kitchen table, wondered and asked myself, 'How the hell am I going to pay that?'

There are people from one end of this state to the other who are going through that very thing now. And do you know what they are seeing? They are seeing \$1.8 million a day being sunk — \$1.8 million of their money, taxpayers money — into keeping a desalination plant alive that is yet to be used, or is very rarely used, anyway. I think we got a little bit of water out of it. That was after we fired it up because they had built it on a flood plain. Only the Labor Party would build a desal plant on a flood plain — and most of the time, strangely enough, it has been under water; it is rusting away.

That goes to show what happens if you listen to lunatics like Sandbags Flannery, who tell you that it is never going to rain again — that the rains that come will never fill our reservoirs again. That is what he said, so all the Labor governments around Australia raced out and built desal plants. But Victoria did not just build a desal plant, we built a big desal plant and we built a very expensive desal plant. And guess what? My great grandkids will still be paying for that desal plant. That is what we have come to expect from the Labor Party in Victoria. As people sit around their kitchen tables wondering how the hell they are going to pay their bills, they see \$1.8 million every day — can you believe that: \$1.8 million every day, seven days a week? — to pay for that desal plant that rarely has actually seen the light of day. It is just quite extraordinary.

Then of course there was perhaps the mother of all outrages of recent years, and that was when the Premier of this state told us before the election that the contract on the east–west link was not worth the paper it was written on and that it would not cost us a cent to cancel the east–west link contract. That is what the Premier of this state said. He was not Premier then, he was the opposition leader, but he is now Premier of this state. You know what? We are now up to \$1.4 billion. It has cost the Victorian taxpayer \$1.4 billion to honour his ludicrous commitment — a commitment that he woke up one morning and just announced. He did not consult with anybody. He did not need even consult with his own shadow cabinet at the time; he just announced it.

Nobody thought he was serious. I remember being down at the footy at Werribee one day and people said, 'He can't be fair dinkum. Surely to God nobody could be that mad'. Well, guess what? He is, and we got have

evidence to prove it. So \$1.4 billion goes down the S-bend. Those people sitting around the table, wondering how they are going to pay their electricity bill and wondering how they are going to pay their gas bill, see that money disappearing forever.

Then of course they see the \$1 million-plus that went from their pockets into the cover-up of the red shirts scandal. Victorians know they are never going to see that money again. They understand that members of the Labor Party — not just in this state but around Australia, but perhaps particularly in this state — regard the taxpayers money as their own money and that they believe they can do with it as they will. And they do, and they have. It is scandal of the highest proportions when a government can spend \$1 million covering up its own corruption. Where else would a government get away with it? I know the people of Victoria have got that hidden away upstairs and they are waiting for November to seek revenge on this foul, vile, rotten government that we have in this state.

Then of course while these people — good, hardworking taxpayers of Victoria — are sitting around wondering how they are going to feed their children the next day, they remember the red shirts scandal itself; they remember how they were ripped off to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars by a Labor Party that thought that that sort of corruption was just fine. They thought that that sort of corruption was just par for the course. Their sense of entitlement is such that they thought they could stick their hands into the pockets of every taxpayer in this state and take out almost \$400 000 and nobody would be any the wiser. Well, they got caught and they said, 'We're sorry'. We know what they are sorry about — they are sorry they got caught. That is what they are sorry about. That is the only thing that they are sorry about. But the people of Victoria — the ones sitting around the kitchen table with their pile of bills mounting — remember the \$400 000 that the Andrews —

Ms Crozier — That we know about.

Mr FINN — Ms Crozier makes an exceptionally good point: 'That we know about'. Because we all suspect — in fact we all pretty much know, don't we — that it was way beyond \$400 000. In fact it would not at all surprise me if it was pushing another million dollars there. We may well have doubled it.

Those people, who are sitting around their kitchen tables wondering how they are going to pay for their petrol to get into work the next day, think of two names: Telmo Languiller and Donny Nardella. They

think of what those two members of the Assembly did and how they corrupted the system.

Mrs Peulich — How about Ted and Patch?

Mr FINN — Well, Ted and Patch is a scratching, I am afraid. That is all a bit sad. But you cannot blame the dogs for their owner — that is a reality. But Telmo Languiller and Don Nardella were two of the individuals who were charged — and they should be charged — with the responsibility of upholding the standards of the Parliament. And what did they do? They ripped us off for everything they could. That is what they did. That is what the people of Victoria are seeing and thinking about as they sit around their tables every night wondering how they are going to pay their Myki bill. They have already paid billions of dollars for Myki. Remember Peter Batchelor? Myki was his brainchild. It is the most expensive transport ticket in the history of the world, and we have the Labor Party to thank for that.

We have these families sitting around wondering how they are going to pay just to keep the roof over their heads, and they remember the \$20 million that this government wasted on a logo. Remember that — \$20 million on a logo. It was supposed to be for the Australian Open, but guess what? It was too big for Melbourne Park. They could not get it on Melbourne Park, so they spent \$20 million and the whole thing just blew up in their faces. What a great government we have got in Victoria. Isn't it wonderful? If you sat down and thought of some of the most appalling outrages, you could not possibly come up with some of the things that this government thinks it has got away with, but indeed it has not. This government stinks, and the people of Victoria know it stinks.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (16:10) — I move:

That debate be adjourned until later this day.

I do not interrupt the business of the house lightly, but there is a very serious issue that this house has the capacity to deal with now and should deal with. On 6 December 2016 the Andrews government introduced legislation to keep police killers behind bars. The Minister for Corrections is quoted in the media release as saying:

Anyone who kills a police officer — the brave men and women who risk their lives to protect us — doesn't deserve parole.

That legislation passed this place. That legislation was introduced and passed after I introduced a private members bill that sits on this notice paper. What the

High Court, in considering an application from Mr Minogue about the application of this law, has determined today is that section 74AAA, the changes introduced by the government, does not actually have the intended consequence that the law was supposed to have. The High Court has said that on its proper construction the law applies to a prisoner sentenced on the basis that the prisoner knew or was reckless as to whether the person murdered was a police officer. They have held that the plaintiff was not sentenced on that basis. The remarks of the sentencing judge contained no reference to the plaintiff's state of mind concerning the identity of the police constable who was killed, the police constable being, of course, Angela Rose Taylor. The offence committed was indiscriminate, and no particular person or class of persons was targeted; therefore the court concluded that section 74AAA does not apply.

This means that Craig Minogue could be eligible for consideration for parole today. This house has an opportunity to fix this issue and fix it straightaway. It is regrettable that this bill, despite the assurances and the statements from the government, has not actually done what it was intended to do. There will be plenty of time for debate about the mistakes, the flaws and how this came to be. The bill is deficient, as held by the High Court today, but we have an opportunity today to correct this mistake, to right this wrong and to ensure that Craig Minogue is not eligible for parole, because on the notice paper is my private members bill, which sought to establish the same test as the Julian Knight legislation, which was held by the High Court to be valid.

In commentary around my private members bill when it was introduced I said naming an individual should be done rarely and should not be done lightly, and I again make that point, but what we are talking about here is one of the most heinous murderers in Victoria. His earliest eligibility date for parole has come and passed. This Parliament will not meet for another month, so while the corrections minister has given assurances about new legislation, the simple fact is a month will pass and the Adult Parole Board of Victoria will meet in that time and may consider any application made by Minogue, noting his earliest eligibility date has passed.

This Parliament should act swiftly to pass my private members bill so that the Assembly can pass the bill this week and this mistake can be fixed. This is only about community safety; it is only about ensuring that the Russell Street bomber, Craig Minogue, is kept in jail and will only be released when that much higher test of incapacity or ability to pose no risk to the community is

met, so I move that debate on this motion be adjourned until later this day.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (16:15) — I have to say that Mr O’Donohue in quite urgent circumstances has actually spoken quite well in relation to the intent of the Parliament — the intent of the laws to keep our community safe — so I am not going to argue with the basic tenor and proposition he has put to us in terms of what the intention of this Parliament was when it acted to move and pass legislation to prevent circumstances of parole being granted. What I am opposing in relation to this deferral motion of Mr O’Donohue is the nature of bringing this matter on today in the form that it has been brought on in circumstances where the government is often on the receiving end of, in my view, punitive behaviour by the opposition in relation to any variation or any circumstances by which the government seeks to order the business of this place.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JENNINGS — I have already been gracious enough to recognise the significance of this issue. What I am also reminding the chamber of is how much goodwill there is between the government and the opposition in relation to the management of this place. Today is the day when we allow the opposition to determine the nature of general business. We do not interfere. As inconvenient and as uncomfortable as every sitting Wednesday may be, we do not get in the way of the opposition determining its business and its order of precedence on the basis of a motion that is moved by the Leader of the Opposition on the Tuesday of the sitting week, which was actually what happened yesterday.

So in the circumstances of what is available to us today, not only would the government call on other members of the chamber to oppose the deferral of the matter that was before the Parliament but we will also oppose any question before the chamber in relation to the postponement of any further items on the notice paper to allow Mr O’Donohue’s private members bill to leapfrog the notice paper. Part of the reason, apart from the functioning of the chamber and apart from the way in which I would hope that one day, perhaps in my lifetime, this chamber might actually operate with some degree of goodwill and allow some degree of flexibility to actually occur in this place — but that is not the environment that we live in and that is not the way in which you, when it is available to you, use the forms of the house —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JENNINGS — I would like to rise above it. In fact I probably go out of my way each and every week to try to rise above it, but unfortunately there are not many fellow travellers that actually come on the journey.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JENNINGS — Certainly I will, and I do. The unfortunate circumstance is that Mr O’Donohue’s assertion of the effect of his private members bill and what might happen in the Parliament has not been tested, has not been subject —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr JENNINGS — No, it has not been tested. Your bill has not been tested. I started my contribution by indicating that in fact I understand what the intention of the Parliament was when the government brought a piece of legislation, and I did not contest the argument and in fact the concerns that Mr O’Donohue raised. But I have raised two issues. One is the appropriate functioning of this chamber, the way in which we acquit our responsibilities to the community and the way in which we operate with some degree of goodwill and cooperation, which is pretty much non-existent, from my perspective, in this chamber. But my significant point is that Mr O’Donohue’s assertion about the efficacy of his piece of legislation and his assertion that it would satisfy the consideration of the High Court, or indeed prevail, has not been tested in the Parliament and discussed between the opposition and the government. The in-built assumption that this bill will automatically pass the Assembly and therefore become law he cannot assert. He cannot assert it because in fact we have not undertaken the appropriate process to deal with these matters.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS (South Eastern Metropolitan) (16:20) — There is a certain irony in listening to the Leader of the Government talk about parliamentary process, the way in which an order of business is set out for general business on Wednesday and the need to stick to that order of precedent for general business, when not more than 10 minutes before this motion to adjourn started I was informed by my whip that the government had suddenly decided to bring on the Appropriation (2018–2019) Bill 2018 this evening. It is not a bill that was listed on the list of bills circulated to the house last week.

