

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, 7 February 2018

(Extract from book 1)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

The Honourable LINDA DESSAU, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable KEN LAY, AO, APM

The ministry

(from 16 October 2017)

Premier	The Hon. D. M. Andrews, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for Emergency Services	The Hon. J. A. Merlino, MP
Treasurer and Minister for Resources	The Hon. T. H. Pallas, MP
Minister for Public Transport and Minister for Major Projects	The Hon. J. Allan, MP
Minister for Industry and Employment	The Hon. B. A. Carroll, MP
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Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Suburban Development	The Hon. L. D' Ambrosio, MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and Minister for Ports	The Hon. L. A. Donnellan, MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans	The Hon. J. H. Eren, MP
Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Equality and Minister for Creative Industries	The Hon. M. P. Foley, MP
Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services	The Hon. J. Hennessy, MP
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence	The Hon. N. M. Hutchins, MP
Special Minister of State	The Hon. G. Jennings, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, and Minister for Local Government	The Hon. M. Kairouz, MP
Minister for Families and Children, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister for Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. Mikakos, MLC
Minister for Police and Minister for Water	The Hon. L. M. Neville, MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Racing	The Hon. M. P. Pakula, MP
Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Regional Development	The Hon. J. L. Pulford, MLC
Minister for Finance and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. R. D. Scott, MP
Minister for Training and Skills, and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. G. A. Tierney, MLC
Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. W. Wynne, MP
Cabinet Secretary	Ms M. Thomas, MP

Legislative Council committees

Privileges Committee — Ms Hartland, Ms Mikakos, Mr O’Sullivan, Ms Pulford, Mr Purcell, Mr Rich-Phillips and Ms Wooldridge.

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

Legislative Council standing committees

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure — Mr Bourman, Ms Dunn, Mr Eideh, Mr 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, #Ms Hartland, Mr Melhem, #Mr Purcell, #Mr Ramsay, Ms Shing, #Ms Symes and Mr Young.

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues — #Ms Crozier, #Mr Elasmarr, Ms Fitzherbert, #Ms Hartland, Mr Morris, Mr Mulino, Ms Patten, Mrs Peulich, #Dr Ratnam, #Mr Rich-Phillips, 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 Hartland, 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 Hartland, Ms Lovell, Mr Mulino and Mr Young. (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr J. Bull, Mr Crisp, Mrs Fyffe, Mr Staikos, Ms Suleyman and Mr Thompson.

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

Law Reform, Road and Community Safety Committee — (*Council*): Mr 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

President:

The Hon. B. N. ATKINSON

Deputy President:

Mr K. EIDEH

Acting Presidents:

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

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. JENNINGS

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. J. L. PULFORD

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. WOOLDRIDGE

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr L. B. O'SULLIVAN

Leader of the Greens:

Dr S. RATNAM

Member	Region	Party	Member	Region	Party
Atkinson, Mr Bruce Norman	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Mikakos, Ms Jenny	Northern Metropolitan	ALP
Barber, Mr Gregory John 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 ⁷	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 ⁸	Northern Victoria	Nats
Dalla-Riva, Mr Richard Alex Gordon	Eastern Metropolitan	LP	Patten, Ms Fiona ⁹	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
Elasmarr, Mr Nazih	Northern Metropolitan	ALP	Ramsay, Mr Simon	Western Victoria	LP
Finn, Mr Bernard Thomas C.	Western Metropolitan	LP	Ratnam, Dr Samantha Shantini ¹⁰	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	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	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Eastern Metropolitan	LP
Melhem, Mr Cesar	Western Metropolitan	ALP	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 25 February 2015

⁸ Appointed 12 October 2016

⁹ ASP until 16 January 2018

¹⁰ Appointed 18 October 2017

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, 7 FEBRUARY 2018

PAPERS	59
NOTICES OF MOTION	59
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE	
<i>Sessional orders</i>	59
VICTORIAN FUNDS MANAGEMENT	
CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014	
<i>Withdrawal</i>	59
TOBACCO AMENDMENT (SMOKING IN OUTDOOR AREAS) BILL 2015	
<i>Withdrawal</i>	59
MINISTERS STATEMENTS	
<i>East Gippsland recreational and commercial fishing</i>	60
<i>Food solutions for ageing populations research</i>	60
MEMBERS STATEMENTS	
<i>Western Victoria Region events</i>	60
<i>Dr Hugh Wirth</i>	61
<i>Australia Day awards</i>	61
<i>Muriel Craddock</i>	62
<i>Australia Day</i>	62
<i>Maddie Riewoldt's Vision</i>	62
<i>Pill testing</i>	62
<i>Workplace deaths</i>	62
<i>Ambulance Victoria Shepparton services</i>	63
<i>Federation Square</i>	63
<i>Black Saturday</i>	63
<i>Seymour College</i>	64
<i>Ms Hartland</i>	64
PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65	64, 91, 103
NAMING AND SUSPENSION OF MEMBER	
<i>Ms Mikakos</i>	81
BLACK SATURDAY	82
ABSENCE OF MINISTERS	82
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	
<i>Fire Wise funding</i>	82
<i>Heavy Vehicle National Law</i>	82, 83
<i>Forest Industry Taskforce</i>	83
<i>Rubicon Valley logging</i>	84
<i>Kangaroo pet food trial</i>	84, 85
<i>Heyfield timber mill</i>	85
<i>Cross border commissioner</i>	86, 87
<i>Greyhound racing</i>	87
<i>Eureka Stadium</i>	88, 89
<i>Written responses</i>	89
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	
<i>Answers</i>	89
CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS	
<i>South Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	90
<i>Northern Victoria Region</i>	90, 91
<i>Eastern Metropolitan Region</i>	90, 91
<i>Western Victoria Region</i>	90, 91
<i>Eastern Victoria Region</i>	90
<i>Western Metropolitan Region</i>	90
INTERNATIONAL DRIVERS	92

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

<i>Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18</i>	117, 118, 120
<i>Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure: RSPCA Victoria</i>	119
ADJOURNMENT	
<i>Energy security</i>	120
<i>Social enterprise employment strategies</i>	121
<i>Assistance dogs</i>	121
<i>Beaumaris Bay fossil site</i>	122
<i>Lara goat farm</i>	122
<i>Knox early childhood education</i>	123
<i>Hurstbridge line level crossing removals</i>	123
<i>Eastern Victoria Region public transport</i>	123
<i>The Babes Project</i>	124
<i>Australia Day awards</i>	124
<i>Responses</i>	125

Wednesday, 7 February 2018

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

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 —

Government response to the Accountability and Oversight Committee's Report on the Inquiry into Education, Training and Communications Initiatives of Victorian Oversight Agencies.

