

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Wednesday, 22 August 2018**

**(Extract from book 12)**

**Internet: [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard](http://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
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services . . . . .	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer and Minister for Resources . . . . .	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects . . . . .	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment . . . . .	The Hon. B. A. Carroll, MP
Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy, and Minister for Small Business . . . . .	The Hon. P. Dalidakis, MLC
Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development . . . . .	The Hon. L. D' Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports . . . . .	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans . . . . .	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries . . . . .	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services . . . . .	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
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**

**President:**

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

**Deputy President:**

Mr N. ELASMAR

**Acting Presidents:**

Ms Dunn, Mr Gepp, Mr Melhem, Mr Morris, Ms Patten, Mr Purcell, Mr Ramsay

**Leader of the Government:**

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

**Deputy Leader of the Government:**

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

**Leader of the Opposition:**

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

**Deputy Leader of the Opposition:**

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

**Leader of The Nationals:**

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 <sup>1</sup>	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O’Brien, Mr Daniel David <sup>8</sup>	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel <sup>3</sup>	Western Metropolitan	Ind	O’Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O’Sullivan, Mr Luke Bartholomew <sup>9</sup>	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona <sup>10</sup>	Northern Metropolitan	FPRP
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin <sup>4</sup>	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmar, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini <sup>11</sup>	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark <sup>5</sup>	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred <sup>6</sup>	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph <sup>7</sup>	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 <sup>12</sup>	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 28 September 2017

<sup>2</sup> Appointed 15 April 2015

<sup>3</sup> DLP until 26 June 2017;  
AC until 3 August 2018

<sup>4</sup> Resigned 27 May 2016

<sup>5</sup> Appointed 7 June 2017

<sup>6</sup> Resigned 9 February 2018

<sup>7</sup> Resigned 6 April 2017

<sup>8</sup> Resigned 25 February 2015

<sup>9</sup> Appointed 12 October 2016

<sup>10</sup> ASP until 16 January 2018;  
RV until 14 August 2018

<sup>11</sup> Appointed 18 October 2017

<sup>12</sup> Appointed 21 February 2018

**PARTY ABBREVIATIONS**

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



# CONTENTS

## WEDNESDAY, 22 AUGUST 2018

### RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

<i>Environment Protection Amendment (Container Deposit Scheme) Bill 2018</i> .....	4209
--	------

### PETITIONS

<i>Woorayl Street reserve, Carnegie</i> .....	4210
<i>Keysborough South secondary school</i> .....	4210

### CORRECTIONS AMENDMENT (ADULT PAROLE BOARD) BILL 2018

<i>Introduction and first reading</i> .....	4211
---	------

### ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

<i>Methodologies and outcomes from Victorian Ombudsman reports tabled in Parliament</i> .....	4211
---	------

### ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

<i>Career advice activities in Victorian schools</i> .....	4212
--	------

### PAPERS .....

### MINISTERS STATEMENTS

<i>Bee biosecurity</i> .....	4213
<i>Sudanese community</i> .....	4214
<i>Nhill Learning Centre</i> .....	4214
<i>Family support programs</i> .....	4215

### MEMBERS STATEMENTS

<i>India floods</i> .....	4215
<i>Senator Fraser Anning</i> .....	4215
<i>Eid ul-Adha</i> .....	4215
<i>Senator Mehreen Faruqi and Lee Rhiannon</i> .....	4216
<i>Government achievements</i> .....	4216
<i>Decentralisation</i> .....	4216
<i>The Greens</i> .....	4217
<i>Cohuna Recreation Reserve</i> .....	4217
<i>Committee for Greater Shepparton</i> .....	4217
<i>Strathfieldsaye early years hub</i> .....	4217
<i>Julie Henderson</i> .....	4218
<i>Mr Gepp</i> .....	4218
<i>The Tipping Foundation</i> .....	4218
<i>Navigator program</i> .....	4218
<i>Allan Lawson</i> .....	4218
<i>Avenel infrastructure funding</i> .....	4219
<i>Tyers Primary School</i> .....	4219
<i>Clergy mandatory reporting</i> .....	4219
<i>Giving Life</i> .....	4220

### FORESTS (WOOD PULP AGREEMENT) REPEAL BILL 2018

<i>Statement of compatibility</i> .....	4220
<i>Second reading</i> .....	4220

### INTERNATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS REMEMBRANCE DAY .....

.....	4224
-------	------

### METROPOLITAN RAIL NETWORK .....

.....	4232, 4244, 4260
-------	------------------

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

<i>Wyndham schools</i> .....	4234, 4235
<i>Fish stocks</i> .....	4235
<i>AGL Crib Point gas terminal</i> .....	4236
<i>Victorian African Communities Action Plan</i> .....	4236
<i>Metropolitan Remand Centre</i> .....	4237
<i>Fulham Correctional Centre</i> .....	4237
<i>TAFE funding</i> .....	4237, 4238

<i>River Red Gum Parks Management Plan</i> .....	4238, 4239
<i>Simplot Australia and SPC</i> .....	4239, 4240
<i>Written responses</i> .....	4240, 4278

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

<i>Answers</i> .....	4240
----------------------	------

### CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

<i>Northern Victoria Region</i> .....	4242, 4243
<i>Eastern Metropolitan Region</i> .....	4242, 4243
<i>Southern Metropolitan Region</i> .....	4242, 4243
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region</i> .....	4242
<i>Western Victoria Region</i> .....	4243, 4244

### FIREFIGHTERS PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS

LEGISLATION .....	4247
-------------------	------

### LAW REFORM, ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

<i>Reporting date</i> .....	4272
-----------------------------	------

### STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

<i>Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19</i> .....	4272, 4275
<i>Electoral Matters Committee: conduct of 2014 Victorian state election</i> .....	4273, 4274
<i>Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee: career advice activities in Victorian schools</i> .....	4273

### ADJOURNMENT

<i>Goulburn Valley Health</i> .....	4276
<i>Solar homes program</i> .....	4276
<i>Western Ring Road noise pollution</i> .....	4277
<i>Homelessness</i> .....	4277
<i>Responses</i> .....	4278



## Wednesday, 22 August 2018

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

**The PRESIDENT** — It might be best right at the start of the day after the prayer when I am actually on my feet to deliver other notices if members could wait at the gates until I resume my seat. I think that would be a real courtesy to the Parliament.

### RULINGS BY THE CHAIR

#### Environment Protection Amendment (Container Deposit Scheme) Bill 2018

**The PRESIDENT** (09:36) — I want to advise the house of a ruling in terms of the Environment Protection Amendment (Container Deposit Scheme) Bill 2018. This ruling is pursuant to matters raised by Mr Rich-Phillips. In the previous sitting week I noted that the Environment Protection Amendment (Container Deposit Scheme) Bill 2018 then before the house had been drafted so as to avoid the imposition of any tax or duty in relation to the proposed scheme under section 62 of the Constitution Act 1975. I noted that the word ‘refund’ was not part of the title of the bill when made public, whereas ‘refund’ had been in the title of the bill at first reading in 2016.

However, during the second-reading debate, Mr Rich-Phillips raised a point of order that the imposition of a mandatory fee on beverage suppliers for the management, administration and operation of the scheme as required by the bill could be an impost under section 62. Mr Rich-Phillips noted that debate would proceed but asked that I provide a view to the house. The Acting Chair at the time took the matter on notice and indicated that I would be making a ruling on the matter at a later time. In the meantime, the house defeated the bill on the second reading. Notwithstanding the bill’s defeat, Mr Rich-Phillips’s point of order requires a response.

There are two aspects to the response: firstly, to what extent could the bill be held to be one imposing a tax or impost and therefore be in breach of section 62 of the Constitution Act; and secondly, to what extent should the President intervene to rule the bill out of order as opposed to having the house form its own view as part of the decision to vote for or against the bill at second and third reading, or to amend it during committee of the whole.

Where a bill is clearly out of order — for example, for obviously contravening the constitution — I may

declare it to be an irregular bill under standing order 14.02 and order it to be withdrawn, as recently occurred with the Charities Amendment (Charitable Purpose) Bill 2018. That bill was clearly dealing with and seeking to directly amend existing tax and duties acts and to change existing tax exemptions in such a way as amounted to an impost. At that time I was able to order the bill to be withdrawn as an irregular bill without question. However, there are times when I believe it is not appropriate for the Chair to determine these matters and it is more suitable for the house to consider specific elements of the bill and its eligibility through debate. The matter raised by Mr Rich-Phillips in the previous week’s debate is one such matter. I point out that in fact in the course of a debate amendments could well be moved to a bill on the floor of the house and change the nature of that bill.

One of the key elements of the bill introduced by Ms Springle is that the mandatory fee was not to be collected by the government. There was to be no engagement with the Consolidated Fund in terms of collection of fees or payments of refunds. There is debate around the meaning of impost in relation to legislative powers of the houses. In *Air Caledonie International v. Commonwealth* [1988] the High Court ruled that an exaction must not always be necessarily collected by a public authority in order to be an impost. However, in 1993 the Speaker in the other place ruled that imposts under section 62 of the constitution did not apply in relation to a bill before that house because there was no engagement between the impost and the Consolidated Fund — imposts on contributors were instead going into a fund at arm’s length from government.

In the case of Ms Springle’s container deposit bill I think there is a reasonably strong argument to say that its effect would have been to impose a mandatory fee and therefore to be seen as an impost. However, there is room to legitimately contest this view, and as such it was more appropriate for the house to make determinations on the bill’s eligibility rather than for the Chair in this instance to take any unilateral action to deny the house the opportunity to make up its own mind.

**Mrs Peulich** — On a point of order, President, just further to the ruling that you have made, you do not outline the grounds on which in the closing part of your ruling you argue that there is room to put forward an argument that it is not an impost. You provide no grounds or reasons for that. Are you perhaps able to circularise the ruling? I am still of the view, with Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips, that the bill should not have been carried to a vote, so I am very interested to learn

of the arguments that perhaps underpin the ruling in terms of why you believe the debate should have proceeded. If you are able to circularise that, that would be useful.

**The PRESIDENT** — I will circulate the paper, but essentially I did refer in that ruling to a ruling in the other place, the Legislative Assembly, by Speaker Delzoppo, which actually defines that area of your concern. Ms Patten's bill on the charities was a fairly clear circumstance in respect of obviously its impact on government finances; that was a fairly clear position for me to be able to take. But in this one, given the way the bill had been reconfigured and the change in the title and the fact that there was not a proposition that the impost would directly go through the Consolidated Fund, it was a little bit more ambiguous.

From that point of view, as I indicated in that ruling — which was not actually written down; this was my point — for the Chair to intervene where there is some ambiguity is different. The house may well have amended that legislation further to address the points of the impost and changed it by way of amendment to the bill were it to be carried on the second reading and then in fact there would not have been a problem. So I felt that in that case it was better to let that bill actually proceed and be determined by the house. As I said, that is consistent with a ruling that was given by Speaker Delzoppo in the other place in respect of what constitutes an impost.

**Mrs Peulich** — On a further point of order, President, am I surmising from your comments that the advice that you received did not necessarily provide the arguments for allowing the bill to proceed and that you have made that decision yourself? You said that it was not contained in the written advice that you have received. Is that right? You said you had just made that ruling rather than —

**The PRESIDENT** — No, what I said I had just done of my own volition, if you like, was mention the aspect that in debate a bill could be amended. That was the extra path that I added of my own volition, which I think the clerks would accept. But the ruling itself, the substantive ruling, is based on research that has been done by the clerks on my behalf. As I said, it takes into account Speaker Delzoppo's previous ruling.

## PETITIONS

### Following petitions presented to house:

#### Woorayl Street reserve, Carnegie

To the Honourable the President and members of the Legislative Council assembled in Parliament.

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

1. the City of Glen Eira has the least open space per head of population of all Victorian local government areas;
2. as such, any and all remaining heritage trees are precious to Glen Eira residents and need to be retained wherever possible;
3. Rosie (pictured) and the remaining handful of eucalypts at Woorayl reserve are under threat by the state government's proposed development of the station precinct next to Carnegie station.

We therefore call upon the Andrews Labor government to cancel plans for development of the Woorayl Street reserve and re-establish this as open space.

**By Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan)  
(10 signatures).**

**Laid on table.**

#### Keysborough South secondary school

Legislative Council electronic petition:

The petition of certain citizens of the state of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council that there is no government secondary school in Keysborough South.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council of Victoria urge the government to —

- (1) determine a site location for a new secondary school for the wider Keysborough region, noting that the neighbouring suburbs of Waterways and Dingley Village do not have a state secondary school; and
- (2) commit funding for the construction of Keysborough South secondary school to open for the 2022 school year.

**By Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan)  
(320 signatures).**

**Laid on table.**

## CORRECTIONS AMENDMENT (ADULT PAROLE BOARD) BILL 2018

### *Introduction and first reading*

**Mr O'DONOHUE** (Eastern Victoria) (09:47) — I move:

To introduce a bill for an act to amend the Corrections Act 1986 and for other purposes.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read first time.**

### ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

#### Methodologies and outcomes from Victorian Ombudsman reports tabled in Parliament

**Ms SYMES** (Northern Victoria) presented report, together with transcripts of evidence.

**Laid on table.**

**Ordered that report be published.**

**Ms SYMES** (Northern Victoria) (09:48) — I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

In doing so I will just make a few remarks on the final report of the Accountability and Oversight Committee. Obviously by the title this inquiry was looking into the methodologies and outcomes from the Ombudsman's reports tabled during this Parliament. During the current Ombudsman's term she has undertaken 30 investigations and own-motion inquiries resulting in reports tabled in the Parliament. Of those there are about 125 recommendations that she has made. The committee looked at the implementation of the recommendations across government departments and agencies and local governments.

In terms of the response from government departments and agencies to the recommendations made by the Ombudsman, a total of 50 per cent of recommendations have been implemented, 38 per cent are in progress and the remaining 12 per cent have been either accepted partially or accepted, are in progress, no response is required or have not been accepted.

In our work we have made some recommendations for the government to consider in relation to enhancing the Ombudsman's important role, and we have made three focused recommendations in that regard.

Recommendation 1 is:

That the Victorian Ombudsman continue to report biennially to the Victorian Parliament on progress by agencies in implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations.

Recommendation 2 is that the government consider amending the Ombudsman Act 1973 to require the Victorian government to partner with its agencies and local councils subject to recommendations by the Victorian Ombudsman and submit to the Ombudsman an indicative timetable by which recommendations are expected to be implemented. We suggested parameters in the short term of up to 12 months, in the medium term of one to three years and in the long term of over three years.

Recommendation 3 is that the Victorian government consider amending the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003:

... to provide a function to enable the Accountability and Oversight Committee to hold hearings into the status of implementation of Ombudsman recommendations by government agencies and local councils.

It was a unanimous report.

I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues who are on that committee with me, especially the chair, Neil Angus from the other house; Luke O'Sullivan, an upper house colleague; Michael Gidley in the Assembly; James Purcell, also from this house; Wade Noonan in the Assembly; and the Honourable Marsha Thomson in the Assembly. But more importantly I would like to thank the work of the hardworking secretariat. Sean Coley has been the executive officer for this committee since the commencement of this Parliament, and I would really like to thank him for his diligence, efficiency and commitment to that important role.

Also, we were very fortunate to have the talented research officer Caitlin Grover, who is very, very intelligent — an up-and-comer. I am very grateful to have worked with her on this report; it is the second time I have worked with her. Also, I thank administrative officer Sarah Catherall for her ongoing support in and commitment to the role of helping the Parliament perform its duties through the committee process.

**Motion agreed to.**

## ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

### Career advice activities in Victorian schools

**Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) presented report, including appendices, together with transcripts of evidence.**

**Laid on table.**

**Ordered that report be published.**

**Mr ELASMAR (Northern Metropolitan) (09:52) —**  
I move:

That the Council take note of the report.

This report is very special to each member of the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee. I am thankful to my fellow committee members who gave their time and energy, ultimately concluding with this sterling report. We all feel very strongly about the importance of quality career advice at schools to help our young people reach their potential. We know that in recent years young people have found it harder to secure full-time work and it is taking them longer to do so. The committee and I are confident that the recommendations in this report will improve school career development and improve students' capacity and confidence to make smart career choices.

The views of young people were central to this inquiry. We used novel ways to engage young people, including an online survey which 247 young people responded to, and we broadcast some of our hearings online. We also heard from young people with a disability, young people who had been disengaged and students and recent school leavers from regional and rural Victoria. I would like to thank the many young people, school careers practitioners, educators, employers and organisations who made submissions to the inquiry, responded to the online survey and gave evidence at the public hearings. Their views and suggestions had a significant impact on the final report.

I would also like to formally thank the committee members for their commitment and contributions to this report. I acknowledge the deputy chair, Ms Dee Ryall in the Assembly; Mr Jeff Bourman; Mr Peter Crisp, Mrs Christine Fyffe and the Honourable Jane Garrett in the Assembly; and Mr Cesar Melhem. As always, the committee and I also express our appreciation to the secretariat, Ms Kerry Riseley, Dr Marianna Stylianou and Ms Janelle Spielvogel, for their diligence, hard work and support throughout the inquiry.

Students in secondary school have important decisions to make about their future. It is the duty of schools to develop students' skills and confidence to make wise career choices which match their strengths and interests. In addition, the nature of work is changing. Schools need to teach students how to manage changes in the labour market and to navigate work and study as their interests and circumstances change over time.

It became clear during the inquiry that career development in Victorian schools is not meeting the needs of students. The committee heard that students want tailored guidelines earlier in their schooling and more time with their school career practitioner. Employers and industry groups were also concerned about the career advice students receive. They told the committee that school career practitioners are not aware of the job opportunities available in industry and that they are directing students toward university rather than vocational education and training.

When we spoke with school career practitioners, we heard they struggle to find the time to meet with students, keep up to date with all the changes in their field and engage with employers and higher education providers. We also found that the delivery of career development in Victorian schools is very inconsistent, with some schools allocating little time and few resources to it. There are no mandated requirements for how schools provide career development.

The committee recommended that each school develop a career development strategy and hire qualified, professionally registered staff to deliver career development. We also recommended that the government support schools to employ one career practitioner for every 450 students enrolled at a secondary school. To provide additional support, we recommended that each local learning and employment network employ a coordinator to link local schools with employers, industry and higher education providers and to provide students, recent school leavers and their parents with counselling over the phone and via email and online chat.

These extra resources will enable career practitioners to spend more time with students. Students should have regular, one-to-one interactions with their school career practitioner from year 7, as well as greater exposure to the workplace before having to make decisions in their senior years. We also want the government to support regional students and young people facing disadvantage to access career development opportunities.

The committee considers career development to be an essential function of Victorian schools. The

recommendations in this report aim to improve the quality and quantity of career development services in Victorian schools and help students successfully navigate their post-school transition. I commend the report and the recommendations contained to the house.

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) (09:58) — I rise to speak on the career advice activities in Victorian schools report. I also want to congratulate the staff on doing a fantastic job, not only on this inquiry but over the last three and a half, nearly four, years. We had an excellent committee and excellent support staff, and I want to acknowledge their hard work for that period of time, and also that of the committee members.

It is great to see when there is a non-political inquiry into a public interest issue, like the career advice inquiry, where it was not subject to political argument. That is where committees and members of Parliament work at their best. I want to acknowledge the good work of all the members of the committee, and I think the committee's report is a high-quality report, with 46 recommendations in all. I am very pleased that the government has already started acting on a lot of the recommendations in the report, which is a really pleasing thing. For example, the government is looking at one of the recommendations in relation to having a career adviser at every school; that has been acted on. It is very important to actually have career advice provided starting at year 7, and I think this is a very important development, which is acknowledged by the government.

I think it is important that our kids at school are able to have that guidance throughout primary school and secondary school to make sure they have a clear view on what to do when they get to years 11 and 12 and whether they go on to university or TAFE or vocational education. I think it is very important and I am very pleased that the state government is actually looking at adopting most of the 46 recommendations in the report, given various announcements. I commend the report to the house, and again I want to acknowledge the good work of the committee and the staff.

**Motion agreed to.**

## PAPERS

**Laid on table by Clerk:**

Surveyor-General — Report on the administration of the Survey Co-ordination Act 1958, 2017–18.

## MINISTERS STATEMENTS

### Bee biosecurity

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (10:02) — I am pleased to inform the house of our government's ongoing support of the largest annual movement of livestock in Australia. This event is happening right now, with over 4.2 billion honey bees being transported to north-west Victoria for almond pollination. I see Mr Ramsay has got the giggles about the definition of bees and livestock, but that is how it is.

**Mr Ramsay** — Are they livestock?

**Ms PULFORD** — They are livestock. An estimated 140 000 beehives from Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland have been transported to orchards in north-west Victoria to pollinate the region's almond blossoms. Victoria's almond industry is worth approximately \$381 million a year, with \$330 million worth of almonds having been exported to 40 countries in 2016–17. Almonds make up over 30 per cent of the value of total horticulture exports from Victoria. Whether you like eating them or having almond milk in your latte, this is an emerging industry that we are happy to support and an industry that could not survive without bees.

With so many beehives in the same area at one time there is an increased risk of hives being exposed to disease, particularly American foulbrood. American foulbrood is the most serious brood disease of honey bees in Australia and leads to bee colony death. Agriculture Victoria apiary officers conduct annual surveillance and compliance operations in Victorian commercial almond orchards during almond pollination in support of the industry and to promote best practice bee biosecurity. This year's operation is being delivered over two weeks and commenced on Monday, 13 August. On the first day of the operation apiary officers destroyed 58 hives infected with American foulbrood.

All of this work is following on from the recent conclusion of Agriculture Victoria's precautionary surveillance program around the port of Melbourne following a detection of varroa mite. Following extensive surveillance efforts, no further detections of varroa mite were found — a successful response that was widely supported and acknowledged by industry. I would like to take this opportunity to thank and recognise the staff and volunteers that worked around the clock to keep Victoria's bees safe during that response. Australia is one of the last remaining countries in the world to be free of varroa mite.

## Sudanese community

**Ms MIKAKOS** (Minister for Youth Affairs) (10:04) — I rise today to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is helping more young South Sudanese Victorians be their best and reach their full potential. Youth disengagement is connected with a range of factors, including low socio-economic status, disrupted education, discrimination and social exclusion. The impact of disengagement is significant for young people, their families and communities. This is why the Andrews Labor government is investing \$5.5 million for three new community support groups (CSGs). The Centre for Multicultural Youth will auspice two groups — in Dandenong and in Melton-Brimbank — and the Wyndham Community and Education Centre has been appointed to auspice the third CSG, which will be located in Wyndham.

Each group has been funded to support its establishment and operation, including employing staff to work with young South Sudanese people and their families and provide them with culturally sensitive support. A local reference group established by the auspice organisations and comprised of community members, including young people, and local and state government representatives will guide each location's operations and activities. The focus is to connect young people and their families to existing and new activities. Funding will also support the engagement of youth outreach workers, alcohol and drug support workers, parenting programs, youth mentoring, family support and sports and recreation activities. Each of the new locations was selected in response to consultation through the *Victorian African Communities Action Plan*, developed by and for African communities in partnership with our government.

Young people who are happy, healthy and connected to education and employment pathways are an asset to our state. We are making sure that every young person has the support and opportunities to make a positive contribution to our society.

## Nhill Learning Centre

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Regional Development) (10:06) — Today Victoria is truly the engine room of the national economy. We lead the nation on wages growth, retail trade growth and real gross state product growth. Victoria also leads the nation in population growth. People want to live in Victoria because it is a great place to live and raise a family. But Victoria's success in the last few years has led to some challenges.

We see significant population growth in Melbourne, in our regional cities and in many of our peri-urban areas, including South Barwon and Bass Coast. In other parts of the state, such as the Great South Coast region in south-western Victoria, booming employment growth is outstripping population growth, leading to skills shortages. In other regions, such as the Wimmera, there has been a slow, long-term population decline over many years — indeed for a number of generations. The Wimmera's ageing and declining population base means that employers are experiencing labour and skills shortages. To address skills shortages and encourage population growth in the Wimmera we need to encourage migration to the region, and to attract migrants you need support services — literacy services, including English language skills, numeracy skills, training and assistance with housing.

This is what has led us to fund an important project for the Nhill community from the government's Regional Skills Fund. I recently approved \$480 000 in funding to the Nhill Learning Centre towards the Wimmera culturally and linguistically diverse workforce industry partnership project. This project will engage a full-time workforce development officer along with a part-time multilingual liaison officer. Based in Nhill, they will partner with industry to provide outreach services to culturally and linguistically diverse employees and their employers. Over 15 small, medium and large employers and over 150 employees across the Wimmera will be involved.

It will build on the work that Luv-a-Duck have done with the Karen community, which has responded to labour shortages and encouraged migration to the region since 2009. Today 8 per cent of Nhill's population are Karen refugees. The project will identify skills gaps, implement learning strategies for employees and identify future employment and education pathways. It will provide workforce diversity and provide businesses with labour to meet their workforce requirements to grow their businesses. There will be important partnerships with Federation University TAFE, local businesses and regionally based training organisations. At the well-known business Luv-a-Duck an onsite learning lab will be established. At the learning lab English lessons and training programs will be provided. There will also be training delivered online.

Other industry sponsors involved include Australian Wildflowers, the West Wimmera Health Service, Ahrens Sherwell manufacturing, Oscar Furniture manufacturing, G & M Kennedy and Toh Mae Pa.

### Family support programs

**Ms MIKAKOS** (Minister for Families and Children) (10:08) — I rise to update the house on how the Andrews Labor government is delivering more support for vulnerable families at risk of becoming involved with child protection or out-of-home care. Yesterday I announced a further \$11.2 million over two years for evidence-based innovative programs that support vulnerable families. This builds on the \$6.1 million I announced in January this year for evidence-based trials. Just earlier this week *Four Corners* showcased one of the programs which we are supporting. It showed three families, one in Rosebud West undertaking the SafeCare program run by OzChild, which provides parents with children aged up to five with at-home parent training sessions to reduce the risk of child maltreatment.

We know that every parent needs support at some stage, so it is crucial that we get in early to support those in need with programs that are backed by experts and those who work in the field. Other programs to be delivered through this investment include an Australian-first multisystemic therapy psychology program to be delivered in West Melbourne and the Barwon region, which provides intensive at-home treatment and 24/7 crisis response targeting children aged between nine and 15 who are at risk of removal or in care due to dysfunction, trauma or other issues.

The functional family therapy program is to be delivered in the Loddon region, which is aimed at families with kids aged up to 17 where there has been child protection involvement, and Promoting First Relationships is to be delivered in north-east Melbourne, which is a 10-week relationship-building program aimed at increasing a parent or caregiver's awareness of their child's needs. There are many other programs being funded, and I congratulate each of the agencies involved in this initiative.

This is the first time a Victorian government has invested in these types of evidence-based programs, and this investment is helping to deliver on our government's *Roadmap for Reform*, shifting the focus from crisis response to early intervention and prevention, because we know that if we provide this early intervention through these types of programs we will strengthen families and provide a safe and stable home for their children and make sure that we can reduce their interaction with the statutory system. I also congratulate the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, which will provide implementation support to embed these evidence-based approaches, for

partnering with my department in relation to these initiatives.

## MEMBERS STATEMENTS

### India floods

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (10:11) — I rise to extend my deepest condolences to those affected by the floods in the Indian state of Kerala, where 223 people lost their lives between 8 and 20 August and — I do not have the latest figures — more than 700 000 people have been displaced from their homes. The people of Kerala have suffered through the worst floods in over a century. Many homes have been destroyed and many more damaged by the floods. The Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund is providing immediate emergency relief to those in distress and is currently taking donations. The local diaspora is also getting behind this cause.

### Senator Fraser Anning

**Mrs PEULICH** — I also want to express my concern at the racist and provocative remarks expressed by Senator Anning, condemning them in the strongest possible way. We live in the most successful multicultural society in the world. Our success is built on a foundation of mutual respect, and we have managed to create this in a world where there is so much disharmony. We have much of which to be proud, and we can never take it for granted. We must always stand up for our commitment to an Australia that defines itself by reference to shared political values, freedom, democracy, the rule of law and a fair go for all no matter where they were born or where they have come from.

In 1966 the Liberal Prime Minister Harold Holt repealed any legislation that enabled the White Australia policy or discriminated against migrants on the basis of their race or religion. That was a great Liberal achievement, and of course in 1967 we had the great referendum — an enormously uniting statement of our commitment to equality. Anning's reference to the 'final solution' was appalling. I condemn that in the strongest possible terms, just as we condemn the racist remarks — a shocking rejection of the Australian values that have made us the successful multicultural nation we are today.

### Eid ul-Adha

**Mrs PEULICH** — In closing I also wish to extend my best wishes to the Islamic community on the occasion of Eid ul-Adha. Eid Mubarak!

### Senator Mehreen Faruqi and Lee Rhiannon

**Ms PENNICUIK** (Southern Metropolitan)

(10:13) — Yesterday I watched online as our new Greens senator for New South Wales, Dr Mehreen Faruqi, gave her first speech as the 100th woman elected to the Australian Senate. As with most first speeches, Mehreen spoke about the journey her life had taken to lead her to taking her place in the Senate. She also lamented the bigotry and xenophobia that have been allowed to flourish in Australia and said that we must all stand up against it.

Dr Faruqi was a member of the New South Wales Legislative Council from 2013 to 2018, and I have enjoyed working with her on issues such as animal welfare. She said she is determined to use her time in the Senate to shake things up, just as she did in the NSW upper house. I know she will. Mehreen will be a wonderful senator, and I send her my best wishes.

I would also like to pay tribute to retired Greens senator Lee Rhiannon, whom Mehreen referred to in her first speech as ‘a leading light’ for her campaigns on public services, animal welfare, political donations reform and more. Her Democracy4Sale campaign was groundbreaking.

Lee has campaigned on a myriad of social justice and environmental issues all her life. She joined the Greens in 1990 and was a member of the New South Wales upper house from 1999 to 2010 and a senator from 2011 to 2018. I first met Lee in 1997 and have worked with her over the years on many issues, including public education, equality, industrial relations, gun control, animal welfare issues and logging in East Gippsland. Lee has said she is leaving Parliament but not politics and will continue to work on the issues she is passionate about. I thank Lee for her huge contribution to public life and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

### Government achievements

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) (10:14) — I rise to commend the incredible work being done by the Andrews Labor government in Victoria. This government is delivering for all Victorians and our economy is thriving. Under the Andrews Labor government 370 000 jobs have been created since the election in 2014, with 234 300 of these jobs being full-time. The unemployment rate has plunged from the 6.7 per cent inherited from the Liberals to around 5 per cent now.

We are seeing record investment in education. The 2018–19 budget alone invested \$1.25 billion in Victoria’s schools. In total over 70 new schools are being built across the state and more than 1200 are receiving vital upgrades. Our TAFE sector is also being revitalised after the Liberal Party decimated it when they were in charge. This government is making 30 priority courses free and is creating over 30 000 new training places in Victoria.

Victorians are also getting the health care they deserve, with billions of dollars in extra investment for hospitals and health services, and this is paying off. Our ambulance response times are the fastest they have ever been, and our elective surgery waiting list is the smallest it has ever been.

That is without even mentioning the unparalleled investment in road and rail infrastructure: the Metro rail tunnel, the West Gate tunnel, level crossing removals, the north-east link, the regional rail revival, a suburban roads package, an airport rail link and over \$100 billion worth of infrastructure investment in the pipeline.

This government is getting things done. I congratulate this government on everything it has achieved so far, and I am proud to be a member of the most progressive government in Australia. This government truly delivers for all Victorians.