Ms Symes — Request made by opposition parties.

Mr RICH-PHILLIPS — No, ‘question asked’ by opposition parties. It was not on the list of bills circulated last week by the government — the top

seven bills listed by the government — yet Mr Jennings has decided to have the flexibility that he spoke about and bring on the appropriation bill this evening in a period of government business which has always been held to be for the receiving of notices rather than the transacting of substantive business. Having determined to exercise flexibility and bring on the appropriation bill, 10 minutes later Mr Jennings stands up in this place and says, ‘There shouldn’t be flexibility to change the program in exceptional circumstances’.

What we have before the house today is exceptional circumstances. The High Court today has struck down legislation brought in by this government, by which, as a consequence of that decision and as a consequence of the defect in this government’s legislation, the community has been put at risk. It is important, and I think the Attorney-General today has acknowledged that it is important, that the Parliament remedy that defect and that it close the loophole that the High Court has determined does exist. We have a mechanism in the house today to do that, and that is the private members bill which sits on the notice paper in the name of Mr O’Donohue, the Corrections Amendment (Parole) Bill 2016, which does have a mechanism to close that loophole.

Mr Jennings in his contribution said, ‘Well, it’s untested’. The reality is that it is not untested because the mechanism, the structure that Mr O’Donohue has put in his bill, is the structure which was successfully used to ensure that Julian Knight was not granted parole. The Julian Knight model was tested in the High Court and was found to be valid. Mr O’Donohue had the common sense to follow that model when he introduced his bill for Craig Minogue. This government knew better. It had to take a different approach, which the High Court has now struck down.

We actually do have a bill which the High Court has previously tested the structure of and determined is valid. We have the opportunity to advance that bill through this place today, to do the Council’s work in closing this loophole and to have that bill to the other place today for its consideration. Whether the other place decides to pass that bill and enact a structure which is known to work or whether the Attorney-General once again wants to declare that he knows best and come up with something else which is at risk of being struck down is a matter for the other place.

We have what has now been identified as a defect in legislation that this government brought forward, but in this place we have something which has previously been recognised as a fix for this problem, previously as

a government bill and now in the form of a private members bill, and this house should adjourn debate on this motion this afternoon and allow Mr O’Donohue’s bill to go forward.

Mr Jennings, in his opening comments, spoke about flexibility. He spoke about our having an agreed agenda for general business and therefore we should stick to it. I would put to Mr Jennings and to the house that, as always, there should be consideration for exceptional circumstances. What we have seen from the High Court today has created an exceptional circumstance. We have a remedy for that defect that has been identified in the High Court and it is incumbent upon this house of Parliament to remedy that defect by passing Mr O’Donohue’s bill this afternoon. I support the adjournment motion for debate on this motion.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (16:25) — In the time that I have available I want to deal with a couple of matters. The first matter is one relating to the process of this place, and the second matter relates to the substance of what Mr O’Donohue is asserting around the validity of the bill that he is proposing as a way of remedying the issue that we have at hand. This is my first term in this place, but I have witnessed at close hand a number of parliaments before this in roles as an adviser and as a bureaucrat. I have seen the federal Parliament at close hand. Can I say that I believe that what has happened in this place in this term is a matter of great concern for this institution.

There have been a number of instances, and I am not going to recount them in such a way as to provide my particular perspective on them, but can I simply say that some things have happened in this place that mean that I do believe we need to rebuild some of the processes in this place, some of the unwritten rules, and that that is important. So much of what happens in this place relies upon so many agreements, so many practices between all the people in this place, and there is a fabric that has to exist if a place like this is going to function. I will just reiterate what Mr Jennings said about the importance of that. This is not a trivial, pedantic process point. I believe we are actually at a point in this place where we are rebuilding not just the trust between individuals but some of the practices, and this is not a trivial point to start with. I think Mr Jennings makes a very valid point that we should not lightly turn away from that process.

I will get to the second point, which is this notion that this is an exceptional case so we need to, for the purposes of public safety, do what Mr O’Donohue is suggesting. But again, going back to a previous life, in fact the first part of my career was as a lawyer in the

commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. Many of my friends went into legislative drafting, and can I say that I do not believe Mr O'Donohue's approach is in fact rigorous or the right one, which is to say that he believes he has transplanted a certain test into his bill and that that is enough. There is so much that is contextual, there is so much that courts have to consider that are specific to pieces of legislation that I believe Mr O'Donohue ought to be more careful. What we ought not do, where we have just had a High Court judgement, is read it and act. You do not just finish reading it and the minute after that make your own decision as to what is sufficient to deal with that judgement. That is not the right way.

Mr O'Donohue, you yourself are saying this is a matter of great importance and yet what you are saying is that you want to read the judgement one afternoon and then a matter of minutes later make your own judgement as to what technical legal response is sufficient to deal with that. I do not think that is consistent. On the one hand you are saying this is a matter of great importance. On the other hand what you are saying is that you are not dealing with this in a way that one ought to if it is a matter of that importance.

In many cases it is not as simple as Mr O'Donohue asserts when it comes to drafting legislation and trying to imagine what it is that courts will take into account when they interpret that legislation. It might appear straightforward to the legislator making that legislation, but with all due respect to the people in this chamber there are often complexities, which is why judgements from the High Court are so often not that easy to predict, even for legal experts. So the notion that just because we in this room have read a judgement we can imagine we are going to correct the situation by passing a particular bill — not even on the substance of what the court is saying and leaving to one side the important issues of process that Mr Jennings raised — is not an appropriate response to this important community safety matter.

Ms WOOLDRIDGE (Eastern Metropolitan) (16:30) — I was not going to speak on the procedural motion and hopefully allow this to go on to a vote, but I think there are a couple of important points that I would like to briefly make. The first point is that the bulk of the government's arguments in relation to the adjournment of this motion to move on to this important bill that has been proposed by Mr O'Donohue, the Corrections Amendment (Parole) Bill 2016, are largely about process — about what has been happening with other aspects across the chamber and what has been happening in terms of the nature of the relationships between the parties. We actually see

this as not a matter of politics or relationships; we see this as a matter of a decision made by the High Court that has great urgency, and we should be arguing the substance of the issue, not the process and the relationships that are not related to the issue at hand. It is very disappointing that the government are purely arguing this on the basis of politics rather than the substance of this issue that Craig Minogue may be out on parole very shortly.

In terms of the substance of the issue, which the last speaker did briefly touch on, I think it is important that I just read from the second-reading speech, which says:

The bill's provisions will mirror those established for Julian Knight and follow the test established by the High Court of Australia in the Crump case, which confirmed that the conditions surrounding the granting of a parole order are a function of executive government ...

The fact is that the approach we had to undertake — Mr O'Donohue led the process in government — which has been tested by the High Court by individually naming a prisoner in relation to not being able to access parole, has been tested. There is evidence at the highest court in the land that the decision to not allow parole will be upheld. The government chose to follow a different path. This bill is grounded in a decision of the High Court already, and we are confident that that will hold firm in relation to the situation with Craig Minogue as well. I certainly implore the house to consider this on the substance of the issue, not the politics behind the issue, which represents the bulk of the arguments that we have had from the government.

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (16:33) — I fully understand the importance of the issue before us and that a decision has been handed down by the High Court this afternoon. That was only brought to my attention some minutes ago, so some people may have had the opportunity to read the High Court decision but I certainly have not. As usual, this would be a bill that would be assigned to me to have carriage of. I know what is in the bill; I understand what is in the bill. But I do not think it is appropriate for a bill to be rushed through the Parliament in the space of some 25 minutes, perhaps less, which would not allow all members to properly scrutinise that legislation to consider its implications, in particular in regard to other changes that have been made to parole since 2016 and in particular that the Adult Parole Board of Victoria has as its paramount concern the safety of the community, which was not the case previously but is the case now. So I believe the changes to the adult parole board would almost, ipso facto, put in place, if not exactly, the spirit of what is in this bill.

We are not convinced that there is going to be any rushing by the adult parole board to grant parole to this particular individual. I would suggest that if an application was made it would take the board a long time to consider reports from Corrections Victoria, the Department of Justice and Regulation et cetera, and it would be looking at its statutory obligations that it must take into account with regard to consideration of parole for any individual. So the Greens will not be supporting the motion to bring this bill on but will perhaps look at any other legislation that comes forward in the next sitting week.

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (16:35) — I will be brief because we are nearly out of time. Obviously I have only just found out about this, but the judiciary have now let down the police again. Apparently the reason that his appeal was upheld was that the judgement did not reference that Constable Taylor was a police officer or something along those lines. Even with the serious assault of a police officer you do not have to know that the person you are assaulting is a police officer, so I am at an absolute loss as to how a person can kill someone and just because it was not mentioned in a finding we have now got the person that did something like that eligible for parole. I will be supporting this.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (16:36) — I just wanted to touch on the reasons for the government not supporting the opposition's position on this. It comes back to the legislation that is proposed in comparison to what we passed some months ago. Our laws are broad enough to ensure that those who murder a police officer do not get parole. It is wider than just Minogue, and it needs to ensure that other people in prison both now and in the future remain captured by these laws. While of course we are all disappointed by the High Court decision, it found that —

Ms Wooldridge — Disappointed?

