

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 6 June 2018

(Extract from book 8)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
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
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Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
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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*): Mr Gepp and Ms Patten. (*Assembly*): Mr Dixon, Mr Howard, Ms Suleyman, Mr Thompson and Mr Tilley.

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

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

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Acting Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Ms Bridget Noonan

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

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Mr P. Lochert

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

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The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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

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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 ¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens	Morris, Mr Joshua	Western Victoria	LP
Bath, Ms Melina ²	Eastern Victoria	Nats	Mulino, Mr Daniel	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Bourman, Mr Jeffrey	Eastern Victoria	SFFP	O'Brien, Mr Daniel David ⁸	Eastern Victoria	Nats
Carling-Jenkins, Dr Rachel ³	Western Metropolitan	AC	O'Donohue, Mr Edward John	Eastern Victoria	LP
Crozier, Ms Georgina Mary	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Ondarchie, Mr Craig Philip	Northern Metropolitan	LP
Dalidakis, Mr Philip	Southern Metropolitan	ALP	O'Sullivan, Luke Bartholomew ⁹	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ¹⁰	Northern Metropolitan	RV
Davis, Mr David McLean	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Pennicuik, Ms Susan Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	Greens
Drum, Mr Damian Kevin ⁴	Northern Victoria	Nats	Peulich, Mrs Inga	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Dunn, Ms Samantha	Eastern Metropolitan	Greens	Pulford, Ms Jaala Lee	Western Victoria	ALP
Eideh, Mr Khalil M.	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Purcell, Mr James	Western Victoria	VILJ
Elasmr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹¹	Northern Metropolitan	Greens
Fitzherbert, Ms Margaret	Southern Metropolitan	LP	Rich-Phillips, Mr Gordon Kenneth	South Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Gepp, Mr Mark ⁵	Northern Victoria	ALP	Shing, Ms Harriet	Eastern Victoria	ALP
Hartland, Ms Colleen Mildred ⁷	Western Metropolitan	Greens	Somyurek, Mr Adem	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph ⁶	Northern Victoria	ALP	Springle, Ms Nina	South Eastern Metropolitan	Greens
Jennings, Mr Gavin Wayne	South Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Symes, Ms Jaclyn	Northern Victoria	ALP
Leane, Mr Shaun Leo	Eastern Metropolitan	ALP	Tierney, Ms Gayle Anne	Western Victoria	ALP
Lovell, Ms Wendy Ann	Northern Victoria	LP	Truong, Ms Huong ¹²	Western Metropolitan	Greens
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
			Young, Mr Daniel	Northern Victoria	SFFP

¹ Resigned 28 September 2017

² Appointed 15 April 2015

³ DLP until 26 June 2017

⁴ Resigned 27 May 2016

⁵ Appointed 7 June 2017

⁶ Resigned 6 April 2017

⁷ Resigned 9 February 2018

⁸ Resigned 25 February 2015

⁹ Appointed 12 October 2016

¹⁰ ASP until 16 January 2018

¹¹ Appointed 18 October 2017

¹² Appointed 21 February 2018

PARTY ABBREVIATIONS

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

CONTENTS

WEDNESDAY, 6 JUNE 2018

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
<i>State disability plan report 2017</i>	2403
PAPERS	2403
NOTICES OF MOTION	2403
LAW REFORM, ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE	
<i>Reporting date</i>	2403
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES	
<i>Membership</i>	2403
MINISTERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Regional partnerships</i>	2403
<i>Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre</i>	2404
<i>Wine industry</i>	2404
DISTINGUISHED VISITORS	2405
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Rugby League State of Origin</i>	2405
<i>Government performance</i>	2405
<i>Victorian High Country Huts Association</i>	2406
<i>Paul Ahern</i>	2406
<i>Suzanne Davies</i>	2407
<i>Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre</i>	2407
<i>Climate change</i>	2407
<i>Given the Chance</i>	2407
<i>Dr Ratnam</i>	2408
<i>Women in politics</i>	2408
<i>Morwell power station site</i>	2409
<i>Latrobe Valley mine licences</i>	2409
<i>Duck hunting season</i>	2409
<i>Emily Nguyen</i>	2410
<i>Wyndham soccer stadium proposal</i>	2410
PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS	2410
NORTH RICHMOND SUPERVISED INJECTING FACILITY	2415, 2436
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
<i>Energy policy</i>	2426, 2427
<i>Logging coupe planned burns</i>	2427, 2428
<i>Native forest logging</i>	2428
<i>Western Victoria fires</i>	2428
<i>Offender electronic monitoring</i>	2429, 2430
<i>Prison security</i>	2431
<i>Child protection</i>	2431, 2432, 2433
<i>Written responses</i>	2434
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	
<i>Answers</i>	2434
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS	
<i>Western Metropolitan Region</i>	2434
<i>Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	2435
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	2435
<i>Western Victoria Region</i>	2435, 2436
<i>Southern Metropolitan Region</i>	2435
<i>Northern Victoria Region</i>	2436
PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS	2437
COLONOSCOPY WAITING LISTS	2454

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

<i>Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues: public housing renewal program</i>	2466, 2469
<i>Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19</i>	2467
<i>Family violence reform implementation monitor: report 2017</i>	2467
<i>Victorian Multicultural Commission: report 2016–17</i>	2468
ADJOURNMENT	
<i>Farm safety</i>	2470
<i>Hume Freeway–McKoy Street, West Wodonga</i>	2470
<i>Circular economy research</i>	2471
<i>Duranta Drive, Gowanbrae</i>	2471
<i>Sydney Road, Brunswick, tram track works</i>	2472
<i>Dandenong Creek</i>	2472
<i>Hallam creek</i>	2473
<i>Hazelwood Pondage</i>	2473
<i>Responses</i>	2474

Wednesday, 6 June 2018

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. B. N. Atkinson)** took the chair at 9.34 a.m. and read the prayer.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

State disability plan report 2017

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) presented report.

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Auditor-General's Office — Annual Plan, 2018–19.

Auditor-General's Report on Community Health Program, June 2018 (*Ordered to be published*).

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule Nos. 67 and 68.

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council Act 2001 — Minister's letter of request for an assessment by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council of Victoria's coastal reserves, pursuant to section 26C of the Act.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

LAW REFORM, ROAD AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Reporting date

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (09:40) — By leave, I move:

That the resolution of the Council of 23 November 2016 and further resolution of 19 September 2017 requiring the Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee to inquire into and report by 30 June 2018 on VicRoads management of country roads be amended so as to now require the committee to present its report by 26 July 2018.

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Membership

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (09:41) — By leave, I move:

That —

- (1) Ms Shing be discharged from the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning;
- (2) Mr Mulino be discharged from the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues;
- (3) Ms Shing be appointed to the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues; and
- (4) Mr Mulino be appointed to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

Regional partnerships

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (09:41) — I rise to make a ministers statement regarding our government's ongoing commitment to creating more regional jobs and providing opportunities to grow skills for people in regional Victoria — this time in Mildura and the Sunraysia region.

I am pleased to announce in the house this morning that through the government's Regional Skills Fund, a grant of \$395 454 has been provided to Shaping Futures as a contribution towards the innovative workforce cluster Sunraysia employment program project. The project will establish a strategic partnership with key industry leaders such as Cozwine, Olam and SuniTAFE to provide a targeted program that will deliver industry identified skills training in the horticulture sector.

Mildura's horticultural sector is expanding as growers and companies begin to take advantage of new markets, particularly in Asia. This project will deliver real and beneficial employment solutions by providing training opportunities for suitable candidates who are unemployed, underemployed or at risk of redundancy. Once completed the program will produce the equivalent of 126 full-time jobs with accredited training to certificate III level in rural operations.

There are a number of government and industry partners on board with this important employment and skills project, including support from the Department of Education and Training. This program will address the

issue of labour shortages highlighted by the Victorian skills commissioner and by local government. I am also pleased to say that this project aligns with the Mallee regional partnership priorities in supporting the building of a stronger regional local economy.

Last week in Kerang hundreds of people from across the Mallee region met to discuss the issues important to them at the Mallee regional assembly — local people coming up with local ideas and local solutions to the issues they identify as priorities to them and their communities. We discussed the implementation of the Victorian cross-border commissioner, which is now funded in this year's budget. There was also a significant focus on promoting the visitor economy by supporting further expansion of the Silo Art Trail. We will continue to work with communities, industry, local government and our regional partnerships to deliver the important programs that boost local skills and deliver jobs growth for every region in Victoria.

Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Early Childhood Education) (09:44) — I rise to inform the house on how the Andrews Labor government is helping to deliver innovative projects to support gender equity in the workplace as well as continuing to give children the best start in life. On Monday I was pleased to participate, with some beautiful children, in the official opening of Australia's first early learning centre at a medical research institute — at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI) in Parkville — together with Labor's candidate for Melbourne, Jennifer Kanis. It was great to return after the sod turn to see this innovative, modern facility. The Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre is named after a senior WEHI scientist who has devoted much of her career to supporting and mentoring young women in medical research.

One of the biggest barriers to parents' career development, especially for women, is access to child care. It was identified within the institute that only one-third of senior laboratory heads were female, so they began the journey to create an environment that enables all parents — men and women — to equally balance their career and professional responsibilities. This on-site early learning centre is a significant achievement for the medical research sector and for gender equity in science. The \$9.9 million centre was established by the institute with considerable philanthropic support together with a \$650 000 grant through our children's facilities capital program.

The centre spans five levels and will offer 100 places for children, including long day care and three and four-year-old kindergarten as well as the opportunity for other early years services. It is a cutting-edge example of modern inner-city design. It will also offer a German language program as well as a science, technology, engineering and mathematics-based learning program called Little Scientists.

The Andrews Labor government recognises how critically important the first five years are for a child's brain development and that a high-quality early childhood education can set them up for life. I want to particularly applaud WEHI's commitment to its workforce and to gender equality. This is a great example to all employers about what can be achieved through workplace child care. It is a wonderful facility. I want to congratulate everyone involved, particularly the director and the board members, for having the foresight and commitment to put in place measures to see all their professional scientists, in particular the women members of their workforce, being able to progress in their scientific careers.

Wine industry

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (09:46) — I am very pleased to be able to update the house on our government's continued efforts to support the Victorian wine industry.

An honourable member — I thought you did that last night.

Ms PULFORD — No, not last night — a strict diet of cold and flu tablets at the moment.

Victoria's wine industry contributes \$7.6 billion to the state's economy and directly employs nearly 13 000 people, many of whom are in regional Victoria. In 2014 the government made an election commitment to develop the *Victorian Wine Industry Development Strategy 2017–2021* and establish the Wine Growth Fund. We have delivered on these promises and have expanded on them.

The Wine Growth Fund aims to develop and sustainably grow the wine industry in Victoria by providing innovative growers, organisations and projects with funding to build both domestic and international markets. After an incredibly successful round 1 of the Wine Growth Fund, which saw us support 41 projects across Victoria's 22 distinct wine regions, with 38 of those recommended projects regionally based, and grants worth more than \$677 000 supporting total project costs valued at close to

\$3 million, what was clear was that there was enthusiasm for the program, so we quickly organised a round 2.

Over the past few months I and other members of the government have been announcing the successful recipients of grants from round 2 of the Wine Growth Fund. I am pleased to report that the government has backed Victoria's wine industry in round 2 with a package of \$1.18 million for 65 projects that will increase local and international markets, boost wine tourism and grow wine businesses across Victoria. The full list of recipients will be available on the department website, where you can expect to see some familiar names and others perhaps newer to you. There is a great diversity of projects being funded — from a glamping experience at Balgownie, Bendigo, and the King Valley Prosecco Road plan to cellar door improvements and digital expansions.

The response to this round of the Wine Growth Fund was also very strong, and it is clear to me that this is an industry growing in confidence and innovation. That is why I was also pleased to announce that as part of the 2018–19 budget the government will continue boosting Victoria's wine industry, with \$4.1 million to support our growing wine businesses. This funding means that there will be a round 3 of the Wine Growth Fund and funds to implement the *Victorian Wine Industry Development Strategy*. It also continues the tackling phylloxera program to help wine growers manage this insect, which is the number one threat to grapevines in Australia. We will continue to ensure that our wine industry goes from strength to strength.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT (09:49) — Before I call for members statements I take this opportunity to acknowledge three visitors in the gallery from Melbourne Victory Football Club: Anthony Di Pietro, the chairman of the club; Jim Christo, the commercial manager of the club; and Stella Smith, who is the general manager of community and government relations.

As members would no doubt be aware, particularly Mr Ondarchie and Mr Dalidakis, Melbourne Victory won the national championship in Newcastle and has therefore established itself as the most successful club since the formation of the national league, notwithstanding the boasts of the Sydney Football Club. We indeed have had great success through Melbourne Victory as a representative of the sporting capital of the universe. Members would be aware that

next year the club will compete in the Asian league again as a result of their success this year.

Can I just particularly pick up on something that I think is very important though. Whilst Mr Ondarchie does not share my football allegiance, I think he very much would be on side in terms of recognising the work that Stella Smith does in the community engagement area, working with young people in particular, including young people from African backgrounds who have had some difficulties and some challenges. The club has supported her. Indeed I know Melbourne City also has a community engagement program.

I think sometimes whilst we recognise the sporting prowess of some of our teams in this city we do not always recognise the other work that they do. In many cases it is an important aspect of the club and the way in which the club enables young people to actually make better choices and better decisions in their lives because they are exposed to programs that actually do encourage them in their leadership skills and give them a range of skills that they would not otherwise perhaps have. I particularly congratulate Stella Smith and those other people in positions like hers throughout the sporting world who do such a great job in terms of engaging with young people and ensuring that they are given opportunities that might otherwise not be available to them. So, thank you. And they do have the premiership cup, which none of us are allowed to look at, but it might just surface.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — There we are! I think it is a nice trophy, but there are people who have defined it in different ways. Well done!

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Rugby League State of Origin

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (09:52) — I can give a plug for the State of Origin match at the MCG tonight — New South Wales and Queensland. Go New South Wales!

Government performance

Mr RAMSAY — The Andrews government is the gonna government — it is going to but never does. In the Geelong region it plans but never builds. The skyline of Geelong is full of coalition projects funded and built, like the national disability insurance scheme building, the library, hospital upgrades, the helipad and the Barwon Water building upgrade, to name a few. But Labor are 'gonna build a convention centre',

'gonna duplicate rail tracks', 'gonna resite rail stabling yards', 'gonna build the Barwon Health North centre', 'gonna build fast rail to Southern Cross', 'gonna duplicate the Barwon Heads Road', 'gonna build the Drysdale bypass' and 'gonna plan though'. 'Fifty million here and 10 million there, and that will get us to the election', they say, 'and we will just blame the Liberals along the way as it's all their fault we can't build anything'. 'We have a Geelong planning authority', they screech, but where are the plans, where are the buildings, where is the infrastructure? 'We have the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust to plan', but where are the projects?

We know Assembly member Christine Couzens likes to build injecting rooms, we know Lisa Neville likes closing police stations and we know John Eren and Gayle Tierney love roting. They are in safe seats, so why would they care? They are not interested in Geelong. The roting guilty party are in it for themselves. They do not care crime is up by 18 per cent across Geelong, the Bellarine Peninsula and the Surf Coast. They hide the fact that women are being bashed daily, carjackings are running rampant and home invasions are now the norm. Alcohol and illicit drug abuse in Geelong is the highest of any regional city in Australia. 'Hey!', they say, 'it's all the Liberal Party's fault'.

Cost-of-living pressures are hurting the Geelong community. Energy costs have increased by 13 per cent across the Bellarine, the Surf Coast and Geelong. 'Hey', say our Labor roters in Geelong, 'we have an idea. We'll close a power station, stop gas exploration and increase subsidies for wind power so we can meet the magical renewable energy target. There's a plan. Anyway, if they're cold, they can get another blanket or buy another hot water bottle, but we have a plan', the guilty party bellows. 'We're gonna, gonna, gonna — but not gonna do anything'.

Victorian High Country Huts Association

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (09:54) — Today I want to talk about my Sunday gone past when I headed out with Mick Bassett from the Victorian High Country Huts Association along with Ricky Muir and my wife. We headed out, amongst other places, along the Haunted Stream Track near Dawson City, which is around about Omeo way. The purpose of that, other than having fun four-wheel driving on public land, was to have a look at the High Country huts and the state of repair that they are in.

The Victorian High Country Huts Association is a volunteer association, and it requires people to spare their time to go out to these places. Anyway, I had a good look out there and I found that the huts are in need of upkeep, and there are already plans to help with that. But it was just good to see an actual volunteer group doing something for everyone, because those huts are for hunters, they are for four-wheel drivers, they are for campers and, if you are a really good bushwalker, I guess they are for bushwalkers. But congratulations to the association for the work they do.

The PRESIDENT — On this occasion just on my right the conversation levels are too high. Again, as I said, I think it is important to allow the courtesy of silence to members who are speaking, particularly in these areas of our proceedings where the timing is short and members need to get their message across or make their statement within a time frame. So please lower the noise level.

Paul Ahern

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (09:56) — When I first stood up in this place I spoke about Noel and Karen Ahern and their kids, Paul and Robert, and how they were like family to my family. Noel and Karen, like my wife, Sue, and I, met at the Australian Taxation Office. Karen is a proud Gonnai/Kurnai woman hailing from Orbost. Their eldest son, Paul, always harboured a dream to play AFL football. He was certain that was his major destiny in life. In 2011 when we chased a white Christmas in New York City, Paul had to take a footy to kick in Central Park on Christmas Day.

Paul's dream looked so much closer when he was drafted at pick number 7 in the 2014 AFL draft by the Greater Western Sydney Giants (GWS). Only having just turned 18, the plan was for Paul to develop his body and game in the North East Australian Football League during 2015. Come the preseason of 2016 the plan was on track when, on the eve of the preseason comp, Paul tragically went down with a season-ending torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). More challenges were to come when eight months later, having resumed training, Paul tore the same ACL during his rehabilitation; then 2017 was also a write-off and the dream seemed further away than ever.

GWS then traded Paul to the North Melbourne Football Club at the end of 2016. North took him on despite his injuries, knowing that if they could get him right he might just be able to play decent football. Paul worked and worked and worked on his rehab; nothing would rob him of his dream. He was driven, he was a determined young man.

I am proud to say that last Sunday Sue and I sat with Noel and Karen and Paul's nan and pop, Margaret and Arthur, as well as his aunts, uncles, cousins and friends when 846 days after first injuring his knee and 1285 days after commencing his journey, Paul debuted in the number 15 jumper for the North Melbourne Football Club, poetically in the AFL's Indigenous round. After 29 disposals — 13 contested — seven clearances and more than 380 metres gained, Paul made it. Well done, young man. You have made your family, your friends, your mob and your footy club very proud.

Suzanne Davies

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (09:58) — I wish to acknowledge the distinguished career of the former director of the RMIT University Gallery, Suzanne Davies. Ms Davies is an experienced art jurist and curator, having programmed, managed or curated some 300 exhibitions of fine arts, design, craft, fashion, architecture, new media and sonic art. As director of the RMIT Gallery for 21 years, Ms Davies established an international reputation for the gallery in Germany, India, Malaysia, China, Vietnam and Japan amongst others and fostered ongoing partnerships in Australia and overseas for RMIT arts students, many of whom are from my electorate.

Aside from her work at RMIT, Ms Davies held many commonwealth board positions, including chair of the Australia-India Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and executive member of the Australian Business Arts Foundation, and she was the chair of the Dax Centre, the Biennale of Sydney and the commonwealth government Committee on Taxation Incentives for the Arts cultural gifts program, which has been instrumental in encouraging significant donations and bequests to the Australian arts sector.

Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre

Ms CROZIER — I would like to acknowledge the work of Professor Lynn Corcoran's staff, Professor Doug Hilton and others, who had a vision. Along with the Minister for Early Childhood Education, I attended the opening of the Professor Lynn Corcoran Early Learning Centre on Monday. It was a terrific event, and I would like to congratulate all those involved in bringing to life that vision that has been so long in the making and seeing the early learning centre finally come to be. It was just terrific to see some of the little children who turned the first sod at the site there on Monday to cut the ribbon — in actual fact they tore the ribbon, which was absolutely delightful to watch.

Climate change

Ms TRUONG (Western Metropolitan) (10:00) — I rise to speak on the single most important issue of our time. Our planet is already dangerously hot, and long-term weather patterns that we are used to are changing rapidly. We are getting 18-degree days in winter and heatwaves day after day in summer, and weather events across the world are becoming more and more violent. People, animals and whole ecosystems are dying as a consequence.

The heat trapped in our Earth's atmosphere is caused by our use of fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas. Australia must mobilise at emergency speed and scale. We need to transform our energy and transport systems and how we run our industry and agriculture. Instead of extending our reliance on coal in this state for another 30 years, as the Andrews Labor government has just done, we need to invest and commit to carbon drawdown to bring the climate below 350 parts per million of atmospheric carbon. We are currently at 410 parts per million and counting. The solutions exist, and we will need to work hard to return our planet to a state fit for our children and our grandchildren. We must all commit to this transition whilst ensuring that those who are most vulnerable or adversely affected by the changes are looked after.

As a representative in this Parliament, as a Green, as a mum and as a human being on this precious tiny blue planet spinning in space, I pledge to do all I can to keep this planet livable and to return us to a safe climate. Take this pledge with me.

Given the Chance

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:02) — Yesterday I was very pleased to attend an event arranged by the Brotherhood of St Laurence to celebrate their initiative called Given the Chance. This initiative helps marginalised jobseekers find work, and it has been very successful to this end. It was interesting to hear from three people that had been through the program and obtained employment — two women that had migrated from African countries and a young man that had been out of work for over a year — and about how important being able to obtain meaningful employment has been to them. It has actually changed their lives.

I want to congratulate the Brotherhood of St Laurence and everyone involved in this particular initiative. I have been very pleased to work with the brotherhood, particularly Brian Finnigan, in applying this initiative to government infrastructure projects, where there has

been some success in a number of marginalised individuals gaining employment through the government's infrastructure program. As I said before, it is something that actually completely changes people's lives, particularly those of asylum seekers and refugees who come to this country with great skills that unfortunately are not acknowledged in this country. Working with these people the brotherhood gets them Australian accreditations and gets them into work, and they turn out to be some of the best employees companies have.

Dr Ratnam

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (10:03) — Last sitting week this side of the house was subjected to an admonition steeped in the piety of Greens left-wing ideology by the Leader of the Greens, who not only attacked Liberal Senator Jane Hume for her views on how to achieve better outcomes for women in politics but also claimed that Liberals who were elected to public office were elected because of privilege, not merit or hard work.

I would like to thank the member for Brighton in the Assembly for her members statement yesterday, which exposed this political pointscore for what it is. I further ask the house to note that Mr Finn, formerly a radio announcer, was elected to this place without the benefits of privilege, as was the case with Mr Josh Morris, a schoolteacher, and Ms Crozier, a midwife. Ms Lovell shares a background with Ms Pennicuik: they attended the same primary school and Ms Lovell went to secondary school with Ms Pennicuik's younger sister, Megan. Ms Lovell's father was president of Paisley High School and Ms Pennicuik's father was vice-president.

In addition to that, I myself came from Bosnia and Herzegovina with my parents. We had no money, spoke no English and enjoyed no privilege. Mr Dalla-Riva is a former detective. The Honourable Matthew Guy is also of migrant origin. Even the Prime Minister, the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull, was raised in a single-parent family and is a self-made man.

The Greens party leader, Dr Ratnam, may not be aware or perhaps finds it difficult to accept that most Liberals elected to this chamber and other chambers have come from humble beginnings without the benefits of privilege, as she alleges. In fact I would go further to say the Liberal Party demonstrates a greater diversity and experience than Labor, which is almost exclusively drawn from the union movement, or the Greens, who until very recent months have been overwhelmingly white Anglo-Saxons. Dr Ratnam claims that she wants

to see more women elected to Parliament, but winning the battle of the sexes should not involve sticking the boot into another female just because she has a different point of view.

Just as Dr Ratnam sought to give the Liberal Party advice last week, I have some for her today: focus less on media stunts and more on holding the Labor government to account, producing policies of substance for the people you profess to represent and using every opportunity in this chamber to advocate your views. This may help the Greens survive in 2018.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — I think I have been too generous on both sides, and I think now we are going to stick to 90 seconds.

Women in politics

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (10:06) — I rise today to acknowledge those within the Labor Party who have not only recognised the importance of women's equal representation in our political system but have worked hard to ensure that it is achieved. I am proud to be part of a political party which has committed to a quota of 50-50 gender representation in leadership positions and in preselections for winnable seats. Affirmative action, at its core, is an attempt to remedy the past effects of discrimination. Twenty-four years ago the Labor Party did take action. In 1994 women such as former Premier Joan Kirner, former Western Australian Premier Carmen Lawrence, Meredith Burgmann, Jan Burnswoods, Kay Setches, Cheryl Davenport, Judy Spence, Carolyn Pickles, Sue Mackay, Fran Bladel and many others joined emerging Labor women leaders such as Julia Gillard, unionist Helen Creed, former minister and then national assistant secretary Candy Broad and community advocate Leonie Morgan to make structural change within the ALP. I was but a humble young Labor Party member at that time, but I was very proud to also support those actions.

Labor's affirmative action targets assisted in increasing the proportion of Labor women federally from 14.5 per cent in 1994 to 48 per cent today. Following the election of the Andrews Labor government here in Victoria 47 per cent of our caucus are women and 43 per cent of the cabinet are women. Affirmative action has resulted in a progressive policy agenda for Australian women, so I was disappointed to hear Liberal Senator Jane Hume's comments on ABC TV that women just:

... have to work for what we want and for women that don't get there, the trick is work that little bit harder.

Those that continue to say that women just have to work a bit harder to achieve equal representation insult women who have worked hard to achieve the right to vote, who have worked hard to enter the workforce and who have worked hard for equal pay and gender equality. I quote from Margaret Fitzherbert, who said in a 2013 paper:

It's time for the Liberals to take a lesson from the past — acknowledge the problem and stop relying on a blind faith in 'merit' to somehow provide a sudden increase in numbers of female MPs.

Maybe they should listen to Margaret Fitzherbert on this matter because Labor women, in spite of gender, belong to a party that has recognised this problem and taken action to fix it. We are a party that gets things done.

Morwell power station site

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (10:08) — I rise today to acknowledge the decision — a significant decision — that has been taken by Heritage Victoria to grant a permit to demolish the Morwell power station with conditions that will ensure that the history and the legacy of this site are preserved through 3D modelling, oral histories and the securing of some plant and equipment for display and exhibition purposes. This site, as those of us who live and work in the valley well know, is one which has often been difficult and tragic to contemplate. It is something which forms part of our heavy industrial history. It is also a site which has been the genesis of much of the asbestos and contaminant-related disease that has taken too many lives in and through the valley.

In the cladding of the Morwell power station building 7600-odd cubic metres of asbestos remains. In this regard it is good to see that a balance between the competing interests of a heritage application on the one hand and the community's need to be able to take stock to preserve community and public safety — and also to ensure that other parts of the site are retained for use — has been struck with this decision to allow the demolition permit with the conditions that have been outlined.

Latrobe Valley mine licences

Ms SHING — It has been a really good sign in terms of certainty for the residents of the valley that we have at least 17 years of rehabilitation being provided through an extension of mine licences through the Latrobe Valley's major power plants. This will ensure that we account for responsible site rehabilitation, and it is consistent with our target of zero net emissions by

2050. It is a really important notification, and the time frames will allow the community to plan and to make adjustments around transition and development for the region.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Thank you, Ms Shing. That is what happens when you give one person more time: everybody else will have extra time.

Duck hunting season

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (10:10) — Next weekend Victoria's three-month duck shooting season will end. While this year we did not see the level of carnage of 2017, where thousands of birds were massacred across Victorian, largely because public pressure caused many wetlands to be closed, there was still widespread cruelty to our native waterbirds. As happens every season, endangered and threatened species, including birds that were not even ducks, were shot and discarded birds were found buried in pits. It is appalling. The Coalition Against Duck Shooting displayed illegally shot birds outside the office of the Premier in early April, as it does every year. I would like to thank the brave and dedicated duck rescuers, who put themselves on the line. It is them who recover birds that have been left on the wetlands week after week, not the Game Management Authority (GMA).

As the Pegasus report found, it is impossible to regulate duck shooting, and non-compliance with the already weak regulations is widespread. On 11 April ABC's 7.30 interviewed ex-GMA manager of compliance George Bucchorn, who had resigned due to the failings of the GMA. He said the GMA does not have the will to investigate breaches by shooters, GMA staff discouraged him from investigating and he was told not to refer to cruelty or to the code of practice.

Recently more regional Victorians have been speaking out about the negative impacts that three months of duck shooting has on them and their communities, breaking the myth that has been perpetrated by successive governments that duck shooting is supported by regional communities. It is not true. The majority of Victorians are opposed to duck shooting, and that includes people living in regional Victoria, whose peace is disturbed by shooting and whose economies are not supported by shooters. Congratulations to Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting on its campaign to end duck shooting and promote nature-based tourism in regional Victoria. Duck shooting was banned in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia decades ago. It is shameful that

this annual slaughter of our beautiful native waterbirds is still allowed in Victoria.

Emily Nguyen

Mr EIDEH (Western Metropolitan) (10:12) — I rise to congratulate a young Kings Park girl, Emily Nguyen, on her recent success at the karate Oceania Cup in New Zealand. Emily attends St Paul’s Primary School in Kealba. Emily began karate training when she was five and a half years old and has been a member of the Victorian karate state team since 2015, representing Victoria at the Australian national championships. Emily received one gold and two bronze medals at the national championships and gold medals for numerous league competitions. Emily was recently selected by the Australian Karate Federation to compete at the Oceania Cup in Auckland. Emily achieved a silver medal in the girls under-12 competition at the Oceania Cup. This achievement is a great testament to Emily’s hard work and dedication and also reflects the wonderful support of her family and community. Well done, Emily.

Wyndham soccer stadium proposal

Mr EIDEH — On another sporting matter, I would like to offer my support to Wyndham City Council for their in-principle support of Western Melbourne Group Holdings in their bid for one of the two A-League team licences that have become available with the expansion of the A-League by Football Federation Australia. If the bid is successful, Wyndham city will become home to a multimillion-dollar state-of-the-art stadium, which is proposed to be built in Tarneit. The proposed 15 000-seat-capacity Wyndham stadium will also feature training pitches, sports medicine facilities, a gymnasium, recovery facilities and sporting spaces for the community to enjoy. This project would bring an economic boost to Wyndham, with hundreds of jobs created through the construction phase and more created once the stadium is up and running. I strongly support this bid, which would put Wyndham on the national sporting stage.

PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (10:14) — I move:

That this house, in accordance with standing order 11.01, requires the Leader of the Government to table by 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 19 June 2018 —

- (1) a copy of all documents in full, concerning the Andrews government’s decision to provide a long-term concession for the Australian Football League (AFL) to

locate its headquarters on a parcel of waterfront land in Docklands, including —

- (a) all correspondence, including emails, relating to this concession between the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources; the Department of Premier and Cabinet; the Minister for Sport; the Premier; the Minister for Planning; and the AFL, its lawyers and agents;
 - (b) all contracts, assessments and analyses of, in particular, but not limited to, the value of the land;
 - (c) all assessments, opinions or commentary provided by the Victorian valuer-general and/or the Victorian government land monitor;
 - (d) all ministerial briefings; and
- (2) similarly, the arrangements struck by the Andrews Labor government with the AFL concerning Etihad Stadium, including financial and other arrangements, and including, but not limited to, any long-term leases and the detailed provision of this concession and including the delivery of (1)(a) to (d) above.

That relates obviously to correspondence, contracts, assessments, opinions of the valuer-general and the land monitor and relevant ministerial briefings. This is an important documents motion. The Parliament clearly has the power — as has been outlined previously in this chamber as the powers of the House of Commons in 1856 — to call for documents and people. In this case these important documents relate to government deals that have been struck by Daniel Andrews, his government and his ministers with the Australian Football League.