Government response to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Committee's Report on a framework for monitoring the performance of the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament —

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 — No. 5.

Corrections Act 1986 — No. 3.

Domestic Animals Act 1994 — No. 1.

Road Safety Act 1986 — No. 6.

Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009 — No. 4.

Wildlife Act 1975 — No. 2.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Documents under section 15 in respect of Statutory Rule No. 2.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion given.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Wooldridge — On a point of order, President, Ms Mikakos just called the entire Liberal and National parties representing this side of the house 'racists'. I think that is a highly defamatory and unacceptable statement, and I ask her to withdraw.

The PRESIDENT — At the very least I think it is an exaggeration. Ms Mikakos, would you please withdraw that remark, as I do regard it as offensive.

Ms Mikakos — President, last year the shadow Treasurer —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Please withdraw.

Ms Mikakos — The shadow Treasurer made a personal attack on me on —

The PRESIDENT — Ms Mikakos —

Ms Mikakos — the basis of ethnicity —

The PRESIDENT — Ms Mikakos!

Ms Mikakos — that was repeated by Ms Crozier and was —

The PRESIDENT (09:40) — Ms Mikakos, half an hour.

An honourable member — She needs to withdraw.

The PRESIDENT — I will handle this. When you come back I will be expecting a withdrawal without an explanation.

Ms Mikakos withdrew from chamber.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Sessional orders

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

That sessional orders 16 and 17 be suspended until members have moved into their new office accommodation.

The PRESIDENT — The import of this would be that we will continue with 3-minute bells rather than 4-minute bells until such time as this motion lapses in respect of the sessional orders.

Motion agreed to.

VICTORIAN FUNDS MANAGEMENT CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2014

Withdrawal

Withdrawn, by leave, on motion of Ms HARTLAND (Western Victoria).

TOBACCO AMENDMENT (SMOKING IN OUTDOOR AREAS) BILL 2015

Withdrawal

Withdrawn, by leave, on motion of Ms HARTLAND (Western Victoria).

MINISTERS STATEMENTS

East Gippsland recreational and commercial fishing

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (09:42) — I would like to take this opportunity to update the house on some important developments for both recreational fishing and commercial fishing in East Gippsland. Last month I had the opportunity to visit some of our state's most beautiful locations.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms PULFORD — Further east than the barramundi, but you will be pleased to know the barramundi fishery is open for business again.

An honourable member — Are they fine?

Ms PULFORD — Yes, they are fine. They are thriving. They are this big — for the benefit of *Hansard* my arms are stretched almost as wide as they go.

I would like to take the opportunity to update the chamber on some very important initiatives the government is taking to cut red tape. In Mallacoota — that iconic and popular destination in far East Gippsland — I announced that commercial rock lobster and abalone fishers will no longer be required to obtain a PrimeSafe licence under a proposed new exemption from the government.

The change comes about as a result of ongoing investigatory work which has revealed the current regulations are disproportionate to the food safety risks from rock lobster and abalone fishing. The changes will make the regulation of rock lobster and abalone fishers in Victoria consistent with that in other states and similar to the regulation of the handling of other live seafood like finfish and yabbies, reducing unnecessary red tape without compromising in any way food safety outcomes or market access.

Victoria exported \$162 million worth of rock lobster and abalone in 2016–17, an increase of more than 70 per cent over five years, as the industry recovers and restocks. The amendments to the Seafood Safety Regulations 2014 will exempt rock lobster and abalone fishers from the requirement to be licensed by PrimeSafe, and I would congratulate the fishing industry for their advocacy over some time on this issue.

In other news, I had the pleasure of releasing 1000 bass fingerlings into the Snowy River at Orbost. I suspect many of them will outlive most of us here in the house,

but we have hit a new fish stocking record with more than 454 000 Australian bass released into 19 rivers and lakes right across Gippsland.

Food solutions for ageing populations research

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (09:45) — I would like to take this opportunity to announce a \$30 000 grant from the government's Food Source Victoria program. This is an important project of significance to Victoria's ageing population in the south-west of the state. The funding will support a new study dedicated to developing texture-modified foods. This is a project initiated by a group of businesses in south-western Victoria and the CSIRO which is focused on addressing health challenges for Victoria's ageing population. The food solutions for ageing populations research project and business case initiated by the Warrnambool City Council and local aged-care facility Lyndoch Living will investigate developing high-protein, texture-modified food products for aged-care residents.

More than 30 per cent of residents in aged-care homes need texture-modified foods. This includes people with dementia who do not recognise a vitamised or texture-modified meal as a more traditional type of food intake. Preliminary research undertaken for the study shows a direct correlation between energy intake from modified diets with weight loss and unintentional weight loss, in association with decline in understanding among aged-care residents. Lyndoch Living and other members of the food innovation working group involving the CSIRO have researched ways to present high-protein food that is actually recognisable as food — things like soft-textured sausages.

This is a \$45 000 project that will involve developing a framework for research and development of new food products that will improve the food intake and health of ageing populations both locally in south-western Victoria and around the world. It is a terrific project, and we are very proud to be able to support it.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Western Victoria Region events

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (09:47) — I return to this chamber having celebrated an ongoing summer of success in the Geelong and Bellarine Peninsula region. It is success borne out of sporting and cultural celebrations originally backed and enabled, if I may say, by the former coalition government. I am speaking of events such as the Geelong Festival of

Sails. I was delighted to be on board the Commodore's boat inspecting the passage race, the first race of the season. It was the Napthine coalition government that commissioned the feasibility study into the marina development around the Royal Geelong Yacht Club, a sign of support and belief in this region and that part of the foreshore.