Ms SYMES — Yes, disappointed.

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay) — Order! Let her finish.

Ms SYMES — Sorry for using the wrong adjective, Ms Wooldridge. While the High Court has found our laws do not capture Minogue, it has found that our laws are valid and are sound. Minogue has managed to convince the court that he did not intend or was reckless in killing a police officer, and as I said, we are very disappointed that this decision has been made, but this can be fixed properly through the legislation as it exists.

The changes will be made with proper solicitor-general and Crown counsel legal advice taking into account the judgement which was only handed down at 12.30 p.m. today. It is incredible to think that the opposition could have commissioned and gotten that advice in those few hours. We will not be supporting the postponement of general business today to move onto a bill that was, frankly, given to us 5 minutes ago to be brought on today.

Coming back to Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips's point about the running of the house and giving each other notice about what is going on so you can be properly prepared and properly briefed, today's change of government business was at the request of non-government members to get their budget speeches done today, which we were happy to accommodate. I would hope that at 5 o'clock everyone is happy to accommodate that. It is not a matter of the government making decisions to suit themselves, it is actually to facilitate the proper running of business and appropriate dealings with one another in a respectful manner in this house.

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (16:39) — I would like to just reply and thank coalition members for their support and thank the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party for their support for my motion. I am surprised — very surprised — that government members and the Greens would seek to talk about procedural matters when we have a matter of urgent business before the house that relates to Craig Minogue, who sought to blow up the Russell Street police complex, who murdered Angela Taylor and who actually went on to commit another murder in prison. We have an opportunity to ensure that Minogue, who is eligible now to apply for parole, is denied that eligibility. To not move on that opportunity that is afforded the house, because of this rare confluence of circumstances with my bill still being on the notice paper, is a disgrace, is irresponsible and is putting politics ahead of community safety.

House divided on Mr O'Donohue's motion:

Ayes, 19

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

Noes, 21

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

Motion negatived.

The PRESIDENT — The procedural motion is lost. We will return to Mrs Peulich's motion, which was being debated.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (16:47) — I rise to speak on Mrs Peulich's motion in relation to the cost of living. The cost of living is an extremely important issue for people right across our state. I do not begrudge those opposite for raising this issue, of course, but what I am disappointed in, frankly, in the way they have handled this issue is that I believe there has been no genuine attempt to look at where cost-of-living pressures exist and what might be done to alleviate those cost-of-living pressures. The debate from the other side I would characterise as being just a litany of political rhetoric.

Let us have a look at the cost of living in a more systematic way. What are the key drivers when it comes to the cost of living? Firstly, I would say, for most families, the key issue when it comes to the cost of living is how many people are in the household or, for you as an individual, whether you have a job. That is a key driver of how you can cope with the cost of living, because whether you have a stable, reliable wage and a wage that is increasing over time is the key thing that is of concern to individuals and to households. The second issue is not just whether you have a job but what your wage and conditions are. Again, I will talk a little bit about that, but that is a key issue. Thirdly, we can look at the components of what people spend their income on — things like housing, transport and energy. These are alluded to in Mrs Peulich's motion, but let us think about this in a systematic way.

Firstly, do people have jobs? Do households have people with jobs, even if they are a mixture of full-time and part-time? How are individuals and households fairing when it comes to having a job? Well, we are going through a jobs boom in this state. Between November 2010 and November 2014, 127 500 jobs were created under the previous government; under this

government it is 347 000. It is almost triple the number of jobs. That is a remarkable gap. So let us talk about the cost of living and let us talk about how many people in net terms are gaining jobs. What about in regional Victoria? In the previous term of government there were 18 500 net jobs created; in this term of government it is more than 42 000, so more than double what occurred under the previous government. What about full-time jobs? Full-time jobs are obviously of critical importance when it comes to households and individuals. Obviously some households are happy with a mix of full-time and part-time, but full-time jobs in many respects are a key indicator of welfare. Under the previous government 48 300 net full-time jobs were created; under this government it is 211 000. When you look at this state relative to other states over that period we are ahead of all other jurisdictions when it comes to the increase in the percentage of jobs.

Finally, let us look at one of the key vulnerable demographics when it comes to employment: youth. Under the previous government there were negative 13 700 jobs — that is, 13 700 jobs less in net terms; under this government there are more than 35 200 extra. So the first component of the cost of living, I would argue, is, 'Do you have a job? How many jobs does your household have?'. That is a starting point, and we are seeing jobs growth continue strongly. Over the course of the last calendar year we have seen that very strong growth continue, and we are seeing jobs growth in the labour force of 2.2 per cent. This has been the story right throughout this term, and this has been supported not just by the confidence in the economy as a whole but by, for example, our massive infrastructure program, where we are seeing more than \$10 billion in government infrastructure per year in the out years and \$13.7 billion in this financial year alone. Those projects are creating thousands and thousands of jobs directly themselves and of course many more indirectly. That is the first thing.

The second thing I want to talk about is: when it comes to cost of living, when it comes to how secure people feel economically, what happens to your wages and conditions over time? I would just like to say that I am confident and I certainly would be happy to debate wages and conditions with those opposite any day of the week. We are going through a period in this country of low real wages growth. We are also going through a period of significant sectoral change, where many people are feeling insecurity in their work because the workforce is changing so much. It is more important than ever before that people have safety nets and that people have, for example, access to TAFE so that they can retrain for new careers if the job opportunities in their old careers disappear.

But let us also not forget — and this to some degree is a federal issue and to some degree a state issue — that when it comes to an environment where we are experiencing low real wages growth industrial relations is critically important for many people in our community, and for the most vulnerable it is as important as it is for anybody. That is a critical part of any discussion about cost of living — not only ‘Do you have a job?’ but ‘How secure do you feel in that job?’, ‘How secure do you feel in your wages and conditions?’, ‘How secure do you feel in the safety of your work?’, and on it goes. As I said, this government stands up for workers in so many different ways. The bill that we saw pass through this place yesterday, against great opposition, is a good example of that and is a real example of cost-of-living pressures.

The third limb of the argument that I want to raise is that we then need to look at some of the cost pressures that people are facing. Let us look at housing, for example. This government has a housing package which has many, many elements to it, including abolishing stamp duty costs for properties less than \$600 000 for first home buyers and doubling the regional first home owner grant. We also have significant money put aside for community housing and social housing. For community housing there is a very significant loan guarantee program over six years, and for social housing there is a billion-dollar capital fund. We are seeing significant movement both on the supply side and the demand side. We are seeing tens of thousands of lots come to market. We are seeing first home owners and many other vulnerable people in the community getting much greater access to the housing market. On housing, much is happening.

Another cost-of-living pressure solution is greater flexibility in interaction with government — for example, short-term registration payments. Since 1 January 2018 more than 500 000 Victorians have opted to take up short-term rego. This is a massive take-up rate. Many people have said that it is quite a simple innovation and that it was not that hard — well, why had previous governments not done it? For a lot of low-income households and for a lot of households without secure income, this meant a lot, and people are taking it up — 500 000 Victorians have voted with their wallets.

Another example that I particularly like as a behavioural economist is the \$48 million in the power saving bonus. We know that if individuals are more engaged in choosing their electricity provider, they can make huge savings. We know that consumers in many markets where products are complicated find it very difficult to engage in a way that benefits them. This is a

\$50 payment that helps them get onto a website that is designed to make the choice between energy retailers easier. This is a fantastic innovation. It is very much in line with modern behavioural economics, with nudge economics. I am very confident that people who take advantage of this are going to benefit. The data shows that the average Victorian family saves about \$330 a year on their energy bills if they take advantage of more active engagement when choosing between energy retailers. We need to come up with new and innovative ways of trying to help people engage.

There are so many ways in which this government is tackling the different components that feed into people’s costs. We are doing so much when it comes to affordable housing, when it comes to more flexible arrangements for paying for government bills and when it comes to energy prices, and on and on it goes. Can I also just say before I finish up and leave a bit of time for summing up that it is also critical to bear in mind that this is not just about the prices of those components; it is also about people having jobs and it is about people having good, reliable jobs with good wages and good conditions.

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (16:57) — We should not be debating this motion anymore. We should be debating something far more serious and far more important to this place and to the people of Victoria. When today’s findings in relation to Mr Minogue and his potential to be paroled in the very near future have come through, we also need to reflect on the fact that in recent times, in the last week, we have very appropriately been mourning the death of an innocent woman — very appropriately. Our hearts have gone out to her family and her friends.

A lady was killed 32 years ago at the hands of Mr Minogue, who was given a sentence with a 28-year non-parole period. She would now be only slightly older than I am, and she would have a chance to live a long, eventful and full life if it was not for Mr Minogue and his activities. So we should not be debating this motion now; we should be debating a bill —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — Ms Bath, can you just explain to me where you are, what you are debating?

Ms BATH — I am just about to start discussing the motion at hand, but I am objecting to the fact that we are on this motion. We should be debating Mr O’Donohue’s bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — I think it is time to go to the motion.

Ms BATH — Well, under sufferance I will, and I will explain a couple of things that are very important. First of all, St Vincent de Paul has come out with key facts that say that the average Australian is now paying an extra \$300 a year on their electricity bills — as compared to other fluff and guff that we have heard today — an extra \$300 across the board. Why has that happened? It has happened because the Andrews Labor government, in their ideological approach to Victorians, have cut down the Hazelwood power station, have closed it without a sequenced closure, have forced a tax of \$252 million on the power companies and have created a reverberation in my patch of Eastern Victoria Region, in Gippsland and particularly the Latrobe Valley, that is very hard to bear for many, many residents and other Victorians.