Now of course governments need to make arrangements and work with major football and other sporting associations, but this deal has not been made sufficiently public. It is a multimillion-dollar set of deals which includes waterfront land at Docklands. It is clear from questions in the Assembly that the minister has not properly assessed the value of this land. It is clear from commentary at Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings in recent days that the land monitor and the valuer-general may not have had the proper and full role that they should have had in this process.

A simple matter of principle here is that the process in which government land that is provided by concession or other leasing arrangements ought to be transparent in the way that it is conducted. The land monitor is there for a specific reason — to make sure that government land is not gifted to friends or for favours or other purposes and as a check to ensure that value is obtained. The valuer-general has an important role,

which is why I have mentioned him in this particular motion too. Now, either the valuer-general has given an assessment on this or he has not. If he has not, that is indicative of a poor process; if he has, then we should be able to see that assessment and understand what the value is that has been gifted in this way.

The support of sport is a very important task of government, and we see the obvious physical health benefits for grassroots sports and the encouragement of sport for men, women, boys and girls as a very important objective. Indeed the Parliament and this chamber in particular is entitled to assess whether proper value has been obtained for the community with the gifting or other arrangements. It is still unclear what value has been obtained for these valuable arrangements that have been struck with the Australian Football League.

It is an important task of this chamber to scrutinise and to hold the executive to account. It is an important task to get to the bottom of these sorts of land deals that have been undertaken by government. Again, we have no difficulty with working with major sporting groups to secure major events and to secure what are major tourist as well as sporting events, but we do think that the AFL is a very wealthy organisation and providing additional support to it is questionable in the sense that it may have been much better to prioritise and support local or grassroots sporting activity.

Be that as it may, this documents motion stands on its own. The community, taxpayers, the Victorian public and this chamber have a right to know what is going on here. This has not been a transparent operation. The Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Sport have not been transparent about these matters. I think the matters surrounding the Treasurer's involvement are also important, and the Treasurer should come clean on what his involvement, the Minister for Sport's involvement, the Premier's involvement and the Premier's office's involvement have been in these special gifts that have been made — special arrangements with the Australian Football League for the benefit of a very, very wealthy organisation indeed.

In essence this is a simple documents motion. There is a public interest in these matters being in the public domain, and we need to establish that there has been a proper process that has occurred with respect to these very valuable land deals that have been struck.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (10:20) — I will not speak at length on this motion. I will at the outset indicate that we will not be opposing this motion. I will also just make a couple of contextual comments, having

said that. One is I will say that Mr Davis is a gifted speaker when it comes to rhetoric. I do not mean this in a disrespectful way, but I would say that he is quite gifted at hyperbole and speaking in a twist of phrase that can leave implications. I think if one were to print out *Hansard* from a number of Mr Davis's documents motions and read through them, one could underline any number of instances of what one might say are mischievous overstatements, misrepresentations or statements that lead one to draw inferences that I do not think are fair or evidence based. This is yet another example of a speech by Mr Davis that I do not disagree with all of but where there are certainly any number of statements in there that are well overblown.

Again, we do not oppose this motion, but I would also say that this motion is yet another instance of a documents motion which one could characterise as being a fishing expedition asking for all sorts of documents. There is some irony here. I would love to go back to the previous government, when Mr Davis was a cabinet minister, and see his record and the records of any number of senior ministers in this place and the other place on disclosing documentation. I would put this government's record up against the previous government's record any day of the week when it comes to transparency and disclosure.

I think we have got to be a little bit careful in having those opposite get up here and give lectures about transparency without putting on the record that they should be the last ones to come in here and pontificate about the importance of disclosing every manner of document — all correspondence, all assessments and all ministerial briefings. They love these long documents motions with parts (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (g) and (z), seeking every single document created.

Mr Davis — There are only four in this one.

Mr MULINO — There are only four in this one. That is correct, Mr Davis, but you have certainly been very studious in drafting some very lengthy ones in the past. I would love to see when you were minister how many instances you complied in relation to requests for all ministerial briefings. Your government and its record on transparency does not stack up to this government's, so let us just get those couple of things on the record.

I am not going to go into detail on this deal, but I will just say that it is an important deal. Mr Davis flagged the importance of government investing in sport, so in the spirit of those comments I would say that we certainly agree with that. This deal has a number of elements that I will very briefly flag. One is that it is a

very long term deal, and I think that is critical. I think both sides of this chamber would agree that in a number of contexts and in relation to a number of sports and a number of major events long-term certainty is important. That is certainly something which is built into a number of aspects of this deal.

Another aspect of this deal that I want to flag is that, when it comes to Etihad Stadium, it is going to ensure much greater access to that stadium for a range of activities, a range of other codes and a range of other major events, and that is very important. I think it is also important to flag that this is a multifaceted agreement and that we have to, when we consider the Etihad component of this, look at it in the broader context of an agreement which also included keeping until 2057 the AFL grand final and all Victorian-based preliminary finals at the MCG.

We also need to look at the minimum number of home-and-away games at the MCG and other long-term components of that deal. We also need to look at it in the context of significant funding when it comes to community sport. The 2018–19 budget delivers for codes right across the spectrum of sporting activities. It includes \$242 million for community and women’s sports, including \$15 million for female-friendly facilities and \$65 million for the upgrade of the State Netball Hockey Centre, and importantly \$60 million for the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund.

There is a strong commitment here not just to a long-term deal and not just to a deal that ensures better outcomes for the broader community and for other sports codes and other major events when it comes to Etihad but also to significant additional funding for grassroots sports right across the state, and women’s sport in particular. I think all of us in this place would agree that the dramatic increase in participation in women’s sports is a good thing. In some local government areas it is increasing by 200, 300 and 400 per cent, so we need to keep up with that; it is something that I think we all agree we need to encourage. We also need to invest in the facilities to allow girls and women to participate in sport appropriately.

Again, I just want to put things in perspective. We have spent around \$720 million-plus on sport and recreation compared to \$126 million from those opposite in their term of government. We are achieving great outcomes. I go to openings in Pakenham and Cardinia around the shire —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — The IYU soccer oval is in use right now, Mr Finn. You might try and talk down what is going on in the community but they do not talk it down. They are using it, Mr Finn. You might want to get up and speak negatively about what is going on in sport around this state, but we can see the numbers. People are participating in record numbers. People are using these facilities. Your kind of negativity flies in the face of the rhetoric of Mr Davis. It is interesting, and it is an inconsistency that we hope will be reconciled before the election but probably will not be.

So in short we do not oppose this motion, but let us just get real with Mr Davis and others from the previous government lecturing us on transparency. Let us also just remember that this is a deal with many dimensions to it, a deal with significant benefits for the Victorian community, and I think that is an important thing for us to remember when it comes to the Etihad or AFL deal and all the community sports funding that this government has put into the most recent budget.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (10:28) — I rise to speak in favour of this motion and state that the Greens will be supporting the motion on a number of grounds. I thank Mr Davis for bringing this matter to the attention of the house. The reason we are supporting this is for the principle and sake of transparency, accountability and essentially basic democracy. These types of deals that are being done by this government, increasingly in secret, covered by commercial-in-confidence, shut the public out from knowing about matters of absolute public importance.

I have recently come from local government, having spent five years at a local council. There are a number of provisions that have been cited previously that keep a check and balance on the trade of public goods and the trade of public land. Local government is subject to incredible checks and balances and monitoring when it comes to particularly transfers of land or sale of land. The reason those checks and balances exist is to ensure that corruption does not occur and interference and influence do not corrupt and undermine the principles of democracy and what our governments are supposed to do, which is act in the public interest.

So it beggars belief that the Treasurer, when asked at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee budget estimates hearing last week how much this land was valued at in terms of doing this deal with the AFL, stated that that work had not been done yet. The Treasurer stated that the work had not been done to value a huge piece of land that was essentially being gifted to a body that is running an incredible surplus and is at absolute profit levels. This is not good

democracy, it is not transparent and it needs to be held to account.

Let us just talk about the situation that is here before us: a \$225 million deal announced by the government to redevelop Etihad Stadium and relocate the AFL headquarters and the essential gifting of 15 000 square metres of land to the AFL for this purpose. Let us just put this in perspective. We have been talking a lot about public housing this week. The government is claiming it has only got \$185 million for public housing, yet it has got \$225 million-plus — who knows the value of this land? — for the AFL and its corporate deals.

It is an extraordinary situation when you look at how the AFL is operating. Do not get me wrong. We all love the AFL; it holds such a special place in the heart of all Australians and all Victorians. This is not denigrating the value and the importance of sport, particularly community sport, which we need to invest in. But let us just look at the AFL. In 2017 it reported that revenue soared by 26 per cent to \$650 million, the highest revenue ever. It is sitting on a \$60.3 million surplus. It has secured \$2 billion worth of broadcasting rights and gets other revenue from gambling and alcohol advertising. It has got so much revenue that it has decided to put away \$20 million a year, that will amount to \$100 million, in a special capital reserve fund for the league and its executives to control — \$100 million. That is how much profit it is making, and its league executives will control this fund and decide where it is spent.

The AFL does not pay corporate tax. It is already subsidised and given special treatment by the government. Yes, sport has a really important place in our society and we need to be able to support it, but let us look at the favours that the AFL is getting. This land deal raises so many questions about whether this is in the public interest. Just recently the government has announced a number of deals. It seems to be more interested in deal making than governing. Now there is a deal with the AFL gifting thousands of square metres of land. That has been made at a time when the government is ripping out public open space and public housing land from communities all across this state. It is rate capping councils and then saying, 'You pay for the land that you have managed and maintained and that has provided open space for municipalities, for people and for local communities for decades', but then saying, 'Well, here AFL, you can have 15 000 square metres of land. We haven't valued the land, but we think this will support your cause'.

We have a deal that has been made with the AFL to the tune of \$225 million plus. We have had a deal made

with Transurban, which was done behind closed doors and which locks us into car pollution, to the tune of billions of dollars of taxpayers money. We have got deals made with property developers — done before the public is told — to sell up public housing estates so that they can make mega profits. We heard yesterday that land had been sold at 5 per cent of the market value, one-twentieth of the market value, and of property developers being given 35 to 50 per cent profit margins when the industry standard is around 20 per cent.

We have a deal with the Apple megastore in Federation Square which involves handing over our public space and which Melburnians have cried out against. They do not want our public space privatised. In all this deal making that seems to be happening behind closed doors this government seems to have forgotten one large group of really important people — that is, the people of Victoria. I urge the government to do a bit more governing rather than deal making in the interests of all Victorians.

The government claims that they have somehow secured this deal to ensure that the AFL Grand Final stays here. Where else was it going to go? It is disingenuous to claim that they have to do these deals to ensure things are going to happen, things which are going to happen anyway. If it really cares about making sport more accessible, how about it not commercialise sport but put some of that money into making ticket prices cheaper and ensuring more people can get to the grand final, or it could fund the community sporting clubs out there who are doing it so hard. Volunteers work hundreds of hours as part of volunteer associations to fundraise every weekend so that the young people in their community are able to participate in community sport.

Here we have a super profitable AFL being given a sweet deal, a sweet deal that we do not even know the value of because the Treasurer says the work has not been done. It is not good enough. Victorians think it is not good enough, and at the least the documents need to be released so we know what we are dealing with. We will be supporting this motion.

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (10:35) — I was not going to speak on this motion, but I will, because the undercurrent of suggestions from both Mr Davis and now the contribution from Dr Ratnam would suggest there is something underhanded or not right with this agreement. We have said that we will support the motion before the house, but it is just absolute nonsense for people to walk in here and suggest that an agreement this government has reached with the major

sporting code in this state is somehow a tainted arrangement and that it is not governing for all of Victorians.

As my colleague Mr Mulino has said, the deal that has been struck with the AFL is a wideranging one that achieves a number of very, very strong outcomes for not just the AFL but also for other sports and major events in Victoria. For example, taxpayers interests will be protected with the final capital expenditure plan at Etihad Stadium, soon to be called Marvel Stadium — I am not sure if that easily rolls of the tongue, but then again I will only marvel at it when the mighty Tigers are playing there and defeating another team — to be approved by the government, with an agreement to an annual capital plan to ensure that the venue is maintained to an agreed standard and with the AFL committing to retaining Etihad Stadium as a multisport and entertainment asset for the next 30 years.

They are considerable benefits to the community and the people of Victoria. In ensuring that Etihad is accessible for other sports, for example, it is important that all of our major infrastructure assets in the sporting world are able to be used as multipurpose venues, and this agreement will provide that guarantee and will make sure that the venue is available and flexible around AFL scheduling and other major events. It will also deliver infrastructure improvements for other sporting codes — rectangular sporting codes, if you like — to facilitate an improved atmosphere and the overall amenity for people who want to go along and enjoy those sports.

But there are some other very key things. This is not the underhanded or somehow clandestine arrangement that has been suggested by Dr Ratnam. What we are talking about, and as has been announced by the government, is keeping footy in Victoria. Up until 2057 the AFL Grand Final will be played at the MCG. Until 2057 all Victorian-based preliminary finals will be played here in Melbourne. We are talking about the national sport of our country, and we have secured the major fixtures in the season here in Victoria. Forty-three home and away games are guaranteed to be played at the MCG, and 10 of the best 12 Victorian home games are to be played at the MCG.

There are some real tangible benefits just for football followers, but as has previously been announced, there are other great benefits. I have talked about the AFL delivering greater community access, including some inclusive environments around Etihad Stadium. That is broader than just football. There will also be the agreement to access the full ticketing of the Melbourne Cricket Club members area when the public and AFL

reserve seats are sold out, something that does not occur now.

Professional standard female change rooms are to be included in the scope of stage 1 works at Etihad Stadium. Those opposite, and I would suggest the Greens, get up here and piously talk about their commitment to things like women's sport and increasing the number of women and girls that can play a variety of sports, but they never put their money where their mouths are. They never actually back it up. It is always just rhetoric. In this term of government we have been putting genuine money into the development of women's sport. Everybody around this state and this country is lauding the development of the AFL Women's competition, and it is this government, with the AFL, that has been driving those wonderful initiatives. There will also be development funding to support the growth of women's teams across Victoria. The AFL has given a guarantee that it will commit a total of \$13 million towards football-related government funding programs.

All of these things are not freebies, as has been suggested. It is not the sweetheart deal that Dr Ratnam has been suggesting. There are some genuine, tangible outcomes for other sports in this state and some very genuine and real outcomes for the broader community, and particularly for the development of women's sports through this agreement, and we will have more to say of course as further detail is developed around the entirety of this package.

But I do want to take the opportunity very quickly just to remind everybody in the chamber again that this government does put its money where its mouth is when it comes to sport. We understand that the sporting fields in this country and in this state, where our kids every weekend come together to participate in a variety of different activities, are so important to their development. They are so important to our community. It is not just an either/or thing; it is at the core of who we are in this state. Sport is such a valued commodity for all of the community. We have put hundreds of millions of dollars into developing sporting fields, sporting amenities and sporting codes — not a soccer field, as was suggested earlier by Mr Finn, but multiple enhancements across the board.

In the 2018–19 budget alone there is \$242 million for community and women's sports. The package contains major investments in areas such as \$50 million for the Female Friendly Facilities Fund, \$13 million for stage 2 of the Moorabbin Oval redevelopment and \$65 million for the upgrade of the State Netball Hockey Centre. The budget delivers an additional \$60 million for the

Community Sports Infrastructure Fund, which will assist clubs across Victoria to access funding for capital upgrades. We put our money where our mouth is. We are committed to growing sporting facilities, sporting codes and access to sports. We have proved it over the last three and a half years, and we will continue to do that for the remainder of this term and in the next term when we are re-elected.

The agreement that we have reached with the AFL ticks all of the right boxes. It is good for the community, it is good for the AFL and it is absolutely good for football lovers across this state. We have kept the AFL Grand Final here, guaranteed, until 2057. I am sure that all Victorians will applaud that outcome. So while we do not oppose the motion that is before the house, it is very important that we correct the record and the undertones that have been suggested by those opposite and the Greens when speaking on this motion.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (10:44) — Very briefly I will say that this is an important documents motion. There is clearly a grubby deal that has been done between the government and the AFL. This set of documents will get to the bottom of what has gone on and what the value for the community is. As I have said, our preference is always for grassroots or community-based spending on sport. We accept the importance of major events and the need to use those for tourism and other matters, but the AFL headquarters — for goodness sake! Waterfront, Docklands — honestly!

Ms Crozier — A sweetheart deal.

Mr DAVIS — This is a sweetheart deal. It is a deal that does deserve the light being shone on it. It does deserve to see these documents in the public domain. Has proper process been followed with respect to the valuer-general and the land monitor, or has it been gifted without proper process, with shortcuts and probity sacrificed?

Motion agreed to.

NORTH RICHMOND SUPERVISED INJECTING FACILITY

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (10:46) — I am very pleased to rise to speak to the motion in my name. I want to speak in detail about this, but I will read into *Hansard* what the motion seeks to do, then explain and hopefully gain the support of the chamber for my motion.

I move:

That this house notes —

- (1) the Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos, confirmed that community playgroups and Vietnamese playgroups in North Richmond have been axed due to the Andrews government's botched supervised injecting room;
- (2) despite the danger to children, the botched legislation means that the supervised injecting room is now located 37 metres from a primary school, despite Daniel Andrews's assurances it would be away from the school;
- (3) research from the Australian Institute of Family Studies found playgroups offer a positive social experience for parents, help them make new friends and enable them to learn more about caring for their kids;
- (4) that since the election of the Andrews Labor government, crime is up 10.9 per cent in Richmond, yet Daniel Andrews chooses to axe family playgroups, which have a positive benefit for families and children;

and further notes that the Andrews government incorrectly legislated the wrong part of the community health centre to house the injecting room, which is an embarrassing and costly mistake.

Mrs Peulich — Typical.

Ms CROZIER — It is typical, Mrs Peulich, because this demonstrates what the government has done. It has rushed this policy and the legislation through for the sake of the Northcote by-election. That is what this is all about. I think we need to go back and look at the history of what Daniel Andrews has actually said on this very issue in the past, because typically, again, he is a man that says one thing and does another.

Mr Finn — Constantly.

Ms CROZIER — Constantly, Mr Finn. He is leading this state under a false premise, and this is just another one.

Mrs Peulich — Driven by the Greens.

Ms CROZIER — Again, it was expediency for the Northcote by-election. Everybody could see through that, and that did not go too well for Mr Andrews and his team, did it? The Greens are sitting there smiling; I can see them. They are very happy with themselves and with that result. This decision was all about that — a political fix that backfired.

I want to make the point about what the Premier has said in the past, because it is really important that the chamber is reminded of what he said and more importantly that the community understands what he

said. Less than 12 months ago, in July of last year, the Premier said that he went to the election on a 'No injecting room' policy.

He also went on to say:

I know there are some that would like us to go further, but I've been very clear, we have no intention to change our policy ... on this.

That was less than 12 months ago. He also repeatedly said he had no intention of changing the policy, day after day. That was on one day in July, and the following day he said:

I have no intention to change our policy on this ...

Just a few months later, in September, the Minister for Mental Health, Martin Foley, said the government would:

... stick by its established policy against trialling the supervised injecting room, partly based on the advice of Victorian police.

Again, and I quote him:

We have no plans to introduce a safe injecting room.

Mrs Peulich — Who would believe him?

Ms CROZIER — Who would believe him? Who would believe either of those two men? Because what they said very clearly in speaking to the community and putting their intentions there was that they would not go to an election saying that they would have a safe injecting room. Well, we have — we have got heroin and we have got ice. But it gets worse. On 31 October last year the Premier backflipped on his commitment to introduce a supervised injecting room in Victoria, and at that time — last October, which is not so long ago — he said it would be a heroin-only facility. He also said:

We have the highest heroin overdose death toll since 2000, circumstances are different ...

So it was only going to be for heroin users.

On the same day as the Premier said — because he had backflipped on his commitment not to introduce a supervised injecting room — it was only going to be for heroin, the Minister for Mental Health, Martin Foley, said there would be protocols developed to keep ice and amphetamines out of the North Richmond centre. He went on to say:

If you front up, they'll establish who you are, that you're over 18 and that you've got your medical records at least available to people who can give that assistance.

Mr Foley said:

Whilst there will be a regulatory power for all sorts of opioids and drugs of addiction that will be allowed, methamphetamine and ice will not be allowed. It's a different type of drug and a different type of risk that comes with it.

I agree with Martin Foley on this. The minister was right: it is a different drug and it has very different risks that come with it.

But just a few months ago again we had a whole series of events that occurred, and as I said, this time frame stacks up with the Northcote by-election, and that all went pear-shaped for the government. But just a few months ago in this place the legislation to establish the exact supervised injecting room that we are talking about actually stated the incorrect planning volume and folio number for the community health building where the facility was originally announced to go, so the interim facility is now going to have to require an amendment.

You have got lots of issues involved with this drug injecting room, and I think it is very clear that the government has rushed this in and has seriously botched it.

Mr Finn — Again.

Ms CROZIER — It is again, Mr Finn, because it was rushed, as I have said. There has been an outcry from the public, who have raised concerns. I want to go to some of the points in my motion, but before I do that I want to look at what we are talking about here — not just heroin use but ice use. If you look at the Alcohol and Drug Foundation's (ADF) website, it gives some very clear explanation of ice use and ice addiction. It talks about the effects of ice and quite correctly points out:

There is no safe level of drug use. Use of any drug always carries some risk ...

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem)

(10:53) — Ms Crozier, if I may interrupt — sorry to do this — I just want to take the opportunity to recognise the Honourable Peter Hall, former minister and member of this place. Welcome. It is good to see you back in this house.

Ms CROZIER — I am quite happy to be interrupted, Acting President, to welcome former Minister Hall in the gallery. But as I was saying, I think it is very important that the Alcohol and Drug Foundation have clearly set out that there are high risks with any drug use and there is no safe level of any drug use. The ADF goes on to talk about some of these

extreme effects. They talk about what happens when you overdose and the long-term effects. Certainly I am very aware of heroin overdoses from my time as a nurse at the Alfred hospital in the 1980s — I saw that far too frequently — but I have not had any experience with ice, or methamphetamine, use as it is in our communities today.

Certainly we dealt with heroin overdose, and it has a different effect. Heroin is not an upper and does not give the psychotic effects like ice does.

I go to the ADF's points on this. It says:

Ice psychosis

High doses of ice and frequent use may cause 'ice psychosis'. This condition is characterised by paranoid delusions, hallucinations and bizarre, aggressive or violent behaviour.

We have seen far too many incidences in our community where we have had some very violent crimes being committed by a whole range of individuals and a whole range of different violent activities that are being blamed on ice and ice use. We have got a serious problem in relation to ice use in this community.

Mrs Peulich — And what has the government done?

Ms CROZIER — The government has done very little, Mrs Peulich — very little in relation to this very insidious drug — and now they are condoning it. They are actually allowing the legal practice of taking ice in this government-run facility. It is quite extraordinary to be acknowledging this when there are so many warnings out there. As I said, Victoria Police are very concerned about allowing drugs into a facility like this and what will happen.

The ADF goes on to talk about dependence on this drug. People who regularly use ice can quickly become dependent, and they may feel they need to use ice to go about their normal activities, like working, studying and socialising, just to get through the day. If you have that frequent use, you can then have that terrible psychotic component that applies to it, and you have got some very violent occurrences that are occurring. Then there is the mixing of ice with other drugs, which also has implications for how unpredictable the medication interactions can be. There are very, very dangerous side effects if you are on various medications and taking ice.

There is significant documentation about the very real issues around ice and the dangerous psychotic episodes that can occur far too often. I think that is why there has been so much community backlash about this —

because they can see it. They are seeing every day on our TV screens, in our newspapers and on social media reports of some very violent crimes. As we know, crime has got out of control under Daniel Andrews. I note that they are trying to be tough now because there is an election in November, but their words are really hollow. We have seen that in the announcement by Minister Mikakos today. It is a headline, but there is no detail. There are so many issues in relation to that particular legislation that we are yet to see the detail on and how it will actually work, and I look forward to seeing that.

This is a minister who has said in the past that there are no problems with youth gangs — that there are no such things and that they are just groups of affiliated people. Well, she has come to the party a bit late on this, and now we have seen that. We have seen gangs, particularly of young people, that have caused havoc across our state and across our city. She is a minister that has lost control of youth crime, and we have seen that within the youth justice system. It is no good her blaming the previous government, because it has actually happened under her watch. She can blame everybody and everything else — from fences to the amounts of pizza and Coke that have been given to young offenders — but this has happened under her watch because of the soft approach.

Mr Finn interjected.

Ms CROZIER — Well, Mr Finn, the pizza and Coke, as we know, were used as bribes to bring those young offenders off the roofs to stop the rioting — those record riots that have occurred in youth justice, including wrecking the facilities. It has led to the government, to pull it into line, putting youth justice under corrections and trying to stop that youth offending — but the assaults are happening still. The issues are happening in youth justice. It is a very dangerous place, as some youth workers have described it. They have said that it is more dangerous than an adult prison. That is a very concerning and alarming situation to find ourselves in when we have got crime on our streets out of control, which has increased significantly under Daniel Andrews.

I will return to a few specific elements of my motion, which goes to these points. There are issues around the Vietnamese playgroups in North Richmond. The minister has had to qualify a lot about what has happened. The playgroups were operating within the North Richmond Community Health centre. They are very important for that local area because of the large Vietnamese community that is there, and there are others there that obviously use that facility for

playgroups. It is a facility that has got rooms. They have got consulting rooms where they have all manner of health professionals that are conducting health checks, counselling and assistance — all range of things that are helping that local community. Very importantly it is a facility in that community which provides great support to the families and to those children that are in there.

We know what playgroups can do. They are a great way to help vulnerable families. They bring great social skills to the parents, but more importantly they give an opportunity for children to explore and use their imagination and to be able to interact with others, assisting with their communication. We only have to look at all those developmental and positive impacts that a playgroup has. I think everybody in the chamber would agree with that. We understand the importance of playgroups and the vital role that they play. They do play a particularly vital role with, as I have mentioned, some vulnerable communities that may not have the social networks of other communities or other individuals, and therefore playgroups have a broader impact on families and local communities.

As I said, I myself raised this very issue in the house. I asked the minister, because there were people within the community that were concerned about this. If I can just go to the point I made in question time back in March about this very issue, it goes again to the point about the rushed decision. The person who wrote this said:

Originally we were informed that any facility would be a low-impact add-on on the north/rear side of the health centre, as far away from the primary school as possible and separate from the general health services.

And they said they:

... have now been told the room will be temporarily situated in the main internal area, taking over the community meeting area and in direct conflict with the general population.

So that is where the playgroups were. The injecting room was not going to be anywhere within the vicinity of this essential playgroup area. That is not the case. It is metres away now — just metres away. It might have a dividing wall, and the minister said a transitional facility is expected to be operational at this location until mid-2019, and they will refurbish the area to accommodate this. But there is still a very real possibility — in fact a probability — that parents and these young children going to the playgroups will come in contact with those people accessing this heroin and ice injecting room. I think this is a tremendous concern, and I understand why those parents are very, very concerned about that element. They do not want to be

confronted with some of the very dangerous effects of people who are on ice. I mean, ice can last in the system for up to some hours. As I have described, they can have psychotic episodes — very dangerous episodes.

What message is that sending to those families and those children who are attending the playgroup when you have got very dangerous individuals coming in who are going to shoot up in this government facility? The messaging to those young families is all wrong. It is sending the wrong message that this is okay to do. No, it is not okay to do. The ADF says no drug use is safe, and we should not be sending the message and condoning it like this, let alone the fact that the Premier and his minister have argued against it for years and have now just backflipped on it. They know the dangers of these drugs, and they know the message this sends to young people, but they are too caught up in saving their own political hide. In the Northcote by-election and now going into the election they are saying, 'No, we're considering this'. I know that there are members in this chamber who will have a different view. There are members who have got a platform on this. Ms Patten has had a platform supporting this facility. Her views are very well known. She has been consistent in her views. Whilst we might disagree on it, she has been consistent. She was elected on this platform, so I understand where Ms Patten is coming from. But the government is not genuine. It is not genuine on this issue. It is a political fix — and a political fix that will not actually work.

If I can just move to the issue around the botched legislation, if you look at what the government did, they had a planning overlay, but they legislated for the wrong area. The minister and Ms Patten were out with the Premier when he announced it at one site, but that actually is not the legislated area. They have botched that as well. They stood there proudly saying, 'This is where the facility will be'. That is actually not the case. It has had to move into the North Richmond Community Health centre, where these playgroups were and where other people from the community are accessing necessary medical and health assistance — because they botched it. They got it wrong. They legislated for the wrong area. I mean, how hopeless is that! It is absolutely hopeless that they could get something so wrong.

If you think about it, they have got the resources to do this. You have got the minister — in fact all the ministers from the Department of Health and Human Services. You have got the deputy secretary, you have got all those people within the department who are looking at this, you have got the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Treasury and Finance,

the Premier and the Premier's office — all of them, and then all the ministers who have sat around the cabinet table saying, 'Yes, it is okay to legislate this area for a new injecting facility', and they got it wrong. How hopeless is that! You have got all those departmental people, all those department heads, the ministers, the cabinet and the Premier himself, and they all got it wrong. I mean, seriously, that just demonstrates again the absolutely inadequate measures that the government has taken and the botched, rushed decision that they have made.

I have got to say that I am a little incredulous about that as I have just named all those individuals and I am reflecting on what I have said, because how did they get it so wrong? They have got access to this stuff, yet they go out and stand there and say, 'This is where the facility is — whoops, actually no, it's over there in another part of it'. It is very clear, if you look at the reports of the address at Lennox Street, where the North Richmond Community Health centre is situated, where the planning overlay is and how the government, unbelievably, got it wrong. As I said, no surprises with the government because they have rushed so many things in trying to play catch-up just for a political fix. It is very superficial politics. People can see through it. I think it has absolutely horrified the Victorian community that we are going down this path, because this facility is just so close to not only the playgroups within the facility but also a primary school. It is just 10 metres or so from the playgroups or 10 metres from the boundary of the actual school to the site, but the entrance is roughly about 37 metres away. That is literally 37 of my steps. It is not that far. It is in very close proximity to a primary school. Again, I do have major issues with anyone —

Ms Patten — Not as close as the people who are injecting in the playground of the primary school.

Ms CROZIER — Well, no, as I said, Ms Patten is quite consistent in her support of this, and she will have her say on it, I am sure. She will not be supporting my motion unfortunately. That is fair to predict, I would say.

But this facility is very concerning. She would agree that we have got primary school children nearby. Some of these children possibly come from vulnerable families. It does not matter who they are; any child being exposed to the dangers of an ice addict is, I think, extraordinarily alarming. That is why we have had a lot of community outcry. People have said, 'Are you serious? You're putting safe injecting room just metres away from a primary school? What message is that sending to those children, for goodness sake?'. The

Premier said, 'Under no circumstances are we going to have a safe injecting room, and we're not going to have ice', and then he backflipped, so who would believe this guy? Seriously —

Mr Leane — Which guy?

Ms CROZIER — Your leader. Your Premier.

Mr Leane — I thought you were saying your guy.

Ms CROZIER — Mr Guy has been very consistent, Mr Leane. He has said we will absolutely not have a safe injecting room, and I can absolutely guarantee that will be the case — unlike your leader, who has backflipped on this and said one thing at one point and then another thing at another point. You and I both know it was only because of the Northcote by-election, Mr Leane. You tried to get that vote and failed dismally. Let us not beat around the bush. You and I know exactly what went on, and as I said, it did not work out for you.

Again I make the point that children are meant to be going to school in a safe learning environment and learning about dangers, but then they are just metres away from people going into a government facility that allows them to inject an illegal substance. It is the wrong message. So many people have brought the experience of New South Wales into it, saying, 'In Kings Cross they've got a safe injecting room, and you don't have these issues'. You do not have these issues because you do not have a primary school just metres from it. I was not on the inquiry that looked at the safe injecting rooms in Kings Cross and other jurisdictions, but I make the point that they were not just metres from primary schools, playgroups and vulnerable people. It just beggars belief that the government is establishing this facility in an area where there are so many children that need to understand that this is highly illegal and should not be condoned under any circumstances.