The Cadell Evans road race was another milestone event, attracting at least 3000 participants, including myself, support crews and 100 000 roadside spectators. These came from around the world, our country and our state. A live broadcast and streaming applications took this event globally to 140 countries. It showcased our beautiful coastline and villages and our, the weekend staging of the Victorian Golf Open at the Thirteenth Beach course near Barwon Heads was a celebration of youth and talent, and it just keeps getting bigger and bigger. It was in fact a former National Party sports minister, Hugh Delahunty, who brought the event to Thirteenth Beach.

Finally, another Liberal-backed project, the Avalon Airport, has now become Victoria's second international airport, with AirAsia announcing it will leave Tullamarine and now operate two flights a day from Avalon. I congratulate Lindsay and David Fox, AirAsia CEO Tony Fernandes and Avalon CEO Justin Giddings, and applaud the Liberal investment, support and foresight for this region. Perhaps this government would like to also make a contribution to the region by considering a rail link to the airport and establishing Victoria's second container port at Bay West.

Dr Hugh Wirth

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture)
(09:49) — It is with great sadness that Victorians have learned of the passing of animal welfare champion, patron and former RSPCA Victoria president, Dr Hugh Wirth. Dr Hugh dedicated his life to animals, beginning his lifelong association with RSPCA Victoria in 1949 when he joined as a junior member. As a young vet he was elected to its state council in 1967 before becoming president in 1972, a role he held for a remarkable 43 years.

Dr Hugh's passion and knowledge was unwavering. He was the first non-European president of World Animal Protection and spent 30 years as the resident vet on ABC 774 Melbourne radio while continuing to care for animals at his Balwyn surgery. In 1985 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia and in 1997 he was named Victorian of the Year. He was the first Australian awarded the George T. Angell Humanitarian Award from the Massachusetts Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Despite declining health in recent years, Dr Wirth continued his involvement with RSPCA Victoria as its patron and as a member of its animal welfare policy committee.

I am proud Dr Hugh lived to see laws that will end puppy farming in Victoria, the release of the state's first comprehensive plan for animal welfare and greater opportunities for families in rental accommodation to take a pet into their home. He changed the lives of humans too by encouraging greater pet ownership. I would like to thank him for his leadership of RSPCA Victoria over decades, for the way he showed a generation to be better carers of our pets and for his tireless advocacy that served to ensure that countless creatures great and small had a better life. Rest in peace.

Australia Day awards

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan)
(09:50) — I would like to say how delighted I was to celebrate Australia Day along with so many volunteers across our communities and also with local government representatives and state and federal parliamentary representatives, including the Liberal candidate for Narre Warren South, Cr Susan Serey; Liberal candidate Vikki Fitzgerald, who has nominated for Narre Warren North; and Liberal candidate for Cranbourne Ann-Marie Hermans. I would like to say that we are the greatest country in the world, a country built on an Indigenous heritage, a British foundation and with a multicultural character. Indeed I think we have enormous reasons to be proud, but at the same time we can use this day to mark some of our history.

I think what we celebrate are the values and the character of Australian people, and in particular the strong sense and commitment to volunteerism, which has been rewarded with lots of awards on Australia Day, including in the City of Casey. We have Casey Citizen of the Year Marie Allen, Casey Young Citizen of the Year Katherine Morgan, Casey Senior Citizen of the Year Ray Bell and Casey Community Group of the Year Beaconhills College. There were a number of study tour awards given to young people: Aashvi Parekh of Cranbourne Secondary College, Arshaan Shaikh of Nossal High School, Jordan Mastrangioli of Cranbourne Secondary College, Leo Crnogorcevic of Nossal High School, Megan Colclough of Berwick College, Michelle O'Hanrahan of Hillcrest Christian College and other —

The PRESIDENT — Time!

Muriel Craddock

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (09:52) — I wish to pay tribute to Muriel Rose Craddock, who died on 6 December 2017 aged 105. In 1965 Muriel, her husband Les and daughter Kay opened the Essendon Treasure Chest, selling second-hand books and bric-a-brac. Sadly, Les died not long after, but Muriel and Kay, while they were grief-stricken at the loss of Les, decided to continue with the business, which became the Kay Craddock Antiquarian Bookseller and has grown into one of the most renowned and respected antiquarian bookshops in the world. After moving premises to Flinders Lane, Bourke Street and Russell Street, it moved to the current premises in the Assembly Hall in Collins Street. The shop has been described as one of the most beautiful bookshops in the world, and I can attest to that.

Muriel was a great friend to my family, particularly my father, who passed away in 2007, and to my mother. We all bought books from Kay Craddock's bookshop, including a box set of the works of George Eliot I purchased. Muriel remained active in the business until recent years. I extend my condolences to her daughters, Patricia, Kay and Julie; her sons-in-law, Hans, Jonathan and Graeme; and her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Muriel was a remarkable woman who lived a long and fruitful life. She was a beloved wife, dearly loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, a good friend to all those who knew her and an icon in Melbourne.

Australia Day

Ms CROZIER (Southern Metropolitan) (09:54) — Australia Day is a day that should unite us all, not divide us. Unfortunately this year we witnessed particularly disgraceful comments by a member of the Koorie Youth Council, Tarneen Onus-Williams, at a protest on the steps of this Parliament. In my local community I attended a number of events where people from all corners of the world celebrated in a way that recognises what this great nation has to offer.

The citizenship ceremonies I attended at Kingston as well as the City of Port Phillip demonstrated the great spirit of Australia Day. Becoming a citizen on Australia Day is particularly poignant for many, and as I looked out to those who had just become Australian citizens I saw a man struggling to hold back tears at the Port Phillip citizenship ceremony. A very real, raw emotion on his face said it all. When he came up to receive his certificate and native plant he told me he was still emotional. He was not the only one. A woman with her

beautiful family had tears streaming down her face — such a powerful reminder of what it means for those who have made the decision to become an Australian citizen, even more so on Australia Day. Australia Day brings joy, purpose and pride and reminds us all of just how fortunate we are to live in a country that provides opportunity and a country that has achieved so much.

Maddie Riewoldt's Vision

Ms CROZIER — Later in the day I attended the Maddie Riewoldt T20 cricket match at Orrong park to raise funds for Maddie Riewoldt's Vision, a charity raising funds to find a cure for aplastic anaemia and supported by the Snowdome Foundation. I was pleased to be joined by my Assembly colleague Michael O'Brien and the Liberal candidate for Prahran, Dr Katie Allen, at the event, along with so many friends and supporters of the Riewoldt family. Well done to Phil Williamson and all those who organised an extremely successful event.