### Decentralisation

**Mr RAMSAY** (Western Victoria) (10:16) — In 1972 the Victorian Liberal Minister for State Development and Decentralisation, Murray Byrne, set out a 10-point policy on decentralisation. It talked about the provision of full infrastructure to country areas, such as power, water, sewerage and roads. He also suggested all new government institutions should be built outside the metropolitan area where possible and tourism efforts should be promoted and supported with the provision of facilities for tourists. He was followed by Digby Crozier, who had a similar portfolio and forged the way for Alcoa to be established in Portland.

Last week former Premier Steve Bracks and former Deputy Premier Pat McNamara joined forces to renew the call for decentralisation. They focused on four pillars, which largely mirrored those of Byrne’s 1972 platform. They want clear targets that go statewide and beyond the obvious regional centres. They want better integrated land use and transport planning, and more involvement from the private sector to make much of this happen.

Decentralisation is not a new idea. Thriving regional cities are a testament, in some part, to the success of those policies to date. The coalition today is heralding a renewed focus on decentralisation as a matter of urgency as Melbourne's population swells by about 150 000 a year, which is just not sustainable. Even the best town planners are saying that it will be hard to catch up with, let alone get in front of, what is a wave of growth and hopefully progress.

Murray Byrne was right to say that infrastructure is key to making our regional cities and towns viable and progressive places for population growth. More than ever successful decentralisation will demand better roads, fast rail, greater connectivity with public transport and better hospitals and schools. The public purse does have a role to play in achieving decentralisation and making the regions attractive.

### The Greens

**Ms TRUONG** (Western Metropolitan) (10:18) — Today marks six months since I was sworn in as the Greens member for Western Metropolitan Region and as the first Vietnamese-Australian woman to be sworn in to any Australian Parliament, and what an incredible privilege this is. I have raised questions against this government's shameful West Gate tunnel project and the delayed Footscray Hospital rebuild and prosecuted the case for Victoria to implement an exit strategy for landfills. There are many and various other fights we Greens are fighting so that our constituents in safe seats can still expect to be heard in this place.

When you start at any workplace it takes you a while to get your bearings, and it is even harder when the workplace is steeped in elitist traditions of colonial times and is predominantly white and male. Across the floor they have heckled us as we have got on with the work. In no other workplace could you behave in such a way and expect to keep your job.

We are the political arm of progressive movements here and worldwide, true to the promise of a truly democratic and compassionate politics. We are a party room of seven women out of eight members, including a public school teacher speaking on education, a forest activist holding the government to account on logging and former community and social workers speaking on women's issues, gambling harm and housing issues.

That diversity of representation is possible because our grassroots politics is working and our members made space for each of us to enter this place. To everyone who is yet to see themselves reflected in this place out there: we are here, we see you and we are making space

for you. I am more determined than ever to do good work in this place and to keep our democracy working for all Victorians.

### Cohuna Recreation Reserve

**Mr GEPP** (Northern Victoria) (10:19) — I am not sure how I follow that, but anyway I will give it a crack. I recently opened the Cohuna Recreation Reserve lighting upgrade project along with Gannawarra Shire Council mayor Brian Gibson, Cr Lorraine Learmonth and Cr Sonia Wright, as well as the president of the mighty Cohuna Kangas Football Netball Club, Grant Lunghusen, or 'Lungy' as he is known.

The lighting upgrade on the first oval includes four 32-metre poles, each set with ten 2000-watt lights. In addition to this, there were another four 10-metre poles with two 1000-watt lights installed on the recently upgraded netball courts. I am pleased to say that the contract for the lighting upgrade was carried out by a local contractor, Mr Steven Orr from Steven Orr Electrical. It was great to see those locals participate.

Unfortunately the mighty Cohuna Kangas did not get up on the weekend — they were beaten by the Woorinen Tigers — but I must say that I was cheering for the Kangas.

### Committee for Greater Shepparton

**Mr GEPP** — I also had the great privilege to be in Shepparton recently to announce funding of \$750 000 for the Committee for Greater Shepparton to establish the Growing Regional Opportunities for Work program (GROW) in the region.

**Ms Lovell** interjected.

**Mr GEPP** — Yes, you were not there; that is right. GROW will bring business, government, community organisations and individuals together to address disadvantage and grow employment in Shepparton. All partners commit to building a stronger local economy and to offering opportunities for jobseekers.

### Strathfieldsaye early years hub

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) (10:21) — Last week, together with the Liberal candidate for Bendigo East, Ian Ellis, I was honoured to attend the official opening of the Strathfieldsaye community early years hub. The community early years hub provides vital child and maternal health services for the families of Strathfieldsaye, meeting the demands of a growing community. The \$2.7 million project has seen the construction of a building that houses a three and

four-year-old kindergarten, maternal and child health services, a playgroup and a meeting room. The hub holds particular significance for me because it was when I was Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development that I announced government funding of \$650 000 for the project in June 2014. It was wonderful to join City of Greater Bendigo mayor Cr Margaret O'Rourke and members of the Strathfieldsaye community at the opening of this wonderful facility.

### **Julie Henderson**

**Ms LOVELL** — I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Merrigum Lions Club member Julie Henderson on receiving a Lions International President's Award in recognition of her outstanding volunteering efforts over the last 12 months. Julie was one of only 100 recipients of the award worldwide, which recognised her work on three volunteer projects within the Merrigum community. These projects included replacing the existing Lions Club signage in the town, installing a gate at the Merrigum Avenue of Honour and replacing the roof of the Merrigum town hall. Well done to Julie on receiving this most prestigious award.

### **Mr Gepp**

**Ms LOVELL** — The hypocrisy of the member opposite, Mark Gepp, last night when he tweeted about Parma for a Farmer was outstanding. This is the same member who last Christmas blockaded Webb Dock, causing much grief and financial loss to our farmers as their fruit and milk rotted on the docks because of his blockade.

### **The Tipping Foundation**

**Ms SHING** (Eastern Victoria) (10:23) — I rise today to congratulate a number of self-advocates who I visited with last week at the Tipping Foundation in Morwell. They are brave, they are courageous, they are articulate and they did a wonderful job of expressing the challenges and opportunities that they face in everyday life. I wanted to give a big shout-out to Voice at the Table, to Yooralla and to the Tipping Foundation, and in particular congratulate Catherine, David, Rachael, Maryanne, Heather, Emily, Julie, Graham and Nick for talking about issues ranging from public transport to the receipt of goods and services and the way in which they encounter discrimination and differential treatment on the basis of intellectual disability in everyday life. Congratulations. Thank you so much. I cannot wait to keep working with you to assist you with the issues that you have identified.

### **Navigator program**

**Ms SHING** — It was a great privilege to launch the Navigator program for inner Gippsland along with Minister for Education James Merlino at Lowana College last week. The rollout of this \$44 million program will ensure that young people who either are at risk of dropping out of school or have disconnected and disengaged from school get the tailored support that they need in a very specialised way, ranging from social work assistance through to psychologists and case management within the school environment. Congratulations to everybody who has worked so hard to bring this program to fruition. We are looking to continue the work to drop the levels of fall-through-the-cracks issues that persist within our secondary schools and primary schools throughout the state.

### **Allan Lawson**

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) (10:24) — I wish to pay tribute to Mr Allan Lawson, who died earlier this year. Allan was a passionate advocate for independence for people who are deaf-blind and continually showed us how this was done. Allan negotiated his way around his home in Sandringham and beyond, often on his own with his white cane, but also with help from friends, neighbours and local shopkeepers.

When I used to see Allan tapping his way around Flinders Street station in his determined fashion I often wondered how he did it. Part of it was that Allan lived in a close-knit community that looked out for him when he sometimes needed help. But in truth he taught us all a great deal. Allan was friendly, happy, approachable and very patient with people, especially the children and dogs that sometimes, despite everyone's best efforts, got in his way.

Allan was also a passionate runner and swimmer. He began running early on his parents farm near Leongatha. He did fun runs, a duathlon and took part in the torch relay for the 2000 Olympics. On one occasion he ran from Jolimont Square, past the MCG and the Yarra River, doing 4 kilometres around the Tan and back. Allan swam at the beach every day.

I was filled with sadness to learn that early in the morning, on his way to the beach, Allan was hit by a car on Beach Road and later died. This gentle, friendly man deserved so much better than that, and I so regret that none of us were there to help him that day.

It is very fitting that plans are well afoot to create a mural that will be a permanent memorial to Allan — a visible reminder of someone who was an integral part of Sandy village and someone whom we will never forget.

### **Avenel infrastructure funding**

**Ms SYMES** (Northern Victoria) (10:26) — Following on from my Northern Victoria Region colleague Mark Gepp and his experience in Cohuna during the week, I would also like to point to the country towns that are benefiting from and going from strength to strength because of the support and commitment from the Labor government.

I was in Avenel on Saturday and was very pleased to join members of that community. Lots of people turned out for the ribbon-cutting for the opening of the cricket nets and the second netball court plaque unveiling. We also got to inspect the progress of the skate park which is being built at the Avenel Recreation Reserve. I was joined by Strathbogie shire councillors, in particular the mayor, Amanda McClaren; the Beddison Group's Tony Beddison, AC, and Robyn Beddison; the Avenel Recreation Reserve steering committee president, Garry Green; representatives from Avenel Primary School, the Avenel Action Group, the Avenel skate park committee, the Avenel Football Netball Club, the Avenel Cricket club and the Tabilk Junior Football Netball Club; and also residential advocates.

Avenel is a community of not too many more than a thousand people, but they are growing and they are a community that does not just put their hand out and ask for assistance. They come and work with us as the government, and they are a great community to work with. In the past four years we have delivered expansions to the preschool with \$350 000 and a new Avenel hall upgrade with \$300 000. We have fixed the problematic intersection in town to make it safer, and obviously being so close to Seymour many of those students at Avenel Primary School are going on to Seymour College and are going to benefit from the brand-new facilities in that community.

We are continuing to work with small country communities, helping them go from strength to strength and making sure that they are great places to live and raise a family.

### **Tyers Primary School**

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) (10:28) — I recently had the pleasure of visiting Tyers Primary School, and I was so inspired by the grade 3, 4, 5 and 6 students'

local, regional, community and global focus that I offered to be a voice for Ms Carleen Haylock's grade 5 and 6 class. Here are their words:

I would like to share with Parliament what we are doing in our classroom. We are focusing on the UN Global Goals 2030 and the *War on Waste*, as this aligns with the Global Goals numbers 13 and 14. We feel passionate about these goals, as we are the next custodians for the future and want a planet that is fair and clean.

We believe that there is too much going into our landfills and would strongly support new industries that help to decrease this. One of these could be microfactories which in our area would provide employment to our locals, as we have high unemployment due to Hazelwood power station closing down.

Another program that we are backing is the no more straw campaign that was developed by a student in Cairns. We want all retailers and hotels that provide straws to change to paper straws or place their straws behind the counter, then have their patrons ask for a straw. This will have a huge positive input into the amount of straws that land into our waterways and eventually into the oceans. This is so dangerous to our wildlife.

On behalf of Tyers Primary School, please support us in cleaning up our planet for our future.

### **Clergy mandatory reporting**

**Ms PATTEN** (Northern Metropolitan) (10:30) — In a recent adjournment debate I reinforced the critical need for governments to stop perceiving religious organisations as above the law when it comes to child sexual abuse. I have been working toward this change for more than a decade and have urged the church to put victims' needs ahead of its desire to defend its reputation. Sadly, victims continue to suffer.

I would like to commend Victorian Nationals leader, Peter Walsh, in the Assembly, who last week announced that if the coalition wins the Victorian election, they will amend the law to allow sexual abuse revealed in confession to be reported to police and used as evidence. That was even echoed straight from the Vatican this week, with Pope Francis issuing a letter to Catholics around the world deploring the crime and the cover-up of child sexual abuse by priests. He said:

The heart-wrenching pain of these victims, which cries out to heaven, was long ignored, kept quiet or silenced ...

And:

Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening ...

### *Giving Life*

**Ms PATTEN** — I would like to remind everyone about the amazing photo exhibition that is on at Parliament all this week. The other day accomplished photojournalist and organ recipient Andrew Chapman took us on a tour of his impactful exhibition, capturing the last moments of an organ donor's life and a recipient receiving a life-saving donation. It is a great time to have that conversation about becoming an organ donor.

## **FORESTS (WOOD PULP AGREEMENT) REPEAL BILL 2018**

### *Statement of compatibility*

### **Ms DUNN (Eastern 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 *Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Repeal Bill 2018*.

In my opinion, the *Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Repeal 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.

The Bill repeals the *Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996* to terminate the agreement set out in the schedule to that Act and to provide that any rights, privileges, obligations or liabilities under that agreement cease to exist on that termination. The Bill repeals previous Acts that remain on the statute book that implemented prior versions of the agreement.

The agreement is between the State of Victoria and a corporation. As per the Note in Section 6(1) of Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, corporations do not have human rights.

There are no Charter rights limited by the Bill.

### *Second reading*

**Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:32) — I move:**

That the bill be now read a second time.

I rise to speak on the *Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Repeal Bill 2018*.

It is critical for this state that we maintain a timber and paper products industry well into the future. We want furniture manufactured in Victoria from Australian-grown timber in our retail stores. We want to see Australian-made paper in our stationery shops

and Australian-made cardboard in our packaging. I'm sure every member in this house can agree on that.

This bill is about completing the transition of these timber and paper products industries into the future.

It's not about litigating the past or cutting an industry down.

This bill will help the pulp and paper industry to adapt to a steep decline in native forests that has been caused by over-logging and bushfires.

The over-logging has been due to government mismanagement and a lack of appropriate oversight of the government business enterprise, VicForests.

Persistently unsustainable levels of logging have increased the risk of bushfire in the context of a changing climate. This has increased the pressure on the remaining state forests, which drives further over-logging. It is a destructive feedback loop which is endangering our native forests.

### **The state of Victoria's native forests**

There is nothing environmentally sustainable about native forest logging currently occurring in Victoria.

It involves cutting down the most carbon-dense forests in the world, releasing huge amounts of carbon dioxide through the incineration of large volumes of forest debris left behind after each logging operation. Up to 60 per cent of the total biomass goes up in smoke.

Through a state-owned enterprise, VicForests, the state government logs our water catchments and imperils the water security of Melbourne. This is surely one of the most short-sighted actions possible considering the increasing duration and severity of drought predicted due to climate change.

The most economically valuable trees that are logged are the 'ash forests' consisting of *Eucalyptus delegatensis*, commonly known as alpine ash, and *Eucalyptus regnans*, commonly known as mountain ash. Mountain ash is the tallest flowering plant in the world and the second tallest tree after the sequoias of California. Timber from these trees are marketed as 'Victorian ash'.

The mountain ash forest provides important habitat for a range of threatened faunal species that rely on intact multi-age forests, large old trees and minimal disturbance. At least 40 of these faunal species need tree hollows to live and breed and it takes around 150 to 200 years to create hollows in such habitat trees.

One of these species, the Leadbeater's possum — *Gymnobelideus leadbeateri* — is the state faunal emblem and is found only in the existing mountain ash forest in the Central Highlands.

The threat from logging and bushfire has become so dire that the mountain ash ecosystem is now listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. This entire ecosystem is heading towards collapse.

### **Supply to Maryvale pulp mills is the principal driver of native forest logging**

The Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996, the act that will be repealed by this bill, legislates that at least 300 000 cubic metres of pulp logs must be sourced annually from these ash forests and delivered to the Maryvale pulp mills.

The Maryvale pulp mills were originally established in 1938 with a 50-year legislated supply of pulp logs from Victoria's state forests. That legislated agreement has been replaced multiple times by acts of this Parliament.

The present agreement was ratified by the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996 on the premise that the Maryvale pulp mills, then owned by Amcor, reduce their dependence on sourcing pulp logs from native forests and substitute these with pulp logs from plantations.

Today the Maryvale pulp mills are owned by Nippon Paper Group, a Japanese conglomerate, through its subsidiary, Paper Australia. All up there are three pulp mills, five papermaking machines, a bleach plant, a pulp lapping machine, a finishing facility, a waste paper processing plant, waste water treatment ponds and chemical recycling facilities. Two of the mills — the bleached hardwood kraft pulp mill and the neutral sulphite semichemical mill — are currently tooled to use hardwood woodchips sourced from native forests.

The Maryvale pulp mills currently consume over 500 000 cubic metres of logs per year from state forests, which is secured under the legislated agreement and a timber sales agreement. They also consume about 130 000 cubic metres per year of offcuts from timber mills that use native forest sawlogs. Based on a report by industry consultants Pöyry in 2011, these mills consume 456 000 cubic metres of pulp logs from the ash forests and 174 000 cubic metres from mixed species forests annually.

According to Paper Australia this represents around 30 per cent of the pulp mills' needs, with the remaining

70 per cent coming from plantations and sourced from recycling streams.

This volume of consumption vastly exceeds that used by other mills. The second largest customer for VicForests' logs from the endangered ash forests is the state government-owned Heyfield mill, which consumes 80 000 cubic metres per annum. The remaining 73 000 cubic metres of ash logs allocated by VicForests are distributed amongst multiple small timber mills. The total of 153 000 cubic metres of ash sawlogs supplied to all the state's timber mills is only a third of the volume of ash forest logs consumed by the Maryvale pulp mills.

Therefore, if we are to transition from native forest logging to 100 per cent sustainable plantation supply, the largest customer of native forest logs needs to be a significant part of that equation. The Nippon Paper Group, as owners of Paper Australia and the Maryvale pulp mills, must lead the transition. The repeal of the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996 is the first necessary step to decouple the Maryvale pulp mills from native forests.

### **The act is counter to the interests of the state**

The Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996 is a very peculiar piece of legislation, because no other business in the Victorian timber and pulp industry has legislation binding the state government to provide fixed log volumes for 34 years. Every other business in the industry is subject to short-term rolling contracts, which are reviewed regularly.

At its heart, the act is a take-or-pay contract. Under section 16 of the act, Paper Australia must purchase 85 per cent of the assigned log volumes as specified under section 14, subsection (2), which from now until the year 2030, the end of the agreement, is 350 000 cubic metres per year. Failure to take delivery of 85 per cent of this volume, or 297 500 cubic metres, results in a penalty applied to Paper Australia at the rate equal to the average pulpwood royalty paid that year.

Take-or-pay contracts are common in the energy and mining sectors. They give the owners of a wind farm or the operator of a rail line the certainty they require in order to make the considerable investment to build the infrastructure.

Take-or-pay contracts are not appropriate for the supply of a natural resource under immense pressure from bushfire and over-logging. This is because it is simply not possible to maintain a constant output as specified in take-or-pay contracts such as the wood pulp agreement, which has an exceptionally blunt and

inflexible specification of how much will be delivered. Due to the over-logging and bushfire pressures on the forest area defined in the annexure to the act, VicForests is forced to go further afield and harvest other areas of native forest to meet supply levels to Paper Australia.

### **The force majeure clause**

It is this very impact of bushfire which should have already terminated the ratified agreement under the act.

Section 32 under division D of the act provides for the suspension of both parties' obligations under the ratified agreement. Paper Australia would have no claim for compensation as a result, where either fire damages forest to such an extent that it is impracticable for the state government to comply with supply commitments, or where, and I quote:

having regard to the situation of those forests and of the company's mills and other circumstances relevant to such damage or destruction it is impracticable for the company to obtain under this Agreement supplies of pulpwood of sufficient quantity ...

The 2009 Black Saturday fires should have been the trigger for this force majeure clause, as they destroyed much of the forest area specified in the annexure to the act. The government of the day and subsequent governments have failed to enact this clause.

This Parliament must act where the executive has failed and terminate the ratified agreement by passing this bill and repealing the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996.

### **The act provides an opportunity for rent-seeking**

The Maryvale pulp mills are an adaptable facility. Over the decades the workers and management have expanded and adapted the manufacturing chain to include plantation pulp. They also opened a de-inking plant in 2015, meaning they can recycle 80 000 tonnes of paper from Victoria and interstate to produce 50 000 tonnes of pulp. They have launched new product lines to meet changing consumer expectations, including 100 per cent recycled copy paper.

The Maryvale pulp mills have a future investment plan which includes the manufacturing of bioplastics in addition to the continuing production of paper and cardboard products.

It should not be basing its market expansion and product diversification plans on the basis of an unrealistic expectation of continuing supply of native forest logs.

The Nippon Paper Group no doubt understands this. Hence, they are wise to the fact that the volumes specified in section 14 subsection (2) of the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996 cannot, and will not, be fulfilled.

The only reason Nippon Paper Group would seek to perpetuate the illusion that the log volumes specified can be fulfilled is to collect compensation payments from the state government due to the failure of VicForests to deliver the specified volume of logs from inside the forest area as per section 13 subsection (5) of the act.

In other words, Nippon Paper Group is holding out for compensation payments.

You can't make paper or cardboard out of compensation payments.

You can't sustain jobs or support country towns on compensation payments.

But you can boost a profit line with compensation payments.

This practice, whereby a multinational corporation seeks to increase its own wealth while not creating any value, is a classic case of rent-seeking. Rent-seeking results in reduced economic efficiency through poor allocation of resources, reduced actual wealth creation and lost government revenue.

This Parliament must ensure that this rent-seeking opportunity is extinguished immediately. The way to do that is by passing this bill and repealing the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996.

### **The Nippon Paper Group has sufficient alternative supplies available in Australia**

Victoria has a burgeoning hardwood plantation pulp log sector. From statistics compiled by the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES), in 2017 Victoria produced nearly 4 million cubic metres of pulp logs from plantations, compared to less than 800 000 cubic metres from native forests: meaning five out of every six pulp logs produced in Victoria came from plantations.

The majority of hardwood plantation pulpwood produced in Victoria is exported following woodchipping. Of the 3.3 million cubic metres of hardwood plantation pulp logs produced in 2015, over 90 per cent of it was exported.

Plantation pulp logs are already a more reliable source than native forests: ABARES forecasts show that hardwood plantation pulp log production in Victoria and South Australia will remain above 2.5 million cubic metres beyond 2035, which is five times greater than the current consumption of native forest pulp logs by the Maryvale pulp mills.

In 2016, according to its sustainability report, the Nippon Paper Group imported nearly 600 000 tonnes of woodchips from Australia to Japan. Some of this volume would have come from plantations that the Nippon Paper Group owns in Western Victoria. I remind the house that woodchip density is about 380 kilograms per cubic metre, hence the tonnage imported to Japan by Nippon Paper Group exceeded 1.5 million cubic metres, or roughly three times the pulp log consumption of the Maryvale pulp mills under the legislated agreement and timber sales agreement combined.

Woodchip export markets generally do not have long-term contracts in place with overseas customers. The contracts typically consist of agreements with short-term negotiations to determine prices and volumes. No contractual impediments exist to the Nippon Paper Group acquiring these woodchips for use at the Maryvale pulp mills.

Furthermore, if it is cost effective to transport plantation pulp logs from plantations across western Victoria by truck to Portland or Geelong and then ship them to Japan by sea, then it is cost effective to haul them from western Victoria to Maryvale.

By simply using resources within its existing group of companies and subsidiaries, the Nippon Paper Group could easily redirect plantation woodchips to its Maryvale pulp mills and cease its dependency on native forest pulp logs.

The Nippon Paper Group knows it can do this. Indeed, they bought the Maryvale pulp mills off PaperlinX in 2009. In their 2005–06 annual report, the CEO of PaperlinX stated that following the upgrade of its manufacturing lines and facilities, the Maryvale pulp mills would reduce their use of pulp logs and other residue from native forests and move to use 100 per cent plantation-sourced fibre for printing and communications papers by 2017.

Clearly Nippon Paper Group had a different idea, and the transition has not been completed.

I note that timber mills in regional Victoria that currently use native forest timbers could also make the transition to sustainable plantation hardwoods. Their cumulative demand — 153 000 cubic metres per year — can be sourced from interstate, specifically Tasmania, which has a private hardwood plantation estate that produced 364 000 tonnes of sawlog, veneer and ply in 2016–17.

### **The bill**

Through the repeal of the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996, this bill will terminate the legislated agreement ratified by that act.

This bill neutralises the take-or-pay and other compensatory and penalty mechanisms by dissolving all rights, privileges, obligations and liabilities provided by the legislated agreement.

The bill voids any claim by the Nippon Paper Group or its subsidiary, Paper Australia, against the state government, and vice versa.

The bill repeals an earlier version of the act that remains on the statute book to avoid unintended consequences regarding rights contained in the agreement ratified by that previous act.

Finally, the bill removes the references to the legislated agreement from other acts on the statute book, including the Sustainable Forests (Timber) Act 2004.

This bill is an essential step in completing the transition of the pulp and paper sector away from the declining native forest logging industry and to sustainable supply.

Public policy and investment must assist this transition. The state government must create jobs in sectors that rely on native forests for their ecological services and intrinsic values. We can create thousands of jobs in ecotourism, hospitality, horticulture, viticulture and beekeeping in regional Victoria by protecting our native forests, not woodchipping them for paper production.

The Nippon Paper Group and its subsidiary, Paper Australia, and the workers and managers at Maryvale pulp mills, need to be part of this transition plan.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture).**

**Debate adjourned until Wednesday, 29 August.**

## INTERNATIONAL PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan)  
(10:50) — I am very pleased to stand and move:

That this house calls on the government to join other Australian states in recognising 15 October each year as International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day.

On this date parents and families across Australia and throughout the world honour their babies who have passed away through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death. This day is observed in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and Italy. It was declared in New South Wales in 2011, in Tasmania in 2017 and in Western Australia in 2014. The day culminates in an international wave of light, which is a worldwide lighting of candles at 7.00 p.m. for about an hour. A series of commemorative local events are held, one of which I will discuss later, to mark this important day.

It is estimated that one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage in Australia each year, and this equates to more than 100 000 pregnancies, and approximately 3000 babies are either stillborn or die in the first 28 days after birth each year. There are around seven stillbirths in Australia every day and in 40 per cent of cases the reasons for this are unknown, and this rate has not changed in more than two decades. Stillbirth is 10 times more common than sudden infant death syndrome. The Australian chair of SANDS Australia, Lyndy Bowden, said:

There are so many Australian families that are affected by the death of a baby. International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day gives them an 'official' opportunity to acknowledge their precious babies. It is also a chance to raise awareness of the emotional impact of pregnancy and infant loss.

SANDS Australia is one of the organisations that helps to conduct commemorative events here in Australia.

Last year on 15 October the City of Boroondara conducted a commemoration event to mark International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, and I was honoured to attend along with Ms Crozier and also the Assembly member for Kew. Anne-Maree Polimeni and Felicity Sinfield from the City of Boroondara deserve acknowledgement and praise for conducting this quite special event that I know Ms Crozier and I were very moved by and very pleased to take part in.

I think what I want to do at this point is quote from Anne-Maree, who along with her husband Alan Wilson

lost a much-wanted and much-loved child to stillbirth. I will use her words here:

I am the mother of three boys. Luis is six, Jude is four, and I was 28 weeks pregnant when Rafael died.

I should say these words are taken from 2015, hence the ages of the children at that time. Anne-Maree went on to say:

I am usually a very private person, so I guess it is out of character that I want to share my feelings and our story. However, it's also very important that I do this because firstly I do not want Rafael to be forgotten, but also because there's a huge need to raise awareness about stillbirth. It's a real taboo, and if I at least try to start the conversation, I know that I have done something for Rafael and for the thousands of other Australian families who have been through it.

She spoke in very moving terms about her pregnancy and the impact that this had not just on her husband and herself but also on their boys and the broader family. She said:

The boys always spoke to him or kissed or touched my tummy. We spoke about what we would do once he was born. He was also part of our wider family. He was a grandson, a nephew, and a cousin, and we were all planning for his arrival, and planning our lives around his arrival. His death has affected many people. The bottom line is that he lived inside me for 28 weeks, and the idea of him was conceived long before he was physically conceived.

Anne-Maree has had quite some time to reflect on these terribly hurtful personal circumstances and to look more broadly into their effect. She said:

Stillbirth is different to other deaths. No-one is going to sit down with you and laugh and talk about the good old times. You can't. There is nothing to reminisce but the kicks and activity inside your own body. There's nothing good that can come out of stillbirth, there's no upside. It's too difficult. And this is the reason that we don't talk about it.

I think that is very true, and certainly I have seen attitudes towards stillbirth change over my lifetime. It is one of those very common events in women's lives, unfortunately along with miscarriage, that have been spoken quietly about in small groups of women rather than more openly. I think often people feel enormously sympathetic but do not know what to say, and so they err on the side of caution unfortunately and say nothing, and this means that people suffer alone and unfortunately in silence. This is not a pain that goes away quickly at all. I would imagine it is one that lasts for a lifetime, albeit in different forms.

As I said earlier, Ms Crozier and I, along with the member for Kew, were very fortunate to attend the commemoration held in Hawthorn that was run by Felicity Sinfield and Anne-Maree Polimeni. It was a really reflective time. It was good to be able to bring

some of that pain into a more public place and to acknowledge what has been lost and what has been experienced. It is also useful, I think, to be able to highlight the issue of deaths that occur shortly before, during or after birth.

I think we have a false sense of security living in the time and space that we do. For many women, pregnancy in generations gone by was an enormously difficult business. It led to the premature death of many, many women, and today I think we are not so aware of the fact that it is still dangerous for both mothers and babies to experience birth. The outcomes are not always what is anticipated, as Anne-Maree has said so eloquently and from a very personal perspective. We need to support the people who have had these experiences, but we also need to turn our attention to medical research to try to find ways to minimise these outcomes for pregnancies.

At the commemoration that was conducted in Kew Ms Crozier and I agreed that we would seek ways to see that this international day becomes recognised in Victoria and that we would have that debate with our colleagues, and today we bring that debate here. Ms Crozier of course brings particular insight to this issue as a former midwife. Both Ms Crozier and I have had close involvement with the Royal Women's Hospital in different ways — Ms Crozier I suspect in a far more practical and useful way than I have, as a midwife and nurse at the hospital and myself as chair of the board some years later.

Something that Ms Crozier has spoken to me about is having been there in the room to experience with families the pain of loss before, during and after birth. She has been part of the immediate support that is offered in these horribly traumatic circumstances, but she is very much aware that that pain does not dissipate simply magically when people leave the hospital. We think very strongly that no-one should suffer alone or in silence, and for that reason we have brought this motion to this house. We support it strongly and urge others to do the same.

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (10:59) — I would like to thank Ms Fitzherbert for initiating a debate on a Wednesday that is so positive and has such purpose. It is befitting of the Parliament, and I am finding that refreshing. On an issue like this, of course, the health minister's door is always open to individuals, families and groups — and members of Parliament as well — who wish to advocate for such recognition and the kinds of initiatives that this motion seeks.

I would like to dedicate my comments in this debate to the memory of Ruby Fensling, a beautiful little girl who is eleven and a half years old now — or should be, had the universe had other plans for her. In speaking to this motion, I wanted to give these babies a name. For me, Ruby represents many babies, and for the parents, aunties, uncles, brothers, sisters and grandparents who may hear these words or read these words, you all know what the name of the child that this debate represents to you is. Ruby's family know the heartbreak and grief of losing a loved and desired child, as do many families across Victoria.

I am very pleased to confirm that the government is supportive of the recognition of 15 October as the International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day and also to acknowledge the work of Sands, who provide miscarriage, stillborn and newborn death support to Australian families. The Minister for Health has asked the Department of Health and Human Services to organise an appropriate and respectful event to mark the day. Ms Fitzherbert has commented on the importance of that — not for all grieving families, but for many — and it is something that we absolutely recognise.