Again on the weekend we saw comments in the press about the lack of consultation by the Andrews government about this very facility, and why should I be surprised about that? The consultation process by this government on a whole range of programs has been void — it has not been there. It has not happened — and if it has happened, it has been around the edges, it has been inadequate and people have felt very underwhelmed by the consultation process. We have seen this so many times. We have seen it with sky rail. There was no consultation; there was just, 'We're just going to build this sky rail across your suburbs'. The people that have been impacted are living with it, but

they will remember that the government provided no consultation whatsoever on that issue.

There are so many other instances of a lack of consultation on planning decisions and other things, but I just have to refer back to the concerns that were raised in this article a few days ago. It says:

Terrified residents have called for a meeting with the Andrews government in a last-ditch attempt to block a controversial injection room set to open next month.

They do so because they are terrified about what might happen. The government has said they are not going to ramp up any security measures — so I am led to believe. The families that are in some of these estates have been ignored. They have a right to understand what is going to happen. They have a right to have their concerns heard. They have a right to put those concerns because they are families, they have children and they are law-abiding citizens that do not want to see their children exposed to a state government-run facility that condones and legalises the use —

Ms Patten — They do not want to be exposed to drug use on the street.

Ms CROZIER — Ms Patten, they are going to be exposed to drug use because people are going to be using drugs in the facility and then coming out onto the streets. This is what those residents are saying. Their concerns have been ignored. That is extraordinary. That is what this government do. They just do not care. They just ignore the voices of some of the most vulnerable, and I think it is absolutely shameful.

There have been concerns about what it is going to look like. What security is going to be in place for these parents who have got fears? Is there going to be security on the doors of the facility? In an extraordinary outburst Minister Foley said, I think, ‘We’ll have big Samoans’. I stand to be corrected, but it was some comment like that. It seemed extraordinary at the time that he would say such a thing. There is a danger here. There is going to be a danger if you are saying that, but the government are now denying that they are going to set up any security in the neighbouring primary school area or anywhere else. But if the community have concerns and they want security, why have they not been heard? What is going to happen?

We have seen that the consultation process has been an absolute sham. We have been saying that from the outset, and it has been confirmed. The government clearly understand that it is a problem. They have been out there speaking to people blocks away, but they have not been talking to the people directly next door to the

facility and the people whose children are attending the primary school and other facilities within the vicinity of North Richmond Community Health.

As I said at the outset, a significant amount of violent crime has gripped our state under the Andrews government. Their soft approach on youth offending and on breaching bail is, ‘Don’t worry about it. There’ll be no consequences for that’. All of these issues are sending the wrong message. Now they are trying to talk tough and say that they want to keep the community safe. Their rhetoric is absolutely extraordinary.

They are playing catch-up. They have been absolutely asleep at the wheel. Crime has increased in the area around Richmond by 10.9 per cent. You can see that from the comments in the paper and online. When you go out and talk to people in the community, they all say to you, ‘These violent crimes are occurring on a daily basis’. I know Mr Foley has responsibility for mental health and the implementation of this ice and heroin injecting room, but he also has responsibility for public housing and the violence in public housing. When I go out and speak to public housing tenants and management the complaints I get on a daily basis about what is occurring mean he seriously needs to be doing more to keep those tenants safe. They have got a right to feel as free from crime as anyone else in their own homes. We have not seen this under this government.

We have seen record home invasions, carjackings and the like. It has taken the opposition to bring private members bills in to push this government ahead, to get them going and to get them to really understand what we are talking about so that they then bring legislation in. Mr O’Donohue has done that. With police rammings or carjackings, we have led the way. Daniel Andrews has had to come kowtowing and following the opposition, which has taken the lead on some of these very important issues.

I mentioned at the outset the minister’s announcement today on GPS tracking — very light on detail. Look at this motion that we are debating today. Let us have a look at what actually could happen here. You could have a young offender — an 18-year-old offender from the Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre — with his gold-star recognition being put out on parole with an ankle bracelet. He could be released from Malmsbury and go to North Richmond, where he could actually purchase an illegal drug like ice. He could go into the government state-run facility and inject that, legally. He could get high, leave the facility and then start to have one of those psychotic episodes that I spoke about. Then he could carjack, terrorise people or — goodness knows — go onto school grounds and cause havoc at

the primary school. He could do any number of things. He is out on parole. He has got this ankle bracelet on. He has actually legally injected in that facility even though he has got a GPS tracker on.

As has been pointed out before, nobody can tell us: is that going to be a defence for his actions? He is out on parole, he has got this GPS tracker on, he has taken an illegal substance in a government-run facility and then he has gone off and terrorised people and committed these crimes. What liability is there for the government? Neither the Premier nor the leader of this house, Mr Jennings — nor even the Minister for Police — have been able to answer that question. If you think about it, it is absurd. It is absolutely absurd that there are loopholes with what could occur in the practical application of this GPS tracking of young offenders and the ability to legally go and inject ice in the government-run facility. It just makes an absolute mockery of their so-called tough on crime stance. We know it is not — it is just words and rhetoric. They have got a soft approach, because they are condoning it. They are condoning this ice user who has been, hypothetically, in a youth justice facility because of previous serious crimes being let out on parole, being allowed to inject again and then going out and engaging in more criminal behaviour.

Again, nobody from the Premier down can answer the question about the government's liability in an instance like that. These are very concerning matters. These are very concerning matters in relation to how this facility will work and how those people who will then be let out of the facility will be monitored. Who is going to monitor them. How is that going to happen? How are those people within the immediate vicinity going to feel safe? I understand their concerns. I think all Victorians should be very concerned about it.

As I said, there are a lot of issues around this. There are a lot of issues that have not been thought through by the government. They have rushed this legislation through. They have absolutely botched it with their legislation of the actual planning component. They have not fully considered all of those benefits of what playgroups do or the message sent to vulnerable families by allowing the injection of ice and heroin in a government-run facility. These playgroups and primary schools are meant to be safe environments where children are nurtured and where they learn. They explore, use their imagination and play — all of those fantastic social, physical and mental wellbeing components that schools and playgroups provide. You are going to set up a very difficult situation if you have this safe injecting room within such close proximity.

It is going to be a bit hard to stomach when the Minister for Families and Children comes in here and talks about protecting the most vulnerable when she supports and condones this injecting facility in such close proximity to some of Victoria's vulnerable children — or any children. I would urge members to consider my motion very carefully because of the implications of this. I would urge them to support my motion. I think there are huge ramifications of what the government has agreed to.

In my opening words I talked about the history and what the Premier said less than 12 months ago — what he said in July last year — about being absolutely adamant that there would be absolutely no change to their policy. He was very clear on this, saying 'I have no intention to change our policy on a safe injecting room' — a 'No injecting room' policy. They had a policy. They have backflipped. They are scuttling around —

Ms Patten — No, they listened to the evidence.

Ms CROZIER — No, they didn't.

Ms Patten — They did. Two inquiries.

Ms CROZIER — It was all for the Northcote by-election, Ms Patten. It was just months, and we all know why they did it. As I said, you have been consistent in your argument. You have your argument; I am not saying that you have not. What I am saying is that the government has been inconsistent. You stood there with the Premier on the wrong site. They have rushed the legislation in. They have got the wrong planning application. There are so many issues with it. That is why I think it is important to debate this motion and understand it, and to understand the true motives of what the government has done here. Again, I would urge members to support my motion, and with those concluding words, Acting President, I will pass it back to you.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (11:26) — Despite Ms Crozier's urge to support this motion, the government members will not be supporting this take-note motion, mainly because a lot of the motion is factually incorrect. I am happy to go through all the points, and I think I will start from the top, where there is an accusation from Ms Crozier in this motion that community playgroups and Vietnamese playgroups in North Richmond have been axed. Well, it is just not true. The playgroup run by the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association will continue. It is going to be accommodated in new rooms at the North Richmond Community Health centre, so I can allay your fears on

that particular one. Another playgroup run by Save the Children has been relocated but will continue to operate nearby. So the premise of point (1), saying that these playgroups have been axed, is completely incorrect.

As far as point (2), which talks about the dangers of the primary school being located nearby, I suppose the most important people as far as it goes for the primary school — that is, the principal, school council and other parents — have actually been supportive of this particular facility. I have not spoken to them personally, but I know that they have been supportive and have worked in with the Department of Education and Training. I think they are supportive because they believe, like other community groups, that the status quo is just untenable. So I think that for this motion to talk on behalf of that particular primary school as far as it not being supportive of this facility is incorrect.

Point (3) says:

research from the Australian Institute of Family Studies found playgroups offer a positive social experience for parents, help them make new friends and enable them to learn more about caring for their kids ...

I think we can all agree on that particular point. I remember that when the mover of this particular motion was in government, funding for playgroups, particularly the Take a Break program that was run in a lot of community centres, was axed. We should all agree that playgroups are important. We should all agree with the findings of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. We should all support playgroups with funding when we physically get the chance rather than axing programs and axing funding for important programs that support playgroups. So I think we can agree with point (3), but I think we should all agree that we should support these groups with funding rather than axing funding.

I will get to point (4) later on in my speech, but I want to talk about the accusations about incorrect legislation around this particular medically supervised injecting room. As I said before, groups in that particular part of Melbourne have accepted that the status quo cannot stay as it is. They have accepted that, and some have lobbied hard. As a government we have listened extensively to experts in the field, including the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners, Ambulance Employees Australia, the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, the Penington Institute, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and, obviously very importantly, the State Coroner, who in her findings was supportive of the fact that the status quo in this particular case just cannot remain.

I think it is important to look at other jurisdictions and how those particular centres have operated. Obviously we know that one has operated in King's Cross for a number of years. When you look at what the medically supervised injection centre in King's Cross has achieved, the statistics show that it has decreased overdose deaths in the area by managing over 6000 overdoses without a single death. Unfortunately we would be fooling ourselves if we did not accept that drug addiction touches us all. People with addictions to certain types of drugs are not necessarily the stereotypes that some would like us to believe. They are businessmen and women; they are people who would never fit those stereotypes that are put up. They are people's brothers and sisters, they are people's sons and daughters, they are people's friends. Sometimes we do not even realise that ourselves.

When it comes to looking at the statistics, I think we all should be supportive of this trial. The centre at King's Cross has also reduced by half the number of dirty needles found in public spaces, and that is a huge issue for this part of Melbourne too. It is a huge issue, and that is why the community groups that I spoke about before have rallied around and supported the centre being established. When you look at the statistic that the centre in King's Cross has led to an 80 per cent reduction in ambulance call-outs, that is an amazing figure, particularly when we would prefer ambulance resources to be used in other areas.

I am not too sure whether the coalition supports this trial or not. I think there was a point when they did support it, but one of their members, Tim Smith in the Assembly, went out and said he did not support it. That forced Mr Guy, their leader, to say that he did not support it either. We are in a position where the Liberal Party are all trying to out-far-right each other because their administration has been taken over by a far-right group. Moderates will not be tolerated. I read in the paper that Bernie Finn is not far-right enough for the group that has taken over, that Bernie Finn is some sort of mung bean loving hippie when it comes to the new Liberal Party. The mind boggles about how far-right you have to be to not be on the new Liberal Party's hit list. I do not want to diverge too much because obviously this is a very serious issue. We should talk about what we hope this trial will bring and the good outcomes it will bring.

Another factual problem we have with this particular motion is that Ms Crozier states that crime has gone up by 10.9 per cent in Richmond under the Andrews Labor government, but that does not add up when you look at the actual facts.

Ms Springle — They are getting in the way.

Mr LEANE — They might get in the way a bit. When you look at the actual facts from the Crime Statistics Agency over the 12 months to 31 December 2017, there was an 8.6 per cent decrease in offences; so there were 47 592 fewer offences overall compared to the same period last year. There was a 9.9 per cent decrease in offence rates per 100 000 population. There was a 5.9 per cent decrease in the rate of family incidents compared to an increase the year before — and I want to get back to family incidents before I finish. Hopefully that is an outcome of actually investing in the justice area in a number of ways. This government has funded frontline police to the tune of an extra 3259 sworn police officers, 400 extra police custody officers and 216 more protective services officers. When you take into account that the coalition hang their hat on being pro law and order and tough on crime parties, it beggars belief that when they were in government they did not actually fund one extra police officer.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr LEANE — Not one extra police officer was funded. I know, Mr Ramsay, that facts get in the way. Arson was down 25 per cent in that year, property damage was down 5.8 per cent in that year, burglaries and break-and-enters were down 15.4 per cent, theft was down 14.2 per cent, drug dealing and drug trafficking was down 17.2 per cent, and weapons and explosive offences were down 8.1 per cent. I know the opposition do not want to hear facts because their whole election platform is that Victoria is really scary and things are getting worse, but it is just not backed up by the facts. So I think good for them; everyone has got to have a platform. Sometimes of course it is better if the platform is actually real and factual — but good for them. They are struggling, and I suppose they have to try to hang their hat on something.

Ms Crozier urged the chamber to do a certain thing when she finished, and I want to urge Ms Crozier when she wraps up on this particular motion to commit that, if there is unfortunately a coalition government at the end of this year, that coalition government will continue to fund the recommendations out of the family violence royal commission. That would be fantastic, Ms Crozier. I know that she is big on law and order and would know — as she says and as she and I both know — that particularly women are more likely to be assaulted in their own home than outside of it. We should all be taking that as one of the major crime and law and order issues, so I urge Ms Crozier to do that when she sums up, because I have got groups in the community that

have been asking me, ‘What is the coalition’s position on continuing to fund the recommendations out of the domestic violence royal commission ongoing?’.

Ms Crozier — Send them to my office and I’ll speak to them. I’m happy to speak to them.

Mr LEANE — They do not want to be sent anywhere. What they want to do is have a public statement from you, as the coalition —

Ms Crozier — How about Mr Cartwright, the implementation monitor report?

Mr LEANE — I will take that as a no. I will relay to that group that that is a no.

Ms Crozier — That is verballing. You are verballing me.

Mr LEANE — I will stop that now. I will finish my contribution, and I will await your summing up, when we will see if you are prepared, on behalf of the coalition, to commit to continuing all the funding of the outcomes and recommendations of the royal commission. We look forward to that because we know that your rhetoric is that you are big on law and order.

Mr O’Sullivan — Everyone knows that.

Mr LEANE — We know that, and this is probably one of the biggest law and order issues; domestic violence would be the biggest law and order issue we have in this state, so we look forward and maybe Mr O’Sullivan can commit the National Party that if they form government they will ensure that all the recommendations of the domestic violence royal commission will be funded with ongoing funding after Ms Crozier does the same in her summing up.

Once again, just to sum up, even though it is only a take-note — ooh, take note! — motion, we will be opposing this particular motion because it is factually wrong.

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (11:43) — I am not intending to make a lengthy contribution on this motion. The Greens will not be supporting this motion, and I suppose I would say from the outset that it is impossible for us to support sections of this motion given that we reject the premise that the implementation of a medically supervised injecting centre is a law and order issue. For the Greens this represents well and truly an issue that sits within the health portfolio, and it is addressing the health needs of the people that will use it.

I would also suggest that it is a thinly veiled attempt to grab headlines by corralling all of the challenges related to the complex job of establishing an injecting room in an urban community. Conflating these issues is very unhelpful, and inciting fear and anxiety in the community is equally unhelpful. With regard to the location of the facility and the proximity to local services, this facility has strong support from the local community, to the best of my understanding, including from the principal of Richmond West Primary School. Late last year the school's principal, Paul Ledwidge, told the ABC:

We anticipate this new facility will significantly reduce the visibility of drug use in our local area.

[We] are confident [the neighbouring health service] will implement this trial with minimal effect on our school.

It is pretty clear that the school community supports the implementation of this centre. This facility will not only help people who are tackling drug addiction; it will make a huge difference to the local communities affected. Those communities, including the local school, its staff and students, are currently exposed to people using heroin in the streets, and the risk of overdose and death exist right now. Those kids should not run the risk of being exposed to overdose and death on their way to school. The centre will tackle that problem, and it will reduce the risk of trauma and injury for everyone in the community.

I am interested to hear Ms Crozier talk about the community outcry. I do not live in North Richmond, it is not my electorate, but from all reports and for all intents and purposes I have heard of no community outcry, so I would love for the member in her summing up to tell us more about how she knows about that and what the community outcry is.

Ms Crozier — They are actually contacting us.

Ms SPRINGLE — So they are only contacting the Liberal Party? They certainly have not contacted the Greens.

Ms Crozier — No, they are contacting the media.

Ms SPRINGLE — I do not believe they have contacted the Reason party; have they contacted the government? It is just the Liberal Party that they are —

Ms Crozier — The newspapers.

Ms SPRINGLE — The *Herald Sun* front page. The *Herald Sun*, really?

Ms Crozier — That's all right. It's a major —

Ms SPRINGLE — Sure, a major Murdoch publication that the Liberal Party has very close ties to. No problem. With regard to the impact on community playgroups, the source of Ms Crozier's information on this is entirely unclear. It would be wonderful if she could let us know where she gets that information from in her summing up, because the fact is that the minister has not confirmed, to my knowledge, that any playgroups will be axed. The reality is that the establishment of this facility is a complex and challenging undertaking, and adjustments will need to be made in terms of service provision and impacts on the community. According to my advice the statements included in this motion with regard to playgroups — and let me put it firmly on the record that we support the intent around protecting our early childhood education facilities and those programs, and they are a vital part of how we educate our children and how we nurture them as a community — appear to be false.

The minister has stated on the record in *Hansard* that there will be three playgroups affected while the transitional facility is established and in operation. Playgroups being run by the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association and Yarra City Council will be moved, as has been alluded to, to different rooms within the North Richmond Community Health building. The minister has confirmed that a playgroup run by Save the Children will be temporarily relocated during the transition phase but that the North Richmond Community Health centre has worked with Save the Children to find a suitable location nearby. So what we are looking at here are transitional issues. There are always going to be transitional issues when there is a major policy change and an implementation of that policy change. I have received confirmation this morning from the minister's office that this information is current and correct. There will be no playgroups axed, and their relocation to their original locations will likely happen in mid-2019. This appears to be a transitional issue. If Ms Crozier has information to the contrary, then I would be very, very pleased to hear it.

In terms of the conflation with crime statistics, I think that Mr Leane summed that up quite nicely. There is absolutely no need for playgroups to be discussed in the space of crime statistics. It is sensationalist and almost nonsensical, to be honest. On that note, for all of those reasons the Greens will be opposing this motion.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (11:49) — I am actually quite delighted to rise to speak to this motion. It was such a beautiful day walking into Parliament today, and I was thinking 'It's a gorgeous sunny day, and I'm going to get to speak about the supervised injecting centre today. Today is a good day'.

I thank Ms Crozier for allowing me the opportunity to speak more about this very important trial that is being held in my electorate at a location that I was at yesterday.

It seems that the Liberal Party is very interested in the supervised injecting centre. We had Mr Smith in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) budget estimates hearings asking nothing but questions about the supervised injecting centre — not to the Minister for Mental Health nor to the Minister for Health nor to the Minister for Police but to the Minister for Education. They were not questions about education but about the supervised injecting centre, to the education minister.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Ms PATTEN — Mrs Peulich, it is just extraordinary. Anyway, back to the motion. I would actually like to bring some evidence into this debate. There have been 12 evaluations —

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Ms PATTEN — Mrs Peulich, you are not even on the speaker list. If you want to speak to this, then wait your turn. Let us look at this. There have been 12 evaluations of the supervised injecting centre in Sydney. There have been multitudes of evaluations done on the 90-plus supervised injecting centres around the world. The health minister in Canada has just opened another 30. The supervised injecting centre in Sydney is near a library. The supervised injecting centre trial in Melbourne was always going to be trialled at the North Richmond Community Health centre. Yes, it is near the school, and yes, that school supports this trial because they have had people injecting in their school — not 37 metres from their school but in their school — and they have had people die.

Mr O'Sullivan interjected.

Ms PATTEN — Mr O'Sullivan, you cannot lock up a dead person. This person died. I have spent a lot of time in this community so I know how these people are concerned about the escalating drug use and the escalating problematic use of prescription medication in North Richmond. I know that some of my party have been doorknocking in the area. Judy Ryan, who has been one of the campaigners for this trial and who lives around the corner from Lennox Street, received an email from a Richmond mum:

... my five-year-old son ... saw a man overdosed in the gutter when we were walking home from his preschool. He now has night terrors about the 'mumbling man'.

Little kids and their parents have to deal with this all the time, so if we are talking about protecting children this is what we should be doing.

Richmond West Primary School supports this. The playgroups are not being closed down. I think previous speakers have managed to point out the falsehoods in this motion. We know that it is supported by the community. We know that there have been two inquiries in this very Parliament on this issue. We received 49 submissions when we scrutinised my initial private members bill on a trial for a supervised injecting centre. We received 49 submissions from residents and local organisations overwhelmingly supporting it. We made site visits and we heard oral evidence from witnesses as part of those hearings — all overwhelming evidence.

Even Ms Fitzherbert and Mr Morris, who were on the inquiry, agreed with the report where we said drug use in North Richmond has reached crisis levels. I quote from the report of the committee that Ms Fitzherbert chaired:

MSICs improve the health of injecting drug users and reduce signs of drug use in surrounding streets.

And:

Evaluations of the MSIC in Sydney found evidence of public amenity benefits to the local community and reduced demand for ambulance services. The evaluations did not find evidence of the MSIC having a 'honey pot' effect on crime.

That was what Ms Fitzherbert and Mr Morris agreed to.

This is a highly considered approach to an ever escalating problem that we are having in our community. Twenty-six people died in a 300-square-metre area of North Richmond. They overdosed and they died. They left children without mothers. They left children without parents. They left parents without children. If we are talking about protecting children, then this is what we should be doing. I would encourage the coalition to support the trial on the evidence and on the fact that the community wants it. It will be interesting to see if they even run a candidate in Richmond.

What we know from safe injecting rooms or supervised injecting centres around the world is that this reduces the obvious signs of drug use. Also, if we want to talk about trying to get people off drugs, actually getting them into a supervised space where they can speak to doctors and where they can receive primary health care

is a very, very good way to do it. If we want to stop children from seeing drug use, an injecting centre is a very good way to do it. If we want to stop children from having to go through drills on what they should do when they find a person who has overdosed or on what they should do when they find a used syringe in their playground, then the trial for a supervised injecting centre is the way to do it. The school has supported this along the way. Certainly the former principal and the current acting principal, Jenny Deeble, think that this is a very sensible approach and that this will improve the amenity and the safety of their school — of their children. It will improve the amenity of the area.

We are seeing an increase in overdoses from prescription drugs. We are seeing fentanyl on our border. In Vancouver four people a day die from overdoses. We are about to see that level of overdose happening in our community.

I will touch on Ms Crozier's hypotheticals and conversations about ice. If the coalition were to support drug testing, maybe we could work out what drugs are being used and what drugs are being used in our street, but we have not got support for drug testing in this Parliament yet. But we know from New South Wales that some of the users use whatever they can get. These are desperate people with mental health issues, with intellectual disabilities, people who are homeless and have addiction. They are buying whatever they can buy — they do not care — whatever will give them some sort of chemical escape from the lives that they are struggling with. We should be supporting those people. We should not be pushing them out on the street or pushing them onto the playgrounds. We should be supporting them.

In New South Wales, where they do not ask what substance is being taken, they know that predominately it is opioids. That is the concern. We are worried about people overdosing from opioids. This is not just heroin; this is fentanyl — this is prescription opioids that are being found in our illicit market and are being found through prescriptions. This is what we are trying to prevent. We are trying to prevent the deaths of these people.

People may use other substances — yes, that will occur — but at least we will have them in a contained space. We can look after these people. We can try to set them on a path to recovery. Just saying 'Lock these people up' ignores the problem. It does not deal with the problem. We have been locking people up for using drugs for centuries, for decades at least, and it has not reduced drug use in our society by a milli-per cent.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Energy policy

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (12:01) — My question today is for Minister Jennings, representing the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in the other place. With the approval for the demolition of the old Morwell power station being announced and the extension of the remaining power stations mining licences, it is timely to revisit the issue of the cost of energy, available base load and jobs in regional areas. So we come to the Yallourn and Loy Yang power stations. Not only do they provide baseload power to the majority of Victoria but they also provide jobs to the locals of Gippsland. It is a complex situation that requires careful long-term planning to ensure that affordable and reliable power is available as well as certainty of employment. My question is: given it can take up to 10 or more years from conception to turning a switch on, what is the government doing to plan for the eventual retirement of the Yallourn and Loy Yang stations?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:02) — I thank Mr Bourman for his question. I do not know whether he is expecting my answer to be augmented by my colleague the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, but as a first pass let me actually give it a go in relation to some of these issues. As Mr Bourman indicated in his question, the reliability and the certainty that the Victorian community requires in relation to the supply of energy has been a big issue of concern not only across the community but for governments state and federal. There is a national framework currently being negotiated between the commonwealth and the states in relation to the national energy market that hopefully will find the right balance between providing certainty into the future but also at the same time meeting our climate change obligations in relation to greenhouse gas abatement and a future that is sustainable and certain. That is the national policy setting.

Within the state of Victoria one of the effects of the issue that Mr Bourman referred to in his question is that in the last week there has been an agreement reached by the state of Victoria in relation to the ongoing availability of the coal licensing arrangement, primarily to do two things: one, which is actually to provide certainty and continuity in relation to the investment that is currently there; and to provide certainty that in fact there will be no premature announcement that will come as a shock to the Victorian energy sector or the

Victorian economy, which was the downside consequence of the decision that was made in France to close down the Hazelwood power station at a time that was set by the parent company. In the circumstances that the Victorian government has secured with the current energy providers we will actually get five years notice of any planned close-down of those facilities.

At the back end in terms of community concerns in relation to the rehabilitation and the appropriate restoration of environmental values and the confidence by which the community can actually believe that rehabilitation will occur in mine sites, there was an extension to provide for confidence in the community that there would be the appropriate rehabilitation occurring at the end once those stations close and the companies assume responsibility for the clean-up. That is in relation to the coal sector — that in fact there will be a greater degree of confidence, certainty and reliability, both for local people who work in the community but in fact in terms of how that will impact upon the Victorian economy in the future.

In relation to the investment strategies that will be pursued by the Victorian government, you would know that we have committed to targets in relation to renewable energy targets. We have made commitments that by 2020, 20 per cent of the Victorian supply will come from renewable sources, and that has led to significant investment being announced by a whole range of generators who want to contribute to the wind capacity — 650 megawatts of capacity has been generated, with more than \$1 billion worth of activity, which is leading to 1200 jobs across regional Victoria in relation to wind supply. They are the current policy settings. As you know, there are further policy settings by the Victorian government to drive renewable investment even higher between now and 2025.

In relation to how all of those elements come together, the national framework in relation to the national energy market reform will do two things: provide for certainty around climate change and greenhouse gas abatement by providing energy which is affordable and by limiting the ability to have shocks in the system, and have a pathway of development that leads to jobs and sustainable energy. That is the current trajectory of the policy settings, both federally and at a state level.

Supplementary question

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (12:06) — I thank the minister for his answer. Renewable energy may well be the energy of the future, but at the moment what we have is unable to provide a base load sufficient to meet current needs, let alone future needs. So despite

many people's wishes we are still required to use traditional methods of power generation, such as coal and possibly, as has been raised a number of times, nuclear. So my supplementary question is: will the government commit to traditional forms of energy production until renewables are able to provide a suitable base load, thus providing certainty for jobs and affordable energy into the foreseeable future?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:06) — I think in the preamble to the supplementary question Mr Bourman probably did not take account of much of what was in my answer, but the end of his supplementary question ultimately leads me to consider, and all of us to consider, that the combination of the factors that I have outlined recognise the reality that in fact existing assets and energy supply sources will continue into the medium term, and the medium term is in the context of between now and 2050. If you think about the profile of energy sources across the nation, let alone Victoria, it will actually mean that there is residual investment and capacity that comes from the coal sector and the gas sector and other forms of carbon-based electricity energy generation and that there will be an escalation of a variety of other sustainable investments that will see that trajectory change over time in a predictable way.

Logging coupe planned burns

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:08) — My question is for the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services, who I believe is Minister Dalidakis. On 23 May 2018 I asked the Minister for Agriculture about the whole-of-government response to deleterious air quality caused in part by logging burns. In a written response the minister said, and I quote:

Emergency Management Victoria has well-established procedures in place to manage significant or prolonged events where smoke or other air emissions have the potential to impact on community health.

Could the minister advise what actions Emergency Management Victoria took on the days when Melbourne's air quality plummeted, between 24 and 28 April and 1 and 2 May?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:08) — I thank the member for her question. I am not sure whether there is a correlation, as the member suggests in the question itself. That being said, I will pass it on to the minister in the other place and seek a response.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:09) — Thank you, Minister. My supplementary is: considering that for 27 hours from the evening of 21 April all Environment Protection Authority Victoria air quality measuring stations in metropolitan Melbourne exceeded the PM2.5 24-hour exposure limit of 25 micrograms per cubic metre and on 1 May the PM2.5 reading was over 120 micrograms per cubic metre at measuring stations in Mooroolbark and Dandenong and over 60 in Brighton, can the minister explain why Emergency Management Victoria did not initiate an evacuation of the worst hit areas of metropolitan Melbourne, thereby subjecting a population of nearly 5 million people to an increased risk of acute cardiac, pulmonary and respiratory failure?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:09) — I thank the member for her supplementary question. They are serious issues she raises, and certainly I will ask the minister in the other place to obviously deal with those in his response. Can I just point out that I hope that the member is not engaging in any type of alarmist behaviour. The government takes the welfare of our citizens right across Victoria very seriously.

Native forest logging

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:10) — This time around my question is for the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, the Forests (Wood Pulp Agreement) Act 1996 ratifies an agreement between the state government and the owners of the Maryvale pulp mill for the supply of logged native forest timber to the pulp mill. Section 12 under part II of the schedule to the act reads:

In order to ensure the effective management and utilization of the forests within the Forest Area the Secretary shall carry out a review of pulpwood within the Forest Area at least once in each period of five years while this Agreement remains in force and shall make the results available to the Company.

Minister, has the state government ever undertaken a review, and if so, when was the last review and what were the findings?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:11) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question. I will take that question on notice and seek to provide Ms Dunn with an answer on the frequency of reviews. I would be confident that reviews are undertaken in accordance with the act, but in terms of specific dates over that period of time since 1996 I will take some advice and provide a written response tomorrow.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:11) — Thank you, Minister. My supplementary question is: Minister, when will the next review be scheduled, will the terms of reference address the risk of collapse of the critically endangered mountain ash ecosystem and will the outcomes of that review be made public to the people of Victoria?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:11) — Ms Dunn asked a series of questions, about three I think, in her supplementary, and I will provide a response to her question, given its relationship to the substantive question around when the last one was and when the next one is.

Western Victoria fires

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (12:12) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Minister Pulford. It is now approaching three months since the devastating south-west fires on St Patrick's Day, and while media attention has moved on, the 50 or so farmers who were impacted, some of whom I met with last week, are concerned that the compensation due to them from Powercor will be held up in a tedious class action which will only benefit the legal firms. Both fires were certainly the fault of Powercor, but history tells us that insurers will drag out any settlement for years to reduce the resolve of farmers and minimise payments. So my question is: Minister, does the government have any process to ensure a quick resolution for farmers affected by these fires?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:13) — I thank Mr Purcell for his question and for his concern for farmers who have been affected by the St Patrick's Day fires in south-western Victoria. This was an extraordinary event with almost unprecedented levels of wind and fires that behaved very dangerously and erratically and that sprang up in the middle of the night, posing a real risk to the community. The fire-affected area lost on-farm assets of a total value of just shy of \$55 million. Indeed two peat fires continued to burn until reasonably recently.

Mr Purcell's observation is absolutely right — the media caravan has moved on — but the clean-up and recovery work continues. Indeed the firefighting effort continued for quite some time as well, but the peat fires are now finally extinguished. This was posing further risk in terms of some property owners quite close to those fires needing to be able to go to and be safe in their workplaces that close to ongoing fire activity. In

total 295 properties have been impacted, and nearly 3000 livestock were lost across the region.