We have seen the outcome, which has put pressures on business like never before. Again we have heard guff from that side of the house, with members saying how well we are doing. Well, here is some reality, some truth. There is a great business in Morwell in the Latrobe Valley called Kiel Industries. Kiel Industries employs 25 people.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (17:00) — I rise to make a statement on the state budget 2018–19, but I do certainly concur with your sentiments, Ms Bath, that we should be debating Mr O’Donohue’s bill rather than proceeding with the other items for this house at this point in time. Nevertheless, I would say that unfortunately the people of Ballarat have once again been duped by this government with regard to the many and varied commitments that Daniel Andrews has made to the Ballarat community but once again has failed to deliver. The most topical at the moment I certainly believe is the fact that Daniel Andrews committed to over 4000 free formalised car parks in the Ballarat CBD and as a result of this provided \$2 million to the Ballarat council. Unfortunately, when Daniel Andrews was on local radio recently he was unable to indicate where that money was and whether or not it had been provided to the council and indeed was unable to explain why it is that those over 4000 free car parks that he had committed to would now need to be paid for by the Ballarat community. The Ballarat community is rightly outraged.

This comes off the back of the slashing of hundreds of car parks in the Ballarat CBD by the Andrews government, whether it be part of the railway station precinct, part of the civic hall redevelopment or part of the shocking plans for Mair Street that would slash hundreds of car parks from that particular area. The traders in the Ballarat CBD are completely up in arms; they are aghast at this government’s plans to decimate the number of car parks in our CBD, and rightly they are going to hold the government to account for this.

Again, another way that this government is failing the community is through the development of the railway station precinct. We all know that the plan that the government is proceeding with has got nothing to do with what was consulted on with the Ballarat community. We know that it attempted to force buses into the historically significant residential Lydiard Street; they have been there for far, far too long.

When the government came to announce — belatedly, as its hand was forced by the community — the bus interchange, what did we have? We had a bus interchange that is not going to protect people from the cold. It is another indictment of this government, the fact that it has not managed to come up with a plan that would protect those commuters as they wait for their connecting bus. In terms of some of the failings of this government, that is of one order.

The more significant and topical issue I think certainly has been crime. The failing of this government with its slashing of 18 frontline police officers in Ballarat whilst crime is up over 12 per cent under this government is nothing short of shameful. It is nothing short of shameful that, despite our increasing population, Daniel Andrews and his police minister are slashing the resources that are there to protect our community and keep our community safe. To have 18 fewer police officers on the beat addressing the significant antisocial issues in Little Bridge Street, in the Bridge Mall and in the many and varied other areas where crime has absolutely skyrocketed, with a 134 per cent increase in aggravated burglaries since Daniel Andrews was elected, the police certainly have plenty to do. Hardworking police have plenty to do due to the soft-on-crime approach of this government. Whilst crime skyrockets, Daniel Andrews slashes frontline police from the Ballarat community. It is a shocking display of contempt for our community.

That contempt could probably not be shown more clearly than the contempt he showed our community when he attempted to put a bike path down the centre of Sturt Street. I mean, who in their right mind would ever think that it would be an appropriate course of action to

place a bike path down the centre median of one of the most magnificent heritage boulevards in the world?

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MORRIS — Indeed. That was off the back of the prison that was going to go into Bacchus Marsh — until Ms Tierney realised that it was not but then said in question time it was and then said it was not again.

The good people of western Victoria have certainly been left behind and the good people of Ballarat have been left behind and ignored by this government.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:05) — I rise to speak on the budget papers 2018–19 that raise the budget for the Country Fire Authority (CFA). I particularly want to talk about three stations in my electorate that are desperately in need of either a relocation or a refurbishment. The first of the stations that I want to talk about is the Shepparton fire station. This is actually a conversation that has been going on for over 30 years — that is, the relocation of the Shepparton fire station out of the CBD. In October this year the station will actually be 50 years old. It has reached the end of its usable life span for a number of reasons. It no longer meets the current standards for a Country Fire Authority station as in the trucks cannot be driven in from the back and also because the location is right in the middle of the Shepparton CBD.

It is in a block between High Street and Kmart. A lot of people travel on the footpath along Maude Street in that block between High Street and the Kmart complex. Kmart is on the corner of Vaughan and Maude streets. The back of the Kmart is on Rowe Street, and the station is directly opposite on Maude Street. As I said, trucks are backing into and exiting from that station across a footpath that is very busy. They are also travelling in that very busy area on the roads. The Shepparton council is actually wanting to reduce speed limits in the CBD to 40 kilometres an hour and it is wanting to put centre-of-the-road parking into Maude Street as part of its redevelopment of the CBD, and the station desperately needs to be relocated.

This station actually is already funded. We already have the funding in the budget to build the new station; what we need is a location. For nearly 12 months now I have been calling on the minister to actually get involved in the relocation of that station. The preferred site is Karibok Park on Archer Street. I know that the CFA have been desperately trying to progress talks with the

city council around relocating to Karibok Park, but the council want to put a retardation basin on Karibok Park. The CFA have ways to overcome that so that both can be located on that park. It is time for the minister to get actively involved and ensure that we can get on with the relocation of the Shepparton fire station out of the CBD to the CFA's preferred location at Karibok Park, which has good north–south access for the town, and let the CFA get on with relocating to a station that is fit for purpose, that will service the permanent firefighters that we have there as well as our volunteer firefighters and will service the City of Greater Shepparton.

The other two stations that I wish to talk about are the Kialla & District fire brigade and the Shepparton East fire brigade, both of which have outgrown their stations and have applied for grants in the Enhancing Volunteerism Grants program. Shepparton East are a great little brigade of 27 members, and they are desperately in need of financial assistance. The brigade has outgrown its current facilities. They need to create a larger meeting room and kitchen, build disabled toilet facilities and facilities for females, and install a remote lift door. They need around \$180 000 to do that. The Kialla & District fire brigade have 25 passionate members. They are wanting to construct male and female toilets and separate change room facilities at their station at a cost of around \$194 000.

Both of these brigades applied for round one funding under the Enhancing Volunteerism Grants program but were unsuccessful. They have both applied for round two funding, which closes on 30 June. I would encourage the minister to look very closely at these applications and to fund these applications, because these are both very active and very vibrant brigades. They have both outgrown their facilities, they are desperately in need of the funding and the minister would be well-placed to encourage and fund these applications to assist our volunteer firefighters at both the Shepparton East and a Kialla & District fire brigades.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:10) — I wish to speak this afternoon on the budget papers 2018–19. In particular I wish to speak on the road funding aspects of that budget and express my very, very great concern about the waste of money that we are currently seeing on Sunbury Road. There is a good deal of works going on on Sunbury Road between Oaklands Road and the Tullamarine Freeway, none of which I can see is going to be of any benefit to the people who actually use that

road. I have expressed a view here in this house for some years now that Sunbury Road needs to be duplicated in its entirety. What the government is doing in the project's current form is in fact creating another bottleneck in Sunbury Road. It has announced that it will also duplicate a part of Sunbury Road on the other side of Bulla, which is already largely duplicated, and that will create one enormous bottleneck at the top of Bulla hill.

My view is that if you are going to spend the sort of money that the government is spending at the moment and is proposing to spend, you should do the job properly. The problem with this government is it does not understand that; it does not understand value for money. It does not understand that when you spend hundreds of millions of dollars, it is taxpayers money and you should get value for that money. You should get something worthwhile for that money. They seem to think that if they stand up and say, 'We have spent \$300 million here' or '\$400 million there' that people are going to give them a standing ovation. I think people have moved past that. We want to actually know what the government or indeed what the taxpayer is getting for their money. We are demanding that the government make the decisions which will give us value for money.

Clearly the section of Sunbury Road between the airport and Sunbury itself needs a good deal of attention. It needs very careful consideration and planning and not this piecemeal nonsense that we are seeing at the moment in the lead-up to an election. They want to be seen to be doing something. That is apparently what their slogan is: 'We are doing something'. Yes, they are doing something, but they are doing the wrong thing, and that is something that we have unfortunately come to expect from this government. What we need desperately — and I know this has been an ongoing point for probably 30 or maybe even 40 years — is the Bulla bypass. We need to have a road constructed which will allow traffic to move unobstructed between the Tullamarine Freeway and Sunbury itself.

Obviously with Bulla on Sunbury Road as it stands, and the Bulla hill in particular, that does create many, many difficulties. We have seen accidents at the bottom of Bulla hill or on Bulla hill and we have seen thousands of cars sent inland either up the Bulla-Diggers Rest Road or down through Konagaderra Road or somewhere like that in the hope of avoiding the blockage. We really need to get over that. We really need to fix this, and it is the government's responsibility to do that. They are not facing that responsibility. These works that they are participating

in on the Oaklands Road to Tullamarine section of Sunbury Road are a nonsense. The duplication that they are proposing on a largely duplicated road is again a nonsense, will serve no useful purpose to anyone and will create, again, bottlenecks that will be a pain in the neck for motorists in Sunbury and surrounds for many, many a long year.

I think it is about time that the government got their act together and actually decided that if they are going to spend the sort of money that they are proposing and that they are actually spending, then they really need to do the job properly. They are not, and Sunbury people are suffering and they should not be suffering. The government really have to get their act together and do the job properly.

Auditor-General: *Community Health Program*

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:15) — I would like to say a few words on the Victorian Auditor-General's report entitled *Community Health Program*. I took the opportunity to sit in on their review the other day in Parliament. We know that our community health programs are very, very important, particularly in regional and rural Victoria.

The scope of the audit looked at 10 community services across the state, and indeed there were three in Eastern Victoria Region: Latrobe Community Health Service, Gippsland Lakes Community Health and Orbost Regional Health. What the Victorian Auditor-General's Office found through doing this audit was that community health programs are a valuable resource, but also, interestingly enough, that many of the community health programs are overstretched and that the demand for their services exceeds their capacity to deliver those services. Sadly the comment was made that those community health programs do not promote their services regularly because they just cannot cope with that additional work. So rather than actually being able to promote what they do and have an influx of patients with a variety of issues, they are actually shielding themselves from that because they just cannot cope with capacity. Also in relation to that, the way the Department of Health and Human Services audits and assesses the effectiveness of the dollars that go into community health is not defined, and it needs to be defined.