I would like to just talk a bit about some of the things our government is doing to improve outcomes for women and babies by planning for care that is close to home, safe and of the highest quality. Following the tragic cluster of perinatal deaths at Djerriwarh Health Services, the Minister for Health ordered a wholesale review into quality and safety in Victoria's hospitals. In 2017 Professor Stephen Duckett's report, *Targeting Zero*, was published. The government accepted all the review's recommendations in principle and is now implementing them.

We have established two new institutions: Safer Care Victoria, tasked with promoting quality and safety in our hospitals, and the Victorian Agency for Health Information, tasked with providing government and the sector with the data required to effectively oversee quality and safety standards. We have also passed quality and safety legislation, which means that private providers who undertake surgery or general anaesthesia will be held to the same regulatory standards as larger private hospitals. This came into force in July this year.

A good example of Safer Care Victoria's maternity safety work comes from the Cohuna District Hospital. In 2017 birthing services at Cohuna were temporarily suspended due to concerns which had been raised about the safety of the maternity service. The community was concerned about the service's future, and there were protests in the town to save Cohuna's maternity service.

Safer Care Victoria, including the CEO, Euan Wallace, and a senior midwife, visited the health service to meet with all persons concerned, including — importantly — having discussions with women due to give birth, doctors and midwives at the service as well as with management.

Safer Care Victoria worked with Cohuna to provide a blueprint for the continuation of maternity services. Their report contained 22 recommendations, which was provided to the Cohuna District Hospital, which has accepted and made progress against all recommendations. These include the purchase of a small amount of additional equipment, regular simulation training for medical and midwifery staff, improvements to medical records, ensuring women give written consent for the induction of labour and an after-hours birthing roster which is safe and sustainable. A formal roster that provides safe medical and midwifery cover of the maternity service after hours is now in place, and on the rare occasion the roster cannot be covered the health service has a policy to ensure all pregnant women are aware that they may need to birth elsewhere if they go into labour during the short period when the service is not covered.

Equipment has been sourced and funded to allow the testing of umbilical cord blood in babies born at Cohuna. This provides real-time information to the staff about the health of the babies. Educational materials have been developed to ensure the mothers of Cohuna and surrounds understand the capability of the health service and to provide choice about safe birthing options. The medical staff and midwifery staff are all working towards achieving the highest level of the national fetal surveillance education program, with the lead obstetrician, Dr Peter Barker, achieving the highest level. So the good news is that maternity services at Cohuna are continuing safely. I just provide this by way of example around improvements to quality, safety and care.

Of course, though, many deaths are seemingly unavoidable. I would also indicate that the government has invested recently in a new initiative to support parents of a stillborn or those who are facing the awful tragedy of a newborn baby death. This initiative will provide an additional 10 cuddle cots to give the parents of stillborn children the opportunity to spend time with their baby following their stillbirth or early death. Cuddle cots include a cooling system for babies who have passed away. This means that parents can have their precious last moments with their child in a nicer environment. It is a shocking and devastating thing for any parent to go through, but at least with this initiative

we can make what is a harrowing experience a little more comfortable and dignified.

While public maternity services in the western, northern and southern regional planning areas are experiencing strong growth, demand for maternity care in some rural hospitals continues to slow. Capital investment decisions are made with a focus on safety and quality and supporting the maternity and newborn system, and these are made cognisant of the changing needs of Victorian women, families and communities. Construction of the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital is underway, and an investment has been made for planning and early works on a new Geelong women's and children's hospital. Rural health services continue to be supported by the six regional perinatal mortality and morbidity committees, and the Royal Women's Hospital is providing a further 12 months of leadership and support through 2018–19.

Delivery of the maternity and newborn emergency program will continue as well, with 11 rural maternity and newborn services currently scheduled to receive training in the management of obstetric and newborn emergencies in 2018–19. More work is being done on the maternity and newborn capability frameworks and health service capability levels. This work is underway. It is all about strengthening safe and high-quality care and supporting health services to plan for the needs of their community.

Through 2018–19, six designated regional maternity and newborn services are working with the Department of Health and Human Services and other rural maternity providers to establish regional operating networks and referral pathways, which will preserve and strengthen local access to maternity and newborn care for rural communities. With routine antenatal screening for family violence underway in seven public hospitals, the department will work with hospitals with a continued rollout of this initiative in 2018–19. Building on the well-established collaborative midwives practice model at the Northern Hospital, expansion of this model to Barwon Health and the Royal Women's Hospital will provide more maternity care choices for women and their families.

I know the heartbreak of losing a child, and although my daughter Sinead lived for 13 years, the loss of a baby is an incredibly traumatic event. Parents, as Ms Fitzherbert described in her contribution, fall in love with their children long before they see them or meet them for the first time — those flutters in the belly, and the imaginings we all have of that baby's future of scraped knees, school achievements, friendships, sporting triumphs and defeats, trees climbed, snuggles

on the bed with a book, and maybe even walking down an aisle one day and their own experience of being a parent.

I obviously cannot speak for all parents who have lost a child, but I suspect that we all imagine our children in two ways: frozen in time, and as they ought to be. I often wonder, this year, what year 11 subjects Sinead would be doing, what she would look like now and what she would be like. Of course I wonder about these things every day.

So, too, parents and families of babies that have died shortly before or after their birth must imagine such things. What would their first words have been? Would they have bumped their forehead on the coffee table while they were learning to walk? What would their favourite story time book have been? How well would they have worn their uniform in those very special first day of prep photographs?

And so often this suffering is done alone. Because pregnancy and infant loss is such a painful subject, as a community we avoid talking about it.

Recognising 15 October as the International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day is an important way that we can support people who have lost so much and also recognise the organisations who support families in their grief journey. So for Ruby and her family and for all those other people affected by this kind of tragic loss, I commend the motion to the house.

**Ms SPRINGLE** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (11:09) — I also thank Ms Fitzherbert for bringing something so substantive to a Wednesday here. Often we do not see motions that are this genuine on a Wednesday, and so I commend her for that.

The International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day seeks to acknowledge and support families who have lost babies through miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death, providing a dedicated day for those families to commemorate their children's tragically short lives. While the day originated in the US, it has now been adopted in a number of countries, including Canada, and in a number of Australian jurisdictions. The move to establish the day as an official day of recognition has been accompanied by support from across the political spectrum in many of those jurisdictions.

Pregnancy loss is an issue that touches so many individuals and families. As Ms Fitzherbert mentioned, around one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage in Australia, though these figures can only ever be an estimate due to the number of early unrecognised

miscarriages. Six babies are stillborn in this country every day, and that figure has not shifted in the past two decades. The cause of death is unknown for around 40 per cent of those babies. But despite the fact that the death of a baby affects so many of us, there is still a sense of silence surrounding the issues and as a result a sense from many parents that they are isolated and alone in their experience. It is the experience of many support organisations, campaigners and families around the world that a day of recognition makes a difference and provides a galvanising point for those conversations to happen.

I want to raise a few brief points today. While we support this motion, it is exceptionally brief, and I do feel quite strongly that in recognising an issue and raising awareness of that issue it must be accompanied by a considered discussion of the drivers and factors underpinning that problem and actions that need to be taken to address those.

First is the importance of tracking and improving our perinatal and support services, which we can and should always strive to improve and invest in. I think it is particularly important to focus here on women's mental health in the context of our growing understanding of how trauma is experienced and impacts on our development, health and wellbeing. While our understanding of those issues is increasing by the month, that is not always reflected in the level and nature of care and support that patients receive, and we need to work hard to bridge that gap.

Secondly, I think it is really important that we look closely at the support services in place for bereaved parents and the capacity of frontline health workers to deal with these issues and refer onwards in a sensitive and appropriate manner. I do note the minister's contribution and her outline of some of the work that has been done, but we can always do more and should do more to relieve that pain and trauma that families experience in their time of need. Families need time to heal following the death of any loved one, including a baby, and they need support throughout that process.

Thirdly, there is more we can do to understand and potentially prevent the death of babies during and after pregnancy. I note the establishment of the Senate Select Committee on Stillbirth Research and Education earlier this year. The committee will consider the future of stillbirth research and education in Australia. It is certainly important that any outcomes of that work be taken into consideration and where appropriate acted on here.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to those organisations, institutions and health practitioners that are dealing with the death of babies and supporting their families through an incredibly difficult experience. To the parents and families who have suffered loss in this way: my heart goes out to you and I offer my condolences. I know many of those who have campaigned for the recognition of this day at both state and federal levels here in Australia have suffered the loss of a baby, and I know this day of commemoration means a lot to many people.

In closing, I am pleased to say the Greens support this motion. It is important to underline the importance of going beyond recognition and a symbolic gesture to look at how we can do more and better to reduce these mortality rates and support families dealing with these losses.

However, I would also like to say that while the Greens absolutely recognise the importance of a day to recognise and commemorate these issues and to acknowledge and support families dealing with baby loss, we submit that adopting this day is not the only option we have. For example, the UK commemorates Baby Loss Awareness Week, backed up by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss, which has developed a vision and strategy for supporting families who have lost babies and reducing the incidence of baby death in the UK.

Baby Loss Awareness Week is a huge movement, supported by 60 charities nationwide and debated annually in the UK House of Commons. It is linked to the International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, but it is a uniquely British campaign and that is undoubtedly one of the reasons it has generated such significant momentum there, with so many stakeholders working collaboratively to achieve change.

There is also the issue of whether recognition of an international day would be best pursued at a federal level, but I do note that it has been adopted in other states around Australia and therefore I can well understand why Ms Fitzherbert has chosen to put this motion up.

We should absolutely be setting out these options in a collaborative way, sharing information and then taking this debate forward at that point. The fact is we have a motion before us that has not been the subject of substantive discussion until right now. These conversations need to be had together, across political parties, if we are to work towards that common goal.

**Mr BOURMAN** (Eastern Victoria) (11:16) — First of all I am going to say I make no apologies for any emotion you may or may not see; it is just the way it is. This is a motion that obviously I wholeheartedly support, and I think the whole world should be doing something like this. I did a little bit of research on International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, and I am surprised that only two states in Australia do this — New South Wales since 2011 and Western Australia since 2014, and there are a few other countries around the place.

As has been mentioned, stillbirths are a far bigger problem than sudden infant death syndrome. Whilst we cannot obviously support one cause in preference to another, it is clear that it is time that we took the whole stillbirth and miscarriage thing a whole lot more seriously, and part of that is actually just raising awareness.

When it happened to us I was amazed at how many people actually have had it happen to them. There are people in this place, elected members and also staff, who came and saw me. That, I guess, surprised me, but then again in the context of this job it does not. I remember when I first started here I was told, ‘Don’t show emotion, don’t show weakness, don’t do anything like that because people will use it to attack you’, and I think some people take that on board, but I do not think that is really a good thing.

I think people have a pretty poor opinion of politicians in general, and I think they need to know we are human, we suffer from human losses, we have feelings, we have families, things go well in our lives, things go poorly in our lives. Me being a member of Parliament meant nothing in ward 2 of the Freemasons. Ward 2 of the Freemasons, that whole ward, is for stillbirths — or is it a room? I cannot remember; it is going back a while now. But it meant nothing — zero, squat. I could have been unemployed, I could have been a criminal, I could have been a member of Parliament, but there I was, along with my wife.

But with a stillbirth it is interesting. I think Minister Pulford said it before: it is not the past you are losing; it is the future you are losing. I am a parent, but I will never hear my son cry. The pain will last a lifetime. It has been only 18 months. Every day I think about it — every day — and quite often I go to where we scattered my son’s ashes.

Anyway, that is about the best I can do. One thing I will call on the government to do is to do it this year — not next year, not just think about it, not anything like that. Do it this year. Next year is too late.

**Ms CROZIER** (Southern Metropolitan) (11:19) — I am very pleased to be able to rise in support of Ms Fitzherbert's motion, and I want to place on record that we have just heard from Mr Bourman the very raw and real emotion that he as a parent has experienced, and there are others in this chamber who are siblings who never knew their sister or brother. There are many people in our community, Mr Bourman, as you say, who have experienced the loss of a child, and it is a very devastating event for anyone — very emotional.

I would like to also pay tribute to Anne-Maree Polimeni, a brave woman who really put this into the spotlight for Ms Fitzherbert and me, along with Cr Felicity Sinfield, who wanted to acknowledge and say that more needs to be done about this in relation to that awareness of all of those people who have had a child who was stillborn. At that very moving event, as Ms Fitzherbert said, along with our colleague the member for Kew in the Assembly, Mr Smith, and others from the community, we came together in support of what Anne-Maree and her husband, Alan, were doing in relation to bringing awareness to the community.

Also at the event was Professor Euan Wallace, who is very well known. Ms Pulford referred to what the government is doing. Professor Wallace is leading the way in relation to some of the initiatives the government has put forward, but he also was at that very important commemorative day and he is somebody who has got a wealth of knowledge and understanding in this area. He is well-renowned and distinguished in the area of obstetrics and gynaecology. He also came before the Family and Community Development Committee's inquiry into perinatal services and spoke of the statistics, of those numbers of stillbirths in Victoria and the issue of research and what is being done around Victoria — indeed around various populations and various cohorts in Victoria — but more generally around his experience and what he knows from collective data around the country and also his understanding from international studies. In the evidence that he gave to the inquiry he spoke about the composite of the numbers of stillbirths, so that they include babies born alive from 20 weeks of gestation onwards. He spoke about that composite and the neonatal deaths that are included in some of these statistics, but he made the point that the perinatal mortality rate is made up largely of stillbirths — about six per 1000. That is the latest data that we have on that, and it is still very high and work still needs to be done.

Ms Springle spoke about the Senate inquiry and the research and what needs to be done in terms of the support services, and I think we all agree on that. We

can always do more, but in this country we are extremely lucky that we have got so many well-regarded and international leaders in this space and that we are showing the way. However, that does not take away from the raw emotion of those people who have been the parents, or of entire families.

Ms Fitzherbert read out some of those comments that Ms Polimeni has made in relation to how it impacted her family, and I also read some of her comments on her blog and they were heartfelt and they were deep and meaningful and they demonstrate the impact on her family and on her children and how she still talks about Rafael and commemorates and remembers him as part of their family, with her husband and her two boys. I am just going to read some of that too because these are the very heartfelt words that were written, as we have just heard the heartfelt words from Mr Bourman. In this blog she said:

This year, I was supposed to be a mother of a newborn baby. I was supposed to be the mother of three boys — all living. I was supposed to be living a really busy, sleep-deprived and chaotic life full of breastfeeding, nappies, milestones and wonder ... and loving it — and I'm not.

And that is the reality for her and that is the reality for thousands of parents in our community, and that is why this is important. This day will go towards recognising what others have recognised in other jurisdictions both internationally but also here in Australia. New South Wales, Western Australia and more recently Tasmania have moved in recognising 15 October each year as the International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. It is something that we as a community can do. We can collectively do that, we can easily do that and we should do that. I think it is very heartening to hear that those who have spoken in the chamber today are all supporting the motion of Ms Fitzherbert. It is something that she and I, as I have said, have worked on, and we wanted to make sure that the Parliament would understand the importance of why we think it is important that 15 October this year, 2018, be recognised in Victoria, and it is this initiative, this motion, this debate we are having today that will put this day on the record here in Victoria.

Ms Fitzherbert did talk about our collective experiences at the Royal Women's Hospital, and it is something that I very fondly recall on many, many occasions. I still have friends there who just do the most extraordinary work day in, day out caring for Victorian women and their families and their newborns. There is no greater privilege than to be with someone in their last hours of living or to be there to support a family member who has lost a family member or, in this instance in my experience at the Royal Women's Hospital, parents

who have lost a child. Giving dignity to the young life is something that I believe always is and always was done. People grieve in different ways but the dignity of that life is always important to recognise. It was an enormous privilege to have been with some of those families and to share with them, to look after them and to support them immediately after their children were stillborn or in the hours later when they were still grieving and needed to view and look at their children in order to remember them and to have those keepsakes, whether it was a lock of hair or a footprint in a memory folder. All those elements are so important for a grieving family. It is hugely important.

I know this happens on too many occasions, young babies or neonates dying or children being stillborn, and it is an incredibly difficult time for all involved. For those parents knowing when they are told that their baby has died that they have to deal with that, they do so magnificently in many instances. Love and support is given to them by so many from different services, and I commend all the people that provide that but none more so than those obviously close around them: their families. It was a huge privilege to be involved in the care of some of those families during my time at the Women's, and I recall too many sad instances where I unfortunately had to undertake that task.

I think this is an important motion. I am very pleased that the government and other members of this chamber are supporting Ms Fitzherbert's motion. I look forward to 15 October when Victoria will join other states in recognising stillborn and infant loss. International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day will mean a lot to all those parents and families that have lost children under these circumstances. I commend the motion to the house.

**Dr CARLING-JENKINS** (Western Metropolitan) (11:29) — I rise this morning to wholeheartedly support the motion to recognise 15 October as International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day brought to this house by Ms Fitzherbert. As we have heard, this is a day that has already been recognised in Western Australia, Tasmania and New South Wales and of course internationally.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my colleague Mr Bourman, who told his personal story. I think it was a great contribution to the debate that he spoke bravely about the loss of his son, Matthew. I believe this is exactly why we are debating and speaking on this motion today: for children like Matthew and parents like Jeff and Nicole.

The loss of a child by miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death is profoundly distressing for all concerned — for mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings, and of course the wider community. I have lost two babies to miscarriage. Emily would be 11 if she had survived, and Harrison would be 8. The loss of my children has had a deep impact on my life and on the lives of my family. My son has grown up as an only child due to the loss of his siblings, my mother lost two anticipated and much-loved grandchildren, and, as others have reflected here today, I lost a future. We find it important to remember Emily and Harrison. Every Christmas I have ornaments with their names on them which I hang on the tree. Such rituals are small but important to mothers and families to initially aid in healing and as time goes by to aid in remembrance. I believe that instigating recognition of this day will contribute to such healing and to such remembrance for many.

The loss of my children was unavoidable, as so many are. They were simply part of the fragility of human life. Others are preventable, and as we remember and mourn the lost children we must seek to work to reduce the incidence of miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death through medical research and improvements in prenatal and perinatal care. Recent research out of the US concluded that almost one in four stillbirths is preventable. This is a sobering statistic, but of course this is not just a statistic — these are our children. This Parliament recently concluded a perinatal care services report which identified many gaps in our services, and I know this report will be taken seriously across the Parliament.

We must also work to provide more support for families as they go through the process of bereavement. One positive development is the provision of Cuddle Cots in public maternity services. I have a friend who used this service and he said it was just amazing. It allowed him to spend time with his little boy, and it allowed their children, their parents and their grandparents to spend time with him too. A Cuddle Cot allows a family the opportunity to spend time with their baby following a stillbirth or early neonatal death.

Sadly, I must note that other lives are lost as a result of deliberate actions, often motivated by eugenic discrimination against children with disabilities. Genetic screening programs offered to pregnant women are often based on an inherently discriminatory approach that views virtually any disability as not just undesirable but incompatible with a life worth living. This eugenic approach continues after birth with the failure to provide care to those children who are born alive following a late-term abortion and with the failure

to give treatment to newborns with disabilities selectively.

I take this personally. I still have a tiny set of booties in my drawer at work which were given to me when I lost Harrison. He was a child lost through miscarriage because of suspected genetic abnormalities. I would have given anything to hold him in my arms even for a short time. That is why I work to ensure that mothers have this opportunity, whether through advancements in care or through education that babies with disability have lives worth living.

This motion reminds us that every child is inherently valuable and irreplaceable. Each child lost is a loss to us all. I commend the motion to remember all our lost infants on 15 October by marking International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, and I echo the words of Mr Bourman, who said, 'Let's recognise it this year'.

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) (11:35) — I rise to very strongly support the motion moved by Ms Fitzherbert — that Victoria recognise 15 October each year as International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. I think it is a move that is long overdue. I commend Ms Fitzherbert very, very strongly for putting this motion to the house today.

I think it is fair to say — almost a truism, I suppose — that the loss of a child is a tragedy at any time. The size or age of that child in no way lessens the pain suffered by mothers, as we have heard today in this house, fathers and indeed siblings. In the old days — and perhaps I am getting to a time in life when I can reminisce about the old days — women who suffered miscarriages were told, 'Don't worry, dear, you can start again'. They were told, 'It doesn't matter'. Well, I would like to think that those days have long gone — and thank God they have gone, because it is important to mothers, to fathers, to siblings and I think to our community that we recognise each life, however old that life may be, as an invaluable, individual human being.

It is an important thing that mothers be able to refer to that child as 'my baby', because that is what indeed we are talking about. We are talking about 'my baby'. I give thanks to God that I have not been through that, but I know a number of people, some in this house who we have heard from today, who have been through that. I am aware of the enormous pain and the enormous suffering that that bestows upon people, quite often for the entirety of their lives.

It is not only about mothers — this is something that might be a little bit controversial, but I will throw it out there anyway — who have suffered a miscarriage or the trauma of stillbirth; a great deal of recent research has shown that many women who have had an abortion also suffer from the same grief and the same pain. We cannot and we should not ignore the suffering of potentially hundreds of thousands of women. In the last 10 years in Victoria, since the law was changed, there have been some 200 000 abortions in this state. Now, if only 10 per cent of the women involved in those abortions are suffering from post-abortion grief, that means 20 000 women. That is a lot of women. That is a lot of people who are going through a great deal of pain. I personally know women, friends of mine, who have been through or are still going through the post-abortion grief process, where they obviously feel enormous guilt but they also feel enormous loss for their own child. That, I believe, is something that we should seriously consider adding. Given the enormous numbers that we are talking about, we should consider adding that to this particular day on 15 October every year.

As I say, I believe that this is a very, very important motion. It is a long-overdue motion. It is something that should be embraced by this house, by this Parliament and by the people of Victoria. I urge the house, and I suspect that my urgings will not be necessary, to support this motion, preferably unanimously. I urge the government to get on and ensure that 15 October this year, as has been requested by Mr Bourman and Dr Carling-Jenkins, is Victoria's inaugural International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day and that we commemorate that day, from this year on, every year on 15 October.

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) (11:41) — I am very pleased to rise on behalf of The Nationals this morning in full support of this wonderful motion by Ms Fitzherbert, and I congratulate her on bringing this to the floor of this house. I also congratulate everybody. I have been listening most intently and most empathetically to people's comments in the house today, and I note that everybody has some link or some experience of grief or loss in relation to this.

In respect to this, I was very fortunate to blink and fall pregnant and to hold my babies, who are now 6 foot tall, but I recognise that my cousin, many, many years ago, had a perfectly beautiful stillborn baby. They had to dig their lives out. They moved to Perth, and they started a new life from there. It is funny: in a sense it is distant from my own life, my cousin's, but we still remember his birthday. They now have two beautiful daughters who are wonderful individuals.

I think it is healing to be able to recognise loss, and I think it is healing to be able to recognise grief. The Nationals therefore fully support the fact that 15 October from now on in this state will be recognised as International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day.

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) (11:42) — There are not many things that appear to unite us all in this place, so I am pleased to have brought a motion here today that actually does that. I know that sometimes we express frustration about the content of our debates and in particular the relevance of that content to the people who we represent. I think that this motion is in some ways the antithesis of that. It is good to speak about something that is as fundamental to people's lives as the birth of a child and to talk about the issues that really matter to people.

I just want to make a few comments on some of the contributions to this debate, but I will be very brief. I was very pleased that Minister Pulford indicated that the government will be supporting this motion. I am strongly of the view, as others have expressed, that we should do that this year. There is certainly time, in my view, to ensure that this becomes an official day, which is what we are asking for, in time for the commemorations that we know will happen on 15 October this year. So I thank the minister for her compliment to me on the value of this motion, and I also thank her for speaking of Ruby and Sinead in this debate in the way that she did. We know of course that the minister has particular insight into this form of suffering, so she brings a great deal of understanding to this debate.

Ms Springle rightly points out that there is a lot more to be done in this space. I wholeheartedly agree, but let us start with this, which I think is the contribution that Ms Springle was making — if that is not an unfair characterisation of what she said.

I did touch very briefly on the issue of medical research and so on in my words when moving the motion. Undoubtedly there is more to be done, and that is something that Ms Crozier referred to in her reference to Professor Euan Wallace and his expertise in this field. I suspect that shining a light on this issue through an officially recognised day of commemoration is part, but not all, of what needs to be done to progress medical research and progress further in this area.

Mr Bourman, thank you for speaking of Matthew and of your own experience, even though I know that that was very painful and worrying for you to do so. I appreciate your generosity in making those comments

today — even though you made me cry. Thank you for your generous words today.

I think what has been shown today is that if you scratch the surface, the loss is actually all around us. In this room there are mothers, fathers and siblings of children who have been lost shortly before, during or after birth. There are also highly credentialled nursing staff as well, who have also seen the loss in its most raw form.

We would not be here today if it were not for Anne-Maree Polimeni and Felicity Sinfield, who are both in the gallery today. Thank you for sitting through this debate as a very visible reminder of what we need to do. They of course were instrumental in the running of the event that Ms Crozier and I attended last year, along with the Assembly member for Kew and also the Assembly member for Burwood. I am always full of admiration for people who can take an enormously upsetting personal event or tragedy and turn it into something positive for others, because I think that takes a great form of strength and a great sense of community and an ability to give that can only be admired. Anne-Maree, well done and thank you.

In conclusion can I say that in memory of Ruby, Rafael, Matthew, Emily and Harrison and their families, and all of the other children and their families whose names were not spoken in this place today but who are held very tight in people's hearts, I urge that we pass this motion and urge that we make it happen this year.

**Motion agreed to.**

## METROPOLITAN RAIL NETWORK

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) (11:47) — I move:

That this house supports the following recent commitments to metropolitan rail enhancement that would see —

- (1) an extension of the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Clyde with dual and electrified tracks —
  - (a) including new stations being built at Cranbourne East and Clyde, along with 350 additional parking places;
  - (b) including improvement of local bus services to connect commuters to the new railway stations; and
  - (c) noting that this is the first stage of an upgrade to the Cranbourne rail corridor and future upgrades to the Cranbourne line will also be essential, including the full duplication from Cranbourne to Dandenong and a future extension to Koo Wee Rup;

- (2) the duplication and electrification of the rail line from Frankston to Baxter and notes that —
  - (a) the Turnbull government has already committed \$225 million towards the project in the 2018–19 federal budget, matched recently by the Liberal-National state coalition;
  - (b) the new metro stations at Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter will provide easy access to rail services for local commuters and help ease congestion around Frankston;
  - (c) passengers will be able to commute more easily to Monash University, Frankston Hospital and Frankston Private Hospital, Chisholm TAFE or directly into Melbourne;
  - (d) this will improve local bus services to connect commuters to the new railway stations; and
- (3) the full duplication of the rail line between Greensborough and Eltham to provide for the growing population in Melbourne's north and allow more frequent and reliable rail services.

The coalition has been very proud to make a series of metropolitan rail announcements in recent months, and indeed there will be further announcements as we move towards the state election. We have particularly singled out a number of these areas because of their clear importance and the fact that the population is growing in these areas and additional capacity is required. Additional services are required in these areas.

The extension from Cranbourne to Clyde is an important announcement. We would expect to commence it in 2019, and it would be completed by 2022. This 5 kilometres of electrified double line from Cranbourne to Cranbourne East and terminating at Clyde would be a significant addition to our public transport system. We would also ensure that there are an additional 350 car-parking spaces.

We note that the population of Cranbourne East and Clyde grew by more than 7000 in the recent year. We note that there is a need to ensure that appropriate level crossings are built in that process as well, and they have been focused upon. The road congestion through that area is extraordinary, and people who move through that area know that it is extraordinary. The extension will improve access to education and recreation precincts in an area where people work and live.

There is a need to ensure — when these rail extensions and improvements in rail capacity or timetables occur — that there are sufficient and new bus services and a formal process to ensure that the buses are rolled out in such a way that they match the new arrangements. There are significant areas of Casey and Cardinia where there has been great population growth

and where there is very little in the way of bus services, and these communities are not served well by that absence of services. The rail extension will provide an opportunity to enhance those services to make sure that people can in fact get to those railway stations from areas of significant population growth. As I said, this is the first stage of our plan to upgrade that Cranbourne corridor. As part of the overall project, future upgrades to the Cranbourne line will also be essential, including the full duplication from Cranbourne to Dandenong and a future extension to Koo Wee Rup.

We make the point that the state government made provision of \$572 million in the recent state budget for upgrades to the line between Sunbury and Cranbourne. The truth of the matter is that most of that money is for signalling upgrades at the Sunbury end of that line, and that is an oversight. The government actually did not fund that part of the metro project in the first instance, so it is playing a catch-up role there. Nonetheless, this money is needed for that signalling upgrade. A small amount of that money has been allocated for the studies that are required on the full duplication of the line from Dandenong to Cranbourne. We welcome that work in that sense but believe that this is too little, too late, and indeed we will be looking to ensure that there are appropriate outcomes in terms of that duplication.

We look forward to seeing the work that the government has done there, but none of that ought to prevent the extension and the appropriate scale of the development between Cranbourne, Cranbourne East and Clyde and further work being looked at for the eastward movement from there along the old rail reservation towards Koo Wee Rup. As I said, we will work to have those relevant intersections dealt with, and that is important in itself.

I note that Labor has been in power for 15 of the last 19 years. It has taken a series of unfortunate steps in this process, and it is worth putting on record Labor's history with respect to the corridor at Cranbourne and Clyde. I have a copy of Labor's 1999 election policy, and I want to read this policy because I think it is quite instructive. This is 1999, which is 19 years ago in the old arithmetic as I see it. Labor says:

This \$4m extension will service the new residential developments and the East Cranbourne community centre that includes a TAFE institute, a secondary school, a library and indoor sporting facilities.

So Labor in 1999 was going to extend the line to Cranbourne East for \$4 million. It did not do that. It kept toying with the people of South Gippsland and Casey and Cardinia, year after year after year until 2008 when it finally said under John Brumby that it was not

going to do this extension. There was going to be no reopening to Koo Wee Rup, no reopening to Leongatha, and indeed it was not even going to extend the line to Cranbourne East or to Clyde. That is the Labor history with this line. It is a history of lies and deceit and poor behaviour, and that is the truth.

I know that people like Ms Bath and Mr O'Donohue are shocked to see in hard print the plan to extend to Cranbourne East in 1999. That was a long time ago — a long time with no action from Labor. It is a fact that Labor has failed to do that and failed even to come forward now to match the coalition, and we think it should come forward. I pay tribute to the work of Casey as a city council. I have met with Casey. I have met with the mayor, the CEO and others to discuss this, and their commitment to Casey is an important advocacy document. I pay tribute to the work they have done and the calculations and the commitment that there will need to be further extensions, and the duplication is part of their work. They list this as a priority project. We strongly believe that the costings and the approach that Casey has taken have been helpful, and its firm advocacy has also been helpful.

We know that Melbourne's population is growing massively, and in a sense Casey and Cardinia are a case study for that enormous population growth — 143 000 last year, and 147 000 the year before. This is very significant population growth, with about 90 per cent of that going into metropolitan Melbourne. The coalition has said that that has got to be rebalanced so there is a greater focus on decentralisation, so that our regional cities play a bigger role. That will obviously require other commitments separate from these metropolitan commitments. None of that of course detracts from the fact that most of that growth is currently occurring in Melbourne, and our outer suburbs will need that significant growth support in the form of these rail extensions, and we will certainly be working hard to do that.

Before I move to Baxter I should say something about the contributions of a number of people. As I said, the council and the mayor have been very active in this process of the Clyde extension. I pay tribute to Brian Paynter in the Assembly for his work with bus groups in particular to try and work out how we can expand the bus network and for his strong advocacy for the extension to Clyde. Also Ann-Marie Hermans and Susan Serey and others in the region have strongly advocated for that extension to Clyde. I know that the focus of those candidates has been on advocating strongly for their community, and that preparedness to advocate I think has been very significant.