Mr Purcell's question goes to legal settlements, the activity of insurers and some broad things that are perhaps beyond the remit of my responsibility. I will make some comments on that in a minute, but I just wanted to say that the immediate response was incredibly fast and incredibly effective, and there are a lot of people to thank for that, including the leadership in the local government areas. I do not particularly want to single out one above all others. I think Corangamite shire was perhaps the hardest hit, and Jo Beard and Andrew Mason and their teams provided great leadership. I know Adam Jenkins from the Victorian Farmers Federation's (VFF's) United Dairyfarmers of Victoria group was certainly working around the clock to provide support to the community, as were many, many other people, including many that I have met and that Ms Tierney met when we visited the area shortly after the fires — and no doubt Mr Purcell knows them well.

The effort to restore power was sensational. In about the same amount of time it took for people to have the idea that they needed generators and for people to start organising generators, power was restored to all properties. That was really important, particularly for the dairy farms. I take the opportunity to pay some tribute to the team from Agriculture Victoria. They were in the first instance responding to immediate animal welfare concerns — not pleasant work by any measure — and more recently they have been working with people on a one-on-one basis to re-establish pastures and get that farm productivity up and running.

There are a couple of things that we did in those very early days as well — some funding for Look Over the Farm Gate and funding to the VFF to organise the fodder drive. That has now ended, but over 250 farmers participated in that. So there was a lot of activity very, very quickly, and indeed many of the people — as is always the case, I guess, with something like this — providing support to the community were also impacted on their own properties and at home.

Mr Purcell's question does go to a very complex area of litigation and insurance claims, which in turn goes to questions that are perhaps rightly resolved by the courts around the identification of fault, if indeed there is fault to be attributed. These things do need to run their course. Frustratingly, they can take some time. While I do not have anything in particular to announce on behalf of the government in terms of any direct measure that would respond to that — and I am conscious that the President is giving me a little leeway here — what I

would say is that everything within our control we have done as quickly as is humanly possible, and I think that the learnings from earlier events have certainly taught all others involved in litigation around these matters about the benefits of expediting matters.

Offender electronic monitoring

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:17) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, as of today's date how many of the approximately 800 parolees living in the community are GPS monitored?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:18) — I thank the member for his question. In terms of that level of detail, I do not have that on me, but I will be able to provide that.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:18) — Thank you, Minister, for that undertaking. You have previously told the house that 77 offenders in corrections-run facilities, the subject of the Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009, form the majority of people subject to electronic monitoring. This means there can only be a small number of parolees living in the community who are electronically monitored. What advice have you received as to why such a small proportion of the approximately 800 parolees are currently subject to electronic monitoring?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:18) — In terms of that question I will take that on notice because there is an element of that that I need to have a greater sense of the finer detail on. I am happy to take that on notice, Mr O'Donohue.

Offender electronic monitoring

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:19) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, despite having access to GPS tracking technology as part of the adult parole system since 2013, only a small handful of offenders are tracked as a condition of their parole order. Will you compel or make it mandatory for the Youth Parole Board to require GPS trackers to be worn by young offenders on parole for aggravated home invasion, aggravated carjacking and culpable driving resulting in death?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:19) — Thank you. I welcome the member's question, because what we have seen from

the opposition so far on today's announcement from the government is that they are all over the shop on this issue. We are anticipating of course a bill that is coming to the house very soon, but we have announced that we will legislate to allow the Youth Parole Board to impose on serious youth offenders electronic monitoring as well as mandatory drug and alcohol testing. I noted that the Leader of the Opposition seemed to support this announcement earlier today, but Mr O'Donohue has been on morning radio questioning this and in fact seeming to contradict his leader's position on this matter.

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, I would not want the minister to mislead the house. I have not spoken to any radio stations today, President, and I have not been on any radio stations, to my knowledge, at all because I have not spoken to any radio stations.

The PRESIDENT — We will all be very interested to find out who is impersonating Mr O'Donohue. That obviously was not a point of order, but I do understand that the record ought to be correct in respect of that matter, given that the minister had relied on some information in her comments. The minister to continue.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you. I welcome Mr O'Donohue clarifying that. It is good to hear, because what we have seen in the past is they have been all over the shop on Grevillea. We had Matthew Guy, Edward O'Donohue and Georgie Crozier all give different positions when it came to Grevillea, and no doubt we will see that again in relation to electronic monitoring. The Liberal Party have got more positions than the Kama Sutra in relation to these matters. But what I can say is the member does not understand that at this point in time the Youth Parole Board does not actually have a legislated ability to impose electronic monitoring. We are going to do this for the first time. We are one of a handful of states that will allow for electronic monitoring of youth parolees. Only South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory have done this, and we are going to do this to make sure that we can keep the community safe.

What I would also say to the member is she does not understand that you have to be very careful in relation to how you go about these matters, because the last thing you want is to open up a basis for people to challenge matters coming from the Youth Parole Board in terms of stipulating mandatory matters. But what I can say to the member is we have taken action in terms of responding to youth offending in this state. We legislated for longer sentences — a bill that those opposite tried to scuttle. We put in place a range of

mandatory parole conditions in the legislation last year again, imposing conditions like curfews and restrictions on the geographic location that young parolees can go to and now we are going to give the Youth Parole Board the ability through electronic monitoring to track whether they are in fact complying with those conditions. Those opposite slashed youth justice staff in the community.

Ms Wooldridge — We didn't.

Ms MIKAKOS — You absolutely did, Ms Wooldridge. You absolutely did. You have got a very selective —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Minister, you are entering that territory of debating again — maybe you were from the outset of this answer. I allowed it early on from the point of view that it was a contemporary announcement that you were talking about, but certainly now, when you are going back to the past, previous governments and so forth you, are clearly debating. So, Minister, please complete the answer without doing so.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, President. We have put more youth justice staff, both in custodial roles and out in the community — more than 280 new jobs — to monitor serious young offenders both on parole and when they are on community-based orders. What we saw from those opposite was that they slashed staff, and now they have announced a commission of audit so that they can slash even more public servants that perform this important task. We are getting on with reforming the youth justice system and keeping the community safe — something that those opposite failed to do for four long years.

The PRESIDENT — Can we try to address our answers without pointing. Answers are to go through me. The pointing actually is quite provocative, but I might also say that after I asked the minister not to debate, she then faced a barrage of interjections, which in fact makes it very difficult for me to sit here and admonish her for debating if indeed she is being provoked by those interjections.

Supplementary question

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (12:26) — My supplementary to the minister is as follows: Minister, given only a small number of adult parolees are GPS monitored and you are not going to compel the Youth Parole Board to require GPS trackers on young offenders, isn't this plan subject to youth parole

discretion and just yet another headline to try and get law and order off the agenda just before an election?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:26) — What we have seen from those opposite is they have been caught flat-footed. They have got policy envy. What we are doing is we are putting in place the measures that are necessary to keep the community safe. Not only will we introduce electronic monitoring in Victoria for the first time for young offenders 16 and over who have been incarcerated for serious offences like home invasions, carjackings and others, but we are also going to introduce mandatory drug and alcohol testing as well. Because we have seen a very strong link between substance abuse and subsequent offending, we are going to put in place the measures to ensure that we can monitor their behaviour whilst they are out in the community. We are putting in place a range of measures where we will know if they have breached their parole conditions — not only more staff in the community to monitor these issues but also now electronic monitoring and drug testing — to make sure we can monitor compliance with parole orders. We are putting in place reforms you failed to.

Prison security

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:27) — My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, following the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC) prison riot — the worst in Victoria's history, where fences were bulldozed down by rioters and where the prison was trashed — can you detail whether all maximum security prison improvements identified across the prison estate have been completed following the post-riot review?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:28) — I do thank the member for his question. The work schedule, budget and time frames are all a matter of public record. Again, immediately after the riot \$12 million was estimated to repair the remand centre. Three months after the riot the prison was restored to the condition that it was in before the riot. Separately to the repairs, the Victorian government invested in capital and operational improvements to the MRC and strengthened the emergency response capability across the corrections system. Upon receiving the Walshe report, \$52 million was allocated for hardening and fortifying works. This included replacing many internal fences with walls and installing stronger internal fencing. A further \$23 million was assigned as part of the 2016–17 budget over four years, which will provide additional emergency response group personnel across the state as well as emergency response equipment and

vehicles. All infrastructure works will be completed this year, Mr O'Donohue.

Supplementary question

Mr O'DONOHUE (Eastern Victoria) (12:29) — Minister, thank you for the answer, but my question was across the prison estate. I ask by way of supplementary: Minister, why have you not addressed the outstanding security issues identified at the maximum security Barwon Prison despite repeated requests to do so?

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Corrections) (12:29) — What we have done is that we have accepted the Walshe report. We also asked Mr Walshe —

Mr O'Donohue — On a point of order, President, the Walshe report relates to the MRC prison. The supplementary question was about the Barwon Prison. We are talking about two different things.

The PRESIDENT — I accept that the supplementary question is apposite to the first question, which was broad, and that it has come down to a specific location. I am a little surprised that Mr O'Donohue got to his feet quite so quickly in the sense that I thought the minister had just started answering. Minister, it is about Barwon Prison, as you have heard, and I am sure that you are about to provide an answer in that respect.

Ms TIERNEY — Thank you, President. It might have been a supplementary question, but it is an assertion, and I would need more information to attempt to answer that question.

Child protection

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (12:31) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, between 1 October and 31 December 2017 there were 44 children recorded by Victoria Police and the Department of Health and Human Services as requiring protection from sexual exploitation. Five months on, how many of those 44 are still at risk from sexual exploitation?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:32) — I thank the member for her question around these matters. Obviously I do not have those figures at hand, but I can advise the member that my department does in fact publish category 1 incident data on the department's website on a quarterly basis that would most likely capture the time period that the member referred to in her question, because we have increased significantly the level of transparency around

these issues. We are now publishing all serious incidents on a quarterly basis as well as having legislated that these matters are provided to the Commission for Children and Young People as well — incidents both in youth justice as well as in out-of-home care.

What I can further advise the member is that our government takes these matters very seriously. We have put in place a range of measures to address issues of sexual exploitation in care. We introduced additional staffing levels in residential care units in our first year. In fact there was a range of measures that I announced in our first 100 days in government. These included more staff overnight to provide additional supervision to young people in care. In those 100 days we also introduced spot audits of our residential care providers for the very first time.

If you look at the data that is also published in the commission's annual report, you will see that the level of incidents characterised as sexual exploitation and sexual offending has actually stabilised. That is something that the commissioner did make favourable comments about. We have seen additional reporting from service providers as a result of these spot audits and additional scrutiny from the department on these matters, but we are seeing these matters being addressed. We also provided funding in our first budget for new sexual exploitation practice leaders in the department — and there are a number of these positions across the state — to work with Victoria Police on these matters. We have seen a very significant increase in the number of harbouring notices issued in response to these matters so we can deter predators from preying on what are very vulnerable children.

We have had these issues for a very long time, sadly. We do know that children who have experienced trauma and had a lack of appropriate adult role models in their lives are vulnerable to being exploited by predators. This is why the department works with Victoria Police to address these issues. We do take these matters very seriously. We have put in place a range of responses around these issues. As we saw from the data published in the commission's report last year, these matters are now showing that there is some positive sign of improvement.

Ms Fitzherbert — On a point of order, President, the minister has given some very general information. I asked quite a specific question, which was about 44 children identified in the last quarter of 2017 and, five months on, how many of those 44 are still at risk from sexual exploitation. I would ask you to direct the minister to the question.

The PRESIDENT — The minister has already indicated that she does not have that level of detail with her. She started her answer by putting that very position to the house. I think this is one of the better answers that I have had for a long time in that there has been absolutely no debate and a lot of very significant information on a matter that all of us have a great deal of concern about. I appreciate the answer. There is no doubt that I will ask the minister to provide the specific figures, but the minister has indicated at this stage that she does not have those available. Frankly, I would not expect her to have that level of detail at this point in time. The minister's answer, as I said, has been very valuable to the house to understand the framework. Not all of us are across it as perhaps are Ms Fitzherbert, Ms Crozier and Ms Springle in particular.

Ms MIKAKOS — With the remaining time I have available I am making the point to the house and reassuring the member that our government and my department have a sexual exploitation prevention strategy. They put considerable effort into these issues and together with the community sector are very determined to address these issues. I was indicating to the house the range of measures that we have put in place and the results of those measures. But I indicated right at the outset that I was going to have to seek some further advice in relation to the data.

Supplementary question

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (12:37) — Minister, 34 of those 44 were in out-of-home care. Thirty-four of those children were under your care. How many of this cohort were in residential care during October to December 2017, and of that how many are still in residential care? I appreciate that a written answer may be required on this as well, given the comments that the minister has made in response to my substantive question.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:38) — Thank you for the further question. What I can say to the member is that what we do see with vulnerable young people in care is that they can be at risk of being exploited. We know that young people living at home with their parents can also be exploited. Sadly in many of those cases it is actually family members who are exploiting them. It is a terrible tragedy that children in our community are exploited, whether they are with their families or they are placed in care.

My department has put in place a range of strategies through the increased use of intervention orders, harbouring notices and other such matters that I have

already referred to in response to the substantive question to address this issue, but if I can provide further details to the member around the specific data set then I will do that.

Child protection

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:39) — My question is to the Minister for Families and Children. Minister, it has been recently reported in Ballarat that hotel rooms are being used to care for vulnerable children in the child protection system, so I ask: in the past year how many vulnerable children have been accommodated in hotel rooms because there has been a lack of foster carers or other emergency accommodation to look after them?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:39) — I thank Mr Morris for his question, because it does give me an opportunity to address this issue. What I can say at the outset is that we do need more foster carers. We have as a government put in place a range of investments and established Fostering Connections, a centralised website and call centre that we fund and that is operated by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, to take these inquiries from the community. What we have seen thankfully is a very significant increase in interest from community members in these issues.

But I want to stress to the member that we have had situations where children have needed to be taken away in the middle of the night probably for as long as the child protection system has existed. We have terrible situations where child protection workers need to attend homes, remove children and make some very urgent decisions about placements in a very quick manner to ensure the safety of those children. We are trialling now a retainer model where we have foster carers on call to be able to take more children in this manner in these emergency placements. We are evaluating that particular trial with a view to doing more of this right across the state.

But we certainly do need more foster carers. They are our unsung heroes. We are providing more support to them and to other carers in the system. I should point out that the vast majority of children actually do end up in kinship care placements rather than in any other placement type. We have provided through the budget this year as part of our record \$858 million investment in our child and family services system additional supports and continued investment in supporting our carers in terms of flexible funding to pay for things like medical expenses, child-care costs and transport

expenses. There is funding in the budget for those costs for all of our carers. There is also funding for Carer KaFE, which is a training system that we have put in place for our carers to give them a formalised training system for the first time. These types of supports are incredibly important to give children greater stability in their placement.

We are doing a range of things to address these issues as well as of course massively expanding our child protection workforce. Since we have been in government we have had a 36 per cent increase to date in our child protection workforce. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge our dedicated child protection workers, who do incredibly challenging work, as I said, sometimes in the middle of the night. There is probably no family in Victoria that welcomes that knock on the door from a child protection worker wanting to take their children away in the middle of the night. So they do face enormous challenges in the work that they do, and I want to acknowledge their hard work. We have their back as a government. That is why we are making the investments that we are making. That is why we are making the reforms that we are making.

I also acknowledge our foster carers. All of our carers are unsung heroes and perform incredibly important work in supporting vulnerable children in our community. That is why we are putting in place investments and reforms to provide better outcomes for vulnerable children in this state and to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring in the first place.

Supplementary question

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:44) — Thank you, Minister, for that response, but I do note that there was not an actual answer to the question of the number of children. In the past year have any young people in child protection been accommodated in a caravan park for their emergency accommodation, and if any have, how many?

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:44) — Thank you to Mr Morris. It is good to see in year four finally a bit of interest around these issues from those opposite. What I can say to the member is that, as I explained in response to the substantive question, we have put in place a range of measures to provide through this retainer model that we are trialling additional placements for children in these short-term emergency placements. We are looking to not only recruit more carers and support our staff in this important work that they do but also provide the early interventions and the prevention support to actually

prevent children from needing to come into the system in the first place. The positive thing about that is that what we have seen in the last financial year is actually a slowing down of child protection reports in our state — 4 per cent growth as opposed to the very significant growth that we had only a couple of years ago. So our investments and our reforms are actually leading to better outcomes for vulnerable children in our state.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:45) — I have 13 written responses to questions on notice: 572, 868, 12 526, 12 565, 12 615–16, 12 655–60, 12 662.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (12:45) — In respect of today's questions I seek written responses to Ms Dunn's substantive and supplementary questions to Mr Dalidakis, and as it involves a minister in another place that is in two days. Regarding Ms Dunn's question to Ms Pulford, the substantive and supplementary, the minister indicated she would seek some further detailed advice on that, and that is one day. Mr O'Donohue's first question to Ms Tierney, the substantive and supplementary, one day; Mr O'Donohue's second question to Ms Tierney, the supplementary, one day; Ms Fitzherbert's question to Ms Mikakos, the substantive and supplementary, one day; and Mr Morris's question to Ms Mikakos, the substantive and supplementary, one day.

I note that Minister Mikakos did provide quite extensive information in respect of the approach to these matters, and as I said, I appreciated those answers, but there were matters of detail that were sought in the questions, so that is why I have sought the written response.

Ms Crozier — I have a point of order, President, in relation to the questions I have asked of Ms Mikakos on GPS tracking. Ms Mikakos, I believe, failed to answer both of those questions in relation to whether GPS tracking would be mandatory in instances of home invasion, carjacking or culpable driving that has resulted in death. I believe the minister failed to answer those very basic questions.

The PRESIDENT — Ms Crozier, you actually acknowledged in your supplementary question that the

minister had not given you an answer on that, so I think that therein you have your answer. The second supplementary question was fairly provocative and rather than being a matter of fact questioned the minister's handling of that matter. That is why I did not reinstate either of those questions.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, I note the response I had from Ms Tierney yesterday to a supplementary question regarding whether the minister was aware of any training providers laying off staff because they had been denied more funded places. That was a very clear question about whether she is aware of any of these circumstances. Her response was to ask me for more information. While it may be trying to be cute in terms of the response, I do not believe her written response has responded to the question. I would ask that you consider reinstating that question.

The PRESIDENT — I reinstate that question.

Mr Morris — On a point of order, President, with regard to the response I received from Minister Tierney with regard to the supplementary question for which you asked that a written response be provided yesterday, the question related to whether or not the minister has met with ACEVic. I have perused the answer, which appears just to be a media release that has been cut and pasted onto a piece of paper. I do not believe the response answers the question that you ruled was to be answered with a written response.

The PRESIDENT — I will reinstate it on the basis that the question actually asked the minister if she had met with them. The minister's response is that the department has had a number of discussions. I do think there is a distinction between the minister meeting with them and the department meeting with them, so I will reinstate the question.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (12:50) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I refer the minister to major concerns held by residents of Yarraville as to their rights under the government's plan to claim ownership of land under their homes as part of the flawed West Gate tunnel project. I ask the minister to outline the rights and responsibilities of government to these landholders. In particular, what compensation is available in the event of damage to their homes or businesses as a result of digging under the properties they own?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:50) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy. It relates to a very pleasing announcement recently that Maroondah Hospital will have a 500 space-plus car park built in the near future with substantial assistance from the Andrews Labor government. The question I would ask is: when will the tender for this work go out, and when is it expected that works will commence on the construction of this much-needed facility?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:51) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it is in relation to the north-east link business case. The assessment of alternatives in the business case for the north-east link is one of the most odious hatchet jobs ever perpetrated. The public transport and freight strategic option includes a rail freight tunnel from Donnybrook in the north to Dandenong in the south via the port of Melbourne. This blows the costing of this strategic option out to \$75 billion. This option is a dreamt-up, fanciful alternative that no-one ever asked for. Meanwhile, in the same ministerial portfolio, other public servants have been running a tender process for a port rail shuttle with a budget of only \$58 million, which has the potential to take thousands of trucks off the roads of Eastern Metropolitan Region each and every day. My question is: in its consideration of strategic options, why has the North East Link Authority ignored an alternative freight-on-rail project that is currently being developed by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources?

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:52) — My constituency question is for the attention of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. It pertains to the uncertainty of Indian cultural precincts that have been promised across Melbourne. Given that this is a constituency question, I am asking about the plans that the minister has — following a protracted three-year period of consultation and deliberation — for the development of cultural precincts in the south-east. What additional allocations have been made for cultural hubs? In particular I am interested in those that have been touted for the Monash area and for the Casey area, about which we have heard nothing. I would urge the minister to lay out his plans for the development of Indian cultural precincts. Given the growing Indian population across the south-east, they are very keen to

hear what the plans of the government are, because little has been heard for three and a half years.

Western Victoria Region

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (12:53) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. I acknowledge that the minister provided a letter last March to the federal infrastructure and transport minister regarding adding Princes Highway west, which runs from Colac to the South Australian border, to the National Land Transport Network. In April this year, two months ago, our federal member for Wannon, Dan Tehan, copied me in on a letter to the minister urging him to take advantage of the 2018 review of the National Land Transport Network by again requesting inclusion in that review. My question is: Minister, have you made that further request to add Princes Highway west to the National Land Transport Network?

Southern Metropolitan Region

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (12:54) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Police in the other place. It relates to a phone booth in Dalgety Street, St Kilda, which has become, in the words of the local police inspector, ‘a suspected hub of illegal drug activity’. The police wrote to Telstra in May requesting its removal and described it as a place of interest. Telstra has declined to do this. They say it has the fourth highest usage of any phone box in St Kilda and responded to say, ‘Your staff’ — meaning the police — ‘may wish to conduct increased patrols over the site if all the illegal activity you stated is actually happening’.

Residents are very concerned by this issue. Telstra has suggested that they would be happy to work with the police by putting stickers inside the cabinet advising that the payphone is under surveillance, but of course that has not happened yet because CCTV continues to be blocked and delayed in that precinct by the Greens on Port Phillip City Council. Minister, what resources or other support will you provide to local police to address this latest crime problem on St Kilda hill?

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:55) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Regional Development, and it relates to the Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society, which before the last election received an election commitment that the government would provide \$5 million for relocation from its current site to a new site. It would appear that the agricultural

society has secured a new site for its operations, so I was hoping to ask the minister to confirm that these funds are indeed still available and when it is that they will be made available to the agricultural society for their planned move to a new site.

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (12:56) — My question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Just over a week ago constituents of mine living in the Tatura area received a letter from an advertising company, Revolver, of Maddison Street, East Redfern, in Sydney. The letter advised that the Midland Highway at Tatura was to be closed to all traffic between 7.00 a.m. and 9.00 p.m. on 30 and 31 May and possibly 1 June for the filming of a television commercial, which they later found out was to be an ad for a state government agency.

Locals found it most disappointing that the Andrews Labor government commissioned a New South Wales production company to produce the advertisement over the highly talented Shepparton production company Alchemy. Alchemy is an award-winning advertising production company that has produced commercials for international brands and national companies. It is also situated in Shepparton, less than 10 kilometres from the filming site for the commercial. Minister, why was a New South Wales production company chosen to produce a television commercial in my electorate over talented Victorian production companies, including the award-winning Shepparton-based producer Alchemy?

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (12:57) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Sport, and it is in relation to one of Warrnambool's strategic priority projects, and that is the Reid Oval redevelopment. The first phase of that redevelopment was done in 2015, yet despite repeated requests to the government in relation to the next stage, they have been ignored. So I am a little unclear whether it is the intention of the government to in fact fund the next stage of the development of Reid Oval, which is being used by a number of sporting groups right across the South-West Coast.

I congratulate the current member for South-West Coast in the Assembly, Roma Britnell, who has been a strong advocate for funding for the redevelopment of Reid Oval, as is the community. The question I ask the Minister for Sport is if it is in fact the intention of the government to fund the next stage of the upgrade of

Reid Oval, which it has been indicated will cost somewhere around \$7 million.

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (12:58) — My constituency question is to the Honourable John Eren, Minister for Sport in the other place. Across northern Victoria local sporting clubs are the lifeblood of many country towns, involving kids in football and netball. They make kids feel involved in their local community and bring country towns together. The Andrews government's country football and netball program is an important program, providing funding to assist country footy and netball clubs, associations and umpiring organisations to develop facilities in rural and regional locations.

The grants are for clubs that need assistance for change room facilities for players and umpires of both genders; the development or upgrading of local playing fields, both football and netball; and the development or upgrading of lighting facilities. Since 2014 the government has already provided grants in my electorate of Northern Victoria Region for footy and netball clubs such as Merbein, Sea Lake Nandaly, Rochester, Cohuna and Pyramid Hill. Greater Shepparton City Council recently applied for a country football netball program grant to help with a project for the Central Park Recreation Reserve netball court redevelopment in Shepparton. The project requires assistance with the construction of drainage around the courts and the installation of a new asphalt overlay and acrylic sports surface.

The PRESIDENT — Mr Gepp, your question please.

Mr GEPP — My question to the minister is: what is the passage of this application, and when can we expect the money to be available?

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.

NORTH RICHMOND SUPERVISED INJECTING FACILITY

Debate resumed.

Ms PATTEN (Northern Metropolitan) (14:03) — I would just like to finish up. Of course I have been delighted to be able to speak about the supervised injecting centre trial and the opportunities for health and safety and crime prevention that it will provide for North Richmond. Of course I do not support this motion because it is not true. The playgroups were not cancelled; the playgroups are still running. The centre

was always going to be at the North Richmond health centre, next to the school. It was always going to be there and it is going to be there now, and I am very much looking forward to it opening in a matter of weeks.

Do you know what? Point (3) was true. Research does show that playgroups offer a positive social experience; that is absolutely true. With this centre and this trial I hope that if the Liberals win this election they will allow this trial to continue, because I think it would be very sad to push drug use back onto the street and back into the faces of children. If we are to protect children, then we should be supporting the supervised injecting centre. I will finish up by reiterating my support for the centre and my opposition to the motion.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENTS

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (14:05) — I move:

That this house —

- (1) notes that on Wednesday, 23 May 2018, the following planning schemes were tabled —
 - (a) amendments C118 and C150 to the Banyule planning scheme;
 - (b) amendment C157 to the Bayside planning scheme;
 - (c) amendment C180 to the Darebin planning scheme;
 - (d) amendment C306 to the Melbourne planning scheme;
 - (e) amendment C177 to the Moonee Valley planning scheme;
 - (f) amendment C170 to the Moreland planning scheme; and
- (2) pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 revokes the amendments to the planning schemes outlined in paragraphs (1)(a) to (f).

The intent of this motion is to stop this Labor government's sell-off of our public housing estates. As part of its public housing renewal programs it has tabled planning scheme changes for six of its proposed sites that it cites are for renewal, but the intent and essentially what they achieve is a sell-off of public housing land to private developers.

I know that there are members in this place who will be tied or beholden to the positions of their respective parties on this motion. Regardless of those positions, however you have been told to vote on this motion, I urge you to keep an open mind during this debate so that you can fully hear the reasons why this motion is coming before this house. You may not want to hear the arguments that are dissident with your party position, but I implore you to listen and hear this afternoon. The reason I ask you to do this today is for the 82 000-plus people currently in housing stress and crisis on the waiting list for public and community housing in Victoria.

The people on this waiting list are all of us. These individuals and families — adults, teenagers and children — are the people that this Parliament and successive governments in Victoria have forgotten. I know how the people on either side of this place will respond to this motion. They will claim that each on the other side from themselves have spent X amount of dollars on some sort of solution — crisis response, affordable housing, new and innovative models for affordable housing, they will say — but that it is all too little, too late, because under their watch the problems have got worse. You cannot deny anymore that we need to do something drastically different to the approaches that have been tried before, over and over, and have continued to fail us.

Housing affordability across this country is at crisis levels. More young people than ever before cannot afford a home. Home ownership levels across all age groups are at the lowest levels seen for decades, and the need for housing assistance has skyrocketed. Just last year the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute in their report revealed for the first time the extent of the true and deep housing need in Australia. An estimated 1.3 million households were found to be in a state of need — that is, not being able to access market housing or in a position of stress — and this figure is predicted to rise to 1.7 million by 2025. If you think about that in another way, that is 14 per cent of all Australian households. That figure is staggering, and I say to the people in this chamber, in this Parliament and in parliaments alike across Australia: it is our responsibility to do something about it — because if we do not do something about it, who will?

Let us look at the scale of the housing crisis and the housing problems before us in Victoria, which is what is driving this motion. There are 37 000 household applications on the waiting list for public and affordable housing — 57 877 adults and 24 622 children. Victoria's public housing stock has remained static for the past 20 years at around 65 000 properties, and in

that time public housing has declined as a proportion of all housing in Victoria. Victoria now has the lowest proportion of public housing in Australia. That is shameful.

Median house prices in Melbourne are at about \$900 000 — a 300 per cent increase since 1995. No wonder we find these levels of housing stress before us. There has been a steady increase in the number of people who find themselves homeless in Victoria, and rough sleeping is estimated to have increased by 70 per cent in Melbourne alone. That covers about 7600 Victorians who are homeless, let alone those who number in the thousands who are the hidden homeless.

In the face of these distressing and despairing figures, what has been the response of this Labor government? The public housing renewal program they announced was supposed to help us address some part of this crisis, but it is actually a program that uses a very cleverly disguised name to sell some of the only land that we have to build more public housing on — the only land that we have on which we need to build more public housing now. Let me be clear: we are in agreement with the Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing that much of that stock needs renewal, but you do not renew housing estates and say this is going to tackle our waiting lists by selling the majority of the land, thereby reducing your capacity to build public housing into the future. The model is deeply, deeply flawed.

Much of the land that our current public housing stock is built on was gifted to the government of the day or to councils for the explicit purpose of providing more public and affordable housing. We are just learning of the story, for example, of one of the sites in this tranche of renewals at Gronn Place in Brunswick West, which we believe was gifted by a generous person — a local who wanted it to go to people who needed housing support. Imagine what Mr Gronn would think of this now — selling off the majority of that land, which was to have gone to a social good, to private developers so they can make megaprofits.

The reason we are moving these revocation motions is to stop the sell-off of this public housing land and to highlight just how deeply troubled this whole model is. The public housing renewal program is grossly insufficient. It claims to increase the stock of public housing by 10 per cent on each of the sites, but this is so minuscule and does not go any way towards addressing the real problems we see. In fact we will actually see a reduction in the number of bedrooms and therefore the capacity for people to be housed on each of those estates. How is that an increase?

The six developments in these revocations have about 620 public units to be built, up from the current 563. Imagine what you could build on those estates, even if you increased density somewhat, if you did not sell off that land. What a missed opportunity! The government claims that there is an outcome of social benefit for the public, for the community and for residents by introducing a social mix of private and public tenancies, but this is not supported by the evidence. I will expand this further on the basis of the inquiry into the public housing renewal program that was just released yesterday. We have seen previous examples of these types of public-private partnerships for public housing at the Kensington estate, which essentially reduced public housing capacity at Kensington and delivered profit margins of up to 50 per cent to private developers.

There are several other reasons these revocations should succeed and this public housing renewal program should be stopped. Public opinion is against this plan. Over the last couple of weekends I have spent time at two of these six estates — the Walker estate and Gronn Place — and I can tell you that residents are filled with uncertainty, anxiety and distress. Local councils and local communities are outraged that their planning powers and their rights as citizens have been stripped, and most of them want to be able to stand up for their public housing neighbours and friends, who they have grown their communities around.

While some in this Parliament might claim that the revocations are a drastic option, we have the power for this very reason. When we see something that is grossly unjust, unfair and flawed, as a Parliament we have to act, and this house has not been shy in using its powers to move a number of revocations over the last six months for these very reasons. Just yesterday we saw that the inquiry into the public housing renewal program, which was called for by the Greens, supported that with the outcomes of that inquiry and showed why that inquiry was so very necessary — to put the spotlight on the flaws, the lack of transparency, the lack of accountability and the sham that is this program. That needed to come to light. My colleague Ms Nina Springle was on the committee for the duration of this inquiry and has written a compelling and strong minority report that truly highlights the flawed nature of this program.