Pill testing

Ms HARTLAND (Western Metropolitan) (09:56) — This summer has had many festivals and dance parties, but again we have seen massive avoidable injury to people because of the government's unwillingness to do a pill testing trial. The event at Festival Hall last week is a case in point. We know from the European experience that you can reduce drug taking by up to 40 per cent because once you have actually warned people that what they have is potentially dangerous or deadly they are unlikely to take it. But in the ACT there has been cooperation between the Greens and the ALP MPs, and there were plans to do a trial of pill testing at the Spilt Milk Festival. This was not able to go ahead because the festival was on commonwealth land and the federal government intervened, but this has not stopped the ACT government from discussing rolling out a trial at the Groovin the Moo festival. I would like to congratulate Greens MP Shane Rattenbury and Assistant Minister for Health and ALP MP Meegan Fitzharris for working together to save lives.

Workplace deaths

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (09:57) — Last year was the worst year for workplace deaths in nearly a decade. Over 27 people died at work. Unfortunately half of those deaths were in the agricultural industry, and it was the most dangerous year to work on a farm since 2004. In fact 20 of the deaths reported came from regional Victoria. This year has not gotten off to a better start unfortunately, and we have already had

three workplace fatalities this year. The first one was in my electorate when a man in his 50s was trampled to death by cattle last month. I intend to keep highlighting these matters as too many families are losing loved ones and workers are being traumatised by workplace deaths and injuries. To reverse this trend in the workplace we need a coordinated effort from all governments, agencies, employers and unions.

Ambulance Victoria Shepparton services

Mr GEPP — Last week I had the great pleasure of visiting Ambulance Victoria in Shepparton following the announcement from the Productivity Commission about the performance data for the second quarter. What we can see is that the great people in Ambulance Victoria Shepparton are delivering a response of 85.3 per cent within 15 minutes for code 1 emergencies. That is an outstanding effort, up from 78.8 per cent last year and indeed much better than the best benchmark established by those opposite of 73.7 per cent when they were last in government. The response time in Shepparton is 10 minutes and 37 seconds. That is in contrast with the state average of 11 minutes and 52 seconds. I commend Shepparton Ambulance Victoria.

Federation Square

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (09:59) — I want to draw the chamber's attention to the announcements that have been made by the Andrews Labor government about the Apple project at Federation Square. People have different views about Federation Square. I think it took a while to grow on everyone, but it is a place that people are very fond of. People love Federation Square. So now the government — without process, without consultation with the community, without consultation with the local council, the Melbourne City Council — has pressed forward with a process to tear out one of the shards, one of the buildings, and to replace it with a project that the Apple company seeks to build.

I have nothing against that particular company. I think there are a range of views about the architectural significance of that, and I for one do not propose to enter the fray as an architect or a pseudo-architect, but I would have thought the government could have been more creative in finding other alternative locations. They could have thought about on top of a new station; they could have thought about a series of other areas.

I must say this has been one of the worst processes I have seen — a planning disaster. The government is clearly split on the matter, and the opposition is

concerned about the way the government has gone about this matter. Clearly Apple is an important company, a major company and a company that adds to Victoria's position, but the government has put this under threat by its poor process.

Black Saturday

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (10:00) — Today, 7 February, we remember Black Saturday nine years ago when 173 Victorians lost their lives, 414 were injured and over 400 individual fires were raging in Victoria. It is a day to reflect on the life lost on that tragic day. It was the worst tragedy in history in Victoria resulting from bushfires. I just want to reflect on and remember those people who lost their lives and also pay tribute to and remember the people still suffering from that tragic event nine years ago. I know that a lot of people and a lot of friends were affected by that tragic event, and I hope that that will not repeat itself.

I also want to pay tribute to the firefighting services personnel, whether the volunteers or the career firefighters employed by the Country Fire Authority. We often forget the firefighters who wear the green uniform employed by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, the forest firefighters, who year in, year out put their lives in danger and in harm's way to basically keep us safe and protected. I commend them as well for the great work they have done this year. Touch wood, hopefully we will get through this season without any major incidents. I just want to conclude by again paying tribute to and remembering those people who lost their lives and the people still suffering from that tragic event.

Black Saturday

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (10:02) — Today, 7 February, marks nine years since the tragic Black Saturday bushfires, where 173 people lost their lives and over 400 people were injured. My family lost friends, my children lost mates and still to this day the emotional and post-traumatic stress is felt right through the district where, sadly, on average we are still losing a Victorian a month who has taken their life as a result of the Black Saturday bushfires. The fires occurred in Kinglake and Marysville, and people will recall terms like the Kilmore East fire, the Murrindindi Mill fire, the Beechworth fire, the Bendigo fire, the Bunyip State Park fire, the Central Gippsland fires, the Dandenong Ranges fire, the Wilsons Promontory fire, the Maroondah and Yarra fires, the Horsham fire, the Coleraine fire and the Weerite fire. There were over 400 fires recorded on that day.

I record my ongoing thanks to the people who have helped and continue to help as a result of that — the emergency services, the volunteers, the churches, the communities, the groups who got together, those who donated and the carers that still provide caring services to many still dealing with the tragedy of 7 February 2009. President, as I conclude my remarks could I request, through you, that this house pauses for a moment of silence in honour of those who passed as a result of those bushfires?

The PRESIDENT — Mr Ondarchie, I intend to do that at question time in the house when the members are all here. I agree.

Seymour College

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (10:04) — I want to use my members statement today to congratulate Seymour College on securing almost \$7 million for redevelopment of their school, benefiting the middle and senior school level students. Last Friday was one of those days when I was just so proud of the Labor Party and what we are delivering for Victorians. There was an announcement that I think I will put as number one, at the top of all the events I have done in three years of being a member. You see, I have been working pretty hard with this school on a variety of initiatives to improve the educational outcomes for the great kids of Seymour.