I should say that I have met also with Casey and Cardinia separately to talk through some of the details of these matters. In fact I have met with Casey and the Cardinia meeting is soon.

**Mr Leane** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — No, no. I am correcting myself. The Casey meeting will be a very important further follow-up which will occur because we want to see the very best outcomes delivered, and the best outcomes mean the design at a local level, it means the connections, the bike paths, it means the walking paths, it means the cycling connections and other aspects of the embedding of these new stations —

**Mr Dalidakis** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — I sure have, and she has been very strongly supportive. She has been very strongly supportive of these extensions to the rail line. I am surprised that you would not want to be Minister Patterson and be very supportive of those extensions, given —

**The PRESIDENT** — Thank you, Mr Davis.

**Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Wyndham schools

**Dr CARLING-JENKINS** (Western Metropolitan) (12:00) — My question is for Minister Tierney representing the Minister for Education. Minister, many of the new housing estates in the Wyndham area have been and are being built before primary and secondary schools are in place or even planned. Existing schools are struggling to cope and are becoming overcrowded. This has resulted in many Wyndham families having to travel long distances to simply ensure their children receive an education. Under Victorian government policy Wyndham should have one government primary school per 3000 dwellings and one government secondary school per 9000 dwellings. Wyndham already falls far short of these benchmarks and will continue to do so under current department plans given the continued and rapid growth in this area. To say we are approaching a school shortage crisis is no exaggeration. So my question is simply: what new plans does the Victorian government have to ensure families in the Wyndham area have access to schools that are planned and built to meet community needs?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:01) — I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her question in relation to the provision of school facilities in the Wyndham area. I will refer that matter to the relevant minister, the Minister for Education, James Merlino, who will respond within the prescribed guidelines.

*Supplementary question*

**Dr CARLING-JENKINS** (Western Metropolitan) (12:02) — Thank you, Minister, for referring my query on to the Minister for Education. In doing that I wonder if you could also ask another question. My research shows that a new primary school in Werribee's west will be needed by 2023. That is within two election cycles, which means we need to start planning for this now. Will the government commit to building this school on top of those already announced in the 2018–19 budget?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:02) — Again I thank Dr Carling-Jenkins for her question, and I will refer that matter along with the question that was raised in her substantive to the Minister for Education.

**Fish stocks**

**Mr YOUNG** (Northern Victoria) (12:02) — My question today is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, fish stocking is an extremely important component in our Victorian fisheries and their management. While sometimes contentious, good consultation and communication drives great outcomes in this space, making Victoria's fisheries some of the best in the world. Currently our only government-owned —

**The PRESIDENT** — Mr Young, can you start from the top? The minister was not able to hear the question.

**Mr YOUNG** — My pleasure. Minister, fish stocking is extremely important.

**Mr Leane** interjected.

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! There is a reason why she could not hear, and it was you.

**Mr YOUNG** — Minister, fish stocking is an extremely important component in our Victorian fisheries and their management. While sometimes contentious, good consultation and communication drives great outcomes in this space, making Victoria's fisheries some of the best in the world. Currently our only government-owned fish hatchery at Snobs Creek is at capacity, and more than two-thirds of fish stocked

last year were imported. The Victorian Fisheries Authority has identified that we need a second warm water native fish hatchery in northern Victoria. Minister, when will this be built to ensure that we retain the capability to provide great fishing opportunities?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:03) — I thank Mr Young for his question and his interest in the government's very, very busy fish stocking program. Before the election our Target One Million policy back in 2014 included a whole suite of measures, one of which was to increase fish stocking to 5 million. We got to that point, and we went marching straight past that record. Recently it was my great pleasure to announce that we had stocked 6 million fish in a 12-month period. So this means that no matter what a hack you are as a fisher, as an angler, you will probably do all right if you are fishing in Victoria. I thank Mr Young for his observations about how Victoria's fisheries are the envy of fishers in many other parts. I think we have a little bit of policy envy from other states in Australia, but we have also put Victorian fisheries on the map internationally, which is very, very exciting.

I welcome Mr Young joining the campaign for a second hatchery. It is fair to say that the team at Snobs Creek work day and night, and the level of activity at the hatchery in Snobs Creek has been very, very busy. There have been calls from a number of stakeholders. Indeed Suzanna Sheed, the member for Shepparton in the Assembly, has raised this with me as well. It is something the government is certainly interested in and aware of. The opportunity to expand particularly our native fish stocking efforts is one that I think is exciting for anglers in Victoria and one we look forward to continuing to discuss with anglers over coming weeks and months. I am certainly not planning on making any announcements as such today, but I think the opportunities that exist to increase our fish stocking capability in Victoria are very exciting. I look forward to working with our recreational fishing community to create more and more opportunities to make Victoria a truly awesome place for people to go fishing.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr YOUNG** (Northern Victoria) (12:06) — I thank the minister for her answer. I look forward to welcoming the government to joining the campaign for a second fish hatchery in northern Victoria when they finally make the announcement to build one. So by way of supplementary, I would like to ask: have the government done work on costing a second hatchery and a cost-benefit analysis on that over importing from other states?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:06) — I thank Mr Young for his further question and his desire for me to tell him how advanced the government's thinking is on this, but I might respectfully decline to share that with Mr Young.

**AGL Crib Point gas terminal**

**Dr RATNAM** (Northern Metropolitan) (12:07) — My question is to the minister representing the Minister for Ports. Last sitting week I asked the minister about AGL's plans to build a huge gas terminal at Crib Point in Western Port bay to import gas to Victoria and build a pipeline to pump this gas. The project will have devastating impacts on the wetlands and will burn more fossil fuels at a time when we should be rapidly and urgently moving to renewables to combat climate change. In response to this substantive question the Minister for Agriculture informed me that AGL are underwriting the costs of all works being undertaken by the Port of Hastings Development Authority on the Crib Point jetty to enable the development of the AGL Crib Point gas terminal. My question is: why is a public entity, the Port of Hastings Development Authority, allowing AGL to invest in these works when no planning permission has been given yet for the Crib Point gas terminal?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:07) — I thank Dr Ratnam for her question. This just seemed to me to be rather similar to the question that was asked of Minister Donnellan last sitting week, but assuming that it is sufficiently different to be allowed, I will seek a written response from the minister.

*Supplementary question*

**Dr RATNAM** (Northern Metropolitan) (12:08) — How can the public have confidence that this government is acting in the best interests of all Victorians when they are yet again allowing a private corporation to dictate what is built in Victoria and, more to the point, allowing something like this, a huge gas ship, to be built in a Ramsar wetland when we know how polluting gas will be for climate change?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:08) — I thank Dr Ratnam for her supplementary question, and I can absolutely confirm that this government represents all Victorians, delivers for all Victorians and takes its responsibility to do so absolutely seriously. So you have my assurance and that of the entire government that we are always focused on delivering for all Victorians.

**Victorian African Communities Action Plan**

**Ms TRUONG** (Western Metropolitan) (12:08) — My question is for the minister representing the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Earlier this year Minister Scott announced \$8.6 million of new money over the next two years for implementation of the *Victorian African Communities Action Plan*. It is money that is very much needed by our communities, but we have heard from many organisations that it has not been received, and they are worried that they might not receive it in time to do much-needed work before the election in the caretaker period. My question to the minister is: can the government confirm whether organisations have had access to these resources, and if not, when will it be made available?

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:09) — I thank Ms Truong for her question and concern about the wellbeing of communities as part of the rich cultural diversity of this state of which we are very proud. We play a role each and every day in trying to support our pride in the diversity of communities and the welcoming nature of the Victorian community.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**The PRESIDENT** — Mrs Peulich. Thank you.

**Mr JENNINGS** — I look forward to the day when we can have a discussion about multicultural affairs and the welcoming nature of the Victorian community and we can do so in a spirit of harmony and perhaps unite the chamber rather than actually making opportunistic jibes across the chamber or acting in a disingenuous way in relation to the respect and regard that we show to sectional interests of different communities when it suits us. Let us actually say we should all embrace the spirit of cultural diversity and the multicultural aspects of the Victorian community.

With that rhetorical flourish, which went on for a bit longer than I was intending to because of the interjection, I will need to take some advice from my colleague about the program that you are seeking information on.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms TRUONG** (Western Metropolitan) (12:11) — Thank you, Minister; I look forward to that. With the government's stated co-design of the implementation of the *Victorian African Communities Action Plan* with African Victorians, how will the government ensure that the new implementation committee is comprised of Victorians of African heritage from different age

groups and sectors so that the diversity of interests of people across these communities are well represented?

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:11) — I thank the member for her question because in fact it does provide me with an opportunity to talk about some aspects of that work that I have had a personal engagement with. With my colleague Minister Scott during the course I think probably of 2017 we had a lengthy conversation with a vast diversity of community leaders from African communities in the way that you described — young and old, men and women, people from different cultures — to talk about the incidence of family violence and the concern of African communities about the connection between the government and the government's programs and our awareness of that issue.

That was an outstanding meeting that will actually live long within my memory for the many things that I learned and heard that we need to be mindful and respectful of. So the point that you make in the supplementary question is well made. We have to actually recognise that we have to encounter the diversity within those communities in terms of our programmatic and policy responses. I will encourage the minister to do so as well.

### **Metropolitan Remand Centre**

**Mr O'DONOHUE** (Eastern Victoria) (12:12) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, can you confirm that yesterday at the Metropolitan Remand Centre around 80 prisoners turned on staff and a number of injuries were sustained, including by prison officers?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Corrections) (12:12) — I do thank the member for his question. There was an incident between a small number of prisoners which required a unit to be locked down. There were some minor injuries to staff as they broke up and secured the prisoners involved. However, none required significant medical attention. One of the prisoners was taken to hospital. WorkSafe Victoria attended the prison, but I understand the staff acted appropriately and managed the situation well.

### *Supplementary question*

**Mr O'DONOHUE** (Eastern Victoria) (12:13) — Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Minister, this very serious incident continues the chaos in the corrections system. Can you confirm that the early preliminary reason for yesterday's incident which left

prison officers injured was prison overcrowding and that due to this overcrowding regular corrections procedures have not been followed?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Corrections) (12:13) — I thank the member for his question. The police are also investigating this incident. This is not an unusual situation, and I am not in a position to comment further on this at this point in time.

### **Fulham Correctional Centre**

**Mr O'DONOHUE** (Eastern Victoria) (12:14) — My question is again to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, the former corrections minister, Steve Herbert, ordered an investigation into how 28 cannabis plants were found growing in the vegetable garden at the Fulham Correctional Centre. Minister, what were the findings, recommendations and outcomes of that investigation?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Corrections) (12:14) — I thank the member for his question. This incident, as the member quite rightly pointed out, occurred prior to me becoming Minister for Corrections. This was an internal review that was undertaken by the prison, and procedures have been put in place to ensure that this does not occur again.

### *Supplementary question*

**Mr O'DONOHUE** (Eastern Victoria) (12:15) — I am interested that the minister says that GEO Group Australia undertook the review, not Corrections Victoria, which leaves the transparency of that investigation in doubt. In asking a supplementary I ask: will the minister commit to releasing the findings of that review, and can she confirm how many cannabis plants have been found growing in Victoria's correctional system since that incident two years ago?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Corrections) (12:16) — I thank the member for his question. Of course there was an internal investigation undertaken by the prison, but there was also a Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR) investigation and report on this. I also acknowledge the fact that when Mr O'Donohue was Minister for Corrections he never released one DJR report.

### **TAFE funding**

**Mr MORRIS** (Western Victoria) (12:16) — My question is to the Minister for Training and Skills. From 1 January next year students studying at RMIT and Victoria University will be eligible for free TAFE courses. Students studying at the Australian Catholic

University (ACU) and La Trobe University, however, will not be. Minister, can you explain how RMIT and Victoria University differ from other universities such as ACU and La Trobe, which also offer vocational education courses?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:17) — I thank the member for his interest in free TAFE. The fact of the matter is that this government, as I have said time and time again, has made a decision that it is putting TAFE in the engine-driver's seat when it comes to vocational education and training in this state. The fact of the matter is that in the last budget we allocated \$172 million for free TAFE courses. We also provided \$303.8 million to the entire sector — including Learn Locals, TAFEs and indeed private providers — and that is to add an additional 30 000 training places to training in this state.

Indeed we also backed that up with our commitment to regional Victoria by having \$120 million allocated to capital funds — those being for a brand-new campus that will be built at Sale, a brand-new trade centre that will be built at Morwell and also the redevelopment of the Bendigo campus of Bendigo Kangan Institute. We are making sure that this is the priority of this government, and we are very pleased with the response that the community has made in relation to our initiatives.

We have had a significant amount of interest from the community in following up on free TAFE, either online or indeed by calls to various training facilities in this state. There are a number of things that need to be put in place to ensure that free TAFE will be able to be delivered come 1 January, and we are looking forward to delivering courses that align to the needs of local communities, where jobs are actually available in local communities —

**Mr Morris** — On a point of order, President, I have been listening patiently, hoping that the minister might at some point come somewhere near answering the question. The minister has spoken broadly about a subject but not specifically about the question. I would ask you to draw her back to the question as to why ACU and La Trobe are not involved in this scheme by the government.

**The PRESIDENT** — Minister, I am of the view that that question was fairly specific. Whilst you have provided quite a bit of context, I think that it would be of interest to the house to know why there is an exception of these two entities, if indeed that is the case. So, Minister, I would draw you to that part of the question.

**Ms TIERNEY** — The fact of the matter, President, is that the initiative around free TAFE is exactly what it is. It is about TAFE, and that is why we are making sure that there is a connection — a real connection — between the jobs that are available in local communities and aligning the courses so that people can live in their communities and attend courses that deliver jobs that are available locally. That is the premise of the initiative, so that we can make sure that those who are interested in staying in their communities can actually undertake the courses, attain the skills, then move on and get the jobs that are available.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr MORRIS** (Western Victoria) (12:21) — I thank the minister for her response. Minister, have any of the universities excluded from delivering free priority courses approached the government to express their concern?

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) (12:21) — There just seems to be an absence of some information here. The fact of the matter is that the ACU and La Trobe are not dual sector. Those universities that are dual sector, that have TAFE, and TAFE standalone institutions are those institutions that can deliver free TAFE come 1 January.

*River Red Gum Parks Management Plan*

**Mr O'SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) (12:22) — My question is to the Special Minister of State representing the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, Parks Victoria's *River Red Gum Parks Management Plan* includes a proposal to 'investigate establishing campgrounds with bookable camp sites'. Will the Andrews government rule out banning families from their favourite camping spots and instead introduce bookable camp sites along the Murray River?

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:22) — I thank the member for his question. Mr O'Sullivan seems in his question to conflate two ideas — one, which in fact he restates in his question, is that he recognises that Parks Victoria's considerations will lead to a regulatory environment about camping sites so that they will continue to have camping sites, and at the same time, he describes banning camping sites. They are not mutually exclusive ideas in the name of wanting to make sure that there is an appropriate environment in which there can be certainty that camping sites will be made available well into the future on the basis of how to protect environmental values along the river — and indeed in those important

natural environments that are sometimes subjected to a lot of pressure because of how popular they are at certain times of the year.

Without knowing the details — and in fact I will rely on my colleague to answer the question specifically — can I actually say that the spirit of the review, as I understand it, is to make sure that there is ongoing availability of camp sites, because there is an appreciation within the Victorian government that members of our community love to camp. They want to continue to camp in natural environments, and it is our obligation to be able to provide that in a way that does provide access for families and people who love spending time in those parks, but to do it in a way which means that we mitigate adverse environmental impacts and limiting those options in the future.

The idea is to get the balance right so that you provide for access, you provide for opportunities and you do not do damage that actually prevents them from being available in the long term. That is the art in the work that is being undertaken, but I will get my colleague to provide the answer to the question.

*Supplementary question*

**Mr O’SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) (12:24) — Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Minister, the plan also proposes introducing camping areas for recreational vehicles and ‘commercial accommodation, such as safari tents’ throughout our park along the Murray River. When was the minister first aware of these proposals put forward in the management plan, and does the Andrews government support them?

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:25) — I take it that that is a question to my colleague rather than to me because my knowledge of it is not the most important knowledge in this moment, but I am certain that she will respond to that question.

**Simplot Australia and SPC**

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) (12:25) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, this morning Simplot Australia has announced the closure of its Pakenham manufacturing facility, costing 150 highly skilled, hardworking and dedicated employees their jobs. Also this morning Coca-Cola has notified the ASX that it is considering the sale of the Shepparton Preserving Company, now known as SPC. Minister, what action will the Andrews government now take to ensure support for employees at these businesses and the local communities affected?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:26) — I thank Ms Lovell for her question and her interest in these matters. The specific form of support to the Pakenham business is something that I will seek a response from Minister Carroll on.

**An honourable member** — You’re the Minister for Agriculture.

**Ms PULFORD** — Yes, that is right, I am, and Minister Carroll is the Minister for Industry and Employment. But what I can indicate is that the government is doing a great deal to support employment in our food industries and indeed in our primary production sector — more than 200 000 people in Victoria derive their income from food and fibre production, including in our food manufacturing plants.

Ms Lovell asked also about the announcement this morning from Coca-Cola Amatil in relation to SPC. In certainly very encouraging news they made it very clear in that statement that there are no plans to close SPC and that the review they are undertaking over the next six to 12 months is focused on future growth potential. We have been providing support to growers in the Goulburn Valley region, particularly in their fruit fly fight, which of course is an important means of support to SPC. That is in some contrast to the approach the former government took in terms of surrender on fruit fly.

I have had the opportunity to visit SPC on a number of occasions in my capacity as Minister for Regional Development and to see the work that has been underway as a result of the \$100 million investment — significant change and upgrade to the production, to the product lines and indeed to the products, which is very much focused on growing export opportunities.

This series of projects has been successfully completed now, which Coca-Cola Amatil refer to in their statement, and in making reference to that significant change that that company has been undergoing for the last four years I recognise the role of my predecessor, Peter Ryan, in the support that he provided in 2014 when SPC’s future looked quite bleak. Members who were following this at the time in 2014 would also recall that from obviously the position of opposition the then opposition leader, Daniel Andrews, indicated that it was our intention, should we form government, to provide support for SPC to make those changes and deliver the projects that were required for SPC to secure its future. So there has certainly been bipartisan support for that.

The investment that was made by the former government, again referenced in the statement from SPC — Coca-Cola Amatil — has been something that I have monitored and my department has closely monitored as we have continued to deliver on the plan that was put in place in the latter part of 2014. The government has made co-investments in that region with local companies, including Murphy Fresh, Katunga Fresh in Katunga and Booth Transport in Strathmerton — 50 jobs, 40 jobs, 77 jobs — and there are a number of other agrifood-related investments in the pipeline in that region that we will hopefully have some news on in coming weeks.

*Supplementary question*

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) (12:30) — Minister, the government purchased Australian Sustainable Hardwoods to save the jobs of those local employees. Will the government consider doing the same for these two businesses?

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:30) — One of the things that the owners of SPC have indicated is that one of the things that will be subject to the review that they have announced today is the possibility of a sale. Right now, though, SPC is not for sale.

**Ms Lovell** interjected.

**Ms PULFORD** — As I indicated, I will seek a response from Minister Carroll on Simplot. It is kind of —

**Ms Lovell** interjected.

**Ms PULFORD** — It is a ridiculous question, and it does you no credit. You could be taking the approach of the member for Shepparton, who has met with the Premier on these matters this morning, who is taking a much more sensible approach. We will continue to support the creation and retention of jobs in regional Victoria in —

**The PRESIDENT** — Minister, thank you.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Answers**

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:31) — There are 10 written responses to questions on notice: 10921–2, 10924, 12523–4, 12617, 12781, 12796–7 and 12830.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Written responses**

**The PRESIDENT** (12:31) — In respect of today's questions, Dr Carling-Jenkins's question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary questions to a minister in another place, I seek written responses in two days; Dr Ratnam's question to Ms Pulford, the substantive and supplementary questions, again a minister in another place, two days; Ms Truong's question to Mr Jennings, the substantive and supplementary questions, two days, also for a minister in another place; Mr Morris's question to Ms Tierney, the supplementary question, that is one day. I have not reinstated the substantive question because the minister in the supplementary answer actually answered the first part. Mr O'Donohue's second question to Ms Tierney I will consider later this day. I am going to have a look at the questions and the responses, so I will determine that at a later stage. In relation to Mr O'Sullivan's question to Mr Jennings, Mr Jennings undertook to obtain some information from a minister in another place for both the substantive and supplementary questions. Ms Lovell's question to Ms Pulford really does involve the minister in another place in terms of portfolio responsibility, so the substantive and supplementary questions, that is two days.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Answers**

**Mr RICH-PHILLIPS** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:33) — I have a long list of outstanding questions on notice from a range of — I think all — ministers in the chamber relating either to their portfolios or portfolios they represent, over an extended period of time, on which I would like to seek explanations from the relevant ministers.

I will start with Minister Pulford: on behalf of the Minister for Industry and Employment, questions 11 479, 11 501, 11 524, 11 546, 11 568 and 12 723–4; the minister in her own right as Minister for Agriculture, questions 11 473, 11 496, 11 518, 11 540, 11 562 and 12 717–8; representing the Minister for Public Transport, questions 12 727–8; representing the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, questions 12 725–6; and representing the Minister for Creative Industries and Minister for Equality, questions 12 721 and 12 719–20. Those are all the ones in Ms Pulford's areas — questions on notice outstanding for various periods of time, but an extended period of time.

**Ms PULFORD** (Minister for Agriculture) (12:34) — I thank Mr Rich-Phillips for bringing these to my attention, and I will endeavour to provide responses to those matters at the earliest opportunity.

**Mr RICH-PHILLIPS** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:35) — In relation to the Leader of the Government there are a small number of questions in the name of the Leader of the Government directly, which are questions 11 475, 11 497, 11 520, 11 542, 11 564 and 12 731–2. Then for the Leader of the Government representing other portfolio ministers: for major projects, questions 11 482, 11 504, 11 527, 11 549 and 11 571; for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, questions 12 735–6; for the Minister for Water, questions 12 740 and 12 741; for the Minister for Industrial Relations, questions 12 743–4; for the finance minister, questions 11 478, 11 500, 11 523, 11 545, 11 567 and 12 737–8; for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, question 12 739; and for the Treasurer, questions 12 729–30, 12 814, 12 817, 12 820 and 12 822–5.

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:37) — I was just mindful, as Mr Rich-Phillips ran through that question, that he is relying on me being good friends with my colleagues in the other place to answer the vast majority of those questions. I wish he had some friends in the other place that could ask those questions directly. That might actually assist those other ministers in the other chamber to address those matters in a speedier way than I have been able to do. But I will now take this list and have a look at their status with my colleagues. In relation to the ones that relate to me, could you tell me the content of the ones that relate to me?

**Mr RICH-PHILLIPS** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:37) — If I can, President, some of them are ones which were reinstated, which would relate to staffing, minus the ones that were provided today. Some of them have not been subject to reinstatement and are original questions asked in June, but I only have the numbers, not the subject matters.

**Mr JENNINGS** (Special Minister of State) (12:38) — I am certain that there are very, very few questions that have been asked of me that have not been answered, and I will get on top of that.

**Mr RICH-PHILLIPS** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:38) — President, I seek your guidance. I did flag that there were questions outstanding to basically all ministers. Since I did that, three other ministers have subsequently left the chamber, so I seek your guidance, given that

Wednesday is the only opportunity to raise these after question time, on how you would like me to proceed with this.

**The PRESIDENT** — You are able to proceed with your request now, because it will be incorporated in *Hansard* and brought to the attention of those ministers.

**Mr RICH-PHILLIPS** — Thank you, President. In relation to Minister Tierney in her own right, questions 12 753, 12 751–2; representing the Minister for Education, questions 11 539, 12 754–5; and for the Minister for Police, question 12 742.

In relation to Minister Mikakos in her own right as Minister for Families and Children, questions 12 747–8; representing the Minister for Health, questions 12 749–50; representing the Minister for Mental Health, questions 11 490, 11 513, 11 535, 11 579 and 12 722; and representing the Minister for Women, questions 11 491, 11 514, 11 536, 11 558, 11 580 and 12 746.

For Minister Dalidakis representing Minister Eren, questions 11 486, 11 509, 11 531, 11 553, 11 575, 12 765–6; representing the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, questions 11 487, 11 510, 11 532, 11 554, 11 576, 12 760–2; for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, question 12 745; for the Minister for Planning, questions 11 485, 11 508, 11 530, 11 552, 11 574, 12 763–4; and for the Minister for Veterans, question 12 767.

I seek an explanation from those ministers as to why those answers have not been provided in the time frame set down in standing orders.

**Ms Crozier** — On a point of order, President, if I may, yesterday I asked a question without notice of Minister Mikakos around the number of staff who were stood down following a very serious incident that happened in one of Victoria's youth justice centres. I note that at the time she did not answer the question and you requested a written answer. I am requesting that again. It has not been responded to appropriately, and I am requesting that it be reinstated because I was just asking how many staff were stood down pending the investigation, not anything around the investigation or what actually occurred in relation to that serious matter.

**The PRESIDENT** — I have had a look at that question, and I am of the view that the question has not been answered. I did indicate yesterday that I believed that the matter canvassed in the minister's answer yesterday — and reflected also in the written answer today — does not go to the matter that was particularly

questioned. From my point of view I would have thought that that matter might well have been answered, particularly given that Ms Crozier mentioned in her supplementary question yesterday information that suggested that there was already an understanding of actions that had been taken and was really seeking a confirmation from the minister in that regard to perhaps avoid public speculation in respect of those matters. So I do take the opportunity to reinstate those questions.

## CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

### Northern Victoria Region

**Mr GEPP** (Northern Victoria) (12:43) — My constituency question is to the Honourable John Eren, Minister for Tourism and Major Events in the other place. Echuca, which is in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region, was host to the 19th Echuca-Moama Winter Blues Festival in July this year, thanks to support from the Andrews Labor government's Regional Events Fund. The festival was held over four days, with more than 50 of the country's best blues musicians performing at a host of venues across Echuca and Moama, and it attracted up to 20 000 people. An event like this not only increases tourism to the Echuca region during the quietest time of the year but also supports local jobs and businesses. My question for the minister is: how is the Andrews Labor government providing support for the Echuca region to ensure it continues to grow as a tourist destination?

### Eastern Metropolitan Region

**Ms DUNN** (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:44) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in relation to the heritage-listed manor house at Westerfolds Park. After 15 years of operation, in May 2013 the much-loved Mia Mia Indigenous art gallery shut their premises at the heritage-listed manor house in Westerfolds Park. Parks Victoria informed the gallery operator that they were not being considered for future tenancy at the end of their lease. Although new tenants were in initial negotiations, nothing has ever eventuated and the manor house has remained vacant ever since. Many constituents have expressed their sorrow at the loss of such an iconic building and that it is now laying in a state of disrepair, so my question for the minister is: will she seek to support Parks Victoria in finding new tenants to restore the manor house services to the community and to commit to upholding the site's linkage with Indigenous culture?

### Southern Metropolitan Region

**Ms CROZIER** (Southern Metropolitan) (12:45) — My question is to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, and it relates to the rollout of replacement heaters in public housing. My office has been inundated by people in public housing and relatives of their elderly parents who are in these various facilities and accommodation who are freezing, not getting out of bed or having hot showers just to get warm. Others have told me of their medical conditions whereby they are reliant on suitable heating and yet they have coil heaters that are inadequate and other heaters which are costing a fortune to run due to the skyrocketing electricity prices that Victoria is experiencing. They have also told me of tenants getting priority over them due to them being more vocal in their complaints to the housing officer or because they 'know someone' in high places and are fast-tracked for heater replacement. It is winter and it has been a very cold, long winter. Minister, I ask that you please provide details of how the rollout of replacement heaters has been prioritised for public housing tenants across Victoria.

### South Eastern Metropolitan Region

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:47) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, and it is in relation to the matter that was raised earlier by Ms Truong about details surrounding the allocations for the implementation of the *Victorian African Communities Action Plan* and specifically, obviously given the issues involving some elements of the African communities in the south-east, I ask the minister whether he could provide a breakdown of the \$2 million that has been recently announced for the delivery of programs to respond to drug and alcohol abuse, to place people into jobs and to improve education through support for various educational initiatives and advise what programs will be funded, which organisations and in what time frames, and in particular what indicators of success will be used to judge whether these programs are effective.

**The PRESIDENT** — Mrs Peulich, that is a broad one. It is not about your electorate.

**Mrs PEULICH** — No, President, what I said was: what proportion of the overall funds are going to be dedicated to South Eastern Metropolitan Region, where there are substantial issues to do with African communities?

### Northern Victoria Region

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) (12:48) — My question is for the Minister for Emergency Services. At last night's City of Greater Shepparton council meeting a decision was finally endorsed to confirm Karibok Park as the site of Shepparton's new fire station. The minister and the member for Shepparton in the Assembly must be grateful for the policy direction they received from the Liberal Party in Shepparton. I have spoken of the need to relocate the fire station to the Country Fire Authority's preferred site of Karibok Park many times over the past 12 months and each time the minister failed to act. The belated announcement from the minister of Karibok Park as the government's preferred site came only after the Liberal Party made an election commitment to build the station on the site. Now Karibok Park has finally been adopted by the government and confirmed by council, the minister needs to stop the stalling and get on with the job of building the new fire station immediately. Will the minister inform Shepparton firefighters and the local community of the date that construction will start on the new Shepparton fire station at Karibok Park?

### Northern Victoria Region

**Ms SYMES** (Northern Victoria) (12:49) — My constituency question is for the minister responsible for community services and relates to our massive support and investment in men's sheds. Recently I have actively encouraged the Heathcote community to apply for funding under the grants program for a new men's shed. Heathcote is a fantastic country town with very active community members who continually demonstrate their interest in the welfare of those around them, and I am very confident that a men's shed would be welcomed and an extremely positive addition. In relation to support for this, there are lots of people who have been advocating for it, but in particular Vicki Forde at the community house. There is a history of the community house attempting to sustain their own men's shed, but due to the size and conflicting user groups it just has not been able to be a home for a dedicated men's shed. We have a site, we have a community that is behind it and I know that the grants program came to a close some time ago, so I am wanting to know when we will find out whether Heathcote has been successful in its application for a grant for a new men's shed.

### Western Victoria Region

**Mr MORRIS** (Western Victoria) (12:50) — My question is for the Minister for Police, and it relates to the ever-growing crime epidemic that is threatening the

good people in the City of Ballarat. Over the past few days there has been a spate of crimes in the beautiful township of Buninyong, some of which involved attacking the football club there who are hosting finals this weekend. Fortunately they are going to be able to proceed, but a number of other concerning crimes have occurred there. This is all while this government cuts the number of frontline police officers in the Ballarat community who are keeping the community safe. To this end there have been 18 frontline police officers cut in this term of government. So the question that I ask is: will the minister reinstate the 18 frontline police officers the government has cut from Ballarat to ensure our community is kept safe?

### Eastern Metropolitan Region

**Mr LEANE** (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:51) — My adjournment matter is directed to Minister D'Ambrosio in her responsibility as Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I would like to join my colleague Ms Dunn in a question about the manor house in Westerfolds Park. I have been approached by a number of groups including a Manningham City Council councillor. I am sure it is the same Manningham councillor who has been speaking to Ms Dunn, and I think it is a fair question that the community is asking. It is a shame that this manor house has been idle for so long under successive governments, so the question I would ask the minister is: has she been having discussions with Parks Victoria regarding the potential of a new tenant moving into the manor house?