Firstly, there is the selling of the public land. This is based on a model of selling the majority of each of these sites to private developers to fund the renewals. I will talk more about this later in my contribution, but essentially this goes to one of the deepest flaws of this program — that the government claims it just does not

have the money, it only has \$185 million and therefore it cannot renew the existing public housing stock if it does not sell the land to private developers.

The current public housing estates are located really well, closely connected to social and community infrastructure and public transport, which is what we know the evidence says is important for good social outcomes for anyone who needs to access public or community housing. The government through the inquiry could not provide sufficient or compelling evidence that it had actually considered alternative models to renew the public housing estates. So on one hand it has said, 'We have no other option', and on the other hand it has not thought of any other option. The question is: why is this the first point of action for this government? Have developers been allowed to shape our program before housing experts, before policy experts and before the community?

The government did not have a sense of how much affordable housing actually would be achieved on each site. For a program that aims to deliver more affordable housing, they did not even know how much affordable housing would be delivered on each site. This goes to show you the lack of preparedness and how this program is not based on evidence. There was no cost-benefit analysis. The government is about to hand over large swathes of public land at discounted rates to developers, and there has been no long-term cost-benefit analysis of the social costs let alone the economic costs of giving this land at subsidised rates, which is what we believe will happen, based on the Kensington report.

This public housing renewal program is largely modelled on a number of pilot projects, including the Kensington redevelopment project, which highlights some very, very serious concerns about the pathway this government is taking. The Kensington report was suppressed by successive governments, and I note that the Minister for Families and Children claimed yesterday that I had grassy knoll conspiracy theories when I cited the findings of the public housing inquiry and what it found through the Kensington redevelopment evaluation. It is not a grassy knoll conspiracy theory; it is research evidence from one of the most pre-eminent research institutions in this country: the University of Melbourne. To attack the evaluation is to attack the research integrity of this institution. That evaluation found the land was significantly undervalued when sold to the developer — one-twentieth of the price, it is claimed; the ratio of public to private housing was not justified and represented a significant advantage to the developer; and the social mix, they claimed, did not

achieve the desired outcomes of the renewal project. These findings are alarming on so many fronts, and the suppression of these documents, even right through the inquiry, goes to show that this government does not want a light shone on its really flawed model.

The inquiry also found, very alarmingly, the true nature of the public housing waiting lists in this state. There are 82 499 people now in Victoria that this government is failing by keeping them on endless waiting lists, and perhaps on waiting lists that they will never realise housing from — 24 622 children are on those waiting lists. And yet what is the government's solution? 'We're going to renew some of these housing estates. We're going to provide 1800 more dwellings'. Eighty-two thousand people are waiting, and the solution is 1800 dwellings. The claim that this is addressing the waiting list is completely disingenuous.

The government claims that it wants to resolve a misalignment between demand and supply in terms of how many bedrooms each applicant needs versus what is available in its stock. With tens of thousands of public housing homes and with the renewal program that is earmarking 1800 new dwellings, how can the government claim that it will help align demand and supply by addressing one fraction of the actual waiting list and the actual stock? Once again it is a completely disingenuous claim to say that by increasing public housing by 10 per cent and reducing bedroom numbers across these estates — in the first six estates, for example — it will somehow align a waiting list of 37 000 applicants in terms of demand. I can assure you that on that list of 37 000 applicants there are thousands of families that need three-bedroom dwellings, and we would be able to address that alignment in a much more sophisticated and much more effective way if this government was actually serious about addressing the waiting list.

The consultation process through the inquiry was also found to be deeply flawed, and the inquiry spent a significant amount of time deliberating on how this process could be improved in the best interests of public housing tenants. There was a lack of transparency. There were documents submitted to residents that caused huge distress and anxiety, to the point where the department had to rewrite them. The minister made a pledge that people would be able to return once the redevelopments were complete, but it remains unclear how that is going to be possible when the number of three-bedroom dwellings is going to be drastically reduced and therefore there just will not be dwellings available for the families that want to return.

The planning process was confusing, with several processes occurring simultaneously, which distressed residents, who are already facing very vulnerable situations. Added to them were rehousing and moving complications, layered with a very complex planning process that was foisted upon them with little recourse for feedback. The government has chosen the least restrictive planning mechanism it can find for these sites — a development planning overlay system — and the inquiry spent time understanding why this was the case. Essentially what it will do is give developers the capacity to be able to change their plans later with the least scrutiny possible, with no consultation of the community, essentially giving developers free reign over these estates, which is public housing land.

One of the most serious and concerning aspects of this program, a question that remains unanswered, is about the land value of these public housing estates when sold to private developers. At the Kensington estate, one of the pilot sites for this project, the land was sold at one-twentieth of the market value. The government may claim that there will be a market valuation done and that it will be sold at market value, but what assurances do the public have that this will actually occur? The government must produce evidence that this is not being traded off as a subsidised deal to private developers, therefore forfeiting the public interest. It must do this before it moves any further on any of these renewal sites.

The social housing mix approach of the public housing renewal program also begs a number of questions. The government claims that it is doing this for a number of reasons, including to increase numbers, although by a minuscule amount, but also to introduce a social mix of public and private tenants on each of the sites. As the committee for the inquiry pored over it, the research was clear: if you want to get the benefits of a social mix, it has to be at a neighbourhood or precinct level, so we are talking between 4000 and 8000 people per site. This does not happen on a side-by-side basis with smaller sites, where you have 60 dwellings. The Victorian Council of Social Service itself submitted that the international research evidence suggests that the benefits of the social housing mix have been found in areas of greater disadvantage and of greater densities. That evidence does not apply to these sites. Once again, for the government to use an anecdotal claim that we are going to get a positive social outcome for this is truly disingenuous. The program is not going to achieve those outcomes, but the government will keep holding on to anecdotal claims that it will achieve them to push this program through, which is driven by an agenda that still remains unclear to me. It is not driven by an agenda of truly addressing the public housing crisis in the state.

Very concerning, the Victorian Auditor-General's Office found too that the Department of Health and Human Services did not have reliable data on the condition of existing public housing stock. So the government says, 'These housing estates need renewal desperately', but actually they have no real record of what needs improvement immediately. I have spoken to a number of residents who claimed that there are aspects of different sites that actually have been renewed quite recently that do not require a wholesale demolition and rebuild. They actually need proper maintenance.

One of the reasons that much of the stock is in need of some maintenance and renewal is because governments have failed to invest in maintaining them when they have needed to. If you run something down, it will break down. You cannot run it down and break it down and then say, 'Look, it's so broken that we have to fix it by giving away public land'. You have to invest in it properly from the very beginning. Once again, the government makes a completely disingenuous claim. The responsibility is on successive governments, successive housing ministers, who have left our public housing to deteriorate to drastic and terrible levels.

Over the last six months we have had a number of revocation motions moved in this house, and for each of those there has been concern expressed about whether this Parliament should use its power to revoke planning scheme amendments. There have been very compelling and significant arguments made about why these revocation motions are necessary, and if there was ever an instance where it was significant and important that this Parliament exercise its power, it is for this purpose — to stop this sell-off of public housing land and the gutting of our public housing system.

I note a colleague, Mr Davis, has cited on a number of occasions that he and his party are concerned about public housing and about the processes underwriting the Markham estate redevelopment. Twice this Parliament voted to revoke the planning scheme permissions for the Markham estate redevelopment, which essentially was another pilot site for the public housing renewal program — the same flawed model, the same poor outcome — and this Parliament said, 'We don't want it, and we're going to vote it down'. I urge those opposite who believed that we had justification to revoke the Markham estate planning scheme amendment to accept that there are no different reasons to not vote that way this time. The same argument is being made, albeit on a much grander and much more significant scale. Because what we are talking about now is the next six housing estates, and once they are done with these six estates, what will

come next? This government refuses to answer that question, but we know they are clearly wedded to this agenda. We do not know what deals are being done, but it feels like private developers are making deals behind closed doors with this government that the public are the last to find out about. So with all this evidence before us, with a significant public housing inquiry now completed thanks to the Greens, thanks to us standing up for public housing for the social good in this state, we have to ask: what is driving the agenda of this public housing renewal program?

Just this morning we were debating a motion to ask for greater transparency around another deal, where the AFL were potentially being gifted land to the tune of perhaps hundreds of millions of dollars for a project that the government has already committed \$225 million to. When the Treasurer was asked about what the value of the land was, he said the work just had not been done yet. So there is \$22 million-plus for the AFL and for elite sport, but there is only \$185 million for public housing. And let me remind you: that is over years — \$185 million spread over the next four years. The government cries poor and yet doles out hundreds of millions of dollars to big corporations. We have had Transurban and we have had Apple. We have had developers, cited in the Kensington report, that made profits of \$45 million because of the renewal of the Kensington estate. Is it the role of government to hand private developers huge, exorbitant profits? That is not our role. The government should be governing. We are not corporations. And when the government say, 'We've got to make a return on investment. It's really important that we make a return on investment', I remind them they are not a corporation. They are not making a profit to go back to their shareholders. They are governing for the good of all Victorians, particularly the Victorians that need them the most. Those 82 000 people on the waiting list are the people in this state that need you the most, and you are turning your back on them.

Perhaps what is most distressing about all of this is that this is coming from a Labor government, a Labor government that bandies its progressive credentials around at every turn, a Labor government that was supposed to be there for the people who need them in their times of most need. It was a Labor government that once saw the need for the state's role in providing housing to people in need and massively expanded public housing in the state. It is the reason — and I give credit where credit is due — that we have a number of these public housing estates in the first place. It takes vision and courage for anyone to be able to invest in a social good like this. At one point in history a Labor government had that courage, but no longer.

What each member of the Labor Party today is doing by agreeing to Minister Foley's plans is walking away from their own traditions, their own values and their own party's moral compass. Perhaps that is one of the most disappointing things about all of this. If you want to know why you are losing support, it is because of decisions like this. The public gets it. Every tenant in those public housing estates gets it, and they speak to us over and over again about not being sure about what is going to happen to their lives and asking why the government is leaving them behind. It is because of decisions like this, where you watch one party lurch to the right and the rest of you stay silent, because when you stay silent you too lurch to the right and abandon your moral compass and your values. This is a symptom of how the Labor Party has completely lost its way.

So let us remember \$185 million being put aside for public housing by this government when it found \$16 billion for a toll road and \$7 billion for its West Gate link. It has found money to give Apple their megastore at Federation Square. It has found money to give the AFL a shiny new headquarters, while people sit despairingly on this public housing waiting list, literally in life-and-death situations at times. It is a government that boasts a \$1.9 billion surplus, and yet it cannot find money for the people who need it the most.

We have heard from residents over the last few weeks who say they are not leaving their estates. The government is trying to get them out, and they are not leaving. So I ask you: on 24 November when people are in their housing states — at Gronn Place and Walker estate, amongst many others — and refusing to leave, are you going to send the police in to get them out? Will that be the headline on 24 November this year? Because that is what is going to happen. This community is not going to let you give away our public housing to private developers. We will not stand by. We will mobilise, and we will make sure this does not happen.

This is why you have to vote for our motion to revoke these planning scheme amendments. There is still a chance to renew these estates. Revoking these amendments does not stop the renewal of these public housing estates. We can go and renew them now. We have the money. If we had the political will and courage, we could do it right now. Voting for these revocations only has the effect of stopping the sell-off of this public housing land to private developers. We can renew those estates right now.

I urge this government to reconsider its position, to look deep inside itself and see if this is actually Labor's way,

because it does not feel like Labor's way at all — or maybe this is Labor's new way. I urge those opposite me who stood for the last few revocations and said this Parliament has a role and a right to intervene when it sees something like this happening, something so distressing that is going to harm many thousands of people, not just now but for generations to come, you can do something to stop it. Vote for the revocation motion today.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (14:33) — I rise to speak in opposition to this motion, and can I just say that having listened to Dr Ratnam speak in relation to this matter I want to remind her and members of her party that they have the power here today to enable these renewal projects to go ahead and to give thousands of Victorians languishing on the public housing waiting list now access to modern, safe, affordable social housing. So I am disgusted to be standing here today to effectively make the defence of new public housing that this government is trying to build both in my electorate and across Melbourne.

I have a particular interest in this issue because I represent the CBD, the inner suburbs of Melbourne and the northern corridor of Melbourne, where we have a lot of these ageing public housing estates and where we have had a lot of people historically also on the housing waiting list. So this has always been an issue that is very dear to my heart, to make sure that as a Labor government we are doing the right thing by disadvantaged families in this state and making sure they have access to social houses, and I am very proud of our record in this respect.

This motion seeks to revoke the planning controls for seven public house estates, all of them crying out for renewal. At the North Melbourne estate, for example, we have three-storey concrete and brick walk-ups which are dilapidated, cramped, horribly hot in summer and bitterly cold in winter, not to mention that these old buildings mean that the majority of tenants can only reach their homes by climbing up stairs, making it difficult and making life so much harder for our many public housing tenants who are ageing, who have physical disabilities or who have small children. These homes might have been appropriate when working-class families in the postwar era moved in, but they are totally inappropriate now for a generation that might well be in their 80s and their 90s. Imagine juggling four children and a load of groceries up three flights of stairs, because this is the reality facing so many of our public housing tenants now, who are dealing with these issues right across the city in these old walk-ups.

I have seen the regeneration that happened with the Carlton housing regeneration project that I was very pleased to be associated with. We replaced those Soviet-era walk-up flats — basically that is what they looked like, Soviet-era architecture — where people had to traipse up many stairs with shopping and with kids. Now we have got a net gain of public housing with modern buildings and a much better quality of life for the tenants.

This is the real experience of people like Amel, who recently lived at the Abbotsford Street estate and who made North Melbourne home for herself and her family after moving from Eritrea 11 years ago. Amel and her family have struggled with the crowded conditions and the lack of privacy at the old North Melbourne estate. These are places that are just well past their use-by date. I have no end of testimonials from people who have moved from some of these dilapidated old housing estates and moved into modern houses that we as a Labor government have funded and who are just absolutely thrilled with these improved outcomes.

So what we have seen is a coalition of the Greens party and the Liberals combining to block social housing time and time again, and I hate to see it happen again today. They will vote to condemn yet another generation of families like Amel's to housing poverty. They have slightly different motives but effectively the result is the same, because by voting together the result will be the same.

In March the Minister for Planning gazetted the planning controls for seven of the estates. These controls respond to the recommendations of a rigorous independent planning process, that will enable the relevant development of these run-down estates while delivering certainty to local communities. The public housing renewal program is about giving tenants access to safe, secure and affordable accommodation. It is about ensuring that our current and our future tenants do not continue to endure substandard living conditions and about building diverse and inclusive communities.

What we are going to see from these projects is guaranteed increases in public housing on every single side and net increases in housing — absolutely net increases — addressing the waiting list. What we are going to see is all new dwellings being built to a 7-star nationwide house energy rating scheme standard. You would have thought that the Greens party would think that is a good idea, having better environmental efficiency and making it cooler for tenants in summer and warmer in winter and therefore cheaper to run. Five per cent of the public homes that will be delivered will be fully accessible to people with a range of mobility

needs and disabilities, making sure that people of all abilities are able to access these homes and live comfortably. That again is something that is very important to me.

We have got projects and plans to build according to what is on the housing waiting list. We have had Auditor-General reports tell us that what we need to do is modernise our housing stock, so we are actually addressing the demand that is there for one and two-bedroom houses rather than very large properties that have sat more than half vacant in the past. Currently 80 per cent of demand is for one and two-bedroom dwellings, so why wouldn't we build to that demand? I know the Greens party have been critical of this in the past and have tried to scare families who need larger homes, but the point I want to make is that we actually want to build to demand. We know that there are so many people on the waiting list who only require one bedroom, so we are providing more properties that actually meet the needs of those who are on the housing waiting list.

We are also making sure that as many trees as possible are able to be retained, with a requirement in each development plan overlay for an arborist assessment to be undertaken to identify significant trees.

I know that the other thing the Greens party has been very big on — and I certainly saw this during the Northcote by-election — is to scare people who are on these estates about their ability to return. What it is important to understand is that the sector, that itself is very supportive of our projects, has developed a deed poll, which has involved the Federation of Community Legal Centres and the Victorian Council of Social Service, to give legal effect to the minister's pledge last year. This deed poll will be appended to the agreements of all tenants relocated as part of this public housing renewal project and will state that they have a right to return to the estate once it is complete, that their rent will remain calculated in the same way and that they will continue to enjoy the same security of tenure. So this is really putting a lie to the scare campaign that we heard from the Greens party during the Northcote by-election, and they continue to trot this out, that somehow people are going to be pushed out and that they will not have the ability to return.

This will mean that large families will also have the right to return to accommodation that suits their needs, and the department will work with developers to ensure that the dwelling configuration can be flexible to allow units to be joined together to make larger dwellings where that is required.

We have got an opportunity also to enable tenants to update their requests. In some cases they might want to relocate a bit closer to family members and other support networks or find a dwelling that better suits their needs. We need to have some flexibility there that also better meets the needs of our tenants as well. What we have seen is a whole range of conspiracy theories from the Greens party. We want to address the thousands of people who are languishing on our public housing waiting list at the moment.

As for the Liberal Party, we know what it is on about, we know what its agenda is, because we have seen this in the past. It goes a little like this: the first step is that it is going to boot out about 7000 public tenants, because they dare to find themselves a decent job. That is something we have seen before from Ms Lovell when she was the minister. There was the secret Vertigan report, and there was this agenda to basically privatise public housing as well as a whole range of other government services. The Liberals were specifically targeting people whose financial circumstances had changed. Then in step two it is going to sell off inner-city estates to its Liberal development mates whilst forcing remaining tenants out to regional areas. We have heard a lot from Matthew Guy lately about relocating populations out to regional areas. Step three of course is to profit — to sell off public housing and enable government to make a profit and of course help its donor mates along the way as well.

We know this is what its plans are because it is willing to tell anyone who will listen. We know that it should not support revoking these amendments. Then we have got the Liberals claiming the moral high ground. The only ground that it has got left after four long years on the benches opposite is some vacant grass where the old Huttonham estate used to be in Preston. This is an issue that is important to me because the Huttonham estate in Preston, at Stokes and Penola streets, when Wendy Lovell was the minister was demolished under the former Liberal government in 2011, and it lay vacant for three years due to a complete lack of investment in public housing. What we saw was that the Liberals kicked out tenants, it demolished the buildings and then it left it sitting there vacant, with no plan for addressing the public housing waiting list in Preston and in the northern suburbs, or anywhere else for that matter.

So what we have seen from those opposite is slash and burn. We know that the Royal Commission into Family Violence — and I know this is a report that clearly the shadow minister, Ms Crozier, has not read yet — found that the previous government cut \$330 million from public housing. This is not our government saying this, this is not the Labor Party saying this; the Royal

Commission into Family Violence did in fact find that the previous government cut \$330 million from housing.

So what we have seen is complete hypocrisy from those opposite, who have absolutely no commitment to addressing issues. We have got them crying crocodile tears like they care about low-income families in Assembly question time. We know what their secret agenda is, and that is to sell social housing, sell off public housing in this state. So what we would need here is —

Ms Fitzherbert — This is from a government that is selling off public housing.

Ms MIKAKOS — We are providing a net gain. We are putting in more public housing. We have a plan to renew and create more public housing. What happens when the Liberals are in town is that they identify all the public housing estates in prime real estate locations like in Williamstown. We know that they have plans to sell off the Williamstown high-rise estates —

Mr Finn — No, they didn't. I wanted to do that, and they wouldn't let me.

Ms MIKAKOS — Mr Finn said he wanted to do that but they would not let him. Thanks, Mr Finn, for at least being prepared to admit that that is something that you support.

What we have seen from those opposite is that they had a plan to flog off all the public housing in the prime locations, with no plan to actually provide for those on the housing waiting list. We want people to do the right thing today and support the growth of public housing.

We have got two sides of the fence here. Those opposite have different views on these issues, but they are working together and effectively preventing new public housing from being built in this state. What we have got from the Greens party is an ideology of pursuing outcomes at all costs, and when that fails we know that they like to claim credit for things that they have had absolutely nothing to do with. That is a pretty common occurrence from the Greens party.

But ultimately the problem with the Greens' position on this is it is reminiscent of the 1940s Victorian public housing commission videos. It is this panacea from decades ago where we had concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage all in one location. This is the great dream of theirs: to basically renovate buildings and keep people in the same locations — the same isolated, concentrated estates. Effectively what they want is to have a ghetto of poverty, of

disadvantage, in these housing estates, whereas our vision is to actually have greater diversification of the population, to have people from different income levels and different backgrounds all living together, coexisting, and to make sure that we do not have children only from the public housing estates going to particular schools and then having middle-class families moving their kids out and going to other locations. That was a shameful thing that happened in the inner city in the past. We had middle-class families taking those steps.

We want to have viable populations in communities in terms of the diversity of the housing. That also leads to children from various backgrounds living together, playing together, learning together in school, and it makes sure that we can promote social cohesion and diversity in our communities. But we have got the Greens party, which really just want to see renovations of those estates, when inquiry after inquiry reports have told us that this is unacceptable and unsustainable, and in fact the Auditor-General is saying that we need to address the needs in terms of the housing waiting list as well.

We know that the world has moved on and we are not operating in a postwar fantasy world. We have over 36 000 people on the Victorian Housing Register, and every day that the Greens party and the Liberal Party delay these projects and support these revocation motions the waiting list only grows longer. I saw media comments from the leader of the Greens party about this issue. Well, she is responsible for this. She was out yesterday complaining that the waiting list grew longer during the time of the inquiry — well, hello! That is the Greens party parliamentary inquiry. You have delayed these projects by months whilst you have pursued an ideological agenda. We have had more people languishing on the waiting list. What we have seen is a meeting of minds. They have got different ideological views, but there is a meeting of minds here politically from the Liberal Party and the Greens party when it comes to this debate.

We have seen it in relation to the Markham estate redevelopment in Ashburton. We saw how they aligned their views there. They criticised those projects, saying they are either too dense or too tall — nimby arguments from the coalition members in particular. It really disturbs me that the Liberal Party pretends to care about these issues, when really it is dog whistling about nimby arguments, scaring people in communities like Ashburton by suggesting that we are going to bring public housing tenants into their community and somehow that is a bad thing. We do not take that view. We think we need to provide for all Victorians

regardless of their income level, level of disadvantage or ethnic background. We know we have got great diversity in our public housing estates, and we want to make sure that these people are looked after.

It has been interesting to see the coalition run these nimby arguments and complain about density issues and about height issues, because this comes from a party led by a former planning minister. We know what Matthew Guy's track record was in relation to these matters when he was the planning minister. We had call-ins. We had Robert Maclellan, a former Kennett government planning minister, sitting in the public gallery on a regular basis. I remember him coming in, watching Matthew Guy when he was in this house, catching up with Matthew Guy to do a bit of lobbying on the side about what his developer mates needed to have looked after. That was very apparent. They were brazen about it. They were not even hiding it. It was pretty brazen. We had massive numbers of call-ins. We had dodgy deals for developer mates whilst Matthew Guy was planning minister. He did not care about density at all when they rezoned Fishermans Bend overnight in 2012 and removed all the height controls.

Mrs Peulich — On a point of order, Acting President, the minister is reflecting on another member and that is actually against standing orders.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Thank you, Mrs Peulich, for your point of order. Whilst I do not think in this instance I will ask for a withdrawal, I think the minister was probably flying pretty close to the line with regard to some of those comments. I might ask the minister to align her contribution a little more closely to the motion as it is stated on the notice paper.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you, Acting President Morris. These issues are directly to the point, because what we have had from those opposite is criticism about the nature of the proposed redevelopments — the planning issues. They have actually been critical about the planning aspects of these particular projects, so it is really important to compare and contrast what their rhetoric is now in relation to this debate and what their track record was when they actually had the levers of power and they were actually in government and we actually saw the planning outcomes during Matthew Guy's time as planning minister.

We saw no consultations from Matthew Guy as planning minister. We saw a complete lack of consultation. We saw a complete lack of planning controls. We saw the constant calling in of planning matters. We know that was designed to help a Liberal

donor make a quick buck, so we know what was going on there. They did not care about schools. We have had to fix up a whole big mess in Fishermans Bend because they did not allow for planning for schools and for the other public amenities that that community would need in the future. They were very quick to rezone it and let their developer mates make millions. 'Let the market take care of all of that' — we know that is their philosophy. 'The market will take care of everything that the community needs', according to the Liberal Party.

I think it is interesting that we have got this unholy alliance happening here between the Greens party and the Liberal Party in relation to these matters. It is very curious that we have got so many people languishing on the housing waiting list. We have got public housing estates that are well located in bustling communities. We know that they have got access to public transport, schools and employment opportunities — all the things that communities and Victorians need to thrive — and we want to ensure that we have got more affordable housing close to these existing services to give all these people living in these estates the same opportunities that we want for all of our families and for all of our constituents. We do not believe in segregation, and we do not believe in having ghettos. We want to make sure that we have got diverse populations living together — coexisting together — and that they are not car dependent and can use public transport. These are things that you would have thought the Greens party would support — spending less time in traffic, reducing our carbon footprint, making sure we can modernise our housing and making sure we have got people living in these important locations.

What we have seen from the so-called party of the environmental movement is them stopping homes from being built in these well-serviced areas because of nimbyism. I can only put it down to that. They talk the talk on housing affordability and sustainable living, but when it comes down to it they oppose anything that obstructs their view of the city skyline. They are not interested in that. Representing a community that covers the inner-city suburbs, I see this play out — an awful lot of rhetoric, talking the talk but not walking the walk when it comes down to it.

This contrasts with our track record, and this is one that I am very proud of. I am proud that our government's record investment is over \$1 billion in housing and homelessness since 2014. We have put our money where our mouth is, unlike the coalition of the unwilling over there. We are preparing for the future through an additional \$1 billion investment in our Social Housing Growth Fund. Our Homes for

Victorians package will help more than 19 000 Victorians access sustainable housing and affordable housing. It will deliver more than 6000 social housing properties. In addition to building public housing, we are also helping to unlock the supply of more affordable homes for key workers in the inner city so that they can be closer to jobs and services. We have learnt from the mistakes of the failed 20th century public housing estate model, and we will not be replicating this through concentrations of disadvantage.

We have heard from those opposite about the thousands of people languishing on the Victorian public housing register, yet they do not want to hear about the needs of these people in this debate. They think that we should continue to have three or four-storey redundant walk-up flats, whilst we want to give people access to safe, affordable, modern homes.

Whilst we are doing this, what we are seeing from the commonwealth is the national partnership running out at the end of this month, I recall — and not a peep from them. What has happened recently in my own portfolio area is that Simon Birmingham had a meeting with state and territory ministers a few days before the federal budget. He did not give an inkling — not an inkling — that he was about to walk away from a national partnership agreement that relates to the regulation and safety of child care and other early years services. He did not give an inkling he was going to walk away from this national partnership agreement that has been around for close to a decade, yet that national partnership was torn up.

I am very concerned about what the Turnbull government's plans are for this housing and homelessness national partnership. It is very concerning that we are getting close to the end of the financial year, yet we have not seen any action from them in relation to this issue. Not only that, they are threatening \$395 million in cuts — shifting all responsibility and ignoring their tax levers that drive our housing crisis. They have got absolutely no interest in doing anything in this particular space.

The other thing that is worth mentioning is in relation to the Andrews Labor government's track record in this space. By 30 June 2018, the end of the financial year, we are set to have built 86 672 social housing units — a new record.

Ms Shing — That's extraordinary.

Ms MIKAKOS — That is an extraordinary number, Ms Shing — an absolutely extraordinary number —

and plenty more are coming, despite opposition from those opposite. I want to commend Minister Foley, because he has shown absolute dedication in his three and a half years as minister to this important issue — making sure that more Victorians are getting access to social housing and public housing in this state. We have got a \$1 billion Social Housing Growth Fund that will add 2200 more homes in four years.

We have had the shadow minister out yesterday talking about the cause of people being on the housing list being somehow all related to electricity costs. She happens also to be the Shadow Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. It is astounding to me that continuously she does not see the link between family violence and people on housing waiting lists. I am just incredulous that, more than two years after the family violence royal commission, we are yet to see a response to that royal commission report, which also talks about the need for more housing. If Ms Crozier were actually genuinely committed to supporting the victim survivors of family violence, then she would support these planning scheme amendments. She would not be supporting these revocations. How can she say that she cares about victim survivors yet she does not want to give them access to more housing?

What we have done is we have invested \$152 million in our family violence housing blitz, addressing the fastest growing category of homelessness — that is, women escaping family violence. I am pleased that in my own portfolio we have had more money in the budget this year for the flexible funding that we provide to family violence victims that enables them to upgrade their homes through improved security to keep family violence offenders out. It also enables them to relocate elsewhere and pay for those basic necessities — new whitegoods, clothes for themselves and their kids, books for their kids, school uniforms and all those things that they might need to leave behind as they are fleeing for their own safety. We are providing that funding, as we have done previously during our term of government, to make sure we give people the supports that they need.

There is a very strong correlation between issues like family violence and people languishing on housing waiting lists. I really want to implore those opposite, particularly Ms Crozier, to have a good hard think about this issue, because there is a very strong linkage. If she cannot see the link between her own portfolios that she purports to take an interest in —

Ms Crozier interjected.

Ms MIKAKOS — What? Are you getting a bit touchy, are you?

Ms Crozier — On a point of order, Acting President, I have been listening to Ms Mikakos's ridiculous commentary about her view on what I might or might not think about family violence. Can I ask her to stop verballing me, and I would ask you, Acting President, to guide the minister on her responses in this room.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Morris) — Thank you, Ms Crozier. Further to the previous ruling that I made, I think perhaps the minister may be straying a little further away from the motion as written on the notice paper. I would encourage the minister to come back to the motion itself.

Ms MIKAKOS — Thank you very much, Acting President, but the point that I am making is that there is a very strong correlation between those people languishing on the public housing waiting list who are there as a result of being victim survivors of family violence. I really think that it is important for coalition members to understand that link, because the fastest growing category of homelessness is women escaping family violence.

Ms Shing — They are blind to it.

Ms MIKAKOS — How they can be wilfully blind to it, Ms Shing? I am incredulous at the fact that they do not see the connection there. What we have got from those opposite is just pure ideology when it comes to the Greens party. We have got a complete lack of commitment to anything to do with public and social housing from those over on the opposition benches, whose track record we know is just to flog it off to the highest bidder. We are getting on with rebuilding run-down estates in Ashburton, Preston, Flemington, Prahran, Ascot Vale, North Melbourne, Brunswick, Northcote, Clifton Hill, Heidelberg West, Hawthorn and Brighton.

We are building 30 modular units on under-utilised land, despite the Liberal candidate for Brighton's opposition to poor people living near the Golden Mile. We are transforming rooming houses such as Elenara, which the minister recently opened, Layfield Street, Ascot Vale, Flemington, Carlton and Ballarat. We are responding to the immediate need of people on these waiting lists. Minister Foley has a homelessness and rough sleeping action plan giving more rough sleepers a new housing pathway. There is a housing strategy, *Homes for Victorians*, underlying the strength of our commitment working across government to tackle the

growing issue of housing affordability. That stands in contrast to those opposite, who just hate social housing and the Greens party commentators who like to make a virtue of joining them in opposing homes for those in need.

I just want to conclude my contribution with the views of not just the Labor government but a diverse range of views that have been expressed around these issues. There is a very diverse range of views that have been expressed here from people in the housing sector right through to people in the business community, all saying, 'Let's get on with it', all expressing their dismay at these revocation motions. There was a media release on 5 June from the Council to Homeless Persons, and I quote from this release:

Victoria's peak body for homelessness is dismayed to learn that tens of thousands of children are living in limbo on social housing waiting lists while plans for new social housing dwellings are being roadblocked in Parliament.

This is the peak body, which is a strong advocate for those who are experiencing homelessness, really making the argument that when we have got thousands of people languishing on housing waiting lists and so many people who are homeless — and they say this in the media release — the housing waiting list figures should be a wake-up call to those opposing the redevelopment of these public housing sites. That is the language of the Council to Homeless Persons saying that the waiting list data should be a wake-up call. I certainly reiterate that. I think that it certainly should be a wake-up call to those who are supporting this motion.