The history of Seymour College is that it is a merger of the town's public schools into a P-12 college. The project was commenced under the Bracks-Brumby governments and saw the completion of some really wonderful facilities for the junior school and special school — state-of-the-art, wonderful buildings. But as was the case for many schools across northern Victoria, things just stopped at the end of 2010. Seymour College suffered neglect from a coalition government until the eve of the election, so there were four years of neglect. Facing concerning polling, the coalition went to that community and said, 'Hey, we might need your parents to vote for us, so how about we promise you \$15 million? Don't worry about the last four years. We'll promise you \$15 million on the eve of an election'. What a horrible, horrible way to treat a school community.

Since I became a member for Northern Victoria Region I have been working to rebuild this school community's trust in government. I have been working with them from the start. We have had to redo the master plan and demolish buildings. We have put a GP in the school, we have a \$3 million early education centre that is starting operation, and the cream on the top of the cake was the

\$7 million announcement last Friday. Congratulations, Seymour College.

Ms Hartland

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (10:05) — I am sure I am going to ruin some sort of protocol, because she has not made her last speech yet, but today I want to acknowledge Colleen Hartland as a member of this chamber, someone who came into this chamber at the same time as me. When you work with her, and sometimes against her, you find out how tough, determined, uncompromising and unwavering she is in standing up for what she believes in. I found, and I think we all found, that when she championed a local cause, she was a local champion. She is amazing, and she never lets go. She might not have always won, but she always put 100 per cent into what she believed was best for the community that she represented. I just want to say what a pleasure it was to work with her, especially in committee work, where if she told you she had a position, you knew that was her position and that it would not change, so she would save you time in trying to negotiate with her. I also want to acknowledge her as a person and say that it has been a privilege to have been a friend of someone of the quality of Colleen Hartland.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65

The PRESIDENT (10:07) — In respect of this item I bring to the attention of the house a letter I have just received, because I think it is pertinent to the debate. It is from the Honourable Richard Wynne, the Minister for Planning. He said, under the heading 'Amendment GC65 — West Gate tunnel project':

I refer to amendment GC65 that I recently approved and gazetted in December 2017.

I wish to inform you that it is my intention to table a notice of approval for amendment GC65 in the next sitting week in accordance with the time lines specified in section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

It was signed by Mr Wynne on 7 February.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (10:08) — President, thank you for that advice. I move:

That there be laid before this house a copy of amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribymong, Melbourne, port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, which facilitates the delivery of the West Gate tunnel project, and was gazetted on 7 December 2017.

It is pretty clear that Mr Wynne has now been shamed into moving to table what he is required to table by law. The Planning and Environment Act 1987 is very clear.

Amendment GC65 was gazetted on 7 December last year, and it has been available publicly on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website since that time. The community has had a chance to look at that. I have looked at it. Many members of this chamber have trawled through what is a mass of documents that change the planning scheme arrangements across those municipalities and seek to facilitate the tunnel.

We will come in a subsequent motion to the details of that tunnel, to the case for and against that tunnel and to a revocation process or otherwise as the chamber may see fit regarding that tunnel. But this initial motion is a very straightforward motion that seeks the tabling of amendment GC65. It is clearly within the power of the chamber to move a motion to table a document, in this case a public document, and to thereby have it put before the chamber for consideration as the chamber sees fit in dealing with a whole range of different processes. Today that is all I am seeking to do.

For the government to argue perhaps, as it might, that we should not table GC65 today would be an extraordinary step. They might argue that only the minister can table it. Well, that is clearly not the case. It is quite possible to table a document by simple motion of the chamber. It has been done many times before in this chamber. It is done routinely when a government minister, for example, tables a particular document that requires a motion to provide it to the chamber in a formal sense, and that is all we are doing with this motion — seeking to table what is already a public document, GC65, the planning scheme amendment that Minister Wynne has put forward.

With respect to his letter, I think he is seeking again to forestall the chamber's ability to make a decision on this planning scheme amendment and consequently on many of the aspects around the tunnel itself. By dithering, by delaying, by obfuscating and by seeking to hold up the process, the government seeks to create momentum for a project that the community does not support. I will say more about the nature of the project in a later motion, but at the moment I seek the chamber's support to table this document — a public document, a document referred to in the *Government Gazette* of 7 December, a document that is on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website now and a document that should be in the chamber's possession formally to enable it to consider it for a whole range of different processes going forward.

Dr RATNAM (Northern Metropolitan) (10:12) — The Greens will be supporting this motion. We share many of the concerns that have just been outlined, and we too are asking: why has this planning scheme amendment not been tabled yet? It is of significant public interest. There has been significant opposition and concern expressed in the community about the rushed process, the lack of transparency and the attempt to shove this through by starting construction before the approvals have been given. We are wondering: is another secret deal on the way? We have seen this happen before — we saw this happen with the east–west link — and we as a Parliament have to ensure the greatest transparency and accountability are built around this project.

The planning scheme amendment was gazetted on 7 December 2017, so there is no reason why it should not have been tabled already to give this Parliament, and therefore the public, the ability to scrutinise it and debate it in time. There is no reason to delay Parliament debating this bad project at its first opportunity. Parliament has a responsibility to consider planning scheme amendments and an obligation to revoke them when they are not in the public interest.

We acknowledge that the government has said that they intend to table the planning scheme amendment in the next sitting week, but this just does not give Parliament the time and does not give it the due process it should be afforded. We are prepared to have this debate now and to have it again later if necessary, because this is a terrible project that needs full public scrutiny.

You would think that the government would have learnt the lesson from the east–west link debacle that doing secret deals that put profits of big corporations above the interests of Victorian citizens is a bad idea. Victorians expected better from this government — public scrutiny of major projects, not outsourcing Melbourne's planning to corporations for their billion-dollar profits.

The Greens will be supporting the revocation of the planning scheme amendment and will be supporting this motion to ensure that we are allowed to have the debate about revoking this planning scheme amendment in time.

Mr MULINO (Eastern Victoria) (10:14) — I think that this motion by Mr Davis warrants very, very careful consideration, because this is a very, very dodgy process. It is a very, very cynical attempt to table a document in this place.

As has been flagged, the minister has communicated to this chamber that it is his intention to table a notice of approval for planning scheme amendment GC65 in the next sitting week in accordance with the time line specified in section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. I have the legislation here, and I think it is worth just having a look at section 38(1). It says:

The Minister must cause a notice in the prescribed form of the approval of every amendment to be laid before each House of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is approved.