### Southern Metropolitan Region

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) (12:52) — My matter today relates to the sky rail through my electorate and beyond. There are a number of people who are being directly impacted by the construction and the activities of the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA). Chris Papapavlou recently contacted me and in fact today he contacted me further, and he is a good case study. He has been told by the LXRA, this morning in fact, 'If you are not happy, sir, you can contact the Ombudsman'. He has suffered four counts of property damage. So far he has had one addressed and in relation to the other three he was told to contact the Ombudsman. These phone calls have been non-responsive to the issues that have been raised — fence damage and other issues along the whole corridor. So in that context I ask the Minister for Public Transport: what action, if any, will she take to bring the LXRA goons into line?

**Ms Pulford** — On a point of order, President, I do not think it is appropriate to be referring to public servants as goons.

**Mrs Peulich** — It is not against standing orders.

**Ms Pulford** — It should be.

**Mrs Peulich** — Well, it is not.

**Mr DAVIS** — On the point of order, President, it is quite appropriate when they are acting like goons. That is what is occurring right along the whole corridor.

**Ms Pulford** — Further on the point of order, President, Mr Davis did not say ‘acting like goons’; he said they were goons. It is completely unbecoming of this place.

**The PRESIDENT** — I agree. I believe it is unparliamentary. Please replace the word.

**Mr DAVIS** — On a point of order, President, I just want to understand this so I fully —

**The PRESIDENT** — Order! It is unparliamentary.

**Mr DAVIS** — I have never heard of that ruling before.

**The PRESIDENT** — Well, nobody else has bothered to use that word before.

**Mr DAVIS** — Well then, these ‘unresponsive public sector employees’ in the context of the Level Crossing Removal Authority.

### Western Victoria Region

**Mr RAMSAY** (Western Victoria) (12:54) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the question I pose to him is: at what stage is the application from the Barwon Heads Country Fire Authority in relation to the upgrade of their fire shed? I have seen plans for the upgrade, and I understand that there have been certain assurances given that in fact there will be funding applied to the redevelopment of that fire station. But on behalf of that fire brigade I ask the minister if he can give both an assurance and some guidance to that fire brigade that their application is being dealt with fairly quickly and that they will be successful in their funding request.

**Sitting suspended 12.55 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.**

## METROPOLITAN RAIL NETWORK

### Debate resumed.

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) (14:03) — I will continue on the motion on the recent metropolitan rail enhancements that have been announced that we would implement in government.

As I said, in the case of Cranbourne to Clyde, that will make a significant difference. I have made the point about the input of a number of key people, including the consultation with Casey council and the start of consultation with other councils in the region, including Cardinia.

Let me just say that the extension of the rail line to Baxter is also very significant. The extension between Frankston and Baxter is a \$450 million transport infrastructure upgrade. That is an 8-kilometre electrified twin track between Baxter and Frankston along the current Stony Point line. There are two new railway stations, one near Monash University and one at Frankston East. There is another one at Langwarrin, and the one at Baxter is to be upgraded. The new infrastructure will enable more frequent, higher capacity Metro trains to service the growing areas of Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter. The existing diesel rail car will remain on the Stony Point to Baxter line.

Obviously people will be interested in the length of that line. Baxter is at the edge of the urban growth boundary, so it is an appropriate stopping point. Of course some would like the rail line electrified and extended down to Hastings, and certainly a good case can be put for that, but in this instance we have indicated that the extension will be to Baxter.

That logically is also close to the Peninsula Freeway and would enable the reworking of bus routes, particularly fast buses down the peninsula. The 788 bus has been much derided. At the transport forum in Frankston recently there was not a word of warmth towards the 788 bus, which winds its way slowly down the peninsula from Frankston to Portsea on a slow milk run that does not please anyone. So the opportunity I think is there to rework the bus transport from each of those stations and also ensure that there is appropriate car parking at those stations.

The Turnbull government has committed \$225 million towards that infrastructure in the 2018–19 budget; indeed we have indicated that we will match that money. This will also ensure that a grade separation occurs at Moorooduc Road. We have begun the process

of working closely with councils, particularly the Frankston City Council, on much of the detail in terms of bike connections, pedestrian access, car parking placement and other key steps. Those specifications and the final layout will be determined, as I said, in consultation with the council and the local community.

I want to put on record my congratulations to a number of key groups. Chris Crewther, the federal member for Dunkley, has been a very firm advocate and a very strong advocate within the Turnbull government, and I pay tribute to his work. I pay tribute to the work of Neale Burgess, my colleague the member for Hastings in the Assembly, for his work on this line extension that has extended over three or four years or even longer. He has worked with the Committee for Greater Frankston, with the local councils, with local schools and with others on what the best outcome and the best design would be. Neale's work, I think, has been very instructive. Michael Lamb, our candidate for Frankston, has also been very active on this. I certainly pay tribute to him for his work as well. He is a local and respected police officer who I think has a wealth of knowledge to contribute.

Council in the form of the City of Frankston have been very strong advocates of this extension. I particularly pay tribute to the Committee for Greater Frankston. They have put together significant work over a long period of time. I again point out that the community owes a debt to the Committee for Greater Frankston. I have met with them and taken on board many of their ideas. I know they will be advocating strongly for much of the detail, including connections through to the McClelland Gallery and all manner of important local attractions to get the very best outcome for the rail extension we are proposing, and the federal government has allocated the money for this.

This again is important. It is not on Labor's agenda it seems. They have been in power for 15 of the last 19 years, and they have taken the peninsula and Frankston for granted. The local member, the member for Frankston in the other place, Paul Edbrooke, has been too busy fighting with Country Fire Authority volunteers instead of fighting for Frankston —

**Mrs Peulich** — He just likes brawls. He is a brawler.

**Mr DAVIS** — He does. He is a bit of a brawler, I must say. I know that he has not done well.

I also want to make the point that this extension will be significantly to the advantage of educational facilities and the Frankston Hospital. Obviously I am very

concerned to see a strong Frankston Hospital. As health minister I was active in expanding that hospital. The emergency department and the expansion that has been recently completed was our work in the period between 2010 and 2014, and that has made a huge difference. My insistence on a 24-hour cath lab being available has made a significant safety difference at Frankston Hospital. Access to Frankston Hospital has always been a challenge and this rail line will make a huge difference. It will mean that there is a stop within close proximity. The design of stations and pedestrian and bicycle access to these key institutions from the new Frankston East station will be a critical point, and we will work with the community, work with the council and work with the Committee for Greater Frankston to get the very best outcome there.

Also important is the new announcement that we have made about the duplication of the line between Eltham and Greensborough. This, on the Hurstbridge line, is a single track north of Greensborough. The duplication will also see a rebuild of the Montmorency station and significant additions to car parking at Montmorency, Greensborough and Eltham. Duplication will mean more trains more often for passengers on the Hurstbridge line. There have been works done on the inner part of the Hurstbridge line and that does ensure that the duplication here will get maximum advantage.

I am concerned that Labor has not committed to this; it has committed to a shabby, inadequate copy of this. They are going to maintain the old bridge without a duplicated line next to it as we have proposed. They are proposing that there be a single line, which will become a choke point for trains going out towards Eltham. That choke point will mean less trains can be run. It means because of safety considerations and for safety reasons there will be a capacity constraint under the model Labor has proposed. Our model will enable full duplication and will make, I think, a significant difference.

I know Nick McGowan, our candidate for the Assembly seat of Eltham, has been very focused on this outcome. He has very much made the point that Labor will not be able to get reliable 10-minute services. They will not put in the car parks that are required at Greensborough. Montmorency will also get absolutely nothing under the Labor proposal: no new car parks and no new station, but lots more cars from out of the area bypassing Eltham's less frequent and less reliable services.

We have got huge population growth to the north of the city. These improvements are needed, and for Labor to try and short-change the community in Eltham,

Montmorency and Greensborough in this way is a very, very poor outcome. A sensible and sensitive duplication plan all the way to Eltham station that protects the trestle bridge and creates 150 new free car parks at Greensborough, Montmorency and Eltham stations will make a real difference for the community.

So I say that Nick McGowan, our candidate there and a strong advocate, stands in stark contrast to the Labor member in that area, who is not prepared to stand up for a line and is prepared only to put a choked line through that area, not the full duplication that is required. You will never get a reliable 10-minute service under Labor. You will not get it to Eltham, and the Assembly member for Eltham, Vicki Ward, and Labor MPs in that area are short-changing the community. I think it is a disgrace. The community is entitled to expect more. The community is entitled to have an outcome that will actually deal with congestion and that will deal with the population growth. I have got to say that the view that you could retain a very old line of this type without properly upgrading it is simply a big, big mistake — a historic mistake by Labor.

I want to say something too about the overall performance of the metropolitan rail system. We have seen cancellations rise across the whole system since the change of government in November 2014. The last figures, to July, show the metropolitan system is creaking. It is struggling with cancellations and reduced punctuality across a series of lines. That is not what we need with population growth of the type that we have got. Some will say this is because of the government doing works. The works are actually taken out of the figures, so they do not include those. Those falling punctuality figures and the increasing number of cancellations — the reduced performance — are also evident on regional lines.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DAVIS** — Indeed, as you point out, the regional lines are actually even worse. V/Line's performance has actually deteriorated, Mr Leane, even more savagely — to Geelong, to Ballarat, to Bendigo, down into Gippsland and elsewhere as well. The decline in performance has been nothing short of scandalous at V/Line, and the Minister for Public Transport appears to be unconcerned about that. Acting President, you will be aware of some of the cancellations that are routinely hitting the Ballarat line. I follow one person on Twitter, Jules, who has pointed out 55 of 150 services that she has sought to catch have actually been cancelled on the Ballarat line. That is an indication. She calls one of the services in the afternoon a ghost service.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — A ghost train. That is exactly what she calls it. Mr Purcell knows the problems that are facing the rail line to Warrnambool. The performance on that line has deteriorated. The punctuality has deteriorated. The cancellations are up. People actually want clean, reliable, safe trains.

The decision of the government today to back down on protective services officers (PSOs) on our trains — a flying PSO squad — is, I think, a travesty. I understand that union pressure was involved in this decision — union pressure to stop PSOs in a roving squad from moving around on our rail system. The Premier said that this would be brought forward, and now it appears that it is not going to be brought forward. Neil Mitchell carried this story this morning. I know that Labor has problems with PSOs; it has traditionally hated PSOs. I think Mr Merlino in opposition called them 'plastic police' and sought —

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr DAVIS** — No, I think it was Mr Merlino too who used the same phrase. I think this undersells their importance to our transport system and to the safety of our system. Terry Mulder is the one who introduced them right across the metropolitan and larger regional centres, putting PSOs into our centres to make sure that people are safe — from dark until the last train. That has been a very important aspect of the reliability and safety of our rail system. The idea of having roving PSOs is a good one. In truth, if there is an incident somewhere, the PSOs ought to be able to move towards that incident in effect as first responders. If they are the closest to it and there is a threat to public safety, I would argue that they ought to be able to respond as required where there is a problem. But the idea that they will now be blocked by unions from going on our rail system I think is a significant problem.

I am making the point here with this contribution that all of these extensions are important. They are not alone; there will have to be further announcements in this space on rail, and on metropolitan rail in particular. But these three announcements to which this motion refers will make a significant difference to the communities they serve in the north, in the south-east and in the south. Communities have faced great difficulties with the increase in population. We need to respond with adequate new services, and we need to service many of the new areas as they are brought forward. It is no good doing this after the event. There will have to be further work on this as we go forward. But these are important, the three announcements that

are involved here. Clyde, Baxter and the full duplication between Greensborough and Eltham are worthy of the support of the whole chamber.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mr SOMYUREK (South Eastern Metropolitan).**

**Debate adjourned until later this day.**

**FIREFIGHTERS PRESUMPTIVE RIGHTS LEGISLATION**

**Mr PURCELL** (Western Victoria) (14:21) — I move:

That this house notes that the —

- (1) Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 was defeated in this house in March 2018;
- (2) purpose of the presumptive rights element of the bill is to provide a rebuttable presumption to claim compensation under the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 for career and volunteer firefighters who are suffering, or will suffer, from certain cancers;
- (3) presumptive rights compensation legislation included in the bill had support amongst volunteer and career firefighters and members of this house;

and therefore calls on the government to expedite the introduction and passing of a new bill that addresses only the presumptive rights compensation issue before this Parliament expires in October.

The reason I have brought this motion to the house is certainly not to reopen old wounds. The discussion about the Country Fire Authority (CFA) bill and the presumptive rights portion of it that was conducted in the house I do not think too many of us would be really proud of, but I bring this to the house because my community wants me to.

When the CFA bill came out in the first place, I took it to the volunteers in my community. I organised a number of meetings, in particular within 100 kilometres of my office. Two of those were at integrated stations. The first meeting I had was at Warrnambool, which is quite a large integrated station. It was well organised. The meeting was a good meeting, with mainly career firefighters. At that, most of them certainly wanted me to support the bill, so at that stage I thought I had better go and talk to some of the other volunteers in western Victoria, particularly south-western Victoria.

The next station I went to was also an integrated station, in Portland. We invited a number of the smaller brigades from the border right through to include Tyrendarra and certainly Nelson and through there. It

became apparent that they did not want the bill to pass — or they wanted more information rather than them not wanting the bill to pass. They definitely wanted the presumptive rights portion of it included as a separate issue. They felt it should be considered as a separate issue.

I then met with a number of the very small brigades in groups that represented a lot of brigades. I went to Heywood, where we had probably 150 CFA volunteers from many different brigades. I also visited the Koroit brigade, the Port Fairy brigade and the Pernim brigade, and I finished up at Macarthur on one very cold evening in the middle of the week. For those who do not know Macarthur, it has a population of about 200 people. We had one of the biggest meetings probably ever held in Macarthur at the fire shed. We could not fit into the fire shed, so they backed the truck out and we all huddled into the shed. There were probably 150-odd people there, so it was a big meeting for Macarthur.

In regard to the bill, I do not intend to touch on it other than to say that all the community really wanted was more information and they did not want me to support it until they received that information. They were not necessarily against what it included; it was just that they did not understand it well enough and were not comfortable enough to be able to say that, yes, it was a good piece of legislation. But I was asked right at the end of that meeting what would happen to the presumptive rights part of the bill if it went down. My comment to that was, 'Look, if the bill doesn't get passed, I will do what I can to make certain that the presumptive rights do not get lost in the rest of the business of government'. I said that if time permitted, I would raise it as a bill or at least as a motion.

So that is the reason why I am here. As I said, it is not to open old wounds; that is the last thing I think any of us need. But what I do think we need to do is to make certain that our CFA volunteers are looked after. As I said, this was a promise I made to them. I do not think anyone would argue about the need for presumptive rights legislation. The volunteers deserve to have the same cover and to be looked after in the same way as professional firefighters. It is long overdue, and it has been in the federal Parliament and this Parliament for getting near a decade. I think both parties have helped and hindered the passage of that as time has gone on.

I think we agree that the work that the firefighters do, our volunteers as well as our paid firefighters, does routinely expose them to toxic smoke and chemicals that can cause cancer. I do not think there is any argument about that, and if there is I certainly have not

heard it. So we can all agree, because if they do become ill and show causes of the cancer, the last thing that they need or that their family needs is for them to have to prove that that was caused through their actions as firefighters. That is where we need to change the burden of proof so that the proof is actually to prove that they have not received it as part of their firefighting routine. I do not need to go through the history of this, but as I said, if there is a siren or a bell, as there often is in country Victoria, volunteers as well as professional firefighters will immediately don their clothes and be out fighting the fire. They will travel overseas, as many of them do, and my understanding is that there are a number of them already overseas fighting fires in other parts of the world, representing Victoria, representing Australia and representing us, and they do that so well.

The idea of presumptive rights has been around for a long time. It may have started before this, but the first piece of legislation was in 2011, when the federal government passed what was called the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill 2011, which amended the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988. That actually created a legal presumption that if a firefighter had been employed for a certain period before being diagnosed with one of seven primary cancers, that employment was to be taken as being the dominant cause for the contraction of that cancer. I think that is the essence of it. So that was in 2011. Not long after that the Greens actually raised the issue in the Victorian Parliament in 2012. Not long after that, while not rejecting it, the Liberal government at the time basically wanted it to include further advice from the Victorian WorkCover Authority and the firefighters assessment panel to set up and review cases, but this required firefighters to prove their cancer was contracted at work. The presumptive legislation is to reverse that.

In 2014 Labor then made it a part of their 100-day promise. That was excellent and they took that to the election, but when the legislation was actually introduced it was wrapped around the very unpopular CFA bill. To their credit Labor did bring it to the Parliament, but they did not bring it in isolation, and that was the problem. I probably do not need to go over the events of Easter when the legislation was lost in this house, but it is probably the story of a book in itself. In May this year finally there was an attempt to introduce presumptive rights as a private members bill, which did not make it out of the other place, but it is time it did. And why wouldn't it?

Both sides of our current Parliament have taken advantage of the issue, I believe, for political reasons

and political gain, especially during the course of this Parliament. I must admit it is not something I will look back on proudly as an achievement during the four years that I have been here. There are a growing number of unwell firefighters and their families who have been left waiting for compensation and recognition. So I urge the government to stop these games. I ask the government to introduce a new firefighters presumptive rights bill as a standalone piece of legislation without strings attached and to expedite its passing before we close. I commend this motion to the house.

**Mr MULINO** (Eastern Victoria) (14:32) — That was a measured contribution by Mr Purcell, but I think the very measure of his presentation is in a sense what is problematic in relation to this motion, because this motion — for example, in paragraph (1) — notes that the bill was defeated on a certain date in March 2018. It is problematic even in paragraph (1) for what it does not say about what led up to that day and what occurred on that day. To have a motion that even starts with simply noting that and then moving on to say, 'I've talked to some stakeholders in my electorate, and they'd like the issue dealt with in a certain way', I think is problematic.

Can I just say from the outset that I agree with Mr Purcell on a lot of the aspects of this issue. Even though I disagree with Mr Purcell on whether that bill should have passed — and I have discussed aspects of it with him over the last couple of years — I have respect for the way Mr Purcell conducts himself in this chamber and beyond. But I could not support a motion which starts with what I consider to be frankly an incomplete and inaccurate description of what occurred back on that day. That is a preamble.

So I want to start by saying I will disagree with Mr Purcell in relation to the substance of the broader issue, and I will explain why I believe we need to deal with this issue in a holistic way and deal with issues that were included in the broader bill. I will include that commentary in my contribution. But I want to say from the outset that I will not reflect any respect for those opposite given the way they have conducted themselves on this issue from day one and indeed for years before this. I will reflect later in my contribution on the rank hypocrisy of those opposite who for years opposed presumptive rights legislation, who for years spoke against presumptive rights legislation, who spoke against the connection — I have got quotes and I will include them in my contribution. They have the audacity to come in here not only after the outrageous behaviour of Good Friday but also with the rank hypocrisy of having spoken for years against this issue.

By way of setting the context, this motion is not sufficient for dealing with the history of this issue.

When it comes to the third element, what I will speak to in my contribution is the fact that we need to have a response to this issue that is holistic. We need to deal with that bill as a whole. I supported the passage of the bill dealing with fire services reform as a whole. Those opposite opposed that, but they opposed it in the most despicable manner. I will speak to why. We need to deal with this issue in a holistic way as a matter of urgency, so I cannot support a motion which sidesteps much-needed reform in the sector, and I will quote from experts that gave evidence to the select committee and have given evidence in public in other forms.

Let us look at presumptive rights legislation. Let us look at the scheme that was on the table as a part of a broad set of reforms and, as I said, I will get to those other elements of the reforms later in my contribution. Let us look at the scheme that those opposite voted down on Good Friday. This government made a commitment before the last election to introduce presumptive rights legislation for firefighters. We made that commitment because it was the right thing to do, and I should say that at the time we made the commitment many senior members of the now opposition who were then in government had opposed that concept. They are not willing to admit to that now, but they are on the record.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MULINO** — So it does not matter what they yell here in this chamber; it does not matter what noises they make in this chamber. They are on the record. I will selectively quote a few, but there are too many quotes for me to go through. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves. But they have no shame, so they will not be ashamed of themselves — they will not be. That is a shame.

We made this commitment because it is the right thing to do. Our scheme would have delivered equal access to compensation for career and volunteer firefighters without rules that required volunteer firefighters to have attended a specific number of fires. If there had not been rules that had not required attendance at a specific number of fires, that would have been problematic. The scheme instead mirrors the approach taken in Queensland, which has no specific incident requirements.

It is worth remembering that the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria publicly expressed a preference for

the Queensland approach in November 2016, when they said, and I quote:

... South Australia and Queensland led the way with equal treatment for career and volunteer firefighters.

That is a direct quote from them for the approach that we adopted in the bill, which those opposite voted down on Good Friday.

Our scheme, as rejected by those opposite, also took care to take into account exceptional exposure events, enabling firefighters who have attended such an event to qualify for the presumption even if they do not meet the minimum years of service — an additional benefit that no other scheme has. These matters would have been dealt with by WorkSafe Victoria on the advice of an expert committee to ensure the fairness of the scheme. The government has also committed to creating a dedicated assistance fund to support the very small number of people who may not fit the criteria of the scheme.

Now, for context I am going to provide some quotes from those opposite before this term of government just to highlight the audacity of anybody on the other side after four years of inertia and four years of denying the problem coming in here and saying that they wanted immediate action on this issue — ridiculous! In August 2013 the then emergency services minister, Kim Wells in the Assembly, said:

We are not convinced that there is a direct link between cancer and the firefighters.

That was 21 August 2013. Also on 21 August Philip Davis said:

Firefighters need to establish that the nature of the work undertaken posed a significantly greater risk to the development of their cancer. In order to do this they need to provide some evidence of the type of duties they undertook. One way of doing this is to specify the types of events they attended — for example, major fires that were large or risky. Firefighters certainly do not need to say, ‘I got cancer when I went to fight fire X on date Y’.

We say there is not a sufficient length to enable automatic coverage for firefighters.

That is a direct quote. I do not think it takes too much interpretation to see where that side stood on the issue in 2013. On the next day Mr Rich-Phillips, who of course is a member of this chamber, said, and I am quoting:

... in order to introduce presumptive legislation it needs medical and scientific evidence that demonstrates the causal relationship between certain cancers and firefighting activity.

It is a sad reality that cancer is very prevalent in the Victorian community. Around 30 000 Victorians are diagnosed every year with various types of cancer, so it is not easy or straightforward to say, 'Because you have cancer and you were a firefighter, that cancer was caused by firefighting'.

Again, it is crystal clear what the intention of that quote is. Those opposite spent years denying that this is an issue, and then after voting down a scheme which we put to the Parliament they come in here and have the audacity to say, 'Oh, this is urgent. Why are you standing in the way of this incredible opposition that is so committed to this issue?'. What remarkable gall!

Even more recently Simon Ramsay said in relation to one of the worst betrayals of fire safety in this state's history:

Despite this, Fiskville is not alone in not adhering to the OHS regulations of the day, and the committee could not substantiate causal links between firefighter training exposure and cancer.

That is from *Hansard*, 24 May 2016.

So at every step of the way we are the party that has been pushing this cause from opposition and then government. At every step of the way those opposite have been resisting. Then when it suits them politically they come in here and make gestures on a life and death issue, but they see political gain. They misrepresent routinely the nature of reforms that are put forward. They spread myths on an issue which should be above politics. Unfortunately this term of Parliament has been, I believe, one of the worst examples of dragging an issue into the mire of politics — one that should have been above it — where we could have as a Parliament achieved so much more.

Let us go to Fiskville. The parliamentary inquiry into the Fiskville training college found clearly and unambiguously that concerns about safety at Fiskville were often not addressed by the Country Fire Authority (CFA). These concerns were raised publicly and by the union between 2011 and 2014. Nothing was done about them. In contrast, the Labor government shut down the Fiskville site in 2015 after tests showed firefighters were exposed to dangerous chemicals that most likely cause cancer, confirming what many had suspected. The government has invested \$80.7 million to decommission the Fiskville training facility and conduct environmental audits and upgrades at six other operational centres located across Victoria. Yet again it takes this party, this government, to push for these kinds of reforms, to push for this kind of issue to be put on the radar, and it takes this government to take action: to push for an inquiry, to follow through on the

recommendations of that inquiry and to commit much-needed funds.

Those opposite will undoubtedly try to use this motion as some kind of exercise in a political stunt. Those opposite will undoubtedly try and use this motion as some kind of opportunity for political rhetoric.

**Mr Leane** — You can't change history.

**Mr MULINO** — Yes, let's go back to the history, as Mr Leane said. Let us go back to the quotes, let us go back to what they said, to what they put on the record, and let us go back to what they actually did — or should I be perhaps a little more accurate and say what they did not do? Four years of complete inaction and denial on presumptive rights — four years of inaction more generally across this broader area where reform was so needed.

Let us look right across the fire services area at what it was that we inherited. When in government they cut \$66 million from fire services. I would be interested to see if any of those opposite try and deny this with some kind of clever financial magic or interpretation. In the media, the emergency services minister at the time, Peter Ryan, confirmed that both agencies would lose about \$66 million, but he insisted this would not have an effect on frontline firefighting services. Well, this is the common refrain of those slashing and burning funding: they claim, 'Oh, it won't have an effect on frontline services'. This is what we heard in so many areas in the last government: 'Let's slash money from social services, from education, from health. But don't worry. We're just going to cut head office money. It won't affect frontline services'. I think the community in their verdict indicated what they thought about that.

There was significant money taken out of the funding for these much-needed, but relied upon organisations in our community. It did have an effect on their capacity to provide the kinds of frontline services the community expects and needs. On the same day as the budget was handed down, then CFA CEO Mick Bourke wrote a message to membership on the budget reductions to the CFA and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). He said:

When the state budget was handed down, we knew we were working in a tight fiscal environment and like any other government entity, we would need to tighten our belts ...

...

While we are facing budget cuts in a variety of areas, CFA is committed to our frontline services and these will not be affected. However, CFA will look at managing overtime and relief arrangements more closely ...

That budget put the CFA in a position where it had to tighten its belt. Of course that organisation would have done everything it could to preserve frontline services. But of course when you cut that amount of money — \$66 million — it has to have an effect on the capacity of the organisation to deal with the challenges and the needs of the community.

In 2014 the *Herald Sun* reported that 164 jobs were to be cut from the CFA:

71 roles in ‘fire and emergency management’, of which 16 positions have already been axed.

**Mr O’Donohue** interjected.

**Mr MULINO** — So job cuts left, right and centre. Look, I am happy if Mr O’Donohue wants to trump my *Herald Sun* quote with some budget papers that deny those jobs were taken away. I am happy to be proven incorrect.

**Mr O’Donohue** interjected.

**Mr MULINO** — I am happy to have some budget papers indicating all the money you put into fire services.

**Mr O’Donohue** — No problem.

**Mr MULINO** — Excellent. Their record on emergency services was appalling. Cuts in funding, denial of presumptive rights, and of course now in opposition they become the champions of presumptive rights — ‘Forget what we did in government, forget the fact that we voted down the bill in the most cynical of ways. Now we’re the champions of presumptive rights’. I think the community will see through that, I think the fire services community will see through that and I think volunteers will see through that in about 3 seconds flat.

Before I get on to the broader issues of the need for reform in fire services, I have to speak a little bit about the nature of the day on which those opposite voted down presumptive rights, because that was a process that had been undertaken for months, for years. This was one of the most important policy debates this Parliament has dealt with this term. I was on a select committee that toured this state, that heard evidence from experts but also from volunteers and career firefighters on the ground. We travelled to towns right across the state. We heard evidence from people right across the metro area. It was a very challenging select committee process, but we ended up with a report and recommendations that led to improvements in the reforms that were being put forward by the

government. I felt that notwithstanding the political tensions in that process it had contributed to an improvement in that package that was put to the Parliament.

That package was put to the Parliament and it was debated extensively. When it comes to the cynicism of those opposite, their hypocrisy in suddenly becoming great converts to a policy they spoke against for years when in government, let us look at the unprecedented, outrageous, despicable act they performed on the day this came to Parliament. This bill was debated throughout the course of a day, and in the lead-up to midnight some of those opposite made a great dramatic set of gestures around their faith, which is fine. I respect people’s faith. It has to be put on the record what happened at the time this bill was rejected. I do not think it is appropriate to simply note that this bill was defeated, because it was defeated in a way that is unprecedented in the history of this chamber and unprecedented in the history of Westminster parliaments.

I have done some research, and I am happy to be corrected, but I cannot find an example of a renege on a pair when a leadership group authorised it. A cynical leadership group authorised a pair being reneged upon. There is a reason why there is a book here filled with signatures going back through the ages in this chamber. There is a reason why we have conventions to make a place like this function. And we have this irony of those opposite calling themselves conservatives, respecting tradition and respecting things that have been around for a long time because they provide stability, because they help things work. Those opposite respect things that have been around for a long time when it suits them. This lot have no right calling themselves conservative. This lot in fact have no right calling themselves even ethical when it comes to what they did on that day.

A number of people opposite spoke at great length about their faith and the great challenge that sitting past midnight would pose to them. This chamber discussed that issue at length and tried to come to a compromise that would respect those individuals’ circumstances, and then the debate continued. And I must say individually I thought that a reasonable compromise had been reached. Two people in particular were granted pairs on the basis of their faith. They simply could not be in the chamber, or that is what we were led to believe based upon the way they behaved. It was so painful for them to be in the chamber on that day. It was just so dramatic to see the pain they were both in, the angst. It was so difficult for them to be here even

1 second longer, so we debated how we would deal with this.

Suddenly, 12 hours later, they had found a cure for that difficulty. It suddenly was a little bit easier. When they sauntered in I did not quite see the same angst and the redness of the face and the difficulty and the moral challenges. It all seemed to be a little bit easier. In fact there was not a redness of the face. There was not a difficulty. There was almost a smirk on their faces; it was really quite a strange transformation. Maybe a good night's rest, a few hours' sleep, had given them that energy. It had buoyed them a little bit. They came in 12 hours later rested and they were actually physically able to vote again. It was really quite amazing to see. It is amazing what a nap can do, really, really amazing.

Those opposite say, 'Oh, we respect tradition', 'We respect this chamber', 'Oh, we respect the Parliament', 'We are conservatives', 'Oh, it's so important. It's so important to respect the 150-year history of this place', 'We're the conservative party. We respect incremental change. We don't like radical change; we want to do things incrementally because all the things that have organically developed over time in society, those kinds of things have to be preserved', 'We've got to respect long-lasting institutions', 'We've got to promote respect in society for Parliament, for the courts, for the executive. It's really important', 'It's really important as conservatives that we see that society doesn't get cynical about institutions. That's part of our brand. That's part of our brand as conservatives, and that's something that people can trust in'.

That will be interesting to see when they go to the next election. How are they going to sell that brand to the public? Of course they are called the Liberal Party. We are seeing in Canberra right now that there is a little bit of a difference between small-l liberals and conservatives. So we will see that debate play out in Canberra. I think Mr Dutton sees himself as more on the conservative side. I think others see themselves as on the small-l liberal side.

**Ms Lovell** — On a point of order, Acting President, I think the member has strayed somewhat far from the motion before the house by talking about what is going on in Canberra. It has nothing to do with the presumptive rights for our firefighters, and I think he is doing a disservice to our dedicated firefighters who deserve to have presumptive rights legislation, which this government is denying them.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! Members! Mr Leane! Thank you. After perusing the motion I would concur with Ms Lovell's comments that goings-on in Canberra do not relate specifically to this motion.