I say this to highlight some of the services that our community health services present, produce and provide for us, and one that I would specifically like to look at is counselling and casework. In relation to that, I note that the Latrobe Community Health Service based in Morwell looks at and supports people with eating

disorders. Eating disorders are something that does not affect every family, but they affect one in 20 Australians. One in 20 Australians will have an eating disorder of some form. We are quite familiar with anorexia nervosa, but that actually represents a low percentage of eating disorders. Indeed coming up tomorrow in this very place there is a Feed the Soul engagement with parliamentarians and the community to shine a light on eating disorders, and I hope if members of this house can, they will avail themselves of that time to go and understand further what happens with people with eating disorders.

We also know that there are other eating disorders. Binge eating actually constitutes one of the largest percentages of eating disorders by numbers, and there are also bulimia and other eating disorders. It is very important that people access help when they can. That can be done, as I said, in a variety of ways in the local community health service, and it can also be in the hospital system. It needs to be picked up early. It is one of the key issues for those working in our schools system and our health system, so that we keep an open mind and, I guess, a mindful watch over those children in our care to make sure that if there is any interesting behaviour, dramatic weight loss or unwellness we send that information through the right channels.

Indeed from speaking with those in the Latrobe Regional Hospital I understand that they have a holistic approach. If someone goes to their GP, that is fine, but there needs to be a wraparound service where there may be paediatricians, certainly dietitians, but also mental health clinicians working around those young and vulnerable people. It is not always young and vulnerable people, but certainly, unfortunately today, with our body image being such a big focus in the media, on television and across the board, young people are often susceptible to these body issues and can in effect succumb to some eating disorders. I just wanted to highlight the great work that Eating Disorders Victoria does and that Feed the Soul is in its seventh year, bringing a light to people with eating disorders.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:20) — I wish to make a contribution in relation to the budget of 2018–19. In doing so I just want to direct the chamber's attention to a number of line items in the budget. Now I have drawn the attention of the chamber to this before, but it has come to my attention that only last week the Premier, Daniel Andrews, and the Minister for Police and member for Bellarine, Lisa Neville, were doing the photo shoot for the Drysdale bypass, which, I might

say, is about three and a half years late in its commencement. They had the obligatory shovel and announced that the tender in fact had been awarded to a company to start construction of the bypass. Originally this bypass was to cost \$106 million, but given that it has taken nearly three and a half years in the planning stage, the actual town of Drysdale has crept around to almost about the bypass itself, not to mention the schools. The number of students at the four Catholic schools and the Bellarine Secondary College, which actually sits on the other side of the bypass, has grown by about 600 over the last three years.

My view currently is that the original planning has been so slow that the town has compromised the bypass route itself. Notwithstanding that, I note that in the budget papers this year there is an additional \$15 million allocated for this particular project. I am no Rhodes scholar, but if I add \$106 million and \$15 million, as per the budget papers appendix A, it does not make \$117 million, which was the announcement Lisa Neville made for this road project only last Friday. Somewhere there is a \$4 million difference in amounts in relation to the budget papers and the announcement the member for Bellarine made last Friday. That is a concern to me. It has already blown out by nearly \$11 million since the first announcement, and we have not even hit the shovel-ready stage.

It is fairly typical of other projects that have been identified in previous budgets. I added up as a reasonably quick rough and ready reckoner that for all the projects the government have nominated as in planning, in construction or being proposed for construction there is a blowout of just over \$25 billion. When you equate that to the 2018–19 budget, which only has a surplus of \$2.1 billion over a total budget of \$80-odd billion, the surplus is pretty small beer — very small margins.

My view is that the way the government is behaving at the moment on that project and the Murray Basin rail project, we see now — given the shonky workmanship, the delays, the poor materials used and a whole lot of other problems associated with that project — that the government has totally stuffed up and that there may well be a blowout of over \$100 million just on that project alone. I am really concerned that the figures for even the projects nominated and funded in this budget and previous budgets are nowhere near the actuals that have been identified. As I said, with only a \$2.1 billion margin to play with in the budget then in fact the government may well be at financial risk if in fact many of these projects do not meet their financial targets.

Mr Finn has certainly made mention of the West Gate tunnel.

Mr Finn — A couple of mentions.

Mr RAMSAY — Quite a few mentions. We note now that the Australian Workers Union, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union and a few other unions are squabbling about who is going to actually construct this tunnel. We expect, if the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) is any indication — and the most probable result of that is our fire services levy going up by about 40 per cent to cover off on the largesse of the MFB EBA — that a whole lot of other public stakeholder groups like teachers, paramedics et cetera will also be seeking similar salaries and conditions in relation to their EBAs. And that is not unreasonable. The trouble is the government is going to be at real risk that the budget is going to blow out. The surplus is going to be disappearing, and they are going to be looking at serious liabilities in the future.

Victorian Multicultural Commission: report 2016–17

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:25) — I am speaking on the Victorian Multicultural Commission's (VMC's) annual report 2016–17, in particular page 6 of the report, which outlines the new relationship that was established by this government with the VMC, which is supposed to be a statutory body. I have spoken about this on numerous occasions. This statutory authority is now a statutory authority in name only, even though it was established under the Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 and was intended to be a source of independent advice to government on policies and programs that are relevant to multicultural communities. The report says, and I quote:

In November 2016 a structural change in the Department of Premier and Cabinet brought the commission's secretariat, now the Office of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, into the department's newly formed multicultural affairs and social cohesion division ...

As a result of the restructure and pursuant to a determination made by the minister, the commission's operating budget of course now has been subsumed by the department, and the commission no longer has its own strategic plan or own dedicated staff.

This reform comes under fairly heavy attack in a report that has been undertaken by a parliamentary intern, a very talented young man called Josef Micallef from the University of Melbourne. He has recently completed a report entitled *Reviewing the Victorian Multicultural*

Commission: Discerning Issues and Developing an Evidence-base for an Effective Multicultural Commission. He gives an outstanding analysis. I would just like to quote from page 17, section 2.2, headed 'Undermined independence of the VMC'. He said, and I quote:

The 2016 restructure of the VMC poses a threat to its status as an independent authority.

This is something I claimed, and the government is clearly not being held to account. It goes on:

In 2016, the VMC was integrated into the MASCD —

an acronym for the multicultural affairs and social cohesion division —

which is nested within the Department of Premier and Cabinet ... Once standing alone as a unitary authority, the VMC now works alongside the government-controlled OMAC —

the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship —

and the CRU —

the cohesion and resilience unit.

The restructure seeks to promote collaboration —

according to the government —

and coordination between each branch so that they can administer multicultural policy as one ...

However, he went on to then say:

Exacerbating this perception of undermined independence is the absence of justifications for this restructure. The Victorian Auditor-General did find that there was significant overlap in the work done by the VMC and OMAC which was limiting each body's effectiveness in providing services for CALD —

culturally and linguistically diverse —

migrants ... However, the final report limits its recommendations to the development of clear roles for each body ... along with coordinating the efforts to evaluate government performance in delivering migrant services ...

He went on to say:

There are no grounds in this report to justify the restructure. Furthermore, the McCann report, an independent review authorised by the Andrews government that justifies the creation of the MASCD, is not available to the public.

Now that is a very common theme of course. The government predominantly does what it wants to do. It sometimes will commission work that may support that particular direction but often does not release it to the public for scrutiny.

Mr Micallef went on to say:

This restructure was immediately followed by a reorientation of the VMC's role. Its involvement in allocating grants was altered ... and it was attributed with a 'strategic leadership' function as part of a whole-of-government approach to multiculturalism and social cohesion ... These alterations give credence to the idea that the Andrews government's restructure has somewhat compromised the VMC's independence.

He went on to say:

The VMC's participation in the allocation of multicultural grants typifies the flaws that pervade this institution as a whole, limiting both its institutional legitimacy and the ability of the VMC to meet community needs.

The time is running out. I will come back again to having a look at some other specific criticisms of this change, which was neither justified by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office report nor is it effective.

**APPROPRIATION (2018–2019) BILL 2018
and BUDGET PAPERS 2018–19**

Second reading

**Debate resumed from 24 May; motion of
Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and
Investment) and motion of Mr MULINO (Eastern
Victoria):**

That the Council take note of the budget papers 2018–19.

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (17:32) — I am pleased to be able to rise to speak on this year's budget. I will start by going through some of the big features of the budget before working my way down to some local issues — what is in there and what should be in there.

The budget is heavily reliant on population growth and booming property taxes. The budget confirms big blowouts and several government infrastructure projects, such as level crossing removals, the costs of which have jumped from \$2.3 billion to \$8.3 billion, although the minister was not prepared to go on the record about additional increases in that sum when questioned as recently as the last few days. Spending will grow by \$6.2 billion over a year to a total of \$68.1 billion, and the single biggest component of this is public employees, which cost about \$25 billion a year. This cost has risen by \$2.57 billion in one year, as public sector wage increases have come home to roost.

I note that in previous years during Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearings I have watched as the Minister for Health has avoided stating what the cost of wage increases is going to be, but you

cannot avoid it forever. That is not to say that you should not have wage increases; you just need to be honest about what the cost is, particularly when you are asked a direct question about it at PAEC.

Net debt will reach \$24.3 billion in 2018–19, which is an increase of \$8.5 billion in only two years. That means, given the forecasts that we have for additional debt over the next four years, by 2021–22 Victoria's net state debt is estimated to be \$31.4 billion. This is a massive increase in a relatively short period of time.

We also have a lot of extra taxes and new taxes alongside the extra debt. But I want to quote from the Premier. On the eve of the last state election in 2014 he was asked by Peter Mitchell of Channel 7:

Daniel Andrews, all the polls say that 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?