What the minister is proposing and has now explicitly communicated in writing to this chamber, which I think is a very courteous and appropriate thing to do, is entirely in accordance with section 38(1), so one has to ask: what is it that Mr Davis is trying to achieve by this Wednesday morning special — this Wednesday morning stunt — in trying to put documents in this place other than through the minister and other than through the normal prescribed process? What is Mr Davis trying to do other than accelerate processes for the purpose of him trying to kill off a project?

I am going to speak in some depth about this project because it is critical for us to understand the importance of this project if we are to consider this motion.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, President, this is actually a very narrow motion. This is not about whether the project is a good project or a bad project. People can have legitimate views on that, and there is a debate forthcoming which will deal with many of those issues. This is a simple motion to table a planning scheme amendment that is in the public domain already: GC65. It is a motion to table it. What the chamber does with the document if it is tabled is a matter for the chamber after that. It is not a wide debate about all the aspects of the project.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, President, Mr Davis is being exceptionally cute in suggesting that this is a —

Mr Finn — He has never been cute in his life.

Ms Pulford — Well, I stand corrected, Mr Finn, but when Mr Davis says that this is quite a straightforward motion I think he is really misrepresenting the facts. There is nothing straightforward about this; this is an elaborate workaround of the rules of the house and the usual processes for significant projects and planning scheme amendments that are spelt out in the legislation. Mr Davis said this is about tabling the document, but in fact it is not. It is about tabling a copy of the document. Whilst Mr Davis might not see the distinction, we do

because we have a responsibility to ensure that the laws of the land are upheld in an appropriate way. Further to that, Mr Davis's motion talks about facilitating the delivery of the project, so I think Mr Mulino's comments are absolutely within scope. He has only been speaking for a few minutes, and I for one would certainly be interested to hear the rest of the member's contribution.

The PRESIDENT — Order! In respect of the point of order, I do not uphold it on this occasion, because indeed Mr Mulino is the lead speaker for the government and is entitled to canvass a range of matters as part of that opening government position statement in respect of this motion. I would also advise the house that whilst in some ways this motion is a very narrow motion in respect of the tabling of the amendment, what we are talking about in this debate is not the tabling of the *Government Gazette* announcement of the amendment. If indeed the motions before the house were to succeed today, the Clerk would be required to table all of the documentation associated with the amendment. As I understand, that runs to some several hundred pages and includes maps as well as the text and the explanation of what is involved in this amendment. Whilst the tabling in one sense is a fairly narrow proposition, in fact the tabling involves a very extensive range of documents, and therefore in my view Mr Mulino is entitled to canvass a range of matters, particularly given he is the lead speaker for the government. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr MULINO — Thank you, President. The President has also indicated, I think rightly, a number of secondary and related issues around the status of documents that are alluded to in this motion. As I indicated, if a document is tabled under section 38(1) of the act it is absolutely clear what process will be undertaken. If indeed some copies of documents are obtained by other parties in the Parliament and are tabled through a process that is different to that, then I think at the very least it raises questions about the status of those documents, about the status of documents that might have otherwise been tabled according to section 38(1) or indeed associated documents, which could be and indeed in this case are voluminous. We would argue first and foremost that there are serious questions around process in this instance.

I also want to flag that this is part of a pattern of behaviour where Mr Davis stretches parliamentary processes to the point of breaking where possible for stunts. In this case it is with a view to — with this project and many other projects — creating a sense of trepidation and fear, and frankly trying to use, under the guise of good process, processes that are really meant to

be nothing more than stalling and blocking. In particular what I want to allude to is the fact that many of the things that are alluded to in this document, many of the documents and the issues that are alluded to, have in fact already been canvassed publicly and dealt with publicly through stakeholder processes and through documents that have already been released. I am going to flag the fact that there has already been a release of documentation in relation to this project that is more extensive than for just about any project of its type in this state or indeed in the nation.

I will make a very brief comment about the place this state finds itself in. I think this is important because this is a major project and any major project is going to involve complexity. This is something people from across all sides of this chamber have discussed over the course of this term. This state is growing at an incredible rate. Australia is growing at just about the fastest rate of any member of the OECD. Victoria is growing at the fastest rate of any state — far faster than any other state. In the last numbers, off the top of my head, I think it was 2.3 per cent versus 1.6 per cent for other major states. Of course these changes, if accumulated year after year, lead to huge pressures on service delivery and lead to congestion. This state is growing at 150 000 people per year, so the context for this project is critical.

This project represents a significant additional road resource for our state. All in this chamber agree in principle that we need significant additional investment in transport, yet the problem is when it comes to the specifics those opposite are always supportive in principle of greater transport improvement but they are always opposed to every specific project or every specific process: everything is too hard in practice, every process needs to be complicated and every process needs to be stalled. This reflects what they were like when they were in government. At the end of their four years they did not have anything to point to. They had all sorts of aspirations.

This state is growing, which I personally feel is a good thing on balance. It is exciting that people want to move here, but it is a huge challenge, and we are seeing congestion right around this state and of course right around Melbourne. We are seeing major projects invested in to the east out near my electorate, which is great. The Monash Freeway is being upgraded. There are many kilometres of upgraded roads with extra lanes being put in. We are seeing the Tullamarine Freeway upgraded. We are seeing major rail projects right across the city.

The thing is that there is a real need for a major connection out west. There is a real need for a second river crossing, and that is a piece of context that we have to focus on in this debate. Mr Davis is not raising this motion in a vacuum. He is very consciously trying to stretch process. As I alluded to at the start of my contribution, he is trying to stretch process so that he can slow this down and stall this, because what he is really trying to do is to slow down a much-needed project.

Let me run through a little bit of the process that has been undertaken already. This is closely related to what we are talking about in this motion, because both Mr Davis and Dr Ratnam spoke about the fact that there is a need for community consultation. They talked about that side of this issue. I think it is important in response to their contributions to put on the record what has occurred already in relation to this project. Specifically an unprecedented amount of documentation has already been released in relation to this project. That is critical. In December 2015 the government released a business case for this project, which I think it is arguable was the earliest and most substantial release for a project of this size and complexity that we have seen. That business case was put on the public record, and it was a clear and practical demonstration of our commitment to transparency.