**Mr MULINO** — Thank you, Acting President. I will certainly respect the traditions of this chamber and abide by your ruling. I certainly would be of a like mind as the member that just stood; I would not want to talk about Canberra if I were her either, and I will not talk about Canberra any further. But I will certainly say that those opposite who as individuals would like to brand themselves as conservatives are going to find it, I think, very hard to go to the election with a straight face and say, 'Oh, this party respects tradition'.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MULINO** — You go to the election and you explain your behaviour. I suspect you will want to skate over your behaviour on that day. I suspect you will not want to mention one little bit the rank cynicism of those on the other side in opposing this issue for four years. They opposed it while they were in government. Minister after minister said, 'It's not an issue. Don't look here'. Suddenly this term we raised the issue and it was like, 'Oh, it has to be done urgently', and then when the bill was put to Parliament their behaviour did not bear any scrutiny.

I had to raise that because paragraph (1) of the motion skates over something that I believe was one of the blackest days of this term, and I cannot find a precedent for it. I am not claiming I am the greatest historian of this chamber or other Westminster systems, but I cannot find a precedent for pairs being reneged on with the leadership group conspiring. I cannot find a precedent for that. I would be really fascinated to hear from those opposite. I would be really fascinated to hear if any of them even want to raise that issue. I doubt it.

Let us talk about fire services reform. The other thing that I think is unfortunately not stated in this motion is that reform is needed of the fire services as a whole. I agree with Mr Purcell that presumptive rights legislation should go through. But can I talk briefly about the need for broader reform of the fire services. This was something which all the experts agreed on in the select committee. All the experts agreed on this. We are facing rapid population growth in the outer suburbs and both career and volunteer stations are coming under unprecedented challenges. Response times in some areas are at unacceptable levels and falling.

Now those opposite, as a rhetorical ploy, will say, ‘Oh, we need to plan for population growth’. But when it comes to what all the experts said about the impact of population growth on this issue, they put their hands over their eyes and ears and do not listen to what the experts say because it is not politically convenient. Now let me quote directly — and this is evidence we received as part of the select committee inquiry — Steve Warrington, Country Fire Authority chief officer:

We are living in the 1950s here.

Steve Warrington also said:

If I have not been clear, let me be really clear: this sector, including CFA, needs reform ... We have two organisations with career firefighters with different recruitment, different development and different training. I can tell you that it is this bizarre in Victoria — and I am probably embarrassed to put it into the public space ...

So there is unambiguous evidence from the CFA: it needs reform.

What about Greg Mullins, former New South Wales fire commissioner? His quote is:

... I believe that the model is an improvement in operational practices because you are dealing with risks in urban areas in two different ways.

Those opposite talk and talk and talk about population growth, which of course is occurring mostly in the outer suburbs. We have Greg Mullins saying that we at the moment are dealing with risks in our urban areas in different ways, and not for any policy reasons — it is because of arbitrary delineations that do not make sense anymore. Greg Mullins continued:

They are getting two different risk treatments ...

Now, that is not appropriate. We would not accept that were it to come to ambulance services; we would not accept that were it to come to police services. There are two different risk treatments for people living in different urban areas based on arbitrary boundaries. The experts have been clear that we need the reforms that were a part of that bill. So yes, I support presumptive rights legislation. Yes, I agree with Mr Purcell that presumptive rights legislation is needed, but that whole bill is needed, and what those opposite did in smashing this reform flies in the face of expert advice. The irony of them coming in here and saying that we need this or that reform in this space is just beyond belief.

What about David O’Byrne, author of the 2015 *Report of the Fire Services Review*, who said:

... the challenges I identified around governance, morale, workplace culture, patchy training, workforce development

and differing work practices will be substantially resolved, with good implementation of course, by this structural change in the fire services and associated measures and implementation strategies.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris)** — Order! Mr Leane and Mr O’Donohue!

**Mr MULINO** — I quote Paul Stacchino, the former MFB acting chief officer:

I think the proposition of the new entity is an opportunity in the context of the two cultures ... I see it as an opportunity to reset elements of culture for both services for the good.

I could go on and on.

**Ms Fitzherbert** — Don’t.

**Mr MULINO** — I know you do not want me to, because they are all experts saying, ‘We should reform’. They are all experts saying the reforms that we put forward need to be implemented. Those opposite come in here and say, ‘Ignore all those reforms. We’ve got to split this bill and do the thing that we argued against for four years’. People in the public would look at this and say it is bizarro world. It is bizarro world what those opposite say.

As I said, I disagree with Mr Purcell on these issues, but I respect the process he has gone through in trying to come to a position on this bill. I respect the way he has dealt with this issue. Those opposite are the most rank opportunists. They have taken an issue of the utmost importance and treated it with the grubbiest of political opportunism. It is very unfortunate. This motion raises important issues. This motion raises an incident in paragraph 1 that has not been sufficiently dealt with.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MULINO** — I think those opposite like yelling in any kind of discussion of the subject of clause 1 — Good Friday — because despite the face they put on it, they must realise that they made a Faustian deal in what they did. It was an unprecedented act. For the Leader of the Opposition and the two people involved to make statements of no regret, no repentance, afterwards just reinforces, I believe, the inappropriateness and despicability of the action on that day. That sets the context for what we are talking about today.

Like any complex issue, of course we are free in this chamber to disagree on different elements of a complex issue like that. But when we come to why this bill did not pass, when we come to what happened on that day

when that reform package as a whole was put to this place, we cannot ignore what those opposite did and in particular what their leadership group did. The leadership group conspired to undertake a very cynical act and has since said, 'The end justifies the means'. As I said before, it is ironic for those who like to brand themselves as being champions of tradition, champions of this place, to be so cynical, so pragmatic. It is remarkable.

When we talk about the other two elements of this bill, we cannot ignore the broader context and the fact that those opposite, in the face of expert evidence, are throwing it out and basically saying, 'We don't need structural reform. We don't need to strengthen the organisations — the CFA and the MFB'. I would like those opposite to quote from experts who support what they want to do. I can quote you expert after expert saying, 'We should have given this plan a go'. I can quote expert after expert who gave detailed evidence saying this bill should have passed. Those opposite cannot. They want, in a very cynical way, to deal with a large part of this issue — the need for structural reform — by sidelining it, putting it in the bin and kicking the can down the road. It is highly cynical, highly inappropriate behaviour.

What we see in this motion is a set of propositions that I cannot support. I do believe that volunteer firefighters deserve presumptive rights and all the other things that this government wanted to provide them with through its reform package. This motion will not do that. In addition, this motion is inappropriate because its language does not hold those opposite to account, and that is important whenever we consider this issue.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** (Eastern Victoria) (15:08) — I am pleased to rise and support Mr Purcell's motion. I congratulate Mr Purcell on moving the motion and on the measured way in which he made his contribution. It is unfortunate that Mr Mulino then sought to play politics with this important motion.

I was listening to Neil Mitchell the other day. When James Merlino was trying to throw mud around a couple of weeks ago, he was referred to as an attack dog. Neil Mitchell said he was more like a chihuahua. I have to say to Mr Mulino, his namesake, that if James Merlino is a chihuahua, he is more like a pussycat, because that was a very poor defence of the Labor government's decision to vote against presumptive rights in this motion. He made it very clear that Labor will vote against presumptive rights in this motion.

There is no need to relitigate, as Mr Purcell said, what happened with the Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) bill,

which bundled a whole lot of separate issues together with the issue of presumptive rights. It was a disingenuous speech from Mr Mulino to pretend that the issue of presumptive rights could not have been dealt with separately. We have said consistently that if the bill had been split we would have passed presumptive rights and dealt with the FRV components at a separate time.

Talking about convention, how many times has the Parliament of Victoria sat on Good Friday before? How many times in its history has the Parliament of Victoria sat on Good Friday? Never — never! — before this disgraceful act by this shocking government.

The minister at the table, Minister Mikakos, may not recall because she was probably asleep in her office, but the government was moving amendments.

**Ms Mikakos** — No, I was in here.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — It was moving amendments at 2 o'clock in the morning because it had drafted a much more restrictive regime for volunteers than for permanent firefighters, and it was not until there was forensic questioning by the opposition about that issue that the Leader of the Government rushed in amendments — at 2 o'clock in the morning — to the definition of volunteer firefighter. So that bill was flawed.

Let us move on. I am sure other members will remember that the chihuahua, Mr Merlino, promised that presumptive rights legislation would be introduced to the Parliament within 100 days of the election of the Andrews government. That was a promise that never happened.

**Mr O'Sullivan** — Didn't he promise he would fix it?

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — He did promise he would fix it.

**Mr Melhem** — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr O'Donohue might need to withdraw some comment he made about Mr Mulino and the word 'chihuahua'. Is that what you called him? Mr Mulino is not in the chamber, but it is not a parliamentary —

**Ms Lovell** — He did not make that comment. He said he was very little.

**Mr Melhem** — You are not in your place, Ms Lovell. I am on a point of order and I am talking to the Chair. I ask that Mr O'Donohue withdraw his comment.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — I am happy to amend my comment to refer to the comment made by Neil Mitchell, who referred to Mr Merlino as a 'chihuahua'.

**Mr Melhem** — A withdrawal should be unconditional.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten)** — Mr O'Donohue, are you happy to withdraw?

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — I was just quoting Mr Mitchell.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten)** — The question is: are you happy to withdraw that comment?

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — I will abide by your ruling, Acting President.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten)** — Having listened to what you said, I appreciate that you probably called Mr Mulino something else — not 'chihuahua' — as in the Mr Mulino who is in this chamber. Will you withdraw the comments in regard to Mr Mulino?

**Mr Melhem** — Acting President, I ask that the Chair rule that Mr O'Donohue withdraw the accusation he made or the name-calling against Mr Mulino, and if he is not prepared to withdraw I ask for a ruling from the President if you are not prepared to support that.

**Mr O'Sullivan** — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Mulino was in the chamber and had no issues with any reference that was made. I think if Mr Mulino was here, he could have done that himself.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten)** — Order! You are quite correct, Mr O'Sullivan. Mr Mulino was in the chamber.

**Mr Melhem** — He was not.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten)** — Mr Melhem, I am well aware. Carry on, Mr O'Donohue.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — Thank you, Acting President. I just want to deal with one other issue that was raised by the government in its contribution. Let us talk about funding for our firefighters — funding for the Country Fire Authority. The budget allocation in the last year of the previous Labor government was \$399 million for the 2010–11 financial year. In the 2011–12 financial year, the first year of the Baillieu government, that went from \$399 million to \$537 million — an increase in base funding but also one-off funding to implement the bushfires royal

commission recommendations — \$138 million more than what the Labor Party invested in their last budget. In 2012–13 it then was \$416 million, so \$17 million more than in the last year of the Brumby Labor government. In 2013–14, \$446 million, and in 2014–15, \$457 million — one-off capital funding to implement the bushfires royal commission recommendations but increased base funding every year that was more than what the Bracks and Brumby governments ever provided in their 11 years in power. So let us just leave that to lie to one side, because that is exactly what it is.

Again, the opposition, the Liberal-Nationals coalition, has had a policy to support presumptive rights legislation since before the last election — since 2014. It is unfortunate that this issue has been conflated with the desires of the United Firefighters Union and with other issues that are not relevant to the issue of presumptive rights. Even the points that Mr Mulino made about management of the fire services and the like are not connected with the issue of presumptive rights, so we are very pleased to advise Mr Purcell and to advise the house of our position in supporting presumptive rights that are equal for both volunteer and permanent firefighters — because they both deserve those rights — and we support any legislation that deals with that issue but does not conflate a whole lot of extraneous issues like the previous FRV bill that caused all sorts of concerns.

I also note that following the FRV bill defeat my colleague the member for Gembrook in the other place, Brad Battin, sought to introduce a private members bill to implement this policy, and that was voted down by the Andrews government. As I understand it, the bill was not even allowed to be introduced; it was voted down straightaway. It is unfortunate that despite promising to fix this problem, despite promising legislation for presumptive rights within 100 days, here we are towards the end of the Andrews government and this issue has not been resolved. I congratulate Mr Purcell on moving the motion, and despite the contribution from Mr Mulino, I hope that in a spirit that we saw this morning with Ms Fitzherbert's motion the chamber can come together and express a view in unison, in support of firefighters, to pass presumptive rights legislation.

**Ms DUNN** (Eastern Metropolitan) (15:18) — I rise to speak on Mr Purcell's motion in relation to the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017 and matters related to that particular bill. It is worth noting that the Greens have long supported presumptive legislation for our firefighters. It is

certainly something that my colleague the now retired Colleen Hartland campaigned on for many, many years. In fact in all of her time in this Parliament she never tired of or walked away from being a champion for presumptive rights for firefighters. I think they are commendable, her efforts in relation to that.

Certainly I know that some of her motivation was around Brian Potter, and Brian Potter of course was a former chief fire officer of the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Sadly he passed in 2014 after a 17-year battle with a range of cancers and other related illnesses that he believed were caused by his work as a fire officer, especially during his time at Fiskville, the CFA training ground. I know the work that Brian Potter and Ms Hartland did certainly cemented her efforts and made her even more resolute about seeing justice for firefighters in relation to this matter.

In terms of the motion before us, there is no doubt, Mr Purcell, that your motion is well-meaning. The Greens certainly support where you are headed with this motion. However —

**Mr O’Sullivan** — However!

**Ms DUNN** — Thanks, Mr O’Sullivan, I will get to where we are at. I have been talking for not even 5 minutes yet.

**Mr Dalidakis** — Let’s start again; reset the clock.

**Ms DUNN** — No, I am not going to start again, Minister Dalidakis. In terms of your motion, Mr Purcell, certainly it is well-meaning, and in terms of the Greens and our views in relation to the presumptive rights legislation —

**Mr O’Donohue** — How patronising!

**Ms DUNN** — Gee, it is lucky, Mr Purcell, that you are your own person in relation to this and that you are not part of the commentary from the opposition at the moment, which is pretty extraordinary considering some of the behaviour we saw. We saw some of the most treacherous behaviour in this Parliament in relation to the bill that is referred to in your motion.

I have no doubt about your commitment to firefighters and I have no doubt about your commitment to seeing this legislation being passed, but it is very unfortunate in its timing because there are two sitting weeks left in this parliamentary term. It is going to be incredibly difficult for the government to expedite the introduction and passing of a new bill that addresses only presumptive rights compensation before the Parliament expires. I certainly commend you on what you want to

do with this motion, and the Greens will of course be supporting you in your efforts, but we do note that there is an enormous challenge in terms of the time frames in relation to this.

Of course this could have all been a moot point; it could have been something that was already finalised earlier this year. However, what we saw after a marathon sitting in this Parliament — and believe me, the Greens are happy to put in the work needed to pass legislation in this place, even if that sometimes requires very late sittings, and on this occasion it required sitting into Good Friday, which is clearly an important religious holiday for some on the other side; I completely respect the right of people to the freedom to practice their religion — was an act of treachery in the Victorian Parliament, with two members of the opposition returning to the chamber to thwart a vote on the long-overdue rights to firefighters compensation.

**Mr Ramsay** — This has nothing to do with the motion.

**Ms DUNN** — Mr Ramsay, this is at the heart of Mr Purcell’s motion. Mr Purcell would not even need to put this motion on the books if democracy had been served that day, but democracy was not served that day.

**Mr O’Donohue** — You certainly have different stories for different people, haven’t you? The firefighters in the hills have a different recollection of what you said to them.

**Ms DUNN** — Mr O’Donohue — through you, Acting President — I speak to many firefighters in the hills and that is generally because they are the people who come and put out the fires in my neighbourhood, so I am well aware of what they are thinking. They are feeling pretty short-changed by the fact that they could have had this legislation in place but they do not have this legislation in place, and the reason for that is the treachery we saw from your side on Good Friday.

What is extraordinary is the opposition’s response to this motion now. I am not going to dwell on what happened on Good Friday except to say that it cut to the core of the Greens in terms of our efforts to see presumptive rights as an important issue that needed to be secured for firefighters. What we saw at the time was a trashing of that campaign and a trashing of work that had been done by Ms Hartland over years and years. It was trashed in favour of political pointscoring.

The Greens will certainly be supporting your motion today, Mr Purcell. We commend you on your efforts in terms of securing presumptive rights compensation legislation in this term of Parliament. However, we do

remain concerned about the time lines because they are incredibly tight and incredibly short.

**Mr BOURMAN** (Eastern Victoria) (15:24) — I am speaking in support of Mr Purcell's motion today. I must point out that, even though we voted against the bill at the time, we have always supported the presumptive rights part of the legislation. Somewhere buried in here is or was a motion from a colleague to split the bill so that we could pass the presumptive rights part of the legislation separately. Here we are having a go at it, but it is probably a bit late in the piece to be doing this.

I think with this motion there is a very important sentiment, because cancer does not care about politics. This is basically a case of this just really needs to be done in the end. It does not matter who said something in 2010 or who said whatever, because both sides of politics agree with this and it is time that we just got on with it.

I will say that the presumptive rights framework has to be the same for both paid and volunteer firefighters because cancer definitely does not discriminate. More broadly I also think that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) amongst emergency services workers also needs to be looked at for some sort of presumptive rights legislation. As it is now, PTSD is as bad as if you get cancer when you end up with some sort of mental health issue from your work. With that, I commend this motion.

**Ms FITZHERBERT** (Southern Metropolitan) (15:26) — I am very pleased to be able to speak briefly on this motion. I heard much of what Mr Purcell said in his moving speech, and I also listened to most of the contribution made by Mr Mulino from my office. Of course I followed the speech of Mr O'Donohue, who made a number of pertinent points about the history of this, shall I say, vexed issue in this place.

Like Mr O'Donohue I compliment Mr Purcell on the measured way he has brought this issue to the house. He made the point that he does not want to reopen old wounds — I think that is the phrase he used or something similar to it. Mr Purcell has brought this motion that serves a very practical purpose; sadly it addresses unfinished business in this Parliament. The motion of course references the bill, which was defeated in this house in March 2018, and indicates that we should deal separately with the passing of a new bill that addresses only the presumptive rights compensation issue before this Parliament expires in October. I strongly support this.

I do not want to inflame things in this place, but listening to Mr Mulino's speech, there were a few comments he made that really cannot go unaddressed. He danced around this issue and talked about discussions that we may have had within this chamber and previous positions that have been held in relation to presumptive legislation. The thing that he did not focus on is why these two issues were linked in the legislation that came before this chamber — the issue of presumptive rights and the issue of a significant change to our fire services and the Country Fire Authority. There is actually no good reason as to why these two issues had to be linked, particularly because for a long time now it has been the position of the opposition that we would support presumptive rights legislation.

Now, you may want to go over the history of all of this in this place. I think that is largely irrelevant. Mr Bourman made the point earlier that these sorts of issues make no difference to people with cancer. I fully support that point. We can talk about pairs, we can talk about all these sorts of issues, but we do have an opportunity to deal with what this is really about, which is people who are experiencing cancer and living with it now.

I very much regret that the government continues to push the incorrect line — the lie — that the reason why we do not have presumptive rights legislation is because the opposition will not support it. This is simply untrue. Our support has been made clear for some time. What we were not going to go along with was tying that legislation to a completely separate sphere of issues to do with the fire services sector and putting that to us as a package — that or nothing. There were attempts to separate these issues. The government would not support them. So to come here now and to point the finger at us and to go back over old history is, I think, frustrating and unreasonable.

The real question for the government is: why won't you do this? It is a perfectly sensible motion. We have a few weeks left before this Parliament is done, and it will not sit again, in a meaningful sense, I suggest, until next year. Where are we now? We are in August. I suggest that if this is not dealt with, the earliest we might look at it is February of next year. So what is that? That is some six or seven months away. That is a long time when you have cancer. I think our time could be well spent addressing that issue instead of the reopening of old wounds and the remaking of old arguments.

There has been debate in the past about how presumptive rights legislation should be formed and what sorts of qualifications there should be. I do not intend to revisit all of that today. That is not the purpose

of this debate. It is an in-principle motion to revisit this legislation and get it passed. But I will make the observation that I do not think it is unreasonable to question how it is going to be put together and which sorts of cancers it applies to, for example.

I have been struck by the fact that bowel cancer is one of the cancers that is the subject of presumptive rights legislation in terms of the legislation that we have looked at in this jurisdiction, and it is certainly covered in others overseas that I have looked at. It is the third most common cancer that is diagnosed in the country — it is very common for both men and women — and it is the second most lethal cancer. So we do end up with a situation, I think, where in some ways presumptive legislation may create two systems, depending on whether you have been a firefighter or not. I simply make the observation; I do not make a judgement.

If you look at the figures in terms of diagnosis, in 2014 there were 15 253 new cases of bowel cancer diagnosed in Australia: 8368 males and 6386 females. It is estimated that this year there will be an even greater number — some 17 000, or just over 9000 men and nearly 8000 women. Given what we know about the gender participation rates in firefighting, that means that there are a lot of women out there that are not going to have presumptive rights in relation to this very common cancer, which is often genetic in background.

I make this point not to suggest that presumptive rights are not needed. I believe that they are. It is consistent with what has happened around the world, and it seems that we do in principle have agreement on this fact. But I do point out this anomaly that we see in terms of the treatment that different genders are going to have in terms of a very common cancer as a corollary of having presumptive rights legislation in relation to cancer for what is, frankly, a male-dominated workforce. I point that out to make the point that it is reasonable to question how presumptive rights legislation is put together and how it will work in practice, because there is potential for confusion, for anomaly and for a distinct disparity in how different patients are treated.

All credit to Mr Mulino. I know he was sent in to do a job. I know he was sent in to fight the good fight on behalf of the government, but he did so I think in response to a commonsense motion from Mr Purcell, which draws attention to the fact that we have an opportunity to right a wrong of the past and to do something constructive — I think for the second time today after our very cordial debate this morning — to revisit some unfinished business from earlier this year, to focus on the future rather than the anger and discord

of the past and to look at what we agree on, which is that there should be presumptive rights legislation. Let us bring it on and let us get it done this term.

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) (15:34) — I also rise to speak on the motion moved by Mr Purcell in relation to the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017. That was the bill which was before this house not long ago. From memory, that bill was referred to a parliamentary committee, which conducted numerous hearings, with hundreds of witnesses and submissions. The Parliament went through a lengthy process to explore fire services reform, which included the presumptive legislation. There was hearing after hearing, with expert after expert.

The bill came before the house and we went through a lengthy process which went for days. In fact I think the sitting went for over 30 hours. We went through the bill clause by clause in a lengthy committee process, and every single clause passed this Parliament. We had division after division after division, and those clauses were passed by this place. That was until the 11th hour, when contrary to every convention this place has had in place for the past 160-odd years, two members of the coalition broke their word, broke their commitment, broke their undertaking — along with the rest of their leadership group — and came back on the third reading and bulldozed the whole legislation.

It is hypocrisy from the other side to say they care about firefighters and they care about presumptive rights. It is just convenient to do so today. When those opposite were in government the Greens party and Ms Hartland brought in a bill, with just the presumptive legislation, and they knocked it on the head. So do not lecture us about caring for firefighters and presumptive rights. You never have and you never will.

I am a bit disappointed. We had the vote. I have got a lot of respect for Mr Purcell, but unfortunately if he had voted and seen what the opposition were doing back then, maybe that bill would have been in place by now. But it is what it is. I am sure Mr Purcell has good intentions in trying to put this back on the agenda, and I respect him for that, but for the opposition to come here and lecture us — 'Vote for this motion, and then we'll get the bill through' — well, let me tell you this: there is an election coming up. As we did at the last election, when we said we would introduce presumptive rights for firefighters and we would reform the fire services, those will be issues come November. In the next few months we shall return and you shall be on the other

side, and that whole issue will be tested again. We will see what you have got to say then.

**Mr Ramsay** interjected.

**Mr MELHEM** — I am not going to support your stunt, Mr Ramsay. It is just a stunt. As I said, every single clause of that comprehensive legislation — which is in the first paragraph of this motion — was passed through this place. Every single clause of that bill passed — hundreds of divisions — and you did your stunt at the last minute. It was just disgraceful. I cannot believe you are even standing here saying, ‘We’re supporting the motion. We will support presumptive legislation’. You never have. You never have in the past; you never will in the future.

Talking about the motion and talking about the issue itself, it will sort itself out — but not by playing politics in the way you are playing politics.

**Mr Ramsay** interjected.

**Mr MELHEM** — Well, either one. You have to get with the program, Mr Ramsay. If you are fair dinkum about firefighters and the Country Fire Authority, about looking after firefighters, you should have actually done the right thing on Good Friday, when your comrades Bernie Finn and Mr Ondarchie came here and ratted on you and ratted on everyone — both a bunch of rats. That is what they did: they ratted. You are no different, because if you had had some decency — if the other side had had some decency — on that day, two of you would have left the chamber and done the right thing and firefighters would have had presumptive rights by now. They would have had presumptive rights by now. That is your doing.

That is why they do not have it — because of you, because you ratted on Good Friday. You sold them down the drain. There is the challenge for you: if you are fair dinkum about fire reform and firefighters — looking after them — we can bring the bill here tomorrow, the whole bill. We have debated it. We voted on every single clause — every single clause. If you were fair dinkum about it, you could have actually said, ‘Okay, clause 1 is the whole bill as it is’. We actually spent hours and hours and days and days in this chamber debating that bill. We spent days and weeks debating the bill in the committee. I was on that committee.

There is the challenge for you: you can simply move an amendment to the motion and just say, ‘Firefighters’ Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2017’ — boom. I am not authorised to speak on behalf of the

government, but as a member for Western Metropolitan Region, here is the challenge for you: move that motion to actually get that bill passed now. You might get that done. You will get that done. But no, you just want to play politics. You just want to play politics. That is what you have been doing for the last four years.

So no, I will not be supporting the motion. I support presumptive rights for firefighters. I support it. You had your chance. Do not pull a stunt. We will come back and fix it. We will come back to that space and get presumptive rights for firefighters. We had a bill before this house which I supported, and I will continue to support it. I support a full, comprehensive reform package for the fire services, including presumptive rights. That is what I support, and that will happen. We will deliver on our commitment, with you or without you.

You ratted on Good Friday. Well, 24 November 2018 is not far away, and hopefully the next Parliament will finally do justice for the firefighters of Victoria — volunteers and career firefighters. We will and I am sure that Victoria will actually see through the stuff you are trying to do. When we return to government and the next Parliament resumes or takes place or starts or commences, that will be one of the priorities for us to actually put in place — to make sure firefighters are looked after.

We all know there are only two weeks left in this Parliament. For a bill like this to be done, there is no time for it. But make no mistake: the Andrews Labor government’s commitment to looking after firefighters, career and volunteer, is paramount, is still strong and will continue to get stronger and stronger. We will deliver an appropriate bill which includes presumptive rights for firefighters, because they deserve to have that. They could have had that a few months ago. They could have had that on Good Friday just past, but because of the act of bastardry that was committed by the opposition that did not happen. You should just basically bury your heads in shame, because it is on your heads. That is why firefighters in this state do not have presumptive rights. It is because you committed that act of bastardry on Good Friday. Shame on you.

**Mr PURCELL** (Western Victoria) (15:45) — It is my pleasure to sum up the debate on this motion. I would like to thank all those who contributed to the debate. It was a worthwhile discussion I think. Probably the thing that I take out of it is that I do not think there is a member in this chamber who does not support presumptive rights legislation for our volunteers. I do understand that there are only two sitting weeks left and it would be difficult to get this through in that period of

time, but I am confident that whoever wins government will do something to protect the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and presumptive rights for volunteers in the CFA. If that happens, I will be very pleased.

The issue in regard to the CFA volunteers is one for all of the members here, but I think more so for the three country regions — the eastern Victoria, western Victoria and northern Victoria regions. I can certainly tell you that in Western Victoria Region the CFA is untouchable. There are probably more CFA stations in my part of the world than there are local halls or shops. Every farm or every six or seven families have a CFA station, and they love it and they should get the respect they deserve.

As I said, the intention was never to pull the bandaid off and open the wound again, but it probably has. If you look at it, it is likely that it was always going to. The intention is to try to get some justice for CFA volunteers in regard to presumptive rights legislation, and I think that as members of Parliament we should continue to raise the issue to get a resolution to that.

#### Motion agreed to.

### METROPOLITAN RAIL NETWORK

#### Debate resumed from earlier this day; motion of Mr Davis (Southern Metropolitan):

That this house supports the following recent commitments to metropolitan rail enhancement that would see —

- (1) an extension of the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Clyde with dual and electrified tracks —
  - (a) including new stations being built at Cranbourne East and Clyde, along with 350 additional parking places;
  - (b) including improvement of local bus services to connect commuters to the new railway stations; and
  - (c) noting that this is the first stage of an upgrade to the Cranbourne rail corridor and future upgrades to the Cranbourne line will also be essential, including the full duplication from Cranbourne to Dandenong and a future extension to Koo Wee Rup;
- (2) the duplication and electrification of the rail line from Frankston to Baxter and notes that —
  - (a) the Turnbull government has already committed \$225 million towards the project in the 2018–19 federal budget, matched recently by the Liberal-National state coalition;
  - (b) the new metro stations at Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter will provide easy access to

rail services for local commuters and help ease congestion around Frankston;

- (c) passengers will be able to commute more easily to Monash University, Frankston Hospital and Frankston Private Hospital, Chisholm TAFE or directly into Melbourne;
  - (d) this will improve local bus services to connect commuters to the new railway stations; and
- (3) the full duplication of the rail line between Greensborough and Eltham to provide for the growing population in Melbourne's north and allow more frequent and reliable rail services.

**Mr SOMYUREK** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (15:48) — I rise to oppose this motion, which seeks support for various rail announcements made by the opposition. I acknowledge that these projects, particularly those that relate to my electorate, are very important to discuss. Even more importantly, it is fundamental that we plan these projects so that they are constructed for maximum outcome, cost efficiency and reliable budget allocation.

It seems that the recent announcements of the rail projects highlighted in this motion have been underfunded, and the most efficient construction advice has not been received to ensure that project planning results in the desired outcome for our communities. I wish to highlight a couple of them as they are important issues for my electorate. We all need to ensure that we get these projects right. Otherwise it becomes too disruptive. Every project, large or small, requires a business case that technically assesses construction methodology, viability, impact, desired outcomes and other possible outcomes and costs. Every aspect of the project has to be anticipated in order to plan and then construct.

In relation to the Frankston line works to Baxter, the government earlier this year commenced the business case so that when duplication and electrification takes place it is informed by facts ascertained through the business case so we will not be in for any nasty shocks before or during construction. In a project such as this one costing is not possible until every important aspect of construction is assessed. With rail in particular there are many contributing considerations, such as which level crossings will be removed. The opposition's announcement does not identify these. There also appear to be no funds allocated for any level crossing removals. The government's level crossing removal program has demonstrated that projects need to be assessed and planned holistically so that the outcome improves efficiency for rail but also for vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist efficiency and safety as well as community amenity.

Many of the level crossing removal projects cost north of \$100 million. Therefore it can be assumed that no crossing removals are included in the project when only \$450 million has been promised for duplication, electrification, two new stations, one rebuild plus new car parking. Indeed the federal member for Dunkley has repeatedly claimed that the project would cost between \$500 million and \$800 million, with localised challenges such as track gradients between Frankston and Baxter being amongst the most severe in the Melbourne network, making rail-based solutions even more expensive than usual.

In the south-east we know how important the Kananook stabling facility is for the efficient operation of any increased services and duplication on the line. However, we understand that Kananook is not considered part of the plan referred to in this motion, which means that stabling will need to occur elsewhere and that additional cost is not factored into the cost of this project. Rather than making random announcements the opposition should have put out detailed analysis undertaken to ensure accurate planning, costing and implementation of this important project.