And Daniel Andrews said:

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

And do you know what? That was false. That was a lie. What have we got instead? We have a 35 per cent increase in taxes under this government. We have \$6.2 billion extra in taxes under this government, and we have 12 broken promises. On the measure of state tax to state gross product Victoria is now the highest taxing state in this country, and we were not a few years ago; we were not at the time of the last election. At the election we were pretty much middle of the field, but under the 12 new and increased taxes that we have seen under this Andrews Labor government we have now bolted to the front of the field.

The government has introduced Uber and taxi fare taxes. The land tax surcharge for foreign owners was introduced at 0.5 per cent and later increased to 1.5 per cent. We have seen stamp duty surcharges for foreign purchasers introduced at 3 per cent and later increased to 7 per cent. The fire services property levy was increased. We have seen an increase in stamp duty on new cars, the removal of off-the-plan stamp duty concessions for investors, new stamp duty on property transfers between spouses, new annual property evaluations to increase land tax, the vacant residential property tax, a new point-of-consumption gambling tax, a new city access tax for the West Gate tunnel, plus the tripling of coal royalties, which were sprung as a budget surprise overnight in 2016 and led directly to the closure of the Hazelwood power station. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has found that this was a major contributing factor towards the 85 per cent increase in wholesale power prices that Victoria

has seen. And there is nothing in the budget to help families and businesses with crippling increases in energy prices.

I want to pause briefly here and look at the report that was done by the Australian Energy Regulator about a year on from the closure of the plant. It found that by 2016 wholesale prices in Victoria were up by 85 per cent. The regulator's chair, Paula Conboy, said the rise was driven by the replacement of Hazelwood's cheap brown coal-fired power generation with power from higher cost sources such as black coal, gas and hydro, at a time when black coal and gas prices were rising. From mid-2017, for the first time in almost a decade, Victoria relied on energy from interstate to meet its needs, as it increased its imports of gas-generated power from South Australia and black coal-fired electricity from New South Wales. Ms Conboy said the price increases and the energy market's response to Hazelwood's closure had been as expected, but new investment in electricity generation was critical, to use her word, to put downward pressure on prices.

The impact of these increased energy costs has flowed on through the economy, and in particular that had a big impact on the health sector. For example, in August it was revealed that health services are facing an estimated \$44 million increase as part of the new electricity contract, according to Health Purchasing Victoria, which is responsible for securing bulk power deals. Health Purchasing Victoria wrote to the sector in June about the electricity increases last year, warning it could not control volatile market conditions but was looking at ways to help health services reduce energy costs.

Some major hospitals have tried to insulate themselves against huge price increases by attempting to produce their own power. We do know that of course health services are required to have their own power generators in case of loss of power, given the critical services they undertake, but there are a range of other health services, particularly those that are smaller and are wondering how they are going to absorb these sorts of soaring costs.

The chief executive of Cobden Health, Leonie Rooney, said her service's monthly electricity bill had risen from about \$4000 to more than \$7000. She is quoted as saying:

I'm certain we're not alone in this situation ... It's going to test our viability.

This rural service provides aged care, allied health services, including a heated pool, and an urgent care centre. Under a worst-case scenario, Cobden Health

was looking at shutting its pool, which offers physiotherapy, swimming lessons, exercise programs and rehabilitation.

The bill for another small regional health service showed that its monthly electricity costs had risen from about \$8400 to just over \$15 000. These are massive increases for small organisations. The member for Lowan in the Assembly has told Parliament that Wimmera Health Care Group in Horsham expected their power prices to rise by about half a million dollars in that financial year.

What is the government's answer to all of this? You will look in vain to find anything of substance in the budget papers. The answer is paying people \$50 each to check a website to get a better deal on their power deal, and some \$50 million is going to be wasted on that exercise. That is a joke, particularly when you look at the needs of the health services that I have mentioned today.

Despite the money that the government is raking in through new taxes, there are still some people who inexplicably need to wait, and I want to focus on a few of these. I have spoken in the last few weeks about the Port Phillip Specialist School, which is a school that I first visited some 20 years ago when I was working for the federal Minister for Education, and it was at that time, as it is now, an outstanding institution. One of the things I always think of in relation to this school is how its community works very hard to provide an environment for the children that is going to give them their best possible start and help them reach their best potential, which is what every child deserves but is particularly hard when it comes to children with special needs.

The school building that they have is beautiful but somewhat impractical, given that it was originally a state school built some 130 years ago and was very much of its time. It does not cope well in many places with children who have mobility needs and may need assistance such as wheelchairs and so on. So there is a constant need to be addressing these sorts practical concerns in the way that the school operates.

One thing that the school has been very keen to do is to redevelop its existing commercial kitchen. It uses this for the children so that they can work on life skills as well as skills for paid employment, and we do know that the most likely place that children with special needs will get employment, if they are able to do this, is in the hospitality industry. At the moment there is a somewhat dark and uninspiring commercial kitchen, but the main problem that it has is that only a handful of

children can fit in there at the same time. Also, they cannot actually fit a wheelchair in there, which means that a number of children are simply excluded from that experience, which is unfair and unfortunate.

The school has worked very carefully on a plan to expand this space and make it look like a cafe, similar to the ones that we see nearby on Bay Street, so that the kids can in particular learn skills for employment in a setting that looks like what they are aspiring to do. I think this is a terrific plan, and I know that it has been implemented at a range of other special education schools. The school has not only planned and dreamed; they have also raised \$150 000 towards this project. They were estimating that the total cost would be around double that. They have applied twice to get funding for this project, and they have been knocked back twice. They have now got a third application in. They have been working on their fundraising and planning for this project for the last two years, and they really want to get on and do it. In fact I know their goal is to start work on the kitchen, if they can, over the summer holidays so that it is ready for the 2019 school year.

A number of schools close to Port Phillip Specialist School have received extremely generous grants — grants in the millions — and in some cases schools have had multiple grants in the millions. This is not to criticise that or question whether it is necessary but simply to make the point that Port Phillip Specialist School is asking for a comparatively small amount of money, and yet for reasons that I frankly do not understand it is being forced to wait rather than the government simply making the funds available and the school getting on with the job. I had been optimistic that that money may be in the budget. I was disappointed to see that it was not there, and I know that the school is continuing to wait to see whether the Andrews government will actually deliver on the funding that the school needs to make this a reality.

I want to pause and say that we, the opposition, have committed to put \$250 000 towards that fund if we are elected, and I am looking forward to seeing that kitchen cafe in action. I think it will be a terrific thing for the school and its students, and I think at that time Port Phillip Specialist School is probably going to look to some of its other needs because it has some basic problems with infrastructure that really need dealing with.

Albert Park College is another school nearby that has a huge challenge dealing with population growth and its own success as a relatively new school. It is a fantastic thing that the community has embraced Albert Park

College so readily after it was closed and then rebuilt a number of years ago. A large majority of local kids now attend this school, but this creates obvious problems with space. The school knows that by the year 2020 it will be unable to meet demand from students within its catchment. If further accommodation cannot be found, the school will not be able to offer places to around 60 per cent of students who are entitled to enrol in the year 7 intake of 2020.

This school also has not been sitting back and waiting for someone else to solve its problem. It has had to manage a series of creative and complex capital projects, and it has got on with organising a solution to its problem, which is to move the existing performing arts practice that they have in their Danks Street campus to another site. At the moment, rooms that were built as classrooms for kids to use for regular academic subjects, if I could put it that way, are being used for the school's music and drama program. This program is great. What makes a lot of sense is to move those classes into another space and free up the classrooms so that more kids can enrol at Albert Park College. What they want to do is move and take over some facilities that are at the nearby Gasworks Arts Park, and that will enable around 350 additional student places at the main campus of the school.

This of course does not come cheaply. The total project cost is estimated to be around \$15 million. Albert Park College has raised \$1 million towards this project. They are going to a lot of effort to provide funding to pay for these new facilities, and that is in addition to similar fundraising that the school has done on earlier projects. Again the opposition has announced that it will support this dream, and we have committed \$14 million towards that project should we be elected. Again this is something that is greatly needed. It comes down to simply enabling kids to go to their local secondary school.

Earlier this year we saw South Melbourne Primary School opened, and we have a further school that is still waiting, which is South Melbourne Park Primary School. It is late — it has been delayed to 2019 — and it is some \$20 million over budget. There were two local school projects in play, and the one that has opened and actually provided those facilities for local kids is the property in Ferrars Street, which was purchased by the previous government. Additional money was allocated for soil remediation, and that work was begun. It was only when the government realised how fraught their preferred site was that the school moved back to this original site. I am pleased to see that the South Melbourne school has opened, and I

look with interest to see when finally the South Melbourne Park Primary School will also be open.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:47) — I rise in relation to the budget reply. There are two parts of this budget that I wish to highlight this evening for fellow Victorians. The first pertains to the north-east link. The second pertains to the logging of our native forests in Victoria.

The first is a critical piece of information that is very pertinent to my electorate. It is about the north-east link. It is squirreled away in budget paper 4, and it states:

The core package of the project ... will be an availability PPP —

public-private partnership.

The new link will be tolled, with the state retaining toll revenues initially ...

What this means is that the Andrews government is ditching the build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) PPP model that was used for the development of CityLink and EastLink and is being used for the West Gate tunnel. The BOOT PPP model puts the traffic demand risk on the private sector consortium that owns it. For some reason known only to the Andrews government, the north-east link will not be proceeding under a BOOT PPP. Instead the Andrews government is proceeding with an availability PPP that squarely puts the traffic demand risk on the taxpayer.

What this means is that the Andrews government wants the Victorian taxpayer to take all the risk on the north-east link and give the toll road company that builds it all the reward. If traffic levels are lower than predicted, the government will have to pay the toll road company the shortfall. What I suspect is happening is that the Andrews government has come to the realisation that the north-east link is shaping up to be the most expensive road per kilometre ever built anywhere. If the private sector were to peel back a few layers on this project and audit the traffic modelling calculations, which are yet to be made public by this secretive government, they would see that there was a significant traffic demand risk and therefore a high chance toll revenues would not be sufficient to finance the project.