I think it is worth saying that that document reflects independent analysis commissioned by the government of the public benefits and costs of this project. It includes what one might call a public sector comparator. So it is critical I think to state on the record that that document provided independent public analysis of the benefits to our state and to the west of Melbourne in particular of this project going ahead.

Mr Finn — We don't want it.

Mr MULINO — Mr Finn says, 'We don't want it'. Well, Mr Finn says that, but let us see what the people say at the next election when they are faced with a party that will not do anything versus a government that is doing things. We are delivering projects. We are going to be able to point to more than 20 level crossing removals. We are delivering rail projects. We will be able to point to projects that have been delivered —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — I am confident people in the west will want to see their travel times reduced; they will want to see their congestion reduced, Mr Finn. I will very confidently go to the next election with our suite of projects and what we have delivered. People will

know that we have delivered and they will know that what we promise to deliver in the next term they can trust we will deliver because we have a track record.

I will go back to what has been put on the public record. A 10 000-page environment effects statement was released in May 2017, making available detailed assessments of impacts in 17 areas. That included a specialist study on human health. Again, that was groundbreaking for a major transport project of this type, and it is critically important that analysis of that type is put on the public record. Community members and stakeholders were invited to review the project's environment effects and to speak to specialists who prepared the assessments. I think this raft of information that is already on the public record is critical, it is important and it is very related to this motion in that those specific issues — the degree to which there has been consultation with the public, the degree to which the public has been brought along — were specifically alluded to in Mr Davis's contribution.

It is also important to talk about the independent expert panel. After six weeks of public hearings, submissions were considered by an independent expert panel and the Minister for Planning. Every aspect of the project was examined and cross-examined by the expert panel, including detailed scrutiny of evidence given by environmental experts, so there has been an exhaustive process that has included the community. The project was refined through this process, so that feedback did have an impact on the project that we will ultimately deliver, and that is important. You do not just want to go through processes for their own sake. The input that has been received by the government along the way has actually had an impact on the project that the community will ultimately see delivered and see benefit from. Those refinements include more open space, quieter neighbourhoods and better environmental outcomes across the board. This is the most comprehensive environmental and planning approvals process that has been conducted for a Victorian roads project.

I mentioned a minute ago that we are a government that is doing things, but we are doing things according to appropriate processes. We are consulting the community and we are taking the community along with us, and not only that but we are releasing documentation. I have said before in this place that I think, if one looks at the broader suite of executive government in this state and other Australian jurisdictions, it is fair to say that there is a broader, long-term trend for greater release of documents and greater transparency. I think that is a good thing.

I and others have also talked in this place about the fact that there are of course going to be constraints on that. Whenever there is a commercial contract involved there have to be boundaries set because the government is going to have to protect its bargaining position in some circumstances. But I support some of the underlying principles alluded to in the contributions that have already been made on this motion and that I am sure will be made on the documents motion later today. I think transparency is important, and I wanted to take the opportunity in this initial contribution to make that point, but I think there obviously have to be boundaries on that and there have to be appropriate processes.

As a result of all of that work what we have is a road project that will generate significant benefits. It is going to deliver for drivers in the west, for drivers in Geelong and for drivers in Ballarat and, because of the interdependent nature of transport in this city, it will benefit everything. As I alluded to, my electorate is out east and the east is not particularly close to this project, but the M1 is the lifeblood of the city when it comes to motor traffic. It is all interdependent. So getting the West Gate functioning better and getting a second river crossing is actually going to generate benefits right across our road network. The analogy there, of course, is the Melbourne Metro tunnel. It is not just the lines directly on the tunnel that benefit; it is the whole network.

We only need to look at the West Gate over the last few days. Yesterday there was a multivehicle accident which led to 45-minute delays. If those opposite want to say to the people living in the west, 'It's all okay. No need to do anything. Let's stay with the status quo', yesterday is a good example of how that will not cut it. They do not explicitly say, though, 'We don't want to do anything'. What they do say in relation to any proposal is, 'Let's slow it down'. It is always 'too complicated'. 'Let's spread some fear'. Look at what they actually do. Those opposite thrive in opposition —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — I think it is clarifying that Mr Finn, through what can only be described as his high-volume interjections, does not want this; he does not want a second river crossing.

Mr Finn — No, I don't.

Mr MULINO — No, he wants the status quo. He says to people in the west, 'No solutions. No reduction in travel time. It's all too hard'. I cannot wait to see how his election suite is going to be received at the next election. I cannot wait. 'It's all too hard': that is really

the subtext, and that is the constant subtext of Mr Davis's procedural acrobatics. This is just one example of him using procedure, and quite often he is quite clever with it, but one does not need to dig too deep to really understand what it is he is trying to achieve.

The time for constantly talking about the problem, when it comes to a clear problem in the west and its transport needs, is over. We need to take action. That is not to say that we do not need to refine projects in light of community feedback, and that is what we are doing, but the notion that we should punt this one off into the deep grass is absolutely ridiculous.

What are the benefits of this project? This is important. There are 6000 jobs. I will not go on about the broader economy because I will talk about that on another occasion, but when you look at the number of jobs created over the last few years again this government has a track record when it comes to jobs. On this particular project there are 6000. Of those, that will include 500 apprentices, trainees and graduates and up to 150 jobs for former auto workers. I was at an event —

Mr Finn — On a point of order, Acting President, we have been listening to Mr Mulino now for quite some time. He has been given ample opportunity to outline his case. As has been pointed out, this is a pretty narrow motion. He is pre-empting the debate on the next motion. He is debating the next motion on today's agenda, so it seems to me that, while he is very welcome to debate this motion, he should leave this argument until we get to the next debate. He is in fact pre-empting the debate that we are about to have.

Ms Pulford — On the point of order, Acting President, the President has already dealt with a very similar point of order from Mr Davis. The President was of the view that this is a broad debate. It goes to the question of the curious procedural approach by which Mr Davis is seeking to stop this significant project, but the motion by Mr Davis's own words —

Mr Ondarchie — You are debating the point of order.