I hold similar concerns about the Cranbourne rail extension to Clyde. There is no doubt that due to the astronomical growth taking place in Clyde an extension of the line is going to be very much needed in the near future. However, again it is about what form that extension takes, and I really would have liked to see the plan to accommodate sufficiently the continued growth throughout the Casey and Cardinia growth corridor, which as I said before is astronomical.

The most significant concern I have with this announcement is that it suggests it is possible to have a single track between Dandenong and Cranbourne and then somehow to double the track beyond Cranbourne on to Clyde. This appears to be a very inefficient approach. Single-track sections in the middle of a corridor mean that any delay to a train in one direction will in turn trigger delays to trains coming in the other direction, thus compromising the entire timetable. Yes, the line will be longer, which I guess is the purpose of the announcement, but no extra trains will run, and therefore people will not get to their destinations any quicker, which I would have thought would be the main objective of this infrastructure project.

Indeed it was actually acknowledged in the original announcement by the opposition leader, Mr Guy, who said that 'Normally you would do the duplication first'. So Mr Guy has acknowledged that he has got this the wrong way around and that the duplication should be

done first. There are very good reasons for that, and I have outlined some of those reasons.

Again the dollar figure of \$487 million for the extension of the line has not taken into account the required removal of level crossings, such as the removal of the South Gippsland Highway level crossing, which needs a rail under road solution that will cost around \$300 million. So with just one necessary level crossing removed, the project is up to \$787 million already without considering the other crossing removals.

My constituents want the government to continue investing in important local infrastructure in order to increase the livability of our growing suburbs, but equally they want those infrastructure projects to be done right the first time around. There is nothing more annoying and in fact costly to the community than digging up roads, highways and train tracks but not getting it right and having to redo it in about 10 years time. I am sure I speak for my constituents and the whole of the Victorian population when I say that when you do it, you should do it right the first time and get the fundamentals right so that you do not have to redo it, and you should allow for growth as well.

What I am essentially saying is that infrastructure projects need to be well planned and costed in order to achieve the outcomes that are important to our communities — that is what we need to do. We need to make sure our infrastructure projects are well planned and costed. In view of what I have just said, I have concerns with this motion, therefore I will not be supporting this motion.

**Ms DUNN** (Eastern Metropolitan) (15:57) — I rise today to speak on Mr Davis's motion 606. I am quite specifically going to talk about the part of the motion that deals with issues in Eastern Metropolitan Region, that being paragraph (3):

the full duplication of the rail line between Greensborough and Eltham to provide for the growing population in Melbourne's north and allow for more frequent and reliable rail services.

Certainly it seems that here we are again on a non-government business day rising to speak on yet another self-congratulatory motion from the Liberal-National coalition. It seems that every fortnight those opposite must float an idea they have actually done some policy work on to make up for the fact that they never did anything while they were in government. As I have said, I am only going to focus my comments on the part of this motion that directly pertains to my

electorate of Eastern Metropolitan Region, that being item (3).

I note that the Baillieu-Napthine government did next to no improvements on the Hurstbridge line. Indeed the only improvements they made during their four years were to install three-position fixed-block signalling on some parts of the track. They did not remove any level crossings, and they did not duplicate a single track. As the Greens have said time and time again in this chamber, duplication is essential for the frequent and timely running of trains. Single-track lines simply do not cut it for the very basic reason that trains coming from opposing directions cannot pass each other. This leads to suppressed frequency and poor reliability of services. Single-track is only suitable for low-demand end-of-line locations.

The central concern with duplication beyond Greensborough station of course is the Eltham trestle bridge, quite an extraordinary structure, well worth going to see. The Eltham trestle bridge is a wonderful engineering feat and a valuable part of the built heritage of Eltham. It is a functional and enduring part of our metropolitan train network, and we should keep it that way.

In recent days or weeks we have heard the government announce that they will not duplicate the track between Montmorency and Diamond Creek stations. This just kicks the can down the road. If the track is to be duplicated between Greensborough and Montmorency and then from Diamond Creek to Wattle Glen, as proposed by the government, the 7.9-kilometre single-track section between Montmorency and Diamond Creek will be a major bottleneck. We will not get the full value out of all the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on the rest of the duplicated sections and level crossing removals to date.

A duplicated train line cannot be accommodated on the Eltham trestle bridge because it is not wide enough, therefore there are two options worthy of consideration. The first is to leave the trestle bridge section as a single track but extend the duplication before and after. Trains will be at a slow speed on the bridge in any case as the Eltham train station is located immediately up the line. The second is to duplicate the trestle bridge by building a new structure next to it. Such a structure must be sympathetic to the timber aesthetic of the existing bridge. Indeed the duplicated bridge could be made out of timber, considering the excellent qualities of engineered timber made from plantation sources that are available on the market.

Obviously extensive community consultation will be necessary for the design and alignment of either option. Protection of the football club and the childcare centre near the station would need to be front of mind. There is also significant trackside native vegetation that would need to be assessed. However, I am confident that working with the community we can get a solution. They are a very vocal and active community. It is in fact one of the hallmarks of Eltham and the Eltham electorate, that part of Eastern Metropolitan Region, that they are a community who are ready, willing and able to say what they think about what is going on in the community. They certainly do not hold back. So working with that community, I am sure we can get a solution for this 7.9-kilometre critical section of the track.

I must say in closing that it is getting rather repetitive in this place for a party that did next to nothing during its four years in power so far this century. They have little to show for it. They certainly did next to nothing for the public transport system of this city and just let it slide.

**Ms WOOLDRIDGE** (Eastern Metropolitan) (16:01) — I am very pleased to be able to speak on the motion today from Mr Davis in relation to the very significant commitments that have been made by the Liberal-Nationals, if in government after 24 November, in relation to metropolitan rail enhancements. There is no doubt that many Victorians rely on our train services in order to be able to do so many aspects of their day-to-day lives: get to work, move around their community, see their family and friends and participate in community activities. These enhancements acknowledge our growing communities where that population growth is happening and the need to not just react but actually be proactive in relation to extending our metropolitan rail network so that more people have access to these vital train services.

The motion deals with three extensions — promises made by the Liberal-Nationals in relation to our rail network. The first extension is from Cranbourne to Clyde, with dual and electrified tracks. This obviously would deliver new stations being built at Cranbourne East and at Clyde, and the motion also recognises that additional parking spaces will be so vitally needed when these stations come on board and with increasing demand. I know station car parks in my community get full very early. People have to leave very early in the morning to actually get a park at the station. Car parking overflows into local roads and communities and is having an impact on residents, local shoppers and visitors, so that car parking is quite vital.

The Cranbourne to Clyde extension also includes improving bus services to connect commuters to the new railway station so that people have a choice in relation to whether they get to the station by public transport — a bus — or whether they drive and park. This motion also notes that this is the first stage of an upgrade to the Cranbourne rail corridor and that future upgrades to the Cranbourne rail will be essential, including from Cranbourne to Dandenong and a future extension to Koo Wee Rup. When you see the growth in population through that Clyde corridor out to Koo Wee Rup you know that we need to be planning now and delivering these additional rail extensions so that the population is supported.

The second commitment that the Liberal-Nationals have made is the duplication and electrification of the rail line from Frankston to Baxter. This is another significant area of population growth that needs to be addressed with these additional train services. The federal government — the Turnbull government — has already committed \$225 million towards the project, and we have matched that. Together we will be delivering this extension: an electrification of the rail beyond Frankston to Baxter. There will be new stations connected with that — at Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter — once again making sure that local commuters can get access to these rail services and relieving some of the congestion that we see in Frankston. That certainly would make a difference to the community there.

This extension will ensure that passengers can extend their commute to include things like Monash University — it would be very useful to have that connected into the network — Frankston Hospital, Frankston Private Hospital and Chisholm TAFE, and of course directly into Melbourne. As shadow Minister for Health I know connecting the two Frankston hospitals to the rail line would make a very significant difference to the local community in terms of being able to access what are very good facilities in the Frankston area. Bus services will also be able to be connected to those new railway stations.

The third part of this motion, which I want to focus on more particularly, is the full duplication of the rail line between Greensborough and Eltham, once again to provide for the growing population of Melbourne's north and to add more frequent and reliable train services. No-one has been a bigger advocate for this duplication than our candidate for Eltham, Nick McGowan. Nick has done a superb job talking to the local community, surveying local residents, understanding the need and then advocating back through the Liberal Party and of course to our leader,

Matthew Guy, of the need for this duplication. So on 18 April it was very pleasing to be able to join with Nick and of course Matthew Guy and David Davis, the shadow Minister for Public Transport, for the announcement that a Liberal-National government will invest over \$300 million to duplicate the Hurstbridge rail line between Greensborough and Eltham station. This is an early commitment, an early investment, because we know what a difference it will make to the community in the Eltham electorate and the surrounding areas.

Presently the rail line is only a single track north of Greensborough. This duplication will significantly increase the number of services that are available to people in Eltham and Montmorency and the regularity of the train services, which is not possible with the single track that is there now. The announcement also includes the rebuild of Montmorency station. Now, Montmorency is a lovely little station, but it is fair to say that it is quite a simple platform and that is about it. The duplication of the line will require a rebuild of the station, and that will happen under the Liberal-National's commitment. We have also committed to additional investments for parking at those key stations, with 150 new car parking spaces spread between Eltham, Greensborough and Montmorency stations. These car park areas currently are chock-a-block; they are absolutely full from the early hours of the morning. These additional car parks are desperately needed. We know duplication will mean more passengers, increased capacity and a genuine improvement in the alternatives people have to vehicle transport into the city, so we need that parking and we need those extra trains and the extra train lines.

This duplication fits in very nicely with our plan to reduce traffic congestion in the area as well — actually right across the Melbourne metropolitan area and in regional cities. Congestion in the Eltham community is very significant. The removal of the intersection at Main Road and Fitzsimons Lane, in terms of grade separating that intersection, will have a very significant impact in addressing the bottleneck that is there at the moment. There will be a further road intersection removals on Fitzsimons Lane and Williamsons Road in Templestowe to allow greater free-flowing traffic from the north-east towards the Eastern Freeway.

To anyone who travels regularly in this area — as I do, and I know some of my other colleagues do, including Mr Ondarchie; he is very familiar with the area — this is a massive bottleneck. This is a very significant limiting factor to people being able to move freely around the area. The intersection removals are vital and the duplication of the line is vital to make sure that

people do have that genuine alternative to driving their cars and do have safe, reliable and regular services into the city.

Now, no-one understands this better than our leader Matthew Guy himself, who grew up in Montmorency. He is very familiar with and regularly uses the train service on the Hurstbridge line, and that is why he knew it needed to happen. He was very receptive after Nick McGowan made such strong representations in relation to this need, and that is why it is the Liberal-Nationals that will deliver more trains more often to people in Montmorency and in Eltham.

This commitment actually builds on a track record of investment that we have had in our time in government in relation to the Hurstbridge line. In the period 2010 to 2014 we spent \$60 million upgrading the Hurstbridge line to improve reliability and efficiency and enable extra peak-hour services. These were essential works to continue running an efficient train line. They also included two new stabling tracks at Eltham and a signalling upgrade. We have a track record of investing in the Hurstbridge line, and this motion is a very significant promise and commitment. Who could forget, though, that it was also a Liberal-National government that put protective services officers (PSOs) on our train stations? This was a very significant policy. Of course the Deputy Premier called PSOs 'plastic police' and rubbished the promise, but it was a very significant promise that delivered PSOs onto stations on the Hurstbridge line so that people had some confidence.

This is a very significant contrast to what Labor did: a very modest promise in Eltham in 2014 of three extra peak-hour services on the Hurstbridge line originating from Eltham or Hurstbridge. Well, you know they promised to deliver that in 2015, and in 2018 we still have only one extra service. So after nearly four years of government, there is one extra service for residents in Eltham. That is actually very poor performance and a failure to deliver their promise. There is a new timetable coming in shortly and, like all things that Daniel Andrews and his Labor government do, very cynically, just in those few days and weeks before the election Eltham residents might get those extra services they were promised three years ago.

The other thing of course that Labor has promised is a so-called duplication of the Hurstbridge line — but it is not; it is a sham. It is fair to say it is a complete sham. The commitment is 3 kilometres of track duplicated between Greensborough and Montmorency. Then there is about a 7-kilometre gap where it is single rail, and back between Diamond Creek and Wattle Glen it will

be doubled up again. It is just a crazy proposal that will not work, and it certainly will not deliver those extra services needed for people in Montmorency.

I do not think we should be consigning the Eltham commuters to second-class status in relation to their access to duplicated rail services, and that is a very clear contrast between the Liberal-Nationals policy and the government's policy. They will also put extra pressure on Greensborough and the car parking there, which is at breaking point because of course commuters are going straight to Greensborough, bypassing Eltham station because it does not have the duplicated track.

Labor also made some incorrect statements indicating that we are going to leave the bridge to rot, which is absolute rot in itself — a ridiculous statement. We are strengthening the bridge, and we are duplicating the bridge. The trestle bridge is iconic in the Eltham community, and it will continue to be so in a way that actually protects it, strengthens it and secures it for the long-term future. We will duplicate the bridge so that the duplicated line can continue over the two. We do not think that single line will deliver the additional services to Eltham. It will create bottlenecks, and it is a proposal that is not deserving of what the Eltham residents actually deserve in relation to their train services.

Labor have also been very tricky, as they like to be, about the amount it will actually cost to duplicate this line, because of course they have combined it with upgrading works at the Clifton Hill junction and have refused to say how much money will actually be spent on the Clifton Hill junction and how much will actually be spent on the duplicated line. Once again they are fudging the numbers, hiding the true costs and trying to get away with fooling people in relation to their real commitment here.

They do not have any plans for extra car parking at the local stations. They have already commenced some at Montmorency, but once again we cannot get a straight answer. They say it is 35 new parks; VicTrack says it is 30. It is very confusing. It is not going to deliver what Eltham residents need and certainly not going to deliver the 158 extra car parks that the Liberal-Nationals have promised.

So we have a very clear contrast — not only in relation to the extensions to Baxter and to Clyde but also particularly in terms of the duplication of the line through to Eltham — between a candidate like Nick McGowan, who has done a phenomenal job of listening to the community and convincing the Liberal-Nationals to make a very significant \$300 million-plus

commitment to duplicate the line to Eltham from Greensborough, and obviously a half-baked promise from the Labor Party that will not deliver Eltham residents' needs. I commend this motion to the house.

**Mr LEANE** (Eastern Metropolitan) (16:17) — In speaking on Mr Davis's motion it puts us in a place where there are a lot of what-ifs. We are talking about the coalition's election commitments that they may deliver — there were a lot of election commitments last time they came to government that they did not deliver, particularly in transport — but also what will happen if they form government in a few months' time, which is very, very doubtful indeed. It even goes on to talk about money that the Turnbull government has committed to the Frankston–Baxter line, and there is no guarantee there will be a Turnbull government tomorrow. Here we are with this debate about all these what-ifs and what if some sort of miracle happens —

**Mrs Peulich** — Six of your ministers could be arrested tomorrow.

**Mr LEANE** — Well, six of your shadow ministers could be arrested tomorrow because when they were ministers they had advisers handing out how-to-vote cards at pre-polls. That is what could happen. If we want to talk about that, there are a lot of what-ifs that we can talk about. I appreciate that this is the —

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay)** — Order! Mrs Peulich!

**Mr LEANE** — From the Liberal Party that would be unbiased, I would imagine! You will have your own time with the Ombudsman. As I said, you know there is a lot of emotion about 'What if this happens' or 'What if that happens', but I can tell you that what has happened is that there has been huge investment in rail infrastructure not only in the metropolitan area and not only on the lines that are mentioned in this particular motion. There have been huge improvements across the state to the rail system. You only have to jump on a train. If you want to talk about the Cranbourne-Dandenong line, maybe just jump onto a train, which I have done recently. It is magnificent, this historic amount of infrastructure improvements to rail.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — Mrs Peulich can carry on in denial. She is in denial. You can continue to row down the river denial, but all people have to do is drive down any highway and they will see a new school or catch a train and they will see improvements.

This is another self-congratulatory motion before an election that the coalition is not going to win. Even if that miracle happened, look at their track record on election commitments — they were going to build a rail to Rowville and they were going to build a rail to Doncaster. I remember that one; that was a good one — 'We'll do a feasibility study, get the money and build it'. That never happened, along with the 800 hospital beds Mr Davis was spruiking. All he delivered was an improvement in hand hygiene apparently, when you ask him.

One thing that this government will guarantee is that we will continue to do work on the rail infrastructure. We will actually increase the amount of effort we put into the rail infrastructure in a second term.

**Mrs Peulich** — Please, no more effort. We've had enough of sky rail. No more effort.

**Mr LEANE** — Mrs Peulich, you may keep carrying on about sky rail. You are one of the few left saying, 'Oh, sky rail, it's so terrible', but people are catching it, and they love it. You can bemoan and stand in the corner with a couple of people wearing your dunce hat because you have failed. But as I said, this government in the next term will continue to make many improvements to the rail network.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr LEANE** — I think you want to save it for the Ombudsman yourself, Mrs Peulich, your propaganda. This government will continue —

**Mrs Peulich** — It is all based on fact.

**Mr LEANE** — Based on fact! Yes, sure. We will continue to improve the rail network, as we have. We will increase our record spending and our record infrastructure program on the rail network. We have committed our own commitments, but we do not come in here and move motions about our commitments for everyone to go 'Hooray for us', because we do not believe in that. We have got our own commitments on the rail network. We will continue to build the Melbourne Metro Tunnel and we will continue to strive for an aspiration that in the future there will be no need for peak-hour timetables as people will turn up and there will be a train a few minutes away, like the best rail systems in cities around the world.

We are proud of our achievements and we look forward to being even prouder the more we do next term. We appreciate that others have views. Some of these views may be embraced or may not be embraced, but I think it

is good that the coalition are trying and they are doing their best.

As I said, there are a lot of what-ifs in this motion that do not really mean a lot, because the expectation that the coalition will deliver anything that they promise to deliver is zero. The expectation that the coalition will form government is zero. There still being a Turnbull federal government tomorrow is pretty hard to imagine the way things are going. Once again, on these self-congratulatory motions that the opposition move on Wednesdays, we say good for you. We appreciate you having a crack, but we will just continue on our record spending and our record infrastructure program.

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (16:23) — What a great opportunity it is to say a few words about some of the wonderful announcements that have been made by the Liberal-National parties as a commitment to building what the south-east needs. It is a stark contrast to Mr Mulino's and Mr Leane's view of just do stuff. The Liberal-National parties believe that you need to do the right stuff, and there is a vast difference between just doing stuff, as they have done — particularly, for example, with the outrageously ugly, destructive sky rail — and doing the right stuff. You can see that stark difference if you visit, for example, the Springvale level crossings, which we did.

**Mr Mulino** — How many did you do last term?

**Mrs PEULICH** — I actually put the level crossings on the agenda for both parties, because I kept on raising it in this Parliament because for decades you guys had done nothing — and remember you have been in government for 14 out of the last 18 years. It was in relation to the Clayton level crossing, which should have been separated when the Monash hospital was built. I was sick and tired of seeing ambulances with people who were dangerously or critically ill waiting for up to 20 minutes there. So do not ask me, 'What did you do?'. We actually completed a few level crossings and we had advanced some others, including Ormond, McKinnon and Bentleigh, and they are beautiful, as is Springvale.

Contrast that with the ugly and the outrageous sky rail that no-one voted for. It has desecrated our environment. Is it any wonder that Melbourne's livability is beginning to descend? Let me say, if this government has its opportunity to build even more sky rail, it will descend even further. You are ruining and destroying our most livable city. To actually think about doing this to a coastal environment is a desecration. Let me tell you: the community is not

going to thank you. They are not thankful. They are waiting for their day of revenge, and it will be 24 November except for those who vote early, and they are waiting to thank you with a very, very large baseball bat. Because what you have done to their communities is outrageous.

If you have not seen it, if you think it is not relevant to you, drive through, for example, Clayton. Now, it might be a working-class suburb, but drive through it. It is ugly. What you have done is tantamount to desecration. What you have done to Noble Park, what you have done to the lives of people who are only metres away from large 24-metre structures is a desecration. What you have done to their privacy is a desecration. What you have done to their peace of mind with the noise they are now subjected to is a desecration. So, Mr Mulino, it is not just about getting stuff done; it is about doing the right stuff — the stuff that the south-east needs.

The south-east has been short-changed of infrastructure investment for a very long period of time. We attempted and made some wonderful advancements. We began the level crossing removal program to decongest the south-east in particular. We also built, for example, the third leg — the Kingston leg — of the Dingley bypass. I note of course in the most recent budget that the fourth leg of the Dandenong bypass has not been committed to, and it is an absolutely critical piece of infrastructure.

But what do we have? We have \$1.3 billion lost as a result of the government tearing up the east-west link contract, and of course the Premier said that it would not cost us a single cent. No, it has cost us much more, and this is money that could have been invested in more infrastructure that is desperately needed in the south-east not just because of the population growth but because of ongoing and longstanding neglect.

On the sky rail eating people's backyards, again no-one voted for it. Property values of abutting residents will be affected forever, but more importantly it is destroying the beauty of those coastal suburbs in particular.

Part of the reason the south-east has been so poorly served is because many of the government MPs who represent it do not live in their own electorates, so they are actually not having to drive on the roads that are goat tracks, single-lane roads carrying city volumes of traffic. So it is not important to them. They visit occasionally, like an absentee landlord. They are disconnected from their communities. There is a very long list of those who do not live locally.

Mr Donnellan, the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, is one. He lives in Fitzroy and has masqueraded as the local member of Parliament for Narre Warren North. Similarly — I will not be too unkind because she is retiring — Ms Judith Graley, the member for Narre Warren South in the Assembly, has since her election promised to move into the electorate. This has never occurred, never taken place. And of course her successor, union organiser Gary Maas, a resident of St Kilda, is already masquerading as a local. An absolute lie. Yet again, we see that is why our south-east has been so poorly represented and has done so poorly in terms of infrastructure.

At least 23 out of 58 of Labor's MPs live outside their electorate — that is about 40 per cent. Could I say I am very proud to belong to a party that has rules which require lower house MPs to live within their electorate —

**Ms Mikakos** — What on earth does this have to do with this motion?

**Mrs PEULICH** — Investment — commitment to investment.

**Ms Mikakos** interjected.

**Mrs PEULICH** — Just sit there and listen.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay)** — Order! Through the Chair. Ms Mikakos, if you have a point of order, feel free to raise it as you see fit.

**Mrs PEULICH** — There has been record investment, and I certainly support the motion that has been brought, some aspects of which I have put on notice, but others have been compiled by Mr Davis into a single motion supporting the recent commitments to metropolitan rail enhancement that would see a huge investment in rail infrastructure and public transport for the south-east. That includes the extension of the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Clyde, with dual and electrified tracks, including new stations being built at Cranbourne East and Clyde, along with 350 additional parking spaces.

We have been briefed by the City of Casey on several occasions. They are very proactive and have their own advocacy document, including the most recent, which I received yesterday, called 'Project priorities'. It includes a whole bunch of stuff, but most of it is about transport infrastructure — public and roads — and in addition to that, sporting and recreational facilities, community infrastructure, services and environmental initiatives amongst other topics. But the most important, which is constantly reinforced to me, is

investment in infrastructure and public transport. The extension of the railway line and the additional stations will be of direct and immediate benefit to the Assembly seats of Bass — and Mr Paynter has been very active in advocating for this — as well as Cranbourne, and the Liberal candidate for that seat, Ann-Marie Hermans, has also been very active in advocating for this. The other two Assembly electorates that this will benefit are Narre Warren South, where some constituents use the Berwick railway station and others will use the Cranbourne East and Clyde railway stations. They will be better served by this, and they welcome the announcement. Even Narre Warren North will have enhanced public transport because there will, hopefully, be fewer passengers on their particular line and also fewer people occupying their parking spaces. In addition to that of course the council do want an improved local bus service network to connect commuters to the new railway stations, especially as the growth in the new suburbs occurs. They gave us a very good snapshot of maps which show those suburbs that are well serviced by existing bus networks and those where improvements are needed, and we are fully on board with that.

I was also incredibly happy about the announcement of the duplication and electrification of the rail line from Frankston to Baxter, and I note that the Turnbull government — and it may well be another government, but nonetheless a federal Liberal government — has committed already \$225 million towards the project in the 2018–19 federal budget, which has been matched recently by the Liberal-National state coalition. The new metro stations at Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter will provide easy access to rail services for local commuters and help ease congestion around Frankston, because people will not necessarily need to come into Frankston, they will not take up parking spaces and they will be able to park closer to home and therefore decongest our roads as well. As mentioned by the previous speaker, it means passengers will be able to commute more easily to Melbourne University, Frankston Hospital, Frankston Private Hospital, Chisholm TAFE and of course directly into Melbourne.

All of this augurs well for my electorate — such huge commitments to the south-east — and we certainly welcome it. We are delighted with it and we look forward to other commitments being made to the south-east to make sure that the growth the south-east is experiencing is matched by an investment in public transport and road infrastructure as well as community services.

In addition to that we certainly welcome other commitments that have been made, including the

commitment to the superhighway that has been recently announced by the coalition, which will help clear congestion in the south-east. The government will build the east–west link, build a north-east link and make other significant road improvements to unclog traffic congestion and get the south-east moving again. Cranbourne East’s population grew by 20 per cent last year, the City of Casey is expected to double its population by 2041 and Greater Dandenong’s population grew by 12.1 per cent over the last five years. It is clear that we need to stop playing catch-up and start getting ahead, and this is exactly what these announcements seek to do.

The east–west link, the north-east link and the upgrades to the Eastern Freeway will be completed in tandem, with \$2 billion allocated from a future Matthew Guy government and \$5 billion from the federal government. It is expected that the east–west link and the north-east link will also be fully completed around 2026 and 2027 respectively. Of course we are the only party which will also remove traffic lights and roundabouts through grade separations at 55 of Melbourne and Geelong’s busiest and most congested intersections. Only our parties — the Liberal-National parties — have a comprehensive congestion-busting plan for Melbourne’s highways and arterial roads, and that is comprised of the investment in the superhighway, the removal of traffic lights and roundabouts through grade separations and ongoing investment in rail infrastructure as well as roads.

With those few words all I can say is that we are excited about the fact that this party places Victorians and our constituents first, not those who give us political favour, as has been the hallmark of the Labor government. Indeed we see that through the rorts and scams that this government has been involved in: Daniel Andrews’s and Labor’s multimillion-dollar red shirts rorts and benefits, and of course still no-one sacked; Daniel Andrews backing Peter Marshall and the firefighters union against 60 000 volunteer firefighters; Daniel Andrews and Labor punishing small business in favour of unionised workplaces; and we have seen a number of other scandals where people have been feathering their own nests. Twenty-one MPs are under Victoria Police investigation and there have been 17 arrests of Labor red shirt organisers. Six ministers are under investigation but refusing to step aside, for the first time in the history of this Parliament. The ministers for corrections and police and the Attorney-General, all three key lawmakers of this state, remain in their positions despite the police investigation into offences which include such things as making false documents, using false documents, false accounting, conspiracy to cheat and defraud, and misconduct in

public office under common law, and that is the view of Graham Ashton.

**Ms Mikakos** — On a point of order, Acting President, Mrs Peulich has had a very long bow here. We are debating a motion on transport is my understanding, and much of her contribution has not actually been relevant to the motion listed on the notice paper. I know it is actually a Liberal Party motion. You would think she would actually want to speak to her own party’s motion.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay)** — I actually have to agree with Ms Mikakos. There was part of that contribution, Mrs Peulich, that I could not see had any relevance to Mr Davis’s motion. However, I ask you to bring yourself back to the motion.

**Mrs PEULICH** — In summary, I was seeking to juxtapose the commitments that the Liberal-Nationals parties make to their communities — the south-east of course is one that I have the great honour of representing — with the political agenda of the current government, which has left those communities short-changed and suffering from underinvestment in infrastructure for 18 years. With those few words, I commend the motion to the house.

**Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan)** (16:39) — I rise today to support Mr Davis’s motion which asks this house to support:

... recent commitments to metropolitan rail enhancement that would see —

- (1) an extension of the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Clyde with dual and electrified tracks —
  - (a) including new stations being built at Cranbourne East and Clyde, along with 350 additional parking places;
  - (b) including improvement of local bus services to connect commuters to the new railway stations; and
  - (c) noting that this is the first stage of an upgrade to the Cranbourne rail corridor and future upgrades to the Cranbourne line will also be essential, including the full duplication from Cranbourne to Dandenong, and a future extension to Koo Wee Rup ...

This is an example of a generational plan, unlike the current government which talks about plans for just this election cycle. This is a plan that is going to change communities, to provide opportunities. Can I on that note commend the work of Ann-Marie Hermans, the Liberal candidate for the Assembly seat of Cranbourne,

who I have been out with meeting communities, both business and residential communities. There has been overwhelming support for the extension of the railway network from Cranbourne to Clyde with dual electrified tracks.

Many people have said they have seen the old tracks that have been sitting there doing nothing for a long time and, having spoken to Ann-Marie Hermans and also, I have to say, to our candidate for the Assembly seat of Narre Warren South, Susan Serey, there has been significant support for this from the local community. So I commend the advocacy already. They are already doing stuff and they are not yet in Parliament. Imagine how powerful Ms Serey and Ms Hermans are going to be when they make it to Parliament. Those electorates are going to get some true representation.

In Cranbourne representation by the government has been absent. In the Narres, if people lived in the local area, they might be able to represent their communities, but sadly the representatives in the Narres do not do that. I have heard often Mrs Peulich talk about the lack of local commitment by the government, and we see that through what is happening in both the Narre seats and in Cranbourne as well. So I commend those candidates and those local activists for pursuing this and commend the announcement that has been made that will see a Matthew Guy government extend the metropolitan rail network from Cranbourne to Clyde with those dual tracks.

When I was talking to some people with Ann-Marie Hermans in that Cranbourne area, the overwhelming support for a new Cranbourne East railway station I have to say was off the scale. People could go from their new homes — and there are some beautiful new homes being built in that corridor down there — and walk to the station. They would be able to be part of the public transport network that has been needed for so long down in that area, and a Matthew Guy coalition incoming government would be able to deliver that for those local residents. So again I commend the great work that has been done in that area.

Also people have recognised that part of this planning is a future plan to extend the railway line to Koo Wee Rup, and in part of one of the fastest growing corridors in the country — that south-east corridor — people are seeing a political party that is making long-term, generational plans, not short-term plans just to satisfy the immediate needs of some splinter groups, as we see often from the current Labor government in this state.

Also Mr Davis's motion talks about:

- (2) the duplication and electrification of the rail line from Frankston to Baxter and notes that —
  - (a) the Turnbull government has already committed \$225 million towards the project in the 2018–19 federal budget, matched recently by the Liberal-National state coalition ...

so we can get on with it with new stations at Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter. It is going to provide great access for local residents to commute and also deal with that congestion issue that Michael Lamb, our candidate for the Assembly seat of Frankston, often talks about — the challenges in Frankston — and I commend the great work of Senior Sergeant Michael Lamb and his work in that local area not just as a great member of the Victorian police force but also as our candidate at the upcoming election.

I also acknowledge the work of Neale Burgess, the member for Hastings in the other place, and his advocacy for the extension of this railway line that is going to go in under the leadership of a Matthew Guy government from Frankston to Baxter. It is going to add significant time value to people in the local area. It is going to provide opportunities for locals to commute to places like Monash University, to the Frankston Hospital, to the Frankston Private Hospital, to Chisholm TAFE or indeed to come all the way into the centre of Melbourne. This is a great initiative and I commend the work of our candidates right down that corridor, including Michael Lamb and Neale Burgess, for the great work they are doing.