There are further issues with the way this government has gone about committing the people of Victoria to the most expensive road per kilometre the world has ever seen. I have already spoken in this place, in the form of a constituency question, as to the ridiculousness of the strategic options considered for addressing congestion and trucks in the north-east. To recap, the Andrews

government included in its strategic option of public transport and freight a freight line from Donnybrook in the north to Dandenong in the south-east via the port of Melbourne. The assumptions used by the North East Link Authority hold that it is necessary to upgrade the Craigieburn and Cranbourne-Pakenham railway lines with an extra track for the full length, which would require extensive tunnelling underneath the central city, significant land acquisition along the rail corridors — which traverse densely populated growth areas — and conversion of railway tracks from broad gauge to standard gauge to suit the existing interstate rail network. This is of course a complete nonsense, because we know from the government's own tender process, presently underway, that it is possible to set up intermodal freight terminals and a port rail shuttle for only \$58 million using the existing rail network.

Also included in this strategic option is a rail spur from the Hurstbridge line to the La Trobe national employment and innovation cluster (NEIC). Again, no-one has ever asked for that. The preference of the local community and the university campus is for an extension of the 86 tram line to South Morang station, which would be less expensive and less intrusive. The North East Link Authority seems to understand this, because a couple of pages later they state:

Construction of a passenger spur line into La Trobe NEIC is unlikely to take significant traffic volumes off the network, as strategic modelling indicates that the number of trips into the central city and to La Trobe NEIC in the north-east is relatively low.

This raises the obvious question: why even include it as an alternative if you clearly do not think it will work and it is so incredibly expensive to build?

Orbital bus services: the Greens are of course in favour of and have been campaigning hard for more bus services, including Smart Bus services and feeder buses. However, the assumption used by the North East Link Authority is that this will require an additional 50 new buses each year, every year, for eternity to maintain an appropriate service level. What they have not told us is why this level of bus acquisition is required and how it compares to the bus numbers required for the bus rapid transit that has been pasted onto this mega toll road project like lipstick on a pig. All this expensive fluff blows up the total for this strategic option to a whopping \$60 billion to \$75 billion — yes, billion dollars, with a 'b'.

For comparison, in 2015 the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration determined that once commercial rocket launches to the moon are viable by the middle of the 2020s it will cost

US\$40 billion to establish a permanent base on the moon. According to the North East Link Authority's calculations, that is less than the minimum price tag of a rail freight solution for the city of Melbourne. What is so galling about this is that even though it has been priced stupendously high, the public transport and freight-on-rail option still competes with the north-east link on assessment of benefits. It is almost as if the North East Link Authority had to give it such stratospheric pricing in order to sink it.

We have heard about the silly things it includes, but what has the North East Link Authority omitted from its consideration of public transport alternatives? It ignores the community's demands from the 2014 election, which were for trains, not toll roads, and the building of Doncaster rail. Incredibly, Doncaster rail is excluded from this suite of projects. It fails to consider a bus rapid transit solution separate from the mega toll road, even though this could be built in two to three years, would only cost \$500 million and would preserve the median for Doncaster rail. It omits the extensions of the route 48 tram line from Balwyn North to Doncaster Hill and the route 72 tram line from Vermont South to Knox City. It fails to include increasing service frequency on the Hurstbridge and South Morang lines by removing remaining level crossings and installing digital high-capacity signalling.

Further howlers can be found throughout the business case. One of the most egregious is the risk assessment of their preferred strategic option. Now, I do not want to spoil it for everyone here because I know that none of the MPs in the major parties — not even the Minister for Roads and Road Safety himself — has read the north-east link business case, so I apologise in advance for the spoiler, but would you believe that the preferred strategic option of the North East Link Authority is the north-east link? Quite the plot twist, I know.

So what is the risk assessment of the preferred strategic option? The authority is right that the toll road presents a moderate risk of potential environmental and social impacts; however, it says these risks can be managed with appropriate mitigation measures. Well, that is comforting, isn't it? The trouble is that they have only recently released the draft scoping requirements for the environment effects statement last month; hence they cannot possibly know what the environmental and social impacts would be and whether they can be mitigated, because they have not even finalised what investigations to conduct.

The further you read into the business case, the more you realise that the north-east link mega toll road is a solution in search of a problem. The recurring theme in

the business case is the admission that what various surveys show businesses and the community want is more public transport to get workers to their place of employment and customers to retail centres. For example, it quotes the *State Significant Employment Precincts: Business Intention Survey*, which found that one of the top limitations for businesses located in the La Trobe national employment and innovation cluster was a lack of access to public transport. So what does the North East Link Authority give these businesses? A toll road.

It is appropriate that the Andrews government allocated zero funding for the north-east link in the 2018–19 budget. May it stay that way. It is a poorly designed project which will flood local communities with more traffic, welcome 85-tonne monster freight trucks into the north-east, create more air and noise pollution, destroy the amenity of our community and ruin our green spaces.

The second issue of great concern to many people in my electorate and across Victoria generally is that this budget shows that the Andrews government is determined to continue native forest logging. Over this term the Andrews government has committed \$108 million in public subsidies for the native forest logging industry, including \$39.5 million in this budget for the continuation of the dysfunctional regional forest agreements (RFAs) that allow logging to be exempted from the commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC act). One has to ask: will some of this budget allocation in fact be now used for wildlife survey assessments, tasked for under DELWP instead of VicForests? Who knows what that might go to, but there is one thing for certain: it is guaranteeing that it is locking in native forest logging into the future, particularly with the rollover of the regional forest agreements to 2020.

I have said before in this place that regional forest agreements have failed to provide security to industry and failed to secure a reserve system to protect species. There has been a haphazard approach to reviews, with delays as much as five years, and the lack of conformance to a five-yearly review cycle, the reliance on the efficiency of state agencies to update information such as action statements, the absence of any enforcement for failure to meet review deadlines, the lack of taking into account existing on-the-ground conditions, the lack of attention to the impact of climate change or the value of water, the exemption from the EPBC act, the automatic rollovers of RFAs and the lack of an open and transparent public process all point to a failure of this instrument to provide any protections to endangered and threatened species.

It is worth noting that the budget also includes an allocation of \$3 million to protect endangered species in the state. I want to turn my focus to the Leadbeater's possum, a state faunal emblem. It is critically endangered. It is my understanding that the \$3 million will be used to continue a program of breeding at the Healesville Sanctuary which is targeted of course at the lowland Leadbeater's possum, which got to a most critical number of only 38 surviving in the wild. It is extraordinary that there is a budget allocation for this Leadbeater's possum but we still see the government continuing to log the habitat of the highlands Leadbeater's possum, our state faunal emblem.

It is worth noting the work of scientists David Blair, David Lindenmeyer and Lachlan McBurney, who wrote 'Failing to conserve Leadbeater's Possum and its Mountain Ash forest habitat'. The scientists note that the conservation of the critically endangered Leadbeater's possum in Victoria's mountain ash forest:

... is one of the most controversial native mammal conservation issues in Australia. Much of the controversy results from long-running conflicts between the demands of the native forest logging industry and associated impacts on Leadbeater's possum and its mountain ash forest habitat.

They argue that:

... despite a legislative obligation to protect Leadbeater's possum and some limited recent improvements in management, conservation efforts for the species have gone backwards over the past decade.

They indicate key problems, including that the Victorian government has maintained levels of wood production that are too high given the amount of the forest estate that was burned in 2009, failed to substitute clearfell logging practices with more ecologically sensitive variable retention harvesting systems, ignored the science (including by its own researchers) on the need for a large protected area for Leadbeater's possum, altered key definitions such as those for mature trees and old growth that have substantially weakened the ability to protect Leadbeater's possum and overlooked the array of forest values beyond timber production (such as water and tourism) and which make a greater contribution to the economy.

I also note past works in relation to the loss of hollow-bearing trees and its impact on the Leadbeater's possum. Of course those large old trees certainly need protecting to reduce the mortality of the species, and it is important to ensure their recruitment into the future. Forests are complex ecosystems. They are not easily regenerated, and it is going to take more than the paltry

\$3 million allocated in this budget to protect the species into the future.

In summary, this budget is one that rings those relentless themes of government: more privatisation, more toll roads and more logging. Victoria, our community and our environment will be poorer for it.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

ADJOURNMENT

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — The question is:

That the house do now adjourn.

Calder Highway, Ravenswood

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (18:02) — The matter that I wish to raise on the adjournment tonight is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. It relates to the recommissioning of the Jock Comini Memorial Rest Area, part of the troubled road works on the Calder Highway at Ravenswood. During the last sitting week I raised issues about these roadworks on behalf of residents on the western side or northbound carriageway of the Calder, and I have now been contacted by residents on the eastern side or southbound carriageway regarding their needs in regard to these roadworks. The action that I seek from the minister is that he ensures the installation of an adequate sound barrier to reduce noise from vehicles leaving the Jock Comini Memorial Rest Area for residents living on the eastern side of the Calder Highway at Ravenswood to the south of the rest area and the construction of a sealed access road off Ravenswood Street that runs parallel to the highway so these residents have safe access to their properties.

The recommissioning of the Jock Comini Memorial Rest Area situated on the southbound lanes of the Calder Highway is part of a large roadworks project currently being undertaken by VicRoads at Ravenswood. The works on the rest area include the installation of wire rope barriers along the Calder Highway, which will run across the front of several houses directly south of the rest area. VicRoads conducted no consultation with these residents prior to commencing the roadworks. Under the current plans these particular residents will only be able to access their properties via McDonalds Lane. As there is no turning lane, southbound traffic on the Calder Highway is forced to turn left into McDonalds Lane directly from the soon-to-be 110-kilometre zoned highway. A turning lane to access McDonalds Lane is needed to help prevent a very serious collision occurring. Residents

need safe access to their homes and say that the most commonsense solution is to construct a road from Ravenswood Street.