There we have got the Victorian Public Tenants Association, which also issued a media release on 5 June expressing concern again about these matters. I quote from this media release:

At no point does the report state that the public housing renewal program should be temporarily halted or permanently rejected. It is therefore concerning that the Victorian Greens are tomorrow —

being today —

tabling a motion to reject the program in full — putting the lives of public housing tenants in limbo.

They went on to say:

The VPTA calls on the Liberal-National coalition to reject any motion from the Greens that seeks to disrupt the program.

So we have got again the Victorian Public Tenants Association saying that there is nothing in this public parliamentary inquiry saying that there is any justification for halting or rejecting what we are trying to achieve here and urging all parties here to oppose

any revocation motions. That is from the advocates in the housing space.

From the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) we have again got concerns. When we had the revocation of the Markham estate amendment in November last year, we had comments as follows from VCOSS:

VCOSS is outraged the Victorian Parliament has blocked the construction of new public housing planned for Melbourne's east.

More than 60 public housing units intended for the Markham estate in Ashburton are now at risk, because Liberal and Greens MPs in the upper house have united to block them.

Victoria is facing an unprecedented housing affordability crisis. For many Victorians, public housing is all that stands between them and homelessness ...

They went on to say:

Politics shouldn't be allowed to get in the way of new public housing.

...

The Victorian Parliament must ensure new social housing is delivered as quickly as possible.

That is from VCOSS, saying, 'Don't play politics with this. Get on with it. Deliver this housing as quickly as possible'.

Moving on to people who might be regarded, I guess, as being ideologically more in line with the Liberal Party's view of the world, the Property Council of Australia, in a letter dated 5 June 2018 addressed to members of Parliament, said:

The Property Council has consistently advocated for the preservation of certainty and transparency in the planning system. Political intervention in the planning system does nothing for the community, is costly and damages investor confidence in the Victorian economy. Victoria's planning system should be evidence led, not emotionally driven.

So we have got the Property Council of Australia basically saying to the Liberal Party, 'Don't play politics with this'. We have the farcical situation where in the past revocation motions have been pretty rare — few and far between —

Mr Davis — Brian Tee tried a whole set of them.

Ms MIKAKOS — They were rare. They were few and far between, and there were very strong reasons at the time, whereas here it has become a monthly occurrence.

Mr Davis interjected.

Ms MIKAKOS — It is no wonder that the property council is concerned with this, because we know that the Liberal Party —

Mr Davis interjected.

Ms Shing — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Davis came into the chamber relatively recently, and before that we were listening without being interrupted. I am sitting directly behind the minister and I am finding it difficult to hear her, so if Mr Davis could wait until his contribution, that would be —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Thank you, Ms Shing. That is not a point of order.

Mr Davis — On the point of order, Acting President, she is factually incorrect. I have been here the whole time —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Mr Davis, it is not a point of order, but I am having trouble hearing the minister as well.

Ms MIKAKOS — I know who has been here and who has not. If you want me to name you all in future, I will, because there have not been a lot of people sitting on the opposite benches.

Coming to the point, however, we have got concerns from the property council. We have had similar concerns from the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA), and we know you have got some friends at the UDIA. I will not digress because it would be a very long digression, talking about your friends. The UDIA expressed concerns in November 2017, again during the Markham and Ormond revocation motions. At the time they said:

Parliament is not a planning authority ...

They went on to say:

The volatility caused by recent revocations of planning scheme amendments have the potential to compromise Victoria's attractiveness as an investment destination, and Melbourne's position as a global city ...

Then we have got concerns from local government. The concerns continue. We have got concerns expressed by the City of Moonee Valley in a letter dated 4 June 2018 and sent to members of Parliament. They go specifically to the amendments that relate to the Moonee Valley planning scheme of course, and particularly they express their support for the Flemington estate redevelopment. They actually explicitly say in this letter that they support the Flemington estate redevelopment. They go on to

mention the quality and quantum of public housing in the walk-up flats along Holland Court:

These dwellings are in an appalling condition and require immediate attention. As we all know, DHHS has a long tenant waiting list, and council welcomes proposals to increase the public housing stock on each site by at least 10 per cent.

I could quote extensively from this letter, but the key point here is that the City of Moonee Valley, as the local council representing the area that covers the Flemington estate, is strongly supporting this particular redevelopment project and is urging MPs to get on with it. They are saying, 'Get on with it'. I know the Greens party have a lot to say about the autonomy of local councils, but when it comes to this matter they obviously do not particularly care what the City of Moonee Valley has to say at all.

Then we have got the City of Banyule, which has a different political complexion. They wrote a similar letter on 4 June 2018 to Minister Foley. This letter relates to the Banyule planning scheme amendment and says:

Council made a submission to the amendment generally supporting the redevelopment, and making suggestions relating to the proposed planning scheme provisions, built form, car parking ...

So we have got a whole range of stakeholders here — from those working with people on the housing waiting list who are experiencing homelessness to those in the business community and those in local government — all saying that the politicking in relation to this issue needs to end and it is time for us to get with the project, so to speak. They are saying that the revocation motions should end and the government should be allowed to proceed with these projects. We know that this is going to build thousands more modern housing units for those who are on the waiting lists. We are going to see modern, safe, affordable housing for those who are currently in public housing, and these are all projects that are worthy projects. They are important projects, and we need to see the politics end. This motion should be opposed. We need to get on with it and enable this government, which gets things done, to build more public and social housing in Victoria. I urge all members to oppose this motion.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (15:15) — I am pleased to make a contribution to this motion moved by Dr Ratnam. This unfortunately is an extreme motion. I am going to talk about the history of revocation in this chamber. This is far and away the most extreme step that we have seen in this approach. It seeks to revoke the planning amendments for public

housing projects C118 and C150 in Banyule, C157 in Bayside, C180 in Darebin, C306 in the City of Melbourne, C177 in the City of Moonee Valley and C170 in Moreland. It seeks to use the powers under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, section 38(2).

It is important to understand the history of this. The Planning and Environment Act gave powers to the minister to promulgate planning scheme amendments to make planning changes, and that was entirely appropriate. The chambers at the time kept to themselves the power to revoke or to stop a planning scheme amendment as a check and a balance on the Minister for Planning, whoever that may be from time to time. It was entirely appropriate that either chamber alone could take the steps that are required to check and make sure that the planning scheme amendments that were being put through were in the public interest.

But that does not mean that this is a power that is used often. It is a power that is used sparingly — rarely — and it is a power that ought to be used in a considered manner. It is a power where close examination of the detail of each project is required, in my view, to allow a sincere and sensible use of this revocation power. The property industry correctly points out that there is an aspect of uncertainty, but let us be clear: this is within the powers in the Planning and Environment Act. It is a lawful power. It is structured in such a way that the government is required to gazette a planning scheme amendment and then table it in the chamber within 10 days. The chamber then has 10 further sitting days in which to make a decision within its powers under the Planning and Environment Act as to how it will manage that particular planning scheme amendment.

It is true that planning scheme amendments were revoked in this chamber in 2010 — the Barwon Heads bridge. It is true that a former member for Eastern Metropolitan Region, Mr Tee, as we have just heard from the minister, did indeed move revocation motions, so I am in no mind to be lectured by the government or indeed anyone else about the use of revocation motions. I am in no mind for little homilies being pushed across the chamber by the minister when she was one who voted in favour of revocation motions herself when in opposition in this chamber, sitting not very far from where I am standing now. Now she has left the chamber. She has fled from the chamber, it would appear.

The point is that in those days those revocation motions were unsuccessful; the chamber did not support them. There was not a majority to support them. But Mr Tee, who was then the shadow Minister for Planning for the opposition, went further. Where he failed with a

revocation motion within the structure of the Planning and Environment Act, he was quite prepared to go outside that and then to say, 'We don't care. If we're elected in 2010, we're going to tear up the arrangements that have been put in place in any event'. He did that with the City of Moonee Valley. He made direct threats to developers and others associated with that to tear up the arrangements despite the fact that he had been unsuccessful in his approach within the lawful structure.

This is very much an east-west link-type situation. There is a lawful way to do this. The Planning and Environment Act 1987 lays out the correct structure and the time lines. If it is not completed within that, my view is that the law of the land stands and it operates from there. But that was not Mr Tee's or Labor's approach. They thought that they could come back and have a second bite if they won in 2014.

The point about this is that this is not a case where Labor is in a position to lecture anyone. I will also say on revocations that we will on each occasion look at the merits of each specific case one by one. We will actually do the work to talk to the local authorities, talk to local communities and talk to relevant parties, and we will seek some input as to what is going on in a specific circumstance. I reject the points made by the minister — who has since fled the place — that in some way that is a wrong approach. It is a right approach, because it does require the detail and it does require you to examine the merits of the proposal. Does this stack up financially? Is this a proper and good use of public land in this case? I will say more about that in a moment. And does this lead to an improved amenity and a balancing of the various interests and challenges on any particular project?

This chamber dealt with the Markham project recently. In that case we knew the government was out seeking super profits because an FOI search of their own documents proved it. They were actually their own words. They used that term repeatedly throughout those documents. In the case of Markham we know that it did not meet the community support objective. There was direct opposition. It was an out-of-scale development that paid no heed to the creek and the area around it. We know that the process in that case was quite wrong too, and for that reason the chamber moved to revoke that planning scheme amendment — the first one. Then the government came back for another bite, and we revoked it then too. That is because it was a bad proposal. The net benefit for the community was not there, and the Parliament used that power in the Planning and Environment Act as a check and as a balance to stop a bad project.

But in this case we have the opposite occurring. Dr Ratnam, with the greatest respect, you have brought a motion to the chamber which is an omnibus motion. I understand that there is an ideological opposition to the model that is being used with these redevelopments. I respect the fact that there is an ideological view here — a hard-left ideological view that I do not share. Many in the chamber do not share it. It is for that reason that you brought a motion that has a slew of revocations all in one, failing to treat the merits of each one in a considered way in the context of the particular local areas. I will say something about that in a moment — about the specifics of the individual projects and what that might mean in those particular areas.

There is scope to look at the detail of each of the individual projects — that is what, in my view, you should do. In this chamber we saw the Urban Renewal Authority Victoria Amendment (Development Victoria) Bill 2016 go through. In that case, the Development Victoria bill, I sought to move an amendment that would have required the government to seek the approval of the councils. The amendment used the words 'must have the approval' of the local responsible authority or the local municipal authority. That was defeated. The Greens voted against that motion. Labor voted against that motion. It was defeated, and in a number of these projects Development Victoria may well end up as the proponent and in a number of other cases, and I think the involvement of local councils and local communities is absolutely paramount.

We have seen with this government a developing trend to ignore local communities — to ride roughshod over them. I think that that failure to consult properly is a tremendous concern. The way this is developing is a tremendous concern because what it does is diminish projects. It diminishes community support for projects. If people feel they are being hoodwinked or ridden roughshod over, they will arc up and they will say, 'No, we don't want this particular project in our area'. So you do need to have a process that genuinely listens, genuinely engages with the community and does not ride roughshod over them, as this government under Daniel Andrews is making an art form of.

Almost wherever you look, wherever there is a project in operation, their government — this government, the Labor government — is riding roughshod over local communities. It is not listening, it is not moderating projects and it is not fitting them to what the community wants. It is doing this in a nasty way, an aggressive way and a very unhelpful way, which brings some of the projects which may have merit — in some cases — into disrepute.

I think it is also important here to note that this set of public housing projects does have merit in concept. We know that the public waiting list has grown significantly. I pay tribute to the work of Ms Fitzherbert's committee, which reported yesterday. It is clear that under Labor in this period of government the waiting list for public housing has blown out significantly. That is a set of people who deserve support and assistance from the community, and Labor has not been providing that.

The Greens would make the point that there ought to be public money — more public money — put into this, and that is a legitimate political point to make. I do not have the same ideological objection if Labor is using a model where there is a mixed private and public component. I can see that that can work, but it is still contingent on the detail of the project. It has to stack up individually. You actually need to look at the detail of the project and understand whether that project is actually going to deliver value for that community, whether it is going to deliver the public housing outcomes that are required and whether it is going to do that in a way that does not diminish unreasonably the amenity of local residents in and around the project, as the government was intending to do in the case of Markham.

There is a need to replace the clapped-out, run-down public housing that is very much a part of our system. A series of locations have been pointed to by Ms Fitzherbert's inquiry, which looked closely at the detail of a number of those. We will have further discussions with government on a number of those over the next period, I have no doubt. The need to replace the public housing in a number of these locations is undoubted, but the model that you do it with is a matter of debate in each particular case. What is important here is what is there now and what is the replacement outcome that is intended by the government or the proponents in each of these cases. Will there be an increase in the public housing component? Well, all of the figures that I have seen across this range of projects is that, net, there may be more units, more actual residences, but the capacity in some cases will diminish. So the question is: is this a good outcome? Is it a satisfactory outcome in each case? I think that they are legitimate points.

I know that when Ms Lovell was the minister on the projects she delivered there were very significant increases in the outcomes. I know that at Atherton Gardens the public housing component went from 824 to 800, the affordable component was 256 and the private component was 766. So the total was 1822, but there was a significant increase in the affordable

component that went with this. The Horace Petty estate in Prahran went from 617 to 684, so there was an increase of 67 in the number of public housing dwellings, and also a significant affordable component of 294, with a private component of 893, bringing it to 1871. The Richmond estate went from 1183 to 1267 in terms of the public housing component. That was an increase of 84 overall. The affordable component was 602, with 1802 private units, bringing it to 3671. Overall there was a very significant increase in public housing across those components and there was also a significant component of affordable housing. So on those cases, on balance, there was a good outcome for the community, and I pay tribute to the work of the department and Ms Lovell in delivering that. I make the point that this is not always the case with this particular government.

You need to also look at the impact on local communities and on local traffic flow. Where are the plans, in many cases, to deal with an increased population, to deal with the local schools and local services? In many of these cases we are not seeing a parallel plan that actually delivers additional capacity into local schools, additional capacity into local services and additional traffic management and parking capacity in particular areas. Government is not, it seems to me, in general dealing with that aspect of it well. I am making a broad criticism here, dependent again on the precise detail of each location, and I will say some more about a number of these locations in a moment.

It is also important in these cases to think about the actual planning outcomes. How do they actually sit with the local community? The example I have given of Markham was the case of a poor planning outcome — a large tower in an area that was not supportive of that high-density development. We know that the current government has got an absolute obsession with densification. It is not me saying this; it is them saying it. The minister said it. Infrastructure Victoria said it. One of their prime objectives is densification. But it is not densification with protections, not densification with the support of additional services and not densification where it is appropriate.

This is a headlong rush into forced densification that the government wants to push through in many of our suburbs, without a sophisticated and thoughtful approach to making sure that the services that parallel increased population, that are needed to support increased population, are actually part of the outcome. It does not matter whether it is sewerage, whether it is water, whether it is open space. We do not hear a lot about the increased open space that is needed to support a denser and increased population. You think if you are

doing that kind of densification, you would need to have a plan for increased public open space to enable people to recreate, and that is not often part of these plans. I am just making some more general points here.

I want to now move to the specifics of a number of these schemes. I am not going to cover every single one, but I am going to cover a couple of points here. The City of Banyule has corresponded with us. I sought information from each of the municipalities that are involved, and I thank those that have provided detailed information to me. I have also had briefings and I have certainly looked closely, I might add, at the work that has been done by the parliamentary committee on which a number of people who are in the chamber now sit and which Ms Fitzherbert chairs.

In the case of Banyule — these are planning schemes amendments C115 and C158 — it is very clear that the council supports the proposals that are put forward by government in this particular case. In that sense I think it is a big call to flatly knock out the planning scheme amendment in this context.

In the case of Moonee Valley, I note mayor Sipek's contribution, and I thank him and the CEO, Bryan Lancaster, for the assistance they have provided in this case and the correspondence and detailed information that they provided. It is clear that Moonee Valley council is not unsupportive of the government's intention in this case and it is not unsupportive of the particular proposals that have been put in place. In that context I think that there is a reasonable point.

I make the caveat here that councils have got a role to actually get in and advocate for the outcomes that they want in their community. They have a role to say, 'This is not an appropriate site' or 'We need to moderate this particular plan. We need to make sure that there is more open space nearby. We need to make sure that the drainage of these sites is dealt with adequately'. All of these details are actually very appropriate caveats to put on each of these developments to say, 'Actually, the work has to be done'. I am not sure that in every case it has, and I will come specifically to one of these cases in a moment where I think that has not been brought to an outcome that the community is happy with.

In the case of Melbourne, I have spoken to the new Lord Mayor. I take this opportunity to put on the record my congratulations to mayor Sally Capp on her election. I have known Sally Capp for a long time, as many of us have, and I think she is a person of great merit, a person of integrity. I think it is a significant opportunity that she has as mayor of the City of Melbourne, a lead for our municipalities in one sense,

being the capital city mayor, but also an opportunity to lead a significant reinvigoration of Melbourne and an opportunity in this case. I thank her for her comments on matters surrounding amendment C306. I think it is true to say that she supports this proposal that has been brought forward by government and does not support the revocation of the planning amendment in this case, and I think that is broadly the case across Melbourne in this circumstance.

Again, I think it is hard to justify a blanket knockout of planning scheme amendment revocations in a slew, in a holus-bolus way. This is not the way that we can really approach these matters. They have got to have much more thought, much more characterisation of the individual detail of what is going on in a particular location. I understand the Greens have an ideological view against the involvement of the private sector in these matters, but, again, I make the point that I have no ideological view on this. I look at the practical outcomes, the aspects of what is actually going to happen on the site; what the outcome is for public tenants that are in those sites currently; what the outcome is for the surrounding community; and whether that is good value for the community for what are very significant public assets in that land.

The motion also looks at amendment C157 to the Bayside planning scheme. I pay tribute to the municipality of Bayside — the mayor, the CEO and others who have met with a number of us and discussed this in detail. This amendment relates to the New Street estate in Brighton. I have to say that a number of aspects about this trouble me, such as the proximity to the Elsternwick canal and the decision of the government to push for a greater height than I think is preferred by the local community. I and others have met with North Brighton residents and have a number of concerns about the way the government has gone about this project, the lack of engagement and, again, the almost zealous and obsessive push by government for increased density.

I understand that there is a legitimate case for use of public land and getting an outcome in terms of replacing bad old stock, and no-one would argue that the stock in New Street is not clapped out and is not in a position of needing to be replaced in a short period of time. Everyone supports the objective of replacing that public housing stock. I am going to use this as a case in point. We need to have regard for the people for whom the current public housing stock is their home — and this applies across this list of planning scheme revocations and projects. They need to be treated with decency and respect, and they need to have confidence in the processes that are being embarked upon in some

cases. I am not sure that that is the case in each of these circumstances. I know that there are a number of people who are concerned, and I for one do not trust —

Ms Lovell interjected.

Mr DAVIS — I am happy to sit down if you would like and I will continue next week, but I am not going to conclude until I have gotten through all of these in detail.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr DAVIS — No, I am serious. There is some detail. Your minister went for 50 minutes.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — I was here the whole time. It was a long contribution. If you want to put forward a motion that covers seven different pieces of land, that actually covers significant detail —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — I am sorry, I am trying to be fair here, and I am working through this in a systematic way. I am using this as a case study for others as well. The people who are resident in a particular location deserve proper respect and proper support.

The council's view of this Bayside scheme is that it is overly dense and overly high, although better than the earlier versions that were proposed. They support the public housing provision — the renewal of the public housing matters. The point I would also make here is that I know our candidate for the Assembly seat of Brighton, James Newbury, has been active in seeking to support the local community on these matters, and he has certainly forcibly put their views to me and to others about the significance of this section of development.

It is true to say that the local community feels that this is an overdevelopment of the site. I concede that if I was the planning minister, I would be looking at a different development on this site. I have no doubt that if Ms Crozier was the housing minister, she would also be looking at a very different and more moderate development on the site. But that is not the case. We are confronted with what has come forward, and we have been confronted with a significant slew of revocations in one hit, which is frankly too far from what is reasonable to support.

In that sense it is not our intention to support this motion. In the case of New Street, looking at the cycle ahead we will look closely at this. If we come to government in November, we will work to get a better outcome for the local community. It is my understanding that contracts have not been signed, and I would urge the minister and the government to think carefully about the input from the local municipality and local residents about a better planning outcome on this site. This is a site that is an inherently tricky piece of land, and there has obviously been public housing there for a long period, but the intensity that is proposed here is greater than is appropriate. I think that the issue of open space is a live one in this context, and I do not think that this proposed model covers off on that open space component.

I make a further point about the need for a model that is actually a fair model, that gets a good outcome, that is not ideological and that does utilise the private sector. I have no difficulty with private sector involvement — superannuation fund involvement or other involvements — where there is a longer term focus. But on this motion I would significantly make the point that it is frankly a 'fairies at the bottom of the garden' idea that you could knock out seven planning scheme amendments in one go. I do not think the consultation has been sufficient, but leaving that aside, just on the pure merits of this approach of a massive revocation-fest where things are done en masse, I do not think that that is the proper way to go.

I will take on board and I know that the coalition parties, the Liberals and Nationals, will take on board any good arguments that are put by local communities, any good arguments that are put by local councils, but this is not on this occasion a motion that we can support, and we do not support this omnibus approach to planning scheme revocation. We think it misapplies what is intended in the Planning and Environment Act. It misapplies good process, and it is frankly ideological, too extreme. I would even go so far, as I say, to say it is well beyond where most of the community is.

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr DAVIS — That is right. It is very, very extreme indeed. I want to put on record our opposition to this extremist approach.

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

Debate adjourned until later this day.

COLONOSCOPY WAITING LISTS

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan)
(15:46) — I move:

That this house notes —

- (1) in Australia, bowel cancer has a five-year survival rate of 68 per cent, and is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths;
- (2) 90 per cent of cases of bowel cancer can be successfully treated if found early, but this occurs in fewer than 40 per cent of cases;
- (3) Bowel Cancer Australia is campaigning for timely access to quality colonoscopy, and advises that research shows diagnostic intervals exceeding 120 days are associated with poorer outcomes;
- (4) documents obtained from Victorian hospitals through freedom of information confirm that the Department of Health and Human Services does not collect and maintain public waiting list data for colonoscopies in public hospitals and that many Victorians are forced to wait months longer for a colonoscopy than is clinically advised;

and calls on the Andrews government to monitor and report colonoscopy waiting lists.

I am very pleased to be able to move the motion in my name that calls on the government to start recording and monitoring waiting lists for colonoscopies in public hospitals and also to start reporting on those waiting lists. I want to share some of the reasons for this with the chamber and explain why it matters so very much.

It is well known that around 90 per cent of bowel cancer cases can be successfully treated if they are diagnosed early, before the illness has progressed, but fewer than 40 per cent of cases are in fact caught early. This is one reason why bowel cancer is the second-biggest cancer killer in Australia for both men and women. We have one of the highest rates in the world and despite this it is something that a lot of people do not want to talk about, and frankly that is one reason why people die.

It is pretty appalling that in recent weeks Facebook has banned ads from the government of Western Australia in relation to bowel cancer awareness. They blocked a health message because it included the words 'pee' and 'poo', because it feared that these were too offensive for regional Western Australia. Cancer Council Western Australia's Find Cancer Early campaign deliberately uses very plain language to explain the symptoms of bowel, lung, prostate, breast and skin cancers to over-40s in country WA, yet Facebook has refused to post these ads because they contain 'specific personal attributes of physical/medical/mental

condition' including 'blood in your poo?', 'Bloody poo?', 'Do you have cancer?' and 'Noticed blood in your poo?'.

The research and education services manager for Cancer Council WA, Cassandra Clayforth, says that regional West Australians are 20 to 30 per cent more likely to die within five years of a cancer diagnosis than those living in Perth. These are very similar figures to what we see in rural areas in other places within Australia, including in Victoria. Ms Clayforth has made the point that these ads are required to change this. She said, 'Unfortunately, a poor understanding of cancer symptoms and the fact country people often delay going to the doctor is causing too many avoidable deaths'. She said that they wanted to get these education messages out in order to save lives and that they found Facebook's refusal disappointing and baffling. She also said:

Facebook is one of the only ways we can reach people over 40 in some rural and remote parts of WA, so not being able to use it is a big issue.

If we change the ads in the way Facebook want us to — by talking indirectly about symptoms or using vague terms like 'stool' — they risk being ineffective and confusing people even more.

It is not just Facebook that Cancer Council WA has had a problem with. A Mandurah radio station initially refused to play the ads as well but have since compromised, and they are prepared to play the ads between 8.30 a.m. and 3.00 p.m., which is when they reckon kids will not be in the car. So there you go. Given the comments that I have heard from children about bodily functions during car rides I find it surprising that they think this would be a problem, but I will just leave that there.

I will provide some basic facts on bowel cancer from Bowel Cancer Australia.

Bowel cancer is the third most common type of newly diagnosed cancer in Australia, and 15 253 Australians are told they have bowel cancer each year, including 2186 people under the age of 55. It claims the lives of 4346 Australians every year, including 455 people who are under the age of 55. Fifty-five per cent of people with bowel cancer are male and 45 per cent are female, and the chance of surviving at least five years after your diagnosis is 68 per cent, which is well behind the chances of survival for other common cancers such as breast, melanoma and prostate, which have survival rates of around 90 per cent.

Bowel cancer incidence rates among young people are increasing both in Australia and internationally, and

there has been a 186 per cent increase in bowel cancer cases in adolescents and young adults — that is, those aged between 15 and 24 years — over the past three decades.

On this note, a couple of years ago Bowel Cancer Australia released interim results of their Never Too Young survey. This survey was the first of its kind in relation to early-onset bowel cancer. It found that more than half of patients who were young when they were diagnosed were diagnosed with stages 3 or 4 of the disease, which means that the cancer has already spread beyond the bowel to lymph nodes or other organs. That is the opposite of catching it early. Bowel cancer is the most common cause of cancer deaths for those aged 25 to 29, while bowel cancer and brain cancer are responsible for the greatest number of cancer deaths for those aged 30 to 34. It is predicted that there will be around 20 000 new cases in the year 2020 because we know that increasing numbers of people are being diagnosed with bowel cancer.

When bowel cancer should be treatable and curable, why is it that so many people get the diagnosis when the disease is advanced? One reason is that they are not aware of the symptoms. The symptoms can be very subtle. Some people feel embarrassed talking about the symptoms or seeking advice, or they worry about the possibility of some kind of invasive assessment by a doctor. It is also reported that many people need to see a medical professional several times before being referred for a colonoscopy, and often these repeat visits take place over quite a long period.

There have been consistent reports that even after getting over these hurdles people are waiting too long for a colonoscopy in our public hospitals. Some give up and go private. As one person reported on ABC radio a couple of weeks ago when told that it would take him about six months to be reviewed at his hospital after he had received a positive screening in the federal bowel cancer screening program, he elected to go private, but many do not have this choice.

There have been rumours about colonoscopy waiting lists for some time and in some states it is clear that the rumours have been right. In South Australia, for example, there has been some public examination of waiting lists for colonoscopies in public hospitals, and this has led to the now new government's commitment to report on colonoscopies and to provide funding to address some of the many patients who have been waiting too long for this form of assessment.

In June 2017, almost exactly a year ago, I used an adjournment debate to ask the Minister for Health

whether she would start reporting colonoscopy waiting times in Victoria, and I have never had a response to that adjournment matter. After some time I FOIed the Department of Health and Human Services, and they responded that they collect waiting list information for surgical procedures in public hospitals but advised that 'colonoscopies do not fall within this scope and therefore the department does not have documents or data relating to colonoscopy waiting lists'. So in February I FOIed a number of individual hospitals based on the ones that report that they have a gastroenterology clinic and sought the information that way.

I will provide a little bit more background information at this stage. Every state tracks and reports the statewide figures for time between a positive faecal occult blood test, or FOBT, which is what is often known as 'the 50-plus poo test', and a colonoscopy for people aged 50 to 74. The most recent public figures show that in Victoria 31 per cent of people who are screened and get a positive screen do not have a colonoscopy and only 27 per cent get one within 30 days. These figures show only part of the picture because they do not include anyone aged under 50 who is on a waiting list and they do not include anyone who is on a waiting list who is there not because they have had a positive screen through the federal program but because they have been referred by another medical practitioner for another reason.

Public pressure in the UK has led to the National Health Service pledging a six-week — that is, 42-day — wait time for a colonoscopy. In December 2017 they were able to report that 92.7 per cent of patients had received a colonoscopy within this target. Last month the American Cancer Society guidelines were updated and recommended that colorectal cancer screening should start at the age of 45 for people of average risk, based in part on data showing rates of this form of cancer are increasing in young and middle-aged populations. Bowel Cancer Australia has for some years run a campaign to get a wait time guarantee and public disclosure of waiting lists for colonoscopies, and that is their How Long We Wait to Learn our Fate initiative, which is starting to get results in a number of states.

So what did I find when I actually tried to get access to this data? Well, the first thing was that many hospitals found it very difficult to produce the data. It was not neatly somewhere so that they could simply pull it out of the bottom drawer and give it to me, and I will return to this a little bit later on in my comments.

Let me give you a few figures. The median wait at the Alfred was 114 days. At Monash Health it was 91 days. At Bairnsdale Regional Health Service it was 65 days. Western Health's colonoscopy waiting list has jumped 128 per cent since 2016, with 3754 people now on the waiting list, which is an extra 2111 from two years before. The average wait time at Western Health is 266 days compared to February 2016, when there were 1643 people on the list, and back in February 2017, when there were 2750 people. At Western Health the median wait time for a colonoscopy has reached 150 days, but there were lots of people on that list who had waited for hundreds of days and many who had actually waited years. Only a fraction had waited less than 30 days.

Peninsula Health had a similar sort of situation. In February 2016 they had 1045 people on waiting lists for colonoscopies compared to 968 today, and that on the surface is an improvement, but some of these people are waiting a terribly, terribly long time. The average wait time for category 1 patients, who should be seen within 30 days ideally, was 66 days — there were 326 people in that category. The average wait time for category 2, in which there were 456 people, is 187 days, which is about double what the benchmark is, because it is 90 days. The average wait time for category 3 is 573 days, and there are 184 people in that category, although I should make the point that category 3 is people who are under surveillance, who are likely to be seen possibly once a year, so I suspect that that explains those figures. These are average figures; however, many of the individual times are way beyond this.

Patient 15 is aged 41, is category 1 and has been waiting for 194 days instead of 30. Patient 29 is 21. They are also in category 1, and back in February that patient had been waiting for 134 days. Patient 37 is aged 20. For some reason, based on their clinical presentation, the doctor or medical practitioner had referred that person for a colonoscopy and put them as a category 1, and they have been waiting for 123 days. In fact I counted on that list from Peninsula Health 248 people who are category 1 and had waited longer than 30 days.

Then there is category 2, which is supposed to have a benchmark of 90 days. Patient 342 is 77 years old and has waited 974 days. Patient 348 is aged 63 and has waited 700 days for a procedure that they are supposed to have in 90 days or less. Patient 349 is 53 and has waited 387 days. I counted about 50 people on the list that I received who had waited a year or longer for their 90-day test.

Ballarat Health Services has increased numbers as well. In 2016 they had 391 people waiting who were ready to go, in 2017 they had 445 and this year they had 588. But there was also the review or surveillance figures, which went from 1192 in 2016 to 1841 this year, so from 1585 to 2429 in two years. Again, many people are waiting much longer than 30 days as a category 1 patient. Ballarat Health Services had been warning DHHS about this for some time, at least back to 2015, telling the department:

Demand for colonoscopy continues to grow. Despite an additional weekly session and an increase, on average, to 200 colonoscopies per month, there is still 1831 on the waiting list, 445 on the active list, 245 category 1 with 64 overdue, 193 category 2 with 73 overdue, and 1386 on the review list.

I make the point at this stage that I raise this issue not to in any way apportion blame on hospital staff or the hospital system. When people are working hard on getting throughput and when they are raising with the health department these sorts of concerns in very, very clear language, I think they are doing the most that they can do.