In doing that with those new railway stations there will also be an improvement to local bus services to get commuters connected to the new railway stations, and this gives me an opportunity to talk about the disappointment that residents in my own electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region have had in the Epping, Epping North and Wollert corridor. They were promised back in the 2000s under the then Labor government a new development called Aurora that was going to have new railway stations and new bus services and a whole lot of things, and people built homes there with that expectation. Well, the train station did not come, the railway line did not come and the bus services did not come. In fact the streets were so badly designed there were times when the buses could not even get up the street.

Residents in that area have talked about having been sold a bit of a dud project by the then Labor government. They moved in with the expectation of a brand-new area with brand-new homes and with all of

these things that the Labor government at the time said were going to come, and they never did. Many of those people have had some stress out of that issue because they have had to deal with the ongoing traffic and the challenges of getting to and from home. The lack of public transport has caused some people some family stress, but it has also caused people to sell their homes and move into different areas. They were sold a pup by the then Labor government that promised in that area that they would get a new Epping North railway station and great bus services, great public transport and a whole lot of community effort, but you talk to the Aurora Community Association and they are still complaining to this day that they got those commitments in a lovely brochure from the government about how lovely life would be out in Epping North and it did not turn out to be that.

We see here some leadership from the Liberal-Nationals coalition about providing for services for not just this generation but for future generations as well. So I was delighted on 18 April of this year when opposition leader Matthew Guy, the next Premier of Victoria, together with the shadow Minister for Public Transport, David Davis, Mary Wooldridge and our wonderful candidate in the Assembly seat of Eltham, Nick McGowan — a fierce, strong advocate for the people in the Eltham electorate — were standing there to announce the full duplication of the railway line between Greensborough and Eltham to provide for the growing population in Melbourne's north and allow for more frequent, reliable rail services in that Greensborough to Eltham area, an area I know very, very well, having lived there for 20 years.

I was strongly involved in the Eltham community as president of the local kindergarten in that area, as school council president and a councillor at Glen Katherine Primary School in Eltham North. I was involved in the North Eltham Cricket Club, commonly known as the Wanderers, as a captain, coach and vice-president at one stage, and they were calling out for more services in that local area. I am delighted that as part of this package announced on 18 April this year there will be over \$300 million spent under a Liberal-Nationals government to duplicate the Hurstbridge railway line between Greensborough and Eltham stations. Presently there is only a single railway track north of Greensborough on the Hurstbridge line. Part of the project that was announced by Matthew Guy, David Davis and Nick McGowan will see a rebuild of the old Monty railway station at the bottom of Were Street. Were Street is a beautiful street with some great shops, but at the end is a railway station that has quite frankly lasted longer than I thought it would in terms of its healthy life. There will be a new rebuild

of the station down there and significant additions to car parking in Greensborough, Montmorency and also further up in Eltham as well.

The duplication of the line to Eltham means more trains more often for passengers on the Hurstbridge railway line. This will also significantly increase the capacity on that line, and it will provide a better quality alternative than trying to drive into the city by driving down Bolton Street and through Main Road, Eltham, and down through Rosanna Road to try to get onto the Eastern Freeway to come into the city. Those in the area know very well — and I know people like Mr Dalla-Riva and Mr Guy know the Eastern Freeway very well — that in the morning it is pretty well the eastern car park back to about Bulleen Road or Thompsons Road.

I have to say that the state coalition had a solution for that: it was called the east-west link. It was a project that could have well and truly delivered some efficiencies in terms of people both getting to work on time and getting home to their families on time as well as dealing with productivity in the commerce industry. Then in opposition, the now Premier said that he was going to cancel that contract — a significant contract that was signed for the people of Victoria. He said it would not cost Victorians a cent — he said it would not cost a cent to cancel a vital piece of infrastructure — but I can tell all those Victorians who have not heard that he spent about \$1.4 billion to cancel that contract and not build that road. Can you ever imagine in the life of any government in any state in this country spending \$1.4 billion to do nothing? That is \$1.4 billion of taxpayer money not to build a vital piece of infrastructure.

In my capacity as shadow minister for investment I talk to institutional investors right across the globe. In a conversation I had in 2017 with an institutional investor from the United Kingdom we were chatting about things and the possibilities for a future Victoria. Whilst they got the monetary term incorrect, they asked me, 'Are you the place that spent over £1 billion not to build a road?'. So that is now part of the bad reputation that has been delivered by the Andrews government across the globe by cancelling a vital piece of infrastructure and spending \$1.4 billion of taxpayer money not to build it. Part of the reason for this is that this government sees that money as their money. They do not think of it as taxpayers money. They do not think they are misappropriating this money by spending it all not to build this road.

The plan announced for Eltham will complement our plan, the Matthew Guy plan, to address road traffic and

congestion, particularly along Main Road, Eltham, and Fitzsimons Lane through a \$5 billion intersection removal program. The Liberal-Nationals' plan that Matthew Guy will commence on coming to government will remove the Main Road–Fitzsimons Lane bottleneck by underpassing one of the roads as well as undertaking two further road intersection removals on Fitzsimons Lane and Williamsons Road, Templestowe, to allow for more free-flowing traffic to head towards the Eastern Freeway.

With that plan to ease the burden across Eltham and Banyule, both from a rail perspective and from a traffic perspective, it is clear that only the Liberal-Nationals have a plan to get the north-eastern suburbs moving again, to get people to work on time and to get them home to their families on time. I know Matthew Guy understands this very well because he is a Montmorency boy — he is a Monty boy — he understands the area and he has seen for himself the significant growth up through the northern and north-eastern parts of Melbourne and how it needs to be addressed. The government do not have a plan for that and they do not have a plan to deal with it. In fact when they talk about the things they are doing in the rail crossing removal space they are talking about projects that were commenced by the Liberal-Nationals in government.

I notice in my own area of Northern Metropolitan Region that they have been talking for a long time about removing the rail crossing in Reservoir. This is a very, very busy crossing, and cars can be committed for over 20 minutes in the morning trying to get through that crossing. They have been talking about it and they had banners up around the suburb saying, 'Only Labor will remove the Reservoir railway crossing'. Well, here we are nearly four years into government and they have not turned a sod out there. Local MPs can be forgiven if they do not know that intersection very well and they say, 'Well, I don't really know what's going on at Reservoir, because I'm not in that particular area'. Most of them can say that except for one, and that is Ms Mikakos, because her office is right at the Reservoir railway crossing.

**Ms Mikakos** — Watch this space. Watch this space.

**Mr ONDARCHIE** — All she has to do is look out the window — if she is ever in her electorate office — and look at all the traffic, but she would not know that because she is not there and she is not part of the local community. When I talk to people on Broadway and when I talk to them across in Spring Street, nobody sees her in the local area. All she would need to do, if she ever had the courtesy to turn up to her electorate office

and talk to her constituents, is look out the window and she would see the traffic in Reservoir every single day. What has happened out there? Zip.

Ms Mikakos will probably interject with something like 'Watch this space', but four years on we do not believe her anymore. The local people do not believe it anymore, because all they get out of this representative of Northern Metropolitan Region is talk, talk, talk. She cannot possibly say that she does not know about it because her electorate office is right there at the Reservoir railway crossing — and she has done nothing. All they have done to add value to the area is put signs up that say, 'Only Labor will remove the railway crossing at Reservoir'. Your value-add to the community, Ms Mikakos — if you have ever chosen to turn up to the local area — has been to put signs up to say that you are going to do something, but then again you do nothing. We see that in your portfolio area and we see it in the local constituency in the Northern Metropolitan Region. It is talk, talk, talk but no action. Quite frankly the people of Melbourne and the people of Victoria are fed up with this government.

**Mr DAVIS** (Southern Metropolitan) (16:54) — I am pleased to sum up on this motion. It is a very straightforward motion. The coalition has made some very sensible, practical, grounded announcements — Cranbourne to Clyde, dual and electrified tracks; the duplication and electrification of the rail line from Frankston to Baxter; and the duplication of the line between Greensborough and Eltham. All of these are important steps in dealing with Victoria's significant population growth. We know that that population growth needs to be managed. We know we need more public transport. In no way does that diminish the need for other transport portfolio steps, including significant new road infrastructure that we have already announced.

I make the point that these are practical, sensible proposals to address the population growth on the edge of the city. More will be needed; I also agree with that. But these are three very sensible, grounded proposals, and I think they should be supported by the chamber — by all in fact. Labor in their proposals have not said they will duplicate in full between Greensborough and Eltham. I think that is a serious mistake. It will leave a bottleneck; it will leave an area where the movement of trains will be limited, and it will make getting the 10-minute frequencies that we need very difficult. Labor have yet to commit to the extension between Cranbourne and Clyde, and state Labor have yet to commit to the extension between Frankston and Baxter.

These ought to be matters that are agreed to by all because they are sensible, practical proposals. We will fund them, we will do the level crossing removals that are needed, we will take the significant steps that will actually improve the capacity of these areas. There will be significant growth in commercial and residential estates in those facilities, and we will work with councils and we will work with communities to deliver a better outcome. These are transport projects that plan for the future of our state.

**Motion agreed to.**

## LAW REFORM, ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Reporting date

**Dr CARLING-JENKINS** (Western Metropolitan) (16:57) — By leave, I move:

That the resolution of the Council of 20 June 2018 requiring the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee to inquire into and report by 22 August 2018 on the Crimes Amendment (Unlicensed Drivers) Bill 2018 be amended so as to now require the committee to present its report by 18 September 2018.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.**

## STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

### Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) (16:59) — I rise to speak on the state budget papers 2018–19. The state budget includes the budget for firefighting services. Earlier today we talked about presumptive rights for firefighters with cancer. This is something that people on this side of the chamber support very strongly — the right of our firefighters to have those presumptive rights. Unfortunately this government chose to play games with presumptive rights legislation by tying it to a piece of legislation that was totally unpalatable to the volunteer firefighters in this state.

We know the history of this. The Greens brought in a bill through the upper house some time ago, but it was subsequently deemed to be unconstitutional because it could not be introduced through the upper house. Both the Labor and Liberal parties went to the last state election promising presumptive rights legislation. Certainly the Labor Party never said that that presumptive rights legislation would be dependent on trashing the rights of volunteers in the Country Fire

Authority (CFA), but they tied presumptive rights legislation to the United Firefighters Union's legislation, which would have had significant detrimental effects on volunteers in the CFA. That bill was vehemently opposed by volunteer firefighters in this state.

The opposition and the other non-government parties then sought to split that legislation. We could have passed presumptive rights legislation for firefighters well over 12 months ago had the government split that piece of legislation. No-one had any arguments with presumptive rights being given. We did have some small arguments over the fact that it was not equal for volunteers and career firefighters, but we wanted to get that presumptive rights legislation passed. But of course the government would not split that bill. They made presumptive rights totally dependent on the trashing of volunteers' rights within the CFA through the other part of the bill. We moved to split that bill when it came to the upper house, but the government voted against splitting the bill. Since then, on 8 May we saw a private members bill introduced in the lower house by Brad Battin, the shadow Minister for Emergency Services. It was voted down once again by Labor.

Labor continue to play games with volunteer firefighters and with all firefighters in this state when it comes to presumptive rights. This is a very important issue. Cancer is not something that Labor should be using as a pawn in their political game. People who have cancer suffer through some of the most traumatic times of their lives. We know that our firefighters go into buildings that have asbestos and all sorts of chemical fumes caused by fire. No-one doubts that some cancers are caused by the work that they do. Therefore they should have those presumptive rights so that they can make a claim due to having contracted cancer at work.

Of course Labor did say that if they were elected to Parliament, we would see presumptive rights legislation no later than May 2016. We are actually still waiting, because the only legislation we have seen is the legislation that Labor wanted to introduce that would have trashed the rights of volunteers in this state and destroyed the CFA, an organisation that is held in very, very high regard and which is most important in country electorates, particularly in my electorate in the north of the state, where CFA volunteers and our career firefighters do a tremendous job.

We want to see both career firefighters and volunteer firefighters have equal access to presumptive rights legislation. I would urge the government to bring that bill in. Bring it in and make it an urgent bill in the next

sitting week. We can still pass it before Parliament is prorogued after the next two sitting weeks. It would be the right thing for all of us to do to put that presumptive rights legislation in place, but of course Labor will not do that because all they want to do is use it as a sweetener to try and get through their deeply, deeply unpopular changes to the fire services that would trash the rights of all volunteers in the CFA in this state.

### **Electoral Matters Committee: conduct of 2014 Victorian state election**

**Mr RAMSAY** (Western Victoria) (17:05) — This gives me an opportunity to speak to the report, *Inquiry into the Conduct of the 2014 Victorian State Election*, which was tabled in the Parliament in May 2016. I particularly wanted to make reference to a number of issues, given the current police investigation into the alleged rorting by 21 Labor MPs, which has been the result of an investigation by the Ombudsman. That report by Deborah Glass was also tabled in the Parliament. There is no doubt that the activity by the Labor Party, and the misuse of taxpayers funds in the form of Labor MPs using payroll staffing sheets for campaign workers, was allegedly seen to be a total misuse of taxpayers money and in fact was illegal. Currently that is why there is a criminal investigation on foot, as well as an internal Privileges Committee investigation here which, Acting President Purcell, you would be very familiar with given you chair that committee. We look forward to the findings of that committee when they are made public, if they are indeed.

Nevertheless the point I wanted to make was that this report actually identified a number of problems associated with the conduct of a number of people, particularly at polling booths not only on the polling date itself but also during the pre-poll. I was witness to that. In fact I was at a number of the polling booths in the Ballarat vicinity where I saw very targeted activity by the United Firefighters Union (UFU) particularly with respect to urging voters not to vote for the Napthine government at the time and with respect to their wishes that they felt were not being addressed by the government.

Of course they were not allowed to wear UFU or firefighters' uniforms, but they were wearing something very similar. So there was a view by voters that in fact it was firefighters generally that took that view, but as we know it was merely the UFU that were angered by the fact that they were not able to conclude an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) which would give them significant increases in salaries, conditions

and entitlements — bits and pieces — if the Fair Work Commission approved it.

There were also many other groups that had self-interests at the polling booths and were quite forceful, proactive — almost intimidating — to many of the voters that went to vote. I will be pleased to see, and my hope is, that from this report there will be new reforms in respect to how people behave at polling booths.

I want to get back to the rorting issues that are currently being investigated, specifically in my local area. It is interesting to note that at least two ministers have been implicated in the Ombudsman's report — that is, the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, John Eren, and, in an unrelated way, the Minister for Police, Lisa Neville. Even Ms Tierney gets a mention along the way as well, so we have three Geelong-based ministers who get a mention directly or indirectly in the Ombudsman's report. I am not privy to the criminal investigation or in fact to the Privileges Committee inquiry currently being conducted, but I suspect all three of those Geelong-based Labor MPs know they will have to give evidence of some sort to either or both the criminal investigation and the Privileges Committee.

There is no doubt there is some substance in all of this. There have been 17 arrests of Labor red shirt organisers and six ministers under investigation who, despite the fact that the coalition have called for them to step aside from their ministerial responsibilities, have refused to do so. Of course implicated in that is the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Police and the Attorney-General — the three key law and order representatives of the government. There are a number of offences that may be substantiated through those investigations. Certainly it is a sad indictment of the Labor Party and the Labor MPs that have been involved in this allegedly fraudulent activity.

### **Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee: career advice activities in Victorian schools**

**Ms BATH** (Eastern Victoria) (17:10) — I would like to say a few words on the committee report that was released today to the house, *Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools*. In doing so I would like to make a couple of comments around educators, career teachers and career educators, and the importance of that, and also on the importance of exposing students who are going through the school system to a variety of work in industry applications and of their being able to have a great work experience in

areas that are local and important to their region, so that they may then stay and work in that area, but also for them to have an opportunity to have a range of experiences.

Then, if I have time, I would like to talk about one of our great proposals that we have got on the books in terms of supporting students going from secondary education into tertiary education. Certainly one of my great passions, being a former teacher, has always been education and having our local country students being able to gain some great knowledge and direction about where they want to head. There is no certainty in life, and we know that many people change careers as they go through life, but it is so important that we expose our country kids to a range of opportunities and stimuli that can create a forward plan and a career aspiration. I was up at Orbost Secondary College a little while ago. They talked about the impediments for country kids to even experience career expos. They were saying that there is a great big career expo every year at, I think, Caulfield Racecourse. It is roughly an 8-hour trip to get there from Orbost to have that experience for a short time and go home.

So one of the key things that I think is very important is to have local career expos with local trades and local work opportunities in our rural and regional areas. I was pleased last year to host in Gippsland an education forum in Traralgon, where we had principals, teachers, TAFE representatives, Learn Locals and parents. We came up with some key thoughts around what is required in country Victoria, and indeed this report actually goes to some of those as well, including appropriately skilled career educators. We do not want our career teachers — and I mean this in the nicest way — to be just teachers with a light load that come on board and take up the career timeslot. It is really important that our career educators are professionally developed in career education. Recommendations 19 to 24 certainly look at qualified practitioners delivering appropriate and comprehensive advice. It is also important that we look at exposing our students to workplaces and vocational education and training, and recommendations 25 to 35 talk about those.

One of the criticisms I have of this Andrews Labor government is that it put forward the idea for a tech school in Morwell, and part of that was to have certain goals around medical, food and fibre, and advanced manufacturing. Then it came up with partnerships that would provide some of that technical expertise. In the partnership there was only one that had relevance to these goals, and I think that was Agribusiness Gippsland. I have raised that on a number of occasions in here, and I have talked about it in the media.

Thankfully I asked Safetech, which is a fantastic, innovative, world-class operation in Moe, to contact the government, which it did. The government has had a conversation with the company, and now Safetech is coming on as, I guess, a junior partner in this tech school arrangement. In order to have a comprehensive and really proper environment for our students, we have to let them engage in activities and skills and experience industry based in our area, and I really thank Safetech for doing this.

The final point is that in order for our students to be able to progress from secondary college to tertiary education, I am really pleased that a Liberal-Nationals government will provide a rural tertiary network — \$600 000 over four years to provide a link for students to travel from secondary to tertiary education successfully and to have networks around that.

### **Electoral Matters Committee: conduct of 2014 Victorian state election**

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:16) — I want to make some comments on the inquiry into the conduct of the 2014 Victorian state election undertaken by the Electoral Matters Committee, which is a committee that I have served on. This report was tabled in May 2016. It is a very solid report. It makes some relatively expected recommendations that look more at the machinery and the trends in voting and so on. It is not riveting reading but it is useful, and obviously it is customary that these types of inquiries are undertaken.

But the more interesting report on the 2014 state election is the *2014 Victorian State Election Review* of the Labor Party, undertaken by Mr Roland Lindell. I have been interested to read some of the detail of that, especially in the context of Labor's worst rorts and scams in Victoria's parliamentary history, known commonly as the Labor red shirts rorts, which are currently being investigated. So far, as was mentioned earlier, we have Labor under police under investigation by the fraud and extortion squad. There are 21 Labor MPs under Victoria Police investigation, lower house MPs refusing to give evidence to the Ombudsman, 17 arrests of Labor red shirts organisers and six ministers being investigated and refusing to step aside — something that goes against every Westminster tradition. Ministers in the past, including very honourable ministers on the Labor side of politics, have stood aside or stood down for much smaller grievances or errors because they accepted the notion of ministerial responsibility.

What is particularly perturbing is the fact that the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Police and the Attorney-General are also under investigation and remain in their positions despite being subject to police investigation. I think that is extraordinary. The types of offences that are being investigated were outlined by the Victorian police commissioner, Graham Ashton, to the Privileges Committee on 11 July 2018. He said:

Possible offences included make false document, use false document, false accounting, conspiracy to cheat and defraud, and misconduct in public office under common law.

Defending democracy and the integrity of our voting system is absolutely the most important principle, and it should never, ever be compromised. That is what makes us different to Third World countries and tin-pot dictatorships. I think it is very, very sad that there has been such an elaborate artifice undertaken to cheat, basically, Victorians out of their vote. This is referred to in the report undertaken by Mr Roland Lindell, who I believe at the time may have worked for Mr Lenders, who was the leader of the upper house and who appears to be the person who the Labor Party has agreed to throw under the bus.

So my advice to the police commissioner in his investigation is to make sure to speak to Mr Roland Lindell, because one of the terms of reference for his inquiry, at paragraph (3)C, was to review the 'innovative field campaign approach'. He was a former ALP state secretary and a well-respected member of the ALP, and some time ago he was also chair of its fundraising committee. The review refers to a number of people who were instrumental in the field campaign, including Noah Carroll and Conrad French, who I think is a fine young man but who obviously has information that may be useful to this inquiry. On page 4 of the review there is reference made to:

... a special thank you to state secretary Noah Carroll, the Premier's chief of staff Johnny McLindon and their staff for their cooperation and for the unhindered access to records and information requested by the review.

It outlines a very sophisticated campaign to win government, but also I think it names certain people who were instrumental in implementing that campaign. My advice to the police commissioner is to read this document and to ensure that all of those people are interviewed.

### **Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19**

**Mr O'SULLIVAN** (Northern Victoria) (17:21) — I will be speaking this afternoon on the 2018–19 state budget, and one of the areas I want to focus on is a

commitment that has been made by the Andrews government in relation to solar energy playing a much greater role in the energy scenario for Victoria as we now know it. Solar is no doubt one of the ideas that is gaining more and more exposure as we have seen the price of electricity absolutely skyrocket. In the last four years solar has been put up as one of the avenues that could be taken as a panacea in terms of lowering energy prices. I am not quite sure I agree with that, but I do agree with the concept of looking at renewables and using them more in the future as part of a mix of energy solutions that are needed to provide enough base power and stable reliability of supply for households and industry to undertake the things that they need to do.

What I want to mention is that up in part of my electorate around the Shepparton area there has been a proposal for four solar plants to be put in: one at Lemnos, one at Congupna, one at Tallygaroopna and one at Tatura. The one in Lemnos in particular is very, very large. The proposal is for some 550 hectares — nearly 1200 acres in the old language. By anyone's measure that is a very, very large solar plant. One of the problems we have with that particular solar plant is that it is right in the middle of a whole range of farming lands, whether it be orchards or whether it be dairies, that grow a whole range of food that we produce and we like to consume right around the state and beyond, and the implementation of this particular solar plant in this area would have a detrimental effect on that particular farming area. So what I would like to see happen is for that to be shifted somewhere else, but the problem we have in relation to that particular solar plant is that there are not the appropriate guidelines in place to give the council the tools that they need to make decisions on where these sorts of solar plants can be located.

I went and visited this particular solar plant with the member for Murray Plains in the Assembly, Peter Walsh, and also The Nationals candidate for the Assembly seat of Shepparton, Peter Schwarz. It was very, very clear to us that these are areas of Shepparton that had irrigation upgrades undertaken through the connections program. A lot of money is being spent up in the north of Victoria upgrading and modernising the irrigation systems. This area has been modernised in terms of its irrigation, so it would be wrong to put that solar plant at that location.

But in terms of the council, they did not want to make the decision, so they asked the Minister for Planning to step in and make the decision on their behalf, and the Minister for Planning referred it off to a panel. The panel has undertaken its findings and had many days of hearings. They have put in a report to the minister, and

it is still sitting on the minister's desk. The people up in Shepparton, in Lemnos in particular and in all of the councils around the state are wanting to see what these guidelines are going to be in relation to the establishment of solar plants, because we do not think that they should be on valuable irrigation and agricultural land. There are many areas where they can be located without having to be on highly irrigated land.

We are seeing similar issues occur on the outskirts of Mildura. Peter Crisp, the member for Mildura in the Assembly, has had conversations with me about that as well. That is certainly an issue where we need to make sure that the government gives us very clear guidelines in terms of how solar plants are to be located and how they are to be integrated into the local communities and into the local farmlands. There is room for them and they are needed — there is no doubt about it — but they do not need to be on prime agricultural land. Hopefully the Minister for Planning will at some stage very, very soon release those findings so everyone will have a very clear understanding of and certainty about how these solar plants are to be located in the future.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

### Goulburn Valley Health

**Ms LOVELL** (Northern Victoria) (17:26) — My adjournment is for the Minister for Health, and once again it relates to Goulburn Valley Health's (GV Health) planned redevelopment of its community health precinct in Corio Street, Shepparton. The action that I seek from the minister is for the minister to inform me of the actions she took to support Goulburn Valley Health's unsuccessful submission to the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund round 2 for funding for the redevelopment of the community health precinct on Corio Street in Shepparton and also that she give a commitment to support any future application for funding for this redevelopment.

On 29 November 2017, during the adjournment debate, I asked the minister to support GV Health's submission for funding to redevelop the community health precinct in Corio Street, Shepparton. GV Health's submission to the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund round 2 proved to be unsuccessful in securing any funding. The minister holds the health care of Shepparton in such low regard that she did not have the decency to respond to my adjournment matter delivered in this place nine

months ago. In fact GV Health failed to secure any money from round 2 of the funding. The same cannot be said for other large regional hospitals. Albury Wodonga Health received over \$1.2 million for three projects, Barwon Health received over \$9.2 million for two projects and Bendigo Health received \$4.9 million for one project. Meanwhile, the much-needed redevelopment of GV Health's community health precinct continues to seek government support but has so far been ignored by the minister.

The service currently provides a range of primary care services, including occupational therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy, speech pathology and health promotion. A redeveloped precinct will enable GV Health to house all care services in one hub, creating a one-stop shop for Goulburn Valley residents seeking community and primary care services. Sitting within the landscape of the Shepparton CBD, a redeveloped precinct would support the revitalisation of the Shepparton central business district. The demand for primary care services has increased greatly in recent years, and this redevelopment is required as a matter of priority to meet this increased service demand.

The action that I seek from the minister is for the minister to inform me of what actions she took to support Goulburn Valley Health's unsuccessful submission to the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund round 2 for funding for the redevelopment of the community health precinct on Corio Street in Shepparton and also that she give me a commitment to support any future application for funding for this redevelopment.

### Solar homes program

**Mrs PEULICH** (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:29) — The matter that I wish to raise is for the attention of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and it is in relation to the recently announced program of the Andrews government to install solar panels on 650 000 Victorian homes over the next decade to the tune of \$1.24 billion. I have been contacted by many constituents who want more detail, in particular those of course who own properties along the sky rail corridor. They want to know, given that they are being overshadowed by the sky rail, whether their homes would be suited to solar panel installation, and indeed if they do have them installed, or even if they get them installed at their own expense, who would be responsible for solar panels not functioning well because of overshadowing as the sky rail blocks out the sun. Also, they are concerned that many older homes may have roofs that are not suited to solar panels.

In particular I am asking the minister to provide information about how solar panels will assist those constituents along the sky rail corridor who may contemplate having solar panels installed. Indeed I seek an assurance that they will not be discriminated against or disadvantaged as a result of a very bad government policy that has not only impacted on their amenity and property values but also their capacity to access future government programs such as solar panel installation should the government win office in November, which I certainly hope is not the case.

### **Western Ring Road noise pollution**

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) (17:31) — I wish to raise an adjournment matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I have received a couple of pieces of correspondence from a constituent, Debbie Lee from Ardeer, who lives adjacent to the M80, or the Western Ring Road as it is more commonly known to most people. Her very great concern is the truck noise pollution, as she describes it, that is impacting her and those around her. She has written to VicRoads on a number of occasions, and I have quite an email trail in front of me. She has expressed, I should say, very strongly her very deep concerns as to the impact of truck noise on her, and she has asked for certain actions to be taken.

Now, it seems to me, having read this email trail, that whilst VicRoads gave some sort of perfunctory response to her, they really have not given her any satisfaction to this point. I have to say this does not surprise me greatly, given that VicRoads is quite often a law unto itself and is quite capable of being somewhat dismissive of concerns that are expressed to it. That, to my way of thinking, is not good enough. I am not sure what can be done about the culture of VicRoads, but certainly something on this occasion —

**Mrs Peulich** — Change the minister.

**Mr FINN** — Well, a change of minister would be a good start, Mrs Peulich — there are no two ways about that — and we certainly look forward to that happening in November. I wish the new minister well. He is going to need it, I can assure you.

I am asking the minister to intervene on this occasion to assist Ms Lee in this particular venture to gain some relief from the truck noise. She is asking for compensation to have her home insulated against at least some of the truck noise that is stopping her from sleeping. That noise impacts on her daily functions and causes her great anxiety, knowing that that same noise will be disturbing her sleep night after night, and I can

understand why she would be concerned. So I ask the minister to intervene to hopefully gain some satisfaction for Ms Lee and to provide some relief from the concerns that she is suffering.

### **Homelessness**

**Mr MELHEM** (Western Metropolitan) (17:34) — My adjournment matter is directed to the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing and Minister for Mental Health, the Honourable Martin Foley. We recently recognised National Homelessness Week. This initiative coordinated by Homelessness Australia is aimed at raising awareness of people experiencing homelessness, the issues they face and the actions needed to find real solutions. I also recently received a letter from the Western Homelessness Network, a body which aims to provide information on homelessness in the west.

The 2016 census showed that there are currently 5712 people experiencing homelessness in Melbourne's west. This is 5712 too many. We also know that census data typically undercounts the amount of people experiencing homelessness, so this number could be significantly higher. It is also becoming more obvious that the key cause of homelessness is the persistent squeeze on affordable housing in Melbourne, which is being felt more and more in Melbourne's west. While the focus on homelessness is often in our CBD, we know that the hidden homeless population is our biggest challenge, and it is an ongoing issue in my electorate.

I am proud of this government's actions towards tackling our housing and homelessness issues. The government has invested \$1 billion in housing and homelessness services, in addition to the \$2 billion in social housing support provided through the Social Housing Growth Fund, which opened for business earlier this month. Bodies like the Western Homelessness Network are also doing their share. In 2015–16 this organisation supported 16 260 people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Melbourne's west, and I want to thank it for that work.

The action I seek is for the minister to outline how the above investments will ensure that we address not only rough sleeping in the CBD but also the issue of hidden homelessness in our suburbs, in particular in Melbourne's west.

## Responses

**Ms TIERNEY** (Minister for Training and Skills) (17:36) — There were four adjournment matters this evening. The first was from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Health, seeking her support for the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health capital in Corio Street, Shepparton. The second was from Mrs Peulich to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, seeking advice on solar panels. The third was from Mr Finn to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, seeking action from the minister to intervene and provide compensation for truck noise for a constituent. The fourth was from Mr Melhem to Minister Foley, seeking that the minister outline homelessness investment and the impact that it is having in relation to the CBD and particularly his own electorate.

I have written responses to adjournment debate matters raised by Mr Leane on 7 June and 26 July, Mr Ondarchie on 24 July and Ms Pennicuik on 27 July.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Written responses

**The PRESIDENT** (17:37) — I did indicate earlier today that I would consider some questions that were posed by Mr O'Donohue to the Minister for Corrections in regard to the responses given to those questions. On reviewing both questions and answers, I have decided that I will request a written response for both the substantive and supplementary questions. Given the time of day I am announcing this, I will allow two days.

**Ms Tierney** — On a point of order, President, I understand that Ms Faraone, who is the CEO of Holmesglen, has written to you, based on the advice that she has received from the clerks, in relation to comments that have been made in this house. I seek your guidance as to how and when those views will be conveyed to the house.

**The PRESIDENT** — The matter has been referred to one of the clerks to discuss with her the right-of-reply procedures, and that is currently being progressed. The house stands adjourned.

**House adjourned 5.38 p.m.**