The on ramp from the rest area to the highway will run directly past these homes, and my constituents are concerned about the noise of traffic entering the highway. The noise level of trucks changing gears whilst gaining speed will have an adverse impact on my constituents' standard of living. An adequate sound barrier is required to ensure these residents do not have to live with excessive traffic noise.

The minister needs to intervene and help these residents affected by these roadworks. The action that I seek from the minister is for him to ensure that an adequate sound barrier is installed to reduce noise from vehicles leaving the Jock Comini Memorial Rest Area for residents living on the eastern side of the Calder Highway at Ravenswood to the south of the rest area and the construction of a sealed access road off Ravenswood Street that runs parallel to the highway so these residents have safe access to their properties.

Australian Paper Maryvale mill

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (18:05) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. There is an Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) works approval public consultation underway for the Maryvale pulp mill's proposal to build a municipal waste incinerator. There are of course many concerns voiced by the public about this plan. Chief among them are the air pollution it will create in Gippsland, which already cops more than its fair share of industrial air pollution and associated health impacts in this state.

My adjournment matter pertains to the process which has been applied to the environmental clearances for this project, considering the long-term implications it may have for our state's native forests. The environment effects statement (EES) referral for the incinerator considered the project as a standalone entity. It did not consider it as part of the foundation for an expansion of operations at the Maryvale pulp mill. This is erroneous, as the mill intends to use the electricity and gas generated from burning waste to massively expand its operations.

The Maryvale pulp mill is the largest consumer of native forests in this state. It takes in chips and whole logs and makes paper and cardboard. Now the management of the Maryvale pulp mill want to expand into bioplastics manufactured from lignin extracted from wood pulp. The lignin supply stream is created by

displacing the burning of lignin to make energy with the burning of waste to make energy. The bioplastic plans and the waste-to-energy plans are intimately intertwined. One cannot happen without the other. The action I seek is that the minister for environment properly consider the full environmental impacts of the full expanded operations of the mill, including the implied lock-in of extraction of native forests timber for decades into the future to feed the lignin plant and the implications of this resource lock-in on biodiversity and the survivability of the mountain ash ecosystem.

HaiR-3Rs

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (18:07) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. The action I seek is that she assist in funding this very innovative program called HaiR-3Rs, which is a program that helps reduce domestic violence in Victoria. This program is run for hairdressers, and the 3Rs stand for recognise, respond and refer. I think this is a wonderful program —

Mr Leane interjected.

Ms PATTEN — Yes, Mr Leane. I have some eastern envy because it is in Eastern Metropolitan Region. As we all know, the relationship with a hairdresser is quite different to a relationship with any other professional. There is a level of intimacy there —

Ms Bath interjected.

Ms PATTEN — That is right. They actually become genuine friends, so it is about using those relationships. This program, HaiR-3Rs, utilises those close relationships that we have to help prevent family violence in the community. If I need to note that Mr Leane has had a big part in this, I would certainly like to make mention of that.

They offer 2½-hour interactive workshops to hairdressers, run by trainers who train the hairdressers to know how to recognise, respond and refer. I contacted the program because I was so impressed with it. They told me that to date 150 salon professionals have taken the course, which helps them to identify those key signs of domestic violence. It informs those salon professionals about gender inequality as the main driver of family violence. It supports the professionals to understand gender stereotypes — I think it must be fantastic seeing this program run with hairdressers who possibly suffer from some gender stereotyping more than many of us — and it increases the capacity of salon professionals to support a client who may be experiencing family violence.

This I think is a wonderful program, so the action that I seek is that we provide some funding to expand this program out of Eastern Metropolitan Region and into the rest of the state.

Ringwood Secondary College

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (18:10) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, James Merlino. Last week the minister and I visited Ringwood Secondary College, and we had a chance to look at the new junior buildings that have recently been completed through funding from the government in a staged approach. There is money in this year's budget for a second stage at Ringwood Secondary College. I think it is about \$5.5 million from the government, and I think there was \$1.5 million left over from the previous stage, which affords the school \$7 million to do their stage 2. They are working through whether they would like to build a new science, technology, engineering and maths building or maybe build a senior school facility similar to the junior school facility which they have. The action I seek from the minister is for his department to work with the Victorian School Building Authority to explore both options so the school can make a decision about which way they want to go with this stage 2 funding.

West Gate tunnel project

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (18:12) — I wish to raise a matter this evening on the adjournment for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. This morning I had a meeting in Parliament with Cameron Murphy and Brendan Hopley. Cameron Murphy is the CEO of Murphy Transport Solutions, and he is the sixth generation of Murphys to run this company. It has been on the one site in Yarraville, on the corner of Leek Street and Whitehall Street, for 160 years, and six generations of Murphys have run that company for all of that time. Sadly, with the new traffic conditions as a result of the construction of the West Gate tunnel, this company finds itself in a situation where it might have to go to the wall. Mr Murphy is very, very concerned about the future if the current arrangements continue. As you can imagine, with such large vehicles — and we are not talking about small trucks here; we are talking about large vehicles — and with the new traffic arrangements the trucks are having a huge amount of difficulty getting onto the street. If you cannot get the truck out of the yard, it is very, very hard to make a living. That is the concern, that they cannot get the trucks properly into Leek Street as a result of the new traffic arrangements because of the construction of the West Gate tunnel.

Mr Murphy and his company have approached some sections of the West Gate tunnel authority to see if they can get some satisfaction with regard to this and to see if there is some way that sense can prevail. They have been told, 'Everybody must feel the pain'. That is not exactly something that they wanted to hear, and I can fully understand that. Perhaps the West Gate tunnel authority needs to feel the pain a little bit as well.

What I am asking the minister to do to is to order a total reassessment of traffic management in the Yarraville and West Footscray areas. I am hopeful this will enable Murphy Transport Solutions to continue on their current site and to continue their current business. There are at least 50 full-time employees on that site, and as you can imagine, it is a significant contributor to the Victorian economy. It would be a major blow to Victoria if this company was to go to the wall. Indeed it would be a tragedy not just for the Murphy family but for many others if after 160 years this company was forced to go to the wall as a result of the impact of the West Gate tunnel. I ask the minister to order that reassessment and hopefully we can see common sense prevail.

Bairnsdale Secondary College

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (18:15) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Education, Minister Merlino, in the other place. It relates to the fact that this is the fourth successive Labor budget that has not allocated any significant funding for Bairnsdale Secondary College. The previous Liberal-National coalition government funded a specific upgrade and stage 1 to bring that school into the 21st century with open and flexible learning spaces, great classrooms and integrated IT, but what is missing there is stage 2, which involves the upgrade to the library facilities. Having been there some time ago during winter, I noted that when it rains the librarian puts out buckets in order to prevent the precipitation from falling onto the library floor. As the principal informed me and as we discussed, the patchwork on this facility is just ending up being a waste of money, and it certainly does not serve the students of Bairnsdale or East Gippsland.

The minister now has some time off; we are about to finish the last of our sitting weeks. The action I seek from the minister — and indeed Mr Bull, the member for Gippsland East in the other place, has called on the minister again and again to go down to East Gippsland — is to get out of the city and to see what the state of that school is, to visit, walk around and look at the library so he can actually fund the stage 2 upgrade.

Public housing heater replacement

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (18:17) — My adjournment matter this evening is directed to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister Foley, in the other place. It relates to an issue I had raised in a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing a few weeks ago regarding the numbers of public housing tenants who do not have appropriate heating because of the decommissioning of heaters after the tragic carbon monoxide poisonings. During PAEC there were some questions asked about that, and I am still waiting for the transcript to find out the answers that were going to be provided to the committee.

This issue has been raised with me by my colleague in the other place Mr Tilley, who has had a very concerning matter raised with him in recent days. He has been putting calls in to the department, which he says is normally very attentive and very good at getting back to him, but I think this matter is of such urgency because of the position we are in, being winter. This particular issue that Mr Tilley has concerns about relates to an elderly woman of 89 years of age and her neighbour, who have both had their gas heating decommissioned, as I said, due to the carbon monoxide poisonings that caused unfortunate and tragic deaths. A gas detector has been installed in one of the elderly lady's places. She has a small oil-filled electric heater, which is grossly inadequate. Despite the heater not being turned off at all the residence is still incredibly cold, and the elderly lady spends a lot of time in bed or in the shower to warm up. I think it is very concerning that we have got elderly women that are spending a lot of time in the shower to warm up or otherwise in bed because they do not have appropriate heating. It has been extremely cold this week. We know it is winter so we expect it to be cold, but it goes to the point of her staying in bed because she cannot afford to turn on an electric heater to heat her home.

The action I seek from the minister, on my behalf and also that of my colleague Mr Tilley, is for us to understand and for him to advise how many properties within the Wodonga region are in this situation of having had their one heating source decommissioned and are still awaiting the installation of new heating. As I said, I find it very concerning that we have got elderly people not only in Wodonga but in other parts of Victoria that are suffering in this way and do not have adequate heating. We need to know what those waitlists are and when these heaters will be in place.

The PRESIDENT — Can I just focus that adjournment item on when the heaters will be installed in the homes that currently do not have heating, because to understand and to obtain the number of properties is not an action; to get the heaters installed is an action, so the last phrase you used is closer to the action.

Ms CROZIER — Thank you, President, for that clarification. I suppose I was just reiterating my concerns expressed in the questions that had been asked at PAEC, but I take that point and I thank you for raising it. I would be very pleased to have the action be that the minister provide me with the details of when those new heaters will be installed.

Responses

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (18:21) — This evening I have received adjournment matters from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, from Ms Dunn to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, from Ms Patten to the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, from Mr Leane to the Minister for Education, from Mr Finn to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, from Ms Bath to the Minister for Education and from Ms Crozier to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing. I will direct those matters to the relevant ministers for a response. In addition I have received three written responses to adjournment debate matters.

The PRESIDENT — The house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 6.22 p.m.