Ballarat's figures show that the big increase came in 2015–16, to 245 from 113 the previous year. The figures that I had were based on an incomplete count of 2015–16, given when they were identified in that calendar year.

In 2016 Ballarat Health Services identified that the flow of referrals to the booking office was slow. It said:

... there are inherent delays before a patient is placed on the waiting list. Identified the need of single entry point of referral & consistent triage with these guidelines potentially could streamline the process and avoid delays.

One document from Ballarat Health Services warns that the process of getting the patient onto the waiting list can take anywhere up to 30 days.

Barwon Health has had increasing numbers, as I have said earlier, and average wait times for category 1 and category 2 are both within the benchmark at this time. There were some outliers in these figures, but clearly a lot of work had gone into improving Barwon Health's figures after one patient waited some five months for a colonoscopy, only to be diagnosed with bowel cancer.

When I got these figures I was surprised that DHHS does not collect them. In fact most people that I mention this to made the same comment. They said, 'That can't possibly be right; they must have them'. Many hospitals struggled to provide the data, and helpful FOI officers reported that central lists were not maintained. They had to go to surgeons' private lists

and to other places. But I am also surprised because we have known for a long time that these numbers are going to grow. We have an ageing population and a growing awareness, and the federal screening program is expanding. What is clear, though, is that little has been done to prepare for this, even though the growth was a long time coming.

The federal screening program was introduced by the Howard government in 2006, and in 2015, again under a coalition government, it was announced that it would expand to more age groups and would happen more frequently. It was not until 2016 that the Andrews government began a very small scale trial to work out a more consistent clinical classification of patients. This is a good thing, but it has started far too late and it has taken far too long. People who get a positive screen in the federal program also get federal funding for their colonoscopy, and aggregate figures are reported on each state for this program, as I mentioned earlier. I note, though, that it is not the federal program that is adding big numbers to the waiting lists for colonoscopies. It is estimated that when it is fully expanded, the number of colonoscopies performed due to the federal program will still be a minor proportion of all of those performed. So, yes, Victoria's federally funded colonoscopies are done faster than in other states, but this is only a small slice of those that are performed.

The Minister for Health was asked about colonoscopy wait times at a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing, including why the figures are not routinely recorded. Her explanation was that the national guideline does not identify colonoscopies as an elective surgery; in other words, 'We don't have to, and so we don't'. But it was someone else at PAEC who actually provided a very useful description of how this is considered. I am going to refer to page 20 of the PAEC transcript of 17 May. The person who was speaking was Mr Symonds. He said:

The data is not completely and consistently collected, even at hospital level. It is collected and kept in a mixture of diaries, sheets of paper in consulting rooms; some is mixed up in electronic systems for recording elective surgery patients. It is collected in a range of places and stored in various forms at hospital level in such a way that it cannot be easily transmitted, and many hospitals cannot even consistently report it. So the work required is to develop a national agreement on what the definition is, exactly, and on what data fields are required to be collected, and that the services to put in place systems to capture that data and transmit it in a way that they have done for decades for elective surgery.

There was a slight gasp that went through the room when he gave that evidence, referring to data being kept in a mixture of diary sheets of paper in consulting

rooms and on various computers. I cannot say that I agree that the work required is to maybe start at some point a national agreement on what the definition is and what data fields are required to be collected. I think if the state of Victoria wanted to really focus on addressing our bowel cancer figures, they could decide to take action individually and to start collecting the data and analysing it themselves.

Mr Symonds went on:

There is a lot of data collected at hospital level, but it is not collected and collated consistently across hospitals in a form that could be reported to the department now and then reported to the public.

He also said:

Elective surgeries nationally across every state and territory have had the attention and investment in data reporting systems that allow every state and territory to report it consistently. That has not been the case for procedures seen as being, once upon a time, on the fringe of core hospital procedures, and that applies to colonoscopy, it applies to cath lab procedures for patients with heart disease. We do not collect it. Hospitals do not collate consistent information either about those conditions, but they are also very serious. It reflects how health care has changed that our reporting systems need to catch up with health care ...

I will say I agree very strongly with the sentiments that he has expressed there.

Colonoscopies are for some a bit of a laugh, and do not get me started on the puns and jokes because I have heard them all and I know them very well. In fact even in the run-up to speaking on this motion today, every time it has been mentioned someone has had a bit of a laugh or made a bit of a joke, but in fact colonoscopies are deadly serious. They help save lives. One certainly saved mine. Colonoscopies identify cancer and they also locate polyps, which may become cancerous but can be removed when they are spotted during a colonoscopy. It has taken me months, a bit of money and a huge amount of perseverance to get these figures from hospitals, and it is beyond me why someone else has not done this before. When I exposed some of the figures I obtained through the *Herald Sun* the government responded by saying that they would allocate \$12 million for the most urgent cases. Based on the figures they provided and the cost that they estimated of a colonoscopy, I calculated that \$1 million of that \$12 million would probably go towards Peninsula Hospital alone, which is only one hospital, and that is before you even get started on the huge need at Western Health or what is happening at Ballarat or any of the other centres.

The \$12 million that was explained at PAEC was part of a contingency in the previous budget. It is not money from the current budget that has just commenced. The reason for that is that no-one actually planned on spending more on colonoscopies essentially because no-one was monitoring the waiting lists. Although the money was announced on 1 April, as of 17 May it had not been distributed, to the best of my knowledge. And given that hospitals have been asked to provide a couple of tranches of lists, including one to be done at the end of this month, I suspect not much if any of it has been distributed. So from those figures from February of this year that I read earlier in my contribution today I suspect the very vast majority of those people are still waiting.

This is of course Bowel Cancer Awareness Month, and this week is Never Too Young Awareness Week. Bowel Cancer Australia has for several years been campaigning for the reporting of colonoscopy waiting times, because scrutiny brings action, kind of like what happened at Barwon Health when it emerged that there was a person who had been waiting for I believe five months before eventually they got a colonoscopy and were found to have cancer, which I now understand has been successfully treated. Without that kind of scrutiny people will continue to languish on waiting lists, waiting for a test that might show that they have cancer or might prevent it in future. As I mentioned earlier, it will be much more likely that they will survive if the cancer is caught early. It is enormously frustrating to know that bowel cancer is one of those cancers that can be treated but we are not oversighting the system properly to make sure that people can be tested and get a diagnosis.

In my life and in my work I speak to a number of people who work with bowel cancer patients. I spoke to one surgeon recently who said to me, 'All of the waiting lists are a mess. Everyone has known that for a long time'. He said that at his hospital, which I will not name, 'at least once a year we find someone who is categorised as category 3 who turns out to have cancer'. It happens about once a year. So what I am urging the government to do is to stop hiding behind language that talks about federal systems and what you have to do to comply on that front and to start actually looking at what needs to be done to address the problem. That means taking ownership of that data and those figures and showing some leadership, which I wish had happened well before now, to make sure that our system is working properly and that people can be tested and get a diagnosis when it is required. Actually doing this would be part of a genuine effort to reduce the death rate and the number of people who have to

undergo treatment, which I can assure you is extremely tough.

I do want to add as a form of footnote to my remarks that in the process of gathering this data I was very surprised when my office received a phone call from a regional health service, which I will not name, to say that the Department of Health and Human Services had written to that health service to advise that I might be making an FOI claim against them. I thought this was very surprising. I had not intended to do that, and I was surprised that the department would be using its time to write such a letter. After some thought I wrote to the secretary of the health department and I asked about this politely.

I said that I would like to see a copy of the letter and I would like to know which hospitals or health services it had been sent to. I did not receive a response to my letter from the secretary; I received a response from an FOI officer at DHHS which informed me, in response to my letter to the department, how I might go about making an FOI application in relation to this matter.

I think this is a pretty shabby way to respond to a polite response. It think it is very questionable for the health department to be writing to health services about something I may or may not do in the course of my work as an opposition MP, particularly when quite frankly I think their time would be better spent working on the problem at hand, which is how to collate these waiting lists and how to present this data in such a way that it can be appropriately oversights and that more lives can be changed.

Following that letter I have resorted to making an FOI application about myself, basically, to see what has been said about me and to whom, and that has been put off and delayed, so I suppose we will be going through the usual process there.

I do also want to acknowledge the work that has been done in trying to ensure that there is a common classification system for the categorisation of people waiting for colonoscopies. As I said earlier, I think that work should have been done much earlier, and to be quite frank I do not think it needs to rely, on interactions with the federal system. If the federal system is going too slowly, I think there is an argument for doing this work ourselves to look after Victorians rather than pretending that it is something that someone else will worry about.

The point that has been made about other forms of procedures, going back to the PAEC transcript which I read out earlier, shows how things are changing in

terms of our health system. The sorts of procedures that were previously seen as being on the fringes or somehow an exception are now very much mainstream. This is clearly one of the major challenges for our health system. It means that we need to show leadership by looking at these sorts of procedures, many of which are fully within the realm of preventative health. That is something I think there is a strong commitment to on both sides of the chamber. I think we need to avoid bureaucratic answers about why we are counting some aspects of our system and not others and move from a starting point of: how can we prevent health problems for Victorians, how can we support them to get the sorts of interventions that they need and how can we get people potentially lifesaving procedures?

Again, as I said earlier, it is beyond me why this has not been done earlier. We have known for years that we were going to have expansion of the federal program. We have known about our ageing population. We know that we have a rising incidence of bowel cancer. We know that younger people — and by younger I am talking about people in their 20s and 30s, not even in their 40s and 50s — are experiencing diagnoses of bowel cancer at huge rates compared to what has happened in the past. We can debate why that is happening. There are some theories, but I do not know that we know for sure. However, what I do want to see is a very real commitment from this government not just to pretend that these sorts of figures are not its responsibility but also to start taking some ownership and start oversighting the system in a way that we drastically need.

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (16:15) — I rise to speak in relation to the motion moved by Ms Fitzherbert, and in doing so I want to address a number of the components of the motion in the context of the contribution that she has made this afternoon by reference not just to the evidence given at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) hearing, which has been referred to in Ms Fitzherbert's contribution, but also to a number of the assertions set out in the originating contribution from Ms Fitzherbert this afternoon.

Let us just begin in the general, however, before moving to the specific components of the motion, noting at the outset that it is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month and that we can and indeed should do as much as possible to have conversations not only about the difficult preventative and reactive health issues in our community but also about those which perhaps do not enjoy the same level of popularity in a way that garners public support, attention and, crucially, funding research and a general level of attentiveness.

I note in this regard that we have come a long way in the context of being able to talk more freely about those levels of cancer and those types of cancer which often, due to their location in the body, are a source of amusement or embarrassment — and it is usually the latter. In the context of conversations around cancers like bowel cancer, prostate cancer, cervical cancer and ovarian cancer, nobody ever died from embarrassment, so it is actually a really good opportunity to have this conversation this month and to talk about the importance of testing, of asking questions and of taking your health into your own hands around asking questions and getting advice and assistance from your medical professional in the event that there are any things about your body and the way it works that seem to be unusual, different or changed.

In that regard, Ms Fitzherbert's contribution is timely. What it does is bring to the fore the fact that every year in Australia we have far too many people dying from colorectal cancer — 4346 people die every year, with a general equivalence between men and women but skewed slightly towards men, with 55 per cent of the diagnoses, and women at 45 per cent. We know that early intervention and detection, along with good advice, assistance and access to services, mean that people will more likely fall into the 65 per cent survival rate within the five years, and that is in fact a really crucial part of what has informed the national bowel cancer screening program. This was initially a program for people aged between 55 and 65 years as far as eligibility was concerned, and kits were sent out every five years only. That was back in 2006. But because of the national program for screening we are now moving to a broader framework which reflects the demographic not just of our population but also of the earlier incidence of a diagnosis of colorectal cancer. People between 50 and 74 years of age are now sent a free test kit in the mail every two years.

The jokes can abound and the witty rejoinders and the banter can keep going, but as long as people are actually taking this test and are in fact in a position to identify through the testing process invisible traces of blood in the faeces that may — although will not necessarily — be a sign of cancer or a precancerous growth, then this is a really important milestone in the context of better health outcomes for individuals and for communities. This accounts for 9 per cent of cancer-related deaths in Australia. To that end the work goes on, and the work goes on in the context of reporting and the collation of data as well.

In moving to the issues around funding and around the collation of data, we do have a situation where the combination of a lack of consistent reporting, a lack of

guidelines and a lack of uniformity in funding and assistance from the commonwealth government has created an aggregate series of challenges for the states. This is something we have in common with our counterparts around Australia in the context of addressing the issues around data collection for non-elective surgeries and the way in which we understand where and how growth and demand is changing not just within the borders of our states and territories but also within specific geographic areas.

We know that the patients most at risk of bowel cancer need to be treated within clinically recommended times, so within the state framework from 1 April this year we announced that there would be \$12 million injected into Victorian hospitals to fast-track access and to cut waiting times for colonoscopy procedures. This is something Ms Fitzherbert referred to in her contribution. It was also the subject of evidence provided by Minister Hennessy and departmental officials at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing, and I do intend to return to it.

What this means is that in the absence of a national uniform set of guidelines for the way in which data is gathered and understood, we have stepped up to fill the space around addressing the need for patients to access colonoscopies and related and similar procedures within our system through greater funding and through making sure that urgency, as was referred to in evidence before the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, remains the determining factor around providing healthcare assistance for those who need it.

Faster access to colonoscopies will deliver — and we know that it delivers — better patient outcomes, with patients able to get a quicker diagnosis and the treatment that they need sooner to fight bowel cancer and to become part of that 65 per cent who are all clear and remain clear after five years, but it will also increase that overall rate over time. In undertaking this colonoscopy blitz there will be provision for colonoscopies for an additional 6635 patients who are in the most urgent category and who have been waiting the longest.

This then begs the question which was raised in the course of Ms Fitzherbert's contribution, but which is also referred to in the motion itself, around transparency for colonoscopy procedures and also wait times. We know that colonoscopies are undertaken in a variety of different circumstances, and often in combination with a variety of other procedures as well. They may well take place in the diagnostic framework; they may well take place in the course of treatment. This is something

which was also the subject of evidence from those within the department.

Importantly, the only cross-jurisdictional data on colonoscopy performance relates to patients who have in fact undertaken the test under the cancer screening program that I referred to earlier, but what we do know from that data is that Victoria's median time to treatment for the most urgent patients — that is, category 1 — is 35 to 38 days, which is in fact lower than any other state or territory. That is not to say that there is not more work to do, and that is not to say that we should walk away from an absolute commitment to continuous improvement, because we should and we must as that is the obligation of any government in delivering health services to those who rely upon them, who need them, and also in managing growth in demand into the future.

At the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council it was Victoria who called upon the states and the territories to work together on nationally consistent public reporting times for colonoscopies. It is in fact this government that has been working towards gathering the momentum necessary for the commonwealth to come on board. Agreement was actually achieved within the COAG health council that the commonwealth Minister for Health should commission the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to develop public reporting on this new performance measure.

Victoria is the first jurisdiction in Australia to develop fit-for-purpose statewide guidelines for clinical risk stratification of colonoscopies based on the research and evidence around risk factors for bowel cancer. Developed in consultation with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, this new colonoscopy categorisation guideline will be implemented in all Victorian public hospitals from 1 July this year. This is a new and extremely important approach that will enable patients to be assessed and booked for colonoscopies according to their clinical risk. Again, using this transparency, using that consistent approach, we will hopefully then be able to correlate that to better outcomes for patients who are in this category. It means also that we will have a better sense of the number of patients who are waiting and also the seriousness of their condition. Consistent categorisation and data entry by health services as a precondition for and a first step towards public reporting of colonoscopy data is an important piece of progress in an ever-evolving health system.

It is also crucial that we note that health services manage the waiting lists for colonoscopies at a local

level and do not provide this data to the department. In the course of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings, which Ms Fitzherbert has referred to in her contribution in speaking to this motion, we had a number of exchanges between government and opposition members of the committee both with the minister and with departmental representatives. One of those exchanges related to the questions of contingency in the allocation of this \$12 million. In the course of the hearings an interesting development to note was that contingencies in the allocation of funding for the purposes of procedures such as colonoscopies have not in effect changed at all within the last eight years. In fact one departmental representative who had been with the department for around 30 years indicated that prudent financial management and reporting as it relates to contingency was in fact something that enabled this to proceed in an entirely usual fashion, so that there was in effect nothing new to see in the context of the \$12 million that was allocated in the 2017–18 budget.

It is an important point to note that as part of this blitz and as part of this operational funding, around \$5.5 million of the \$12 million has been distributed already. In the course of understanding how we not just gather better data but understand the number of colonoscopies that are being performed and provided throughout the state, we do have a dollar figure around expenditure to date, and it is \$5.5 million out of the \$12 million.

One of the other things that came up in the course of the minister's evidence to the committee was that we have actually seen a really significant change in demand. To quote the minister at page 10 of the Hansard transcript of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of 17 May 2018, the minister indicated that:

When the national bowel cancer screening program was initially introduced in 2006, it was for a much smaller cohort. Only those aged between 55 and 65 were eligible for the kits, and the testing was only once every five years. In that time we have seen some significant changes. The screening regime is now for Australians aged between 50 and 74, and people are ... sent a free test kit in the mail every two years.

She then went on to refer to the equivalence between the national bowel cancer screening program and the cervical cancer screening programs, at the same page of the transcript, and indicated:

It was announced that the commonwealth government would establish a bowel cancer screening register, and that was going to be covering both cervical and bowel cancer screening. That was supposed to be functional by 1 March last year and the cervical cancer screening by 1 May. They subsequently then made a decision that they would not do them both — that the commonwealth would go for the

cervical cancer screening as a priority. That is also because there has been a change from going once every two years for a Pap smear to a human papilloma virus check once every five years.

So, the minister refers to the changing nature of clinical data along with the changing nature of demand.

We do know, however — and this is indicated again in the minister's evidence, at page 10 — about the national bowel cancer screening process that we have got much variance in the approach to how we categorise and the risk stratification process for those tests.

In recognition of a growing demand the additional investment through the COAG process, as well as through the contingency and operational funding, has then enabled us to meet some of those challenges in the absence of a national framework. And, in noting that we have the lowest median wait time in the country, the minister said at page 11:

... we are still not where we should be, and that is why we are making the additional investment.

There are ways to look at this particular issue and to look at the absence of data and to see only the problem rather than the work that has been done to date, the work that is ongoing and the work that still needs to be done as compared with where we have come from.

We need to understand that, more broadly, the commitment goes on to make sure that we tackle the particular challenges associated with the uptake of colonoscopies as well as the access to those services. In doing that we need to understand the fact that colonoscopies are not classified as an elective surgery and that therefore nationally there is no elective surgery data for the purpose of the colonoscopy process itself. We need to note that a national change program that needs to be underway is something that will hopefully inform a better understanding of this. Hopefully it will be more than the screening register data that we have, which shows that Victoria has the lowest median wait time of the states and territories, to see how many people need services and assistance, for what purpose and the extent to which those needs are being met into the future.

It was clear from the evidence that hospitals collect and keep their data in a mixture of forms — Ms Fitzherbert did refer to that in her evidence — but also at the same page of that transcript, page 20, Mr Symonds indicated in response to a question from Mr Smith about why data was not collected and collated consistently across hospitals in a form that could be reported to the

department now and then reported to the public, to quote Mr Symonds:

Because colonoscopies, I guess, like a lot of other procedures — procedures in radiology suites, diagnostic procedures — have not had the attention that elective surgeries have nationally.

And he also said:

Elective surgeries nationally across every state and territory have had the attention and investment in data reporting systems that allow every state and territory to report it consistently. That has not been the case for procedures seen as being, once upon a time, on the fringe of core hospital procedures, and that applies to colonoscopy, it applies to cath lab procedures for patients with heart disease. We do not collect it. Hospitals do not collate consistent information either about those conditions, but they are also very serious. It reflects how health care has changed that our reporting systems need to catch up with health care ...

And again, this is not a moment for a gotcha opportunity. This is not a moment for someone to spring out and say, 'Aha! Victoria hasn't done the work it needs to do', because everybody agrees that continuous improvement is part of tackling the challenges and the opportunities that exist as the population grows, as medical technology changes and as testing, diagnostics, response, treatment and care evolve over time.

The minister has indicated really clearly that the guidelines will be in place around categorisation from 1 July and then in fact that the work will continue around what we do at a local level. We need to make sure, however, that we focus on the needs and the challenges and the opportunities for people to receive the care and the attention that they require, and that colonoscopy as a part of this in fact is well understood in the context of proper modern, efficient and accessible health care.

Making sure that we have consistent guidelines was another subject of discussion later on in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings. Again I would like to refer to page 24 of that transcript from 17 May, in which Mr Symonds indicated:

... to ensure that the most urgent patients are treated quickly to address any risk of cancer. You will appreciate that many colonoscopies are undertaken for diagnostic purposes as follow-ups to earlier concerns. Simply looking at the total number of colonoscopies waiting or booked might not be the best guide to who actually needs treatment soonest.

In a subsequent comment Mr Symonds indicated:

... there is variation within health services about how much diagnostic information is held about the patient that would allow a decision to be made about how soon they should be treated. If I compare it to elective surgery, where we have

guidelines around what procedures should be categorised as 1, 2 or 3 — that is, ideally treated within 30 days, 90 days or a year — we do not or have not had previously those kinds of guidelines for colonoscopy. The guidelines that we have got now, that are now publicly available — they are on our website — refer to having to combine single symptoms, such as rectal bleeding, altered bowel habits, diarrhoea, constipation et cetera, with other factors to understand who should be treated soonest. We have categories there for treatment ideally within 30 days, 60 days and 180 days, and for each of those, examples of the kind of combination of symptoms that might guide clinicians and ensure that an urgent patient in this health service we understand to be the same as an urgent patient in that health service. Or within one health service, a patient seen by one clinician and understood to be urgent is equally as urgent as a patient seen by another clinician, because ultimately they have to get booked within the same procedure rooms with the same overall resources.

That is the kind of variation we are trying to address, and the simple global number of colonoscopies, many of whom will not necessarily even be symptomatic or have the kind of symptoms that require urgent treatment, does not help us understand ... necessarily the time frames in which people have to be treated. Our concern here is to make sure that the most urgent patients are treated soonest. That is what is at stake in the variation we are talking about.

So, we know that people can be waiting too long, not just for colonoscopies and not just for cath procedures but for elective surgery.

Mr Symonds then went on to say, at page 25 of the transcript from PAEC:

I guess what we are trying to do, in the case of urgent elective surgery, urgent colonoscopies and urgent procedures of any kind, is make sure those patients are seen quickly and immediately. For those patients where the condition they are being treated for is not life-threatening and does not require urgent treatment, then we think the length of time they have waited should be a more important factor in terms of when they are treated. So for less-urgent patients, treating, if you like, from the back of the list, then the longest waiting first is a good principle, if they can afford to wait. But if those patients have symptoms that require urgent treatment, they should come first, and that applies equally to colonoscopies and elective surgeries.

Mr Symonds then went on to say that there is, in effect, nothing new in that.

So, we have not waited for the work to proceed at a commonwealth level for the purposes of guidelines and we have not actually sat on our hands in a way that others might conclude for political purposes. We have in fact done a lot of work, but there is a lot of work to go, and we do need to make sure that we remain vigilant and that we continue to provide the funding for the purposes of meeting need now and into the future.

In noting the terms and the provisions of the motion moved by Ms Fitzherbert, we do not oppose the importance of addressing bowel cancer treatment in

increasing the survival rate and in making sure that we have a consistent approach to this. We do not oppose — in fact we welcome — the ongoing work from Bowel Cancer Australia. We do not oppose the harmonisation of the gathering of data and information that is currently kept in various ways and various means through our health services. We acknowledge, as any responsible government must do, that more should be done and more must be done. Because health services are continually evolving and changing and growing, more work must happen into the future. But we note in fact that this work is well underway in the context of providing guidelines that will come into effect shortly.

Despite the cuts that have taken place across the federal government's health agenda, which will lead to \$2.1 billion less in our health system, and as a consequence of refusing to update and improve the health agreement funding, we are going to be doing it tougher. We are going to be doing it more on our own. Initially it will take a more innovative approach from the states, who are faced with the same sorts of cuts and challenges from the commonwealth, to continue to provide world-class health systems. To that end, we have invested record funding into the health system itself.

The \$5.5 million of the \$12 million allocated in the contingency for 2017–18 is a worthwhile investment in the health of people who require attention for a cancer which is all too common and which we are only just beginning to get better at addressing now. With those words and those clarifications in the context of the motion, I indicate that the government does not oppose the wording of the motion itself but notes in fact the work that is already underway and has been well underway since 2016.

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (16:41) — I rise to speak on the motion put forward by Ms Fitzherbert. I would like to first acknowledge and commend her for her attention to this issue, which is an area of health and public health that is often ignored. I think it is excellent that she has taken it upon herself to draw attention to it, heighten its publicity and look at it in a substantive manner.

The Greens have long argued for increased focus within our health system on preventative measures, shifting the focus from acute emergency care to prevent crisis from occurring at all. A robust system with a strong focus on preventative health care provides the best outcomes for patients, and it is cost effective. Good data management to inform the allocation of resources and provision of care is a critical part of that. The Andrews government has talked incessantly about the collection,

sharing and use of data to improve service provision and provide positive outcomes for Victoria.

Unfortunately we are still waiting to see any of those real outcomes. I have spoken many times in this place about the lack of data maintained by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in the area of child protection, in case allocation and on the issue in general. But it is becoming clear that this is a problem that is potentially widespread across health and human services. You cannot share the data and use it to improve services if you are not collecting or analysing the data. We Greens have been arguing that case for years. This government can and must do better on data collection, sharing, analysis and utilisation, and in particular DHHS needs to lift its game.

We do support the centralised maintenance of data and the publication of waiting lists for colonoscopies in public hospitals as a means of increasing transparency and supporting decisions in relation to resource allocation. But we would also point out in relation to bowel cancer screening and colonoscopy waiting lists that this is not a simple problem that can be addressed by throwing money at it. Bowel cancer is the second-most lethal type of cancer in Australia. As referenced in the motion, early detection and treatment significantly improves outcomes for patients. If detected early, up to 90 per cent of bowel cancer can be successfully treated. Earlier diagnosis also means treatment can be less invasive.

It is important to note that Australia's national screening program is one of the best in the world, and it is designed in part to ensure that people who need colonoscopies are referred accordingly. It is also designed to avoid unnecessary colonoscopies for people who probably do not need them. Colonoscopies take time, they are resource intensive and for many people they are an unpleasant experience. If they are not needed, they should not be happening.

Professor Tim Price recently covered the issue of appropriate referrals and pressure on colonoscopy waiting lists in the *Medical Journal of Australia*. He wrote:

Around 1 million colonoscopies are performed in Australia each year. In 2015 (the most recent data), only 29 000 colonoscopies were conducted for people who had tested positive for iFOBT through the NBCSP — about 3 per cent of total colonoscopies.

Even allowing for people who screen with iFOBT outside the program, and for other priority patients (those with symptoms or family history), we can still assume tens of thousands of average-risk people are screening with colonoscopy. Is it any wonder there are reports of pressures on colonoscopy waiting

times, when there is such widespread inappropriate use of colonoscopy as a first-line screening tool?

The best way to free up colonoscopy services for people with the highest need is for more average-risk Australians to screen with iFOBT.

Participation in the national bowel screening program should be maximised, as should referral for colonoscopy where risk is detected and timely access to colonoscopy. But there also needs to be increased attention within the department, hospitals and general practices to triaging older people who are concerned about their risk and to improve practices in referring people only where this is genuinely a need. Guidelines recently published nationally and in Victoria should help in this respect, but that is an issue that needs to be better managed by professionals referring and delivering those services, and monitored by the department.

We note the recent announcement by the Minister for Health of \$12 million to cut waiting list times for the most urgent referrals to colonoscopies. We support the central collation and publication of waiting lists as a transparency measure, and we support the motion in its entirety. But while this is an important measure, there is much more that needs to be done to tackle this issue more broadly, addressing critical systemic issues and practices.

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (16:47) — I certainly would like to commend Ms Fitzherbert for moving this motion. I have been fortunate to have been kept up to speed with many of the revelations that have come to light as a result of Ms Fitzherbert's hard work through FOIs and the like that really have brought the issue discussed in this motion to light.

It was only a few weeks ago that Ms Fitzherbert and I spoke to many media outlets in Ballarat about the concerning increase in the number of people waiting for colonoscopies in Ballarat. This was something that many in the media were shocked by — the fact that there was not a public waiting list or indeed waiting lists that were collated in a way that could establish where the real pressure points were for colonoscopies across the state. It came as a surprise to many when the government made a \$12 million funding announcement that happened to come off the back of the media becoming aware of the massive colonoscopy waiting lists that are present in the state.

This type of reactive policy announcement — and we have certainly seen many from this government, including the reaction to heroin injecting rooms as a result of the Northcote by-election — is no way to run a

state. What we of course need is a government that is prepared and willing to engage with these very important issues and address them head-on rather than trying to hide them away. As Ms Fitzherbert said in her contribution, many health services have drawn the government's attention to the fact that there were significant issues with colonoscopy waiting lists, and the government's approach to this was just to bury its head in the sand until finally the issue was uncovered and addressed.

Some of the concerning numbers that particularly relate to Ballarat Health Services were significant waiting list increases from 391 in 2016 to 445 in 2017 and then 588 in 2018. During this time we saw an obvious growth in the number of people waiting for colonoscopies. One of the real issues is with data that is not published. The published data that we see across the state gives people the opportunity to understand that if they live in Geelong and are looking for knee surgery and they see that there is a significant waiting list in Geelong, they can head to perhaps Ballarat where there is a shorter waiting list. This is not the case with colonoscopies, because this data is not published and is not made available. Therefore those pressure points across the state are not appropriately addressed.

I certainly commend Ms Fitzherbert on her exceptional work on this issue. In effect Ms Fitzherbert has directed government policy, because nobody on the other side was doing it. I will keep my contribution very brief, and I look forward to the vote.

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (16:51) — I have a few comments based on the debate that we have had this afternoon on this issue. I want to start out by saying how pleased I am that we have been able to air this issue in Parliament this week. We have spoken about an issue that people often do not want to speak about. I think that is a very good thing. I thank the other participants in the debate for being part of that. You might not be able to say 'blood in your poo' on Facebook, but you can say it here.

Ms Shing interjected.

Ms FITZHERBERT — You have just said it now, Ms Shing. Thank you very much. That is great.

I will respond to a few comments that were made by Ms Shing in particular. I appreciate her interest in the issue but feel it is reasonable to give a rebuttal of sorts to some of the issues that were mentioned. Ms Shing referred to the median times for people who go through the screening program being between 35 and 38 days. Yes, that is a good thing, but I worry that focusing too

much on those federal figures obscures what is really happening in waiting lists around the state. I addressed this issue in my substantive contribution to this debate and indicated that the number of colonoscopies we see as a result of a positive screen in the federal screening program is really a minority when compared with those that are undertaken in public hospitals. They are the ones that are tracked, assessed and reported on the most, but they are not indicative of what is happening more broadly based on the figures that I have seen. I have quoted figures from a number of major hospitals and also regional hospitals in my contribution today, but there are many, many others that I could quote.

Focusing on that figure — yes, it is a good thing, and yes, I am glad it is the case — muddies the water somewhat if it is to be relied upon as an indication of the real need and the extent of the wait that many people are experiencing. I do not want to read out the figures again, but there were people, as I indicated, who were down as category 1. We had their ages, and some of them were quite young. It did make me wonder about the circumstances that led a medical practitioner to refer someone who was, say, 20 or 21 for a colonoscopy as a category 1. There has got to be some very good clinical indicators for wanting to do that.

We were told that the \$12 million that the government suddenly announced through the *Herald Sun* of 1 April was nothing unusual. That is a direct quote from Ms Shing. She said there was nothing unusual about it happening then. Actually there was something that was a bit unusual. Public waiting lists were revealed in the *Herald Sun*, and that is why the government made that announcement at that time.

Ms Shing — On a point of order, Acting President, just in relation to the verballing — and I do not think it is intentional — when I said there was ‘nothing unusual’ it was by reference to the contingency model for prudent financial management, as evidenced by Mr Symonds at Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Ramsay) — Thank you, Ms Shing. Yes, I know it is not a point of order. It is actually debate.

Ms FITZHERBERT — I think it is undeniable that the reason why that announcement happened when it did was that public waiting lists had been so graphically exposed and the government felt it needed to do something to address perceptions that there was a big blowout in waiting lists — because indeed there was. Some of those figures are terrible. As I have indicated, this should not have been a surprise to anybody.

The announcement that the federal screening system was going to be expanded happened in 2015, but it is not until 2018 that we actually have a new clinical classification process rolling out. There has hardly been a sense of urgency about that. Even if we go back to 2006 and earlier periods than that, as I said earlier, the growth in demand in this area has been remarkable.

Ms Shing also referred to the issue of the cervical cancer register and the bowel cancer register that are to be operated at a federal level. Yes, I am aware that the bowel cancer register has been delayed, but I note that one difference between the two is that in the case of the cervical cancer register a huge amount has been done at the state level and there has been a register in the state of Victoria for many years. I would imagine, having not been close to the Council of Australian Governments process, that it is easier to bring together a federal register if you already have states operating their own. We do not have that in relation to bowel cancer. The figures that are collated, as we know, are those in relation to the federal screening system, so I suspect there is a great deal more that needs to be done at the state level before that can happen.

However, that should not be an inhibitor. There is no reason why the state of Victoria cannot do additional work on that front in terms of collating the data. In discussion of this issue here but also more broadly there has been what I might characterise as a bit of debate on how legitimate the figures are. We have people on a waiting list. Yes, the number is bigger than we would hope it would be, but we do not have a common sense of how people are classified. Therefore it is sort of implied, if not stated openly, that maybe we should be suspicious that not everybody is in need when they are on that list.

What I would say to that is that many of the health systems, as I understand it, do their own triage. They do not just accept a referral necessarily and put someone on a waiting list. In fact this was part of the issue at Ballarat that I referred to in my substantive contribution. I indicated that they had their own system — I am going to call it a triage process; I am not sure that is what they would call it — whereby after a referral came in they would go to a number of places to assess the referral that had been made. That would be done within Ballarat Health Services, and only after that process, which was taking about 30 days, would someone be put on the waiting list. I do not think that we can somehow assume that there is no oversight of whether people are validly on the list or on the list in the classification for which they have been put there. I think that partly the difficulty with having a system like that — a sort of a secondary triage that works well — is

that it has contributed in some instances to waits that are even longer than we see on the list.

I have got to say I am somewhat impatient with the use of phrases like ‘continuous improvement’ in relation to this, and ‘looking forward to progress over time’. I think that these are inappropriate words when we are talking about a cancer which has a five-year survival rate of 68 per cent overall, compared to some 90 per cent for other major cancers. As I said, I am impatient with using those terms, and I think that with the benefit of not having the scrutiny of waiting lists, it has been too easy to hide the need that is there and the role that should be played by government to make sure that people can actually get the treatment that they need and the assessment that they need when they need it and not, in some cases, many months later than is clinically advised — or even years later. I find that appalling and frightening. So I guess I could sum up by saying I am impatient with talk of continuous improvement and progress over time. What I would really like to see is some leadership.

Motion agreed to.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues: public housing renewal program

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (16:59) — I would like to say a few words this afternoon on the report tabled this week. It is timely, given that Ms Fitzherbert is in the house. She is chair of the committee that inquired into the public housing renewal program. I note that the chair’s foreword states — and I think this is pretty ghastly — that the number of Victorians applying for public housing is increasing and that as of March this year there were around 58 000 adults and 24 000 children seeking public housing. We can equate that to roughly 82 000 men, women and children seeking public housing. Also, it says that the number of people on the Victorian Housing Register has increased by 1500 in the first three months of this year alone.

As we know, in our hierarchy of needs shelter is up there with the most important for people. For dignity, human beings, to act and to be able to live out a reasonable life, need to have a roof over their heads. Indeed that report looks at the nine sites in stage 1 across metropolitan Melbourne and identifies those. The housing shortage in Melbourne has ramifications out in country electorates and certainly in my electorate of Eastern Victoria Region and in and around

Gippsland. What we know is that the wait for public housing can take three months to several years, depending on the type of housing that a person applies for. It is even more challenging for people moving into the country having to find homes when they may not own a car and may have to use public transport, which is a great struggle as well.

I have actually had good conversations with a number of our Gippsland housing providers, Victoria Police and constituents who come into my office. What they identify is that there needs to be a holistic approach — the commonwealth, state and local governments working collaboratively. Some of those factors that they identify we know affect homelessness. Low-income people on social welfare find it extraordinarily difficult to make ends meet, paying rent and paying astronomically high overheads and electricity bills. We also know that mentally fragile people quite often struggle to find permanent homes, as do those with other health complications or substance abuse problems or those from separated families. Indeed I was speaking with one of the people from the housing provider sector today, and he said that family violence is one of the key issues in our area that make women and children look for homes and wind up on those registers.

If we look at that and we flip it, housing stress is a major contributor to homelessness. It was identified in the 2015 census that 8.3 per cent of Gippsland renters are on the very cusp of becoming homeless, and 5.3 per cent of mortgage-holders in Gippsland also felt that they were on the cusp of being homeless. It is a great struggle for them to be able to have a roof over their head. St Vincent de Paul have said that the average household is paying an extra \$300 in electricity costs, and this is just an absolute crying shame.

The positive actions that were taken by the previous coalition government in Gippsland — it was then Minister Tim Bull, in fact — improved and upgraded 100 existing units and built 70 new houses in our region. Unfortunately this government puts out media releases saying that it is going to do something, but in Gippsland it has not; there has not been one additional bed provided in terms of public housing. What also happens — and I note that my friend and candidate for the seat of Morwell, Sheridan Bond, has identified this — is that single people really struggle to find accommodation in Gippsland. What can happen is that people can be thrown into rooming houses in our country areas and be unknown to anybody. They do not have the background and they really struggle to stay in those homes and have a very supportive environment, and we need to improve this situation going forward.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2018–19

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:05) — I want to take the opportunity to speak about a budget item in the state budget papers that has yet to be implemented. I have had the opportunity over the last week to raise a number of projects that have been funded in the 2018–19 budget — in fact they were even funded in the previous 2017–18 budget — on which we have not actually seen any work started. I know Mr Leane would be delighted if I spent 4 minutes going through all the projects that I have actually spent the whole week talking about that have been flagged and planned but are yet to be constructed, but I am not going to do that. I am going to identify one or two of particular interest that I want to put on the record.

The duplication of rail between Waurin Ponds and South Geelong was an item in the budget. It has been much talked about by the state government in respect to working with the federal government on constructing this duplication. The business case has been much talked about yet not seen, certainly from this side of the chamber, in respect to what sort of funding will be required to do this duplication. The point I want to raise is that it is so important to have a commitment by both the federal and state governments to allow the duplication construction to start, because it will actually then enable significant, far better and more reliable services, particularly between Geelong and Warrnambool. Also it obviously gives an opportunity to discuss what may well be done in relation to the tunnel between South Geelong and Geelong and providing greater capacity through that quite small tunnel, which is one-way traffic for train sets.

The argument that has been put to me federally is that they are still awaiting a specific business case for the rail duplication, yet the Andrews government has suggested that that business case has been made available to the federal Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities, Paul Fletcher, in relation to part of a city deal that has yet to be announced, particularly for Geelong. I understand that will be in the next few months. I cannot think of a reason why the government cannot commit the appropriate funding, given the business case has now been concluded. Put the money on the table, as the federal government has — they have put \$150 million on the table — and allow that project to commence. We have been talking about it now for three or four years. The Public Transport Users Association's Paul Westcott has been strongly supportive of it, as have all the major stakeholder groups in Geelong, including the Committee for Geelong, G21 and the local council. We

have been very supportive of the project, as has the federal government, so really the ball is in the hands of the Andrews government now to put the money on the table and allow that construction to start.

Another area I wish to just highlight out of the budget is the duplication of Princes Highway west. That duplication has been built in a number of stages. As we know, the Waurin Ponds to Winchelsea stage has been completed. But sadly I now see that the foundation of some of that pavement, which is only two years old, is starting to break up, so it does raise a question for me about the next leg, Winchelsea to Colac, and the work that is being done there meeting the material standard, the foundation standard, of the code in relation to road making. I am really concerned that there may well be some call on the contractors to make good, particularly in that first section, where there are obviously significant problems associated with the workmanship of that road.

Again we have yet to see any funding on the Western Highway from Stawell onwards. We know that long-term duplication of the Western Highway is to run to Horsham, with bypasses both in Ararat and in Horsham itself. We are yet to see any commitment from the Andrews government in respect to that duplication as well.

Family violence reform implementation monitor: report 2017

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (17:10) — I am pleased to be able to rise this evening to make some comments in relation to the *Report of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor as at 1 November 2017*, which was conducted by Tim Cartwright, APM, who is the inaugural family violence reform implementation monitor. He was appointed under the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor Act 2016. As a former member of Victoria Police, I think he was well placed to undertake this review into what the important Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse looked at and its recommendations. I want to place on record my thanks to Mr Cartwright and those who have worked with him in his small office for looking at what has been going on in this very important reform area.

The federal government obviously had a mandate to undertake the royal commission. They went to the last election. They did that. There has been and will be bipartisan support from all members within this chamber to end the scourge of family violence. The government sometimes makes some outrageous comments in relation to this side of the house not

supporting what needs to be done. I think we all recognise and understand that a lot more needs to be done. Certainly when we were in government we started the process of understanding and looking at some significant reform and significant funding. Nevertheless I am not talking about the previous government; I am talking about the royal commission and the implementation of the 227 recommendations.

It is fairly evident from the comments made in the report that the government's priorities have possibly been misguided because they are focused on fulfilling their commitment to implement all 227 recommendations. We all understand that this is an enormous task because of the extent of the royal commission and the extent of those recommendations. There are 227. They are not simple recommendations; they are very complex. There needs to be a proper approach taken in relation to the priority of keeping women and children — anyone for that matter, any victim of family violence — safe, secure and thriving.

I will just quote a bit from page 10 of the report, where the monitor looks at what the government has been doing. It states:

The government needs to stop thinking about the reform as implementing the 227 recommendations and instead return to the desired outcomes articulated in the 10-year plan and determine how to achieve them.

It is clear from the findings of this report that due to the complexities and the nature of the 227 recommendations, some of the priorities have been, if I can say, wrong. The report says that the priorities need to have critical planning work. The government needs to pause or slow down some areas of the reform so that they can actually undertake some of that critical planning work, because it is about planning and enabling those 227 recommendations to actually take effect and be meaningful.

As I said at the outset, I want to commend Tim Cartwright and his team for being very frank and open about the issues that the government is facing in relation to the complexity of the implementation process. As I said, there are a number of recommendations that are easier to implement; they are not as complex. With the complex ones, such as the information sharing or other aspects around the safety hubs, we know there are delays and there is uncertainty. Certainly people are saying to me, 'We don't know where the hubs are, we don't know what they look like, we don't know what the model is'. There are serious concerns around many issues in relation to the government's very forthright stance on, 'We will implement all 227 recommendations', without fully

understanding what they are. I think that was misguided by the Premier and the government at the time. I think they needed to understand the complexity of what the recommendations were. Hence I am very pleased the implementation monitor is in place and is providing the necessary oversight so that these recommendations from the very important royal commission will be implemented.

Victorian Multicultural Commission: report 2016–17

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:15) — I wish to spend a little bit of time speaking about some ideas that are emerging in the multicultural affairs space. I would like to use the Victorian Multicultural Commission annual report 2016–17 as a starting point because it focuses on the underpinning objectives of our multicultural affairs policy, and that is to create a harmonious Victoria. Objective 5 talks about promoting unity, understanding and harmony amongst Victoria's diverse communities; objective 6 is about promoting a better understanding of Victoria's diverse communities; and objective 7 promotes interaction between individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds.

It has been my very great privilege to serve as the shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, having come to this country myself as a migrant — as a little girl with parents and an older brother with no contacts, no language and no money — and having had the opportunity of serving in this Victorian Parliament and also now serving those multicultural communities. The greatest joy for me is sharing some of the many achievements of those in our multicultural communities, irrespective of their background, where they were born, what religion they profess or what languages they speak. Can I say that they all share that joy. They are there to celebrate those occasions and their own achievements. Just in recent days, following a spate of iftar dinners — which have not finished — involving our Muslim communities, I have received a number of emails from families delineating the achievements of their children and grandchildren and their extended families in this country. Whenever I speak about that I get tremendous applause, because people are indeed proud of their achievements and they are proud to live in a nation that provides the opportunities that their own countries of birth have not. They are the reasons why my parents also migrated here.

What has become disturbing to me in recent times is the emergence of a potentially divisive and politically motivated lexicon which is infused in the whole

multicultural affairs space. One of those terms that we heard mentioned earlier, but others have also used it, is this notion of privilege — that people who are not migrants have come from privileged backgrounds and that somehow the system is stacked against those who are migrants and therefore they may not be able to achieve their dreams. I find that very disturbing and very discouraging. It is not something that I think most people would agree with. I go to great lengths to say that Australians are inherently people who believe in an egalitarian society, believe in equality of opportunity, believe in fairness and believe in treating people based on their character and their conduct and not on other superficial characteristics. The messages that I get are that if you embrace the opportunities and the friendship of Australians they will certainly embrace you, and they have. I cannot underestimate the hardships that some people face in integrating and adjusting to a very different culture, and I have experienced that as well.

This notion that somehow we are a society where privilege dominates and will be a barrier to the achievement of your dreams or of your potential is a very disturbing phenomenon that is now emerging in Australia and certainly here in Victoria. Often people talk about injustices around the world, especially in Third World countries with undemocratic regimes, whether they are left-wing or right-wing, and conflate that with some of the challenges that we may face, which are certainly of a very different magnitude. All I want to say is that in a multiparty system where we do not have institutionalised discrimination there is no scope for discrimination based on those characteristics. We do have an equal opportunity act which attempts to balance some of those inherent rights that are recognised worldwide, and sometimes it does require a balancing of those rights in order to be able to foster that harmony and at the same time respect the values that people have and that define who they are. Most countries around the world would tend to aspire to western values, and those are essentially freedom of speech, government transparency and rule of law.

These demands will only grow stronger over time of course with a more globalised world and better communications as well. I believe that a government that is open will have far less entrenched political privilege than any other. The achievements in Australia amongst the migrants that I have had the privilege of meeting have usually not been the outcome of privilege. They have usually been the outcome of hard work, of sacrifice, of talent and of risk-taking — things that we need to encourage because we all benefit from them as a nation, as a community and as individuals. I will come back to this theme because it is a very important one for the future of our state.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues: public housing renewal program

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:21) — I rise to speak on the inquiry into the public housing renewal program report of June 2018. This is a report that once again shows that when it comes to Labor they are all talk and all smoke and mirrors when it comes to public housing. When I took over as public housing minister in 2010 we had recently had an Auditor-General's report that highlighted that the state of public housing was in crisis. There were 10 000 properties that were about to reach the end of their useful life span because the former housing minister, Richard Wynne, had not invested in public housing. There were also 41 212 applications on the public housing waiting list which we estimated to be in excess of 100 000 people, because each application represented a household, not just an individual. The number of people on the public housing waiting list was more than the number of people who fill the MCG on grand final day.

As I said, the Auditor-General said that public housing was in crisis. There were 10 000 properties about to end their useful lifespan and we knew we had to do something. Richard Wynne's answer to needing to do something was to just dispose of public housing properties holus-bolus. In fact in his final budget, the 2010–11 budget, he actually budgeted to dispose of 1737 properties that year. Over four years in that portfolio he disposed of 818 in his first year, 775 in his second year, 1164 in his third year and 1737 in his final year. That was a total of 4494 properties that he disposed of and people were left on the public housing waiting list because they had no access to those properties. The department was knocking over houses in places like Corio and Norlane and leaving vacant blocks. Public housing truly was in crisis.

The coalition set about rectifying the wrongs in public housing and added 4244 properties to the social housing numbers in this state, making the number rise from 80 955 in June 2010 to 85 199 in June 2014. We also invested heavily in the maintenance program to try to stop the decline of the 10 000 properties that were about to reach the end of their useful life span and invested also in the renewal of public housing. As I said, in September 2010 there were 41 212 applications on the public housing waiting list. Despite all of our challenges in public housing we managed to reduce the public housing waiting list by 6594 applications over that four years to our last waiting list that was published in September 2014, which was 34 618 applications. I note that that has once again blown out under a Labor government to 36 742 applications.

Labor is very good on rhetoric when it comes to public housing and to homelessness but very poor on actually delivering for those in our community who are the most vulnerable and the most in need. People in the Labor Party keep telling me how great my youth foyer initiative is. Youth foyers are really kicking goals. They are changing the direction of kids' lives and are a fantastic asset to this state. Yet even though the coalition had committed to continuing that program and to expanding it, this government has failed to invest in any further youth foyers to give young people who can no longer live at home, who are couch surfing and who are in danger of falling into recurring homelessness and welfare dependency for life the opportunity to participate in education, work and training and to have subsidised accommodation in a youth foyer. The work and learning centres that we initiated are also kicking goals, with thousands of people who had never worked before gaining employment.

We kicked off a number of renewal programs around the state. The Olympia program in West Heidelberg was a \$160 million investment over 10 years, with more than 1500 public housing dwellings in Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights and Bellfield that were to be renewed, and there was to be no net loss of social housing. The New Norlane program was an \$80 million investment which aimed to build 320 new affordable social and private homes in the Norlane area. Carlton was a \$146 million investment. We did master planning for a number of estates and we truly invested and truly cared for those in need of social housing in this state.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Farm safety

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:26) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Agriculture, the Honourable Jaala Pulford, and I am sorry to see she is not in the chamber. Nevertheless the matter I want to raise with her tonight is the concerning escalation of farm deaths in Victoria. The number between 2007 and 2017 is 56, which is a fairly horrifying number of people who have died on farms in Victoria. In 2008 and 2009 the number of farm deaths had been very low. In fact there was only one in one year and there were three in the other so we actually thought that, given the amount of work that had gone into a number of farm safety programs and the work of FarmSafe Alliance, FarmSafe and WorkSafe

themselves, the messages were getting through about the importance of being aware of the potential risks on farm, particularly given it is not only a home but also a workplace. A lot of good work was done in the old days in relation to farm safety workshops that farmers themselves and different stakeholder groups took ownership of and that were well supported by the government of the day.

The reason I am raising this with the minister tonight is that last year we saw 12 farm deaths, so we are actually seeing now an increase in the number of deaths on farm. It is time to reassess what the government can do to support the farming industry in trying to reduce both the risk on farm and also in making farmers and those that live on farms more aware of the risks in the workplace, given that it is a residential home as well as a workplace, and also given the increased use of machinery and obviously the age of farmers now and the health of farmers. So there are a lot of mitigating circumstances in relation to farm deaths, but the action I seek from the minister is that she look at the programs of old, particularly in relation to providing funding for the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) in particular as the principal lead agency of FarmSafe workshops to perhaps reinstate many of those programs to make the farming community more aware of the risks associated with working on farm and also to be able to help and support the VFF again in implementing these workshops that were very successful in the early 2000s to try to reduce what is a very disturbing trend in farm deaths across Victoria.

Hume Freeway–McKoy Street, West Wodonga

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:30) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and it is regarding the redesign of the intersection of the Hume Freeway and McKoy Street near Wodonga. The action that I seek from the minister is for the minister to act as a matter of urgency and halt the current works at the intersection of the Hume Freeway and McKoy Street near Wodonga until VicRoads has undertaken exhaustive consultation with local residents and traders to ensure any works undertaken make this notorious blackspot intersection safer.

The intersection of the Hume Freeway and McKoy Street on the western fringe of Wodonga is a notorious traffic collision blackspot. The high incidence of serious collisions at the intersection caused VicRoads to reduce the speed limit from 110 kilometres per hour to 80 kilometres per hour in 2015. The intersection is used daily by a cross-section of the community, and

approximately 35 000 vehicles pass through the intersection each day and about 3000 trucks each night.

The planned works currently being undertaken in conjunction with the building of a service centre at the intersection will make this intersection more dangerous for road users. VicRoads and Wodonga City Council both objected to the construction of the service centre. This decision was overturned by VCAT on the condition the service centre developer, United Petroleum, upgraded the freeway intersection. This planned change of the intersection has received wide condemnation from the locals, trucking operators and civil engineers. Locals believe the proposed intersection design makes it even more unsafe and may cost someone's life. The universal safest option for the intersection is the construction of a flyover. A flyover would deliver the necessary safety outcomes and would cause the removal of a level crossing on the north-east rail line.

The current works must cease immediately while VicRoads conducts consultation with the local community to ensure any changes will make this intersection safer. The action that I seek from the minister is for the minister to act as a matter of urgency and halt the current works at the intersection of the Hume Freeway and McKoy Street near Wodonga until VicRoads has undertaken exhaustive consultation with local residents and traders to ensure any works undertaken make this notorious blackspot intersection safer.

Circular economy research

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:32) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Industry and Employment. Last year the former Premier of South Australia launched the report *Creating Value: the Potential Benefits of a Circular Economy in South Australia*. The report was the groundbreaking culmination of extensive research by Melbourne-based consultancy Lifecycles in partnership with EconSearch, Colby Industries and the University of Queensland, and was commissioned by Green Industries SA. Using environmentally extended economic analysis, the research examined the likely impact of transition to a more circular economy in South Australia, which involves designing or importing smart products that last longer and can be reused many times, sharing things more and making repair the norm, recycling materials effectively, converting some waste materials into biofuels and displacing fossil fuels and derived products with bio-based materials.

Conservative estimates were made in terms of jobs, greenhouse emissions and energy use, with a finding that transitioning to a more circular economy would increase the number of full-time equivalent jobs in South Australia in 2030 by 25 700 compared with business as usual for the same-sized economy; decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 27 per cent, or 7.7 million tonnes of CO₂-equivalent by 2030; and cut territorial energy use in South Australia by 86 petajoules compared to business as usual in 2030, or just over a 20 per cent reduction.

We know that despite significant job creation Victoria still faces real challenges in relation to unemployment and underemployment. We know that we need to act urgently and ambitiously to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and tackle our waste and recycling crisis. A move to a circular economy would make substantial inroads into each of these challenges, and using the sophisticated modelling developed for the South Australian study the research could be completed in a very timely manner. This work could provide a blueprint for a smart, staged transition to a circular economy in Victoria, which frankly cannot come soon enough. Minister, the action I am seeking is that you meet with the Melbourne-based consultancy Lifecycles to be briefed on their circular economy work, with a view to commissioning this work in Victoria.

Duranta Drive, Gowanbrae

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:35) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Planning, with possibly input from the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation and also the Minister for Local Government, but that is for the minister at some point to decide. Last weekend I was out visiting constituents in Gowanbrae with Cassandra Marr, who will be the next member for Sunbury in the Assembly, and we are certainly looking forward to having her in the Parliament after November. I came across a group of residents in Duranta Drive in Gowanbrae who have a number of issues, and have had a number of issues for some years now, that certainly need some considerable investigation and indeed need to be sorted out. I will read out parts of a letter — as much as I can, anyway — to me from one of those residents:

To give you some background, most homes in Duranta Drive were bought off the plan from Bahl Homes. The first resident moved in approximately four years ago, with a varying length of occupancy between then and now, and we have a mix of owner-occupiers and rentals.

During the course of the last couple of years, several residents have contacted the developer, Bahl Homes, as well as

engaging with private property lawyers to rectify individual issues as well as those pertaining to the whole street.

As you have seen for yourself, we have a number of issues in Duranta Drive; one that you have highlighted yourself is parking.

And this is particularly true; I can vouch for that.

The parking in Duranta Drive is horrendous, with the problem contributed by the construction on the east side of the street. The gradient of the driveway does not allow entry into the allocated garage and the driveway length is not sufficient to fit one car, let alone two. Moreland council has replied to this by saying there is sufficient parking spots, however, will investigate the planning permit and gradient.

They have also said that the road itself was approved as it is classified as an access road. Personally, we do not understand how a road with approximately 30 homes and travels in both directions can be classified as access versus residential. We have been given no clarity around this.

We also have an issue with common land. There are three parcels of land in Duranta Drive that cannot be built on as there are council amenities running through them. The problem that has arisen with this land is who is responsible for clearing, developing and then going forward maintaining.

We, the residents, were told it was the developer, who then passed it on to the council who has now handballed it back to us, the residents, telling us we must now form a body corporate to not only maintain it but to clean and landscape it as well.

This was not something we factored in when buying our properties but will agree to maintain once the land is cleaned and landscaped. At this stage though, neither council or Bahl Homes will agree to this so we are at a standstill.

Secondary to the landscaping is public liability of this land. To date, this land is uninsured.

They went on to explain a whole range of issues concerned with that. I ask the minister to hold a full inquiry into this matter, with a view to getting to the bottom of who is responsible to these people and sorting out the very real issue that these people in Gowanbrae are facing on a daily basis.

Sydney Road, Brunswick, tram track works

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (17:38) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Public Transport, and it concerns the Yarra Trams works that are due to occur in Northern Metropolitan Region commencing next week, specifically around Sydney Road. The tram works will shut down traffic to key Brunswick roads before the very important Ramadan celebrations. It has been described as an ‘absolute disaster’ by local business owners. To repair the tram tracks Moreland Road will be closed between Sydney Road and Nicholson Street from 9 June until 12 June, as well as nearby Cameron Street. Sydney

Road will also be closed to traffic between Cozens Street and Moreland Road as trams form a tram park on the road, because access to the Brunswick depot will be limited by the replacement of the track.

I remind the government it is Ramadan. Local traders have been preparing for months and months and months, and now, through Yarra Trams works, they are going to close the road for us. It is going to be total chaos. The works are going to block in businesses from every single way. I should remind the minister that meat cannot be carried for hundreds and hundreds of metres or delivered in vans. It is going to be an absolute disaster. Public Transport Victoria said:

To minimise disruptions, we work with the local community and relevant agencies to schedule works during quieter periods.

I have to tell you, next week is not a quieter period. This is Ramadan, when those businesses, especially in Sydney Road for our Muslim community, are going to be faced with lots and lots of customers and lots and lots of orders. The local businesses received a letter informing them of the works on 24 May, which said, ‘In a couple of weeks time we’re going to close down Sydney Road’. Now, I know there has been disrespect for faith in this place by the government already so far this year, but I have to say if they are genuinely about bipartisan support for faiths they would then consider the needs of our Muslim community before they schedule any infrastructure works.

Last year businesses were promised more consultation with Yarra Trams after a similar incident closed down businesses in November. There will be thousands and thousands of people looking to get to that area to pick up their orders and for those businesses to supply those orders. The Sydney Road Brunswick Association are also unhappy with the Yarra Trams timing and called it ‘a complete lack of thought for those affected’. The action I seek is for the minister to halt these works immediately, respect the Muslim faith and local businesses during that very, very busy week and reschedule the works to a time that better suits local businesses and the community.

Dandenong Creek

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:40) — My adjournment matter is directed to Lily D’Ambrosio, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in her capacity as the minister that the Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) answers to, and it is concerning a stretch of Dandenong Creek around the Heathmont-Bayswater area. There have been a number of occasions in recent days where this stretch of creek

has had an unusual white foam along it, which looks like it might be the inside of a clothes washing machine. The real concern from a number of groups around there is that the creek is being polluted somewhere from inside the Bayswater industrial estate. I know the EPA is investigating. The action I ask of the minister is that she send any report of these events that are at hand now to me so I can pass them on to the First Friends of Dandenong Creek and other concerned groups to keep them updated continually about the progress of the investigation. Hopefully there will be actions to ensure this does not occur again.

Hallam creek

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (17:42) — I would like to raise a matter for the Minister for Planning. I know that there is probably a little bit of overlap with the Minister for Water, but this essentially falls within his responsibility. It is an issue that I have raised before a number of times, and that is the state of our inland waterways. In particular the one that I would like to raise tonight is the state of the Hallam creek. This matter was raised with me by the Liberal candidate for the Assembly electorate of Narre Warren South, Susan Serey. When you actually drive past that, as I do — I used to teach in Hallam — it is a very, very neglected and dirty-looking area. I think there has got to be some way under planning laws to be able to require — it will probably take a period of time — those who require planning permits to take some responsibility for the areas that back onto the creek. In particular I am thinking of rubbish and unkempt grasses overgrown with all sorts of weeds.

It really is a lost opportunity. These waterways could be developed in such a way that they can be enjoyed by walkers for passive recreation and beautified not just for the benefit of many of the businesses and industries in the area but also for members of the community. So I would like the minister to put his thinking cap on to see what can happen within his portfolio to, over a period of time, transform these areas into beautiful environmental assets for the community and for local businesses. It is an absolute blight on our community to have such neglect and such lost opportunities.

Cr Susan Serey, the liberal candidate for Narre Warren South, is absolutely right. She is very passionate about this and wants to see these opportunities seized to improve the amenity of the environment of these inland waterways for the benefit of all.

Hazelwood Pondage

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:44) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Resources, the Honourable Tim Pallas in the other place. The action I seek is for the minister to release into the community the executive summary of a report that has been produced by engineering consultants GHD which has resulted in the mining company Engie closing and beginning to drain the Hazelwood Pondage last Friday. As Engie is the entity that is responsible for the rehabilitation of the site, it commissioned a technical report to look at the stability of the dam. It had various geotechnical elements to it.

Due to the finding of this report, the pondage is now closed, and it has brought huge disappointment, frustration and bewilderment to the Latrobe Valley community. One such group within that community is the Latrobe Valley Yacht Club. For decades they have run a fantastic event called the Sauna Sail. It was due to be scheduled this weekend, and it has had to be cancelled despite costly preparations. Apparently there are two main issues in this report. Based on a media release from Engie, one is around the integrity of the dam wall in a seismic event. That is an earthquake of Richter scale 6, which I am not sure has ever been recorded in the history of our region. The other one is around potential wet zones in the dam wall due to leakage and seepage, so it states.

Public safety is paramount, and no-one is arguing that fact, but what we find from the Daniel Andrews government is a deafening silence on how this asset, this greatly used and loved community asset, can be saved. The government needs to answer a number of questions. How will it work with stakeholder groups such as Engie, Southern Rural Water, Latrobe City Council, the yacht club, the caravan park and the Yinnar and district association? What could the government do to support strengthening of the integrity of the walls, and has it done any costing around it?

There is silence from this government a week later, and that is such a disappointment to those communities. In fact this community of Latrobe Valley has had a kick in the shins over many, many months with the closure of the Hazelwood power station and the closure of Carter Holt Harvey. They need something positive, and they keep getting knocked down. The first step is to ensure that this report, or a technical summary of it, is released into the community so people can read it, understand it, make commentary back and then engage with the government about how to save this really vital asset in our Latrobe Valley community.

Responses

Ms TIERNEY (Minister for Training and Skills)

(17:48) — There were eight adjournment matters this evening. The first was from Mr Ramsay to the Minister for Agriculture in relation to farm deaths. The second was from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety in relation to a traffic black spot in her electorate. The third was from Ms Springle to the Minister for Industry and Employment seeking that the minister meet with Lifecycles on the basis of the work they have undertaken in South Australia. The next was from Mr Finn to the Minister for Planning in relation to land use issues and parking issues at a particular location in his electorate. The fifth was from Mr Ondarchie to the Minister for Public Transport in relation to the closure of roads due to tram track replacements, seeking that the minister halt the works.

The sixth was from Mr Leane to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change seeking information to be released and provided to the First Friends of Dandenong Creek in relation to foam that has been sighted at that location. The seventh was from Mrs Peulich in relation to the Minister for Planning, and it was concerning issues around the Hallam creek, in particular the cleaning up of the Hallam creek. The final adjournment matter was from Ms Bath to the Minister for Resources, and it was in relation to the release of an executive summary of the GHD report.

I also have written responses to adjournment matters raised by Ms Springle on 1 May, Ms Bath on 8 May and Mr Finn on 10 May 2018.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Purcell) — The house now stands adjourned.

House adjourned 5.49 p.m.