Ms Pulford — I am not debating the point of order. The motion by Mr Davis's own words goes to facilitation of the delivery of the West Gate tunnel project. The President has already ruled on this. Mr Finn's point of order is completely vexatious.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — I concur with Ms Pulford on her comments, and I concur with the President's ruling this morning. I think the

motion itself is very broad, so I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr Finn interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Mr Finn, if you have got an issue with my ruling, you can raise another point of order, but do not reflect on what I am saying.

Mr MULINO — Just for Mr Finn's benefit I will make the connection with the motion even more explicit than I thought I had made it. The point that I am making is that there are significant project benefits, but there is an urgent need. This procedural acrobatic process — this procedural stunt — is about delay. That is my point. It is unorthodox. It flies in the face of section 38(1), and my point is it is particularly troublesome because of the nature of this project. So what I am trying to do is to relate what we are concerned about in relation to this procedural innovation by Mr Davis. We are trying to link that back to this specific project and the fact that this is a much-needed and urgent project. There is an urgent need for a second river crossing. There is an urgent need for additional capacity on the western side of the city. This project will create significant benefits.

I was out there a couple of weekends ago at a friend's child's birthday party. It was beautiful and it was on a weekend, so I did not have to put up with as much of this traffic, but I understand that if I had tried to go on that route on a weekday at peak time, it would not have been anywhere near as easy.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — That is the point, Mr Finn. Mr Finn continues to interject and by implication say, 'Just don't worry about this. It's all too hard. We don't want major projects'. I will be happy for him to clarify when he gives his contribution.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — Mr Finn talks about the project we scrapped, and I am just responding here to mischievous interjections by Mr Finn, which are unruly of course and to which I should not be responding, but it is important to get on the public record that the project that we scrapped had a cost-benefit ratio starting with 0.5. It started with 0.5, and the point that we have tried to make is that it is better if it starts with something greater than one. This is not exactly public analysis wizardry. This is public policy 101, but Mr Finn seems to have forgotten that, notwithstanding the fact that it has been debated many, many times.

The point I was trying to make before Mr Finn got a little bit too excited is that this project is going to take 28 000 vehicles and 8000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 vehicles off the Bolte Bridge. The point is — and this is what I was referring to earlier — that we can just look at yesterday, when we had a 45-minute delay for people to get home because of a multivehicle accident. If you have a second river crossing, if you have an alternative, it is absolutely critical for your transport network. You can find expert after expert lining up to back that in. It is absolutely imperative that we have a second river crossing. Infrastructure Victoria has backed in the need for a second river crossing. I think it is critical.

If Mr Finn, on behalf of his constituents apparently, does not want a second river crossing, I think it is important that he goes on the record with what it is that he does want. I think he is very much in Mr Davis mode, which is to talk about the need for a solution but attack every specific solution. That is critical.

So what are the benefits for each area of our city? For the west there are significantly reduced travel times, less congestion and more choice. That goes to the issue that I just flagged, which is the fact there will be a second river crossing that will take vehicles and trucks off the West Gate Bridge and the Bolte Bridge. For the north that is reflected in the fact that vehicles will be taken off the Bolte Bridge and there will be an alternative route to the western suburbs, Geelong and the Surf Coast. For the east, again as I alluded to, there is better flow along the M1 as a whole. This reflects the fact that our transport networks are interdependent — we are increasingly realising that — in a jurisdiction that is growing so quickly.

This project has significant benefits. Those benefits are not just significant in magnitude but the need to realise them is urgent. We need to get on with this. The people in the west, the people in Geelong and indeed the people in the north and the east as well fully understand that. They fully understand, and that can be related back to this specific motion, which does nothing other than use a very unorthodox process to slow things down. Mr Davis, if he is being fully truthful with this place, if he has a moment when he sums up this debate, I think should be fully frank and say that there is a lot of mischief behind this motion. Before we vote on this motion it is important for the sake of this house that the motives underlying this motion are laid bare.

Another dimension of the benefits of this project is the important design benefits. The design features over 14 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, which include a 2.5-kilometre veloway

for cyclists, and completes the missing link in the Federation Trail. Again, the benefits are significant. Industrial and other unused land in the inner west will be transformed by the project, with almost 9 hectares of new green spaces and wetlands. That is something which I imagine will appeal to all in this place. It is a particular benefit I imagine the Greens will be very keen to see in the final solution.

Also, with direct connections to the port of Melbourne, the West Gate tunnel will take thousands of trucks off local roads. This is an absolutely critical benefit. I was a member of the Port of Melbourne Select Committee; it feels like a long time ago now. Other members of that select committee are here in the chamber:

Mr Rich-Phillips, who was the chair, and Ms Shing. That was a committee which produced a lot of very strong analysis. One piece of analysis that I think the committee agreed on — a non-political conclusion that arose from that analysis, and indeed I think Mr Barber, the previous leader of the Greens, signed up to it — was that there need to be better connections into the port. There need to be better rail connections, our road connections into the port need to be significantly enhanced and we need to take trucks off local roads.

We cannot underestimate the importance of this aspect of this project. Our container traffic is increasing at a rapid rate, and of course the reason for that is directly linked to and proportional to gross domestic product (GDP) growth and population growth. Because GDP growth is so high in this state, we are going to see container growth continue at very fast rates. There is almost a kind of an inexorable momentum to that. We have to, in addition to all the benefits for people living in the west, undertake a project of this nature to improve our connections to the port. It is urgent.

I am also a big supporter of improved rail links into the port over the medium term. We know that takes a bit of time to plan and finance. There are very stringent requirements in the lease around that, and I think that is something which again all members of the select committee supported and the government ended up adopting. I think that is a more medium-term initiative. I would be surprised if anybody in this place would rebut the notion that we need significant investment to deal with the issue of trucks on local roads. It is all well and good to say, 'We do not like this particular solution, it is too hard. Let's delay, let's throw sand in the wheels, let's play political games and pull stunts with the process, let's sow fear in the local community'. That is easy politics.

Occasionally I look at those opposite and think that it is just what oppositions do, but that is all they do.

Occasionally on the big issues, on the big projects, you need to say, 'Let's get a solution that is in the interest of the state, not play games with it but play our politics elsewhere'. I think those opposite have to seriously ask themselves, given the urgent need for the project, 'Is this the kind of strategy that we should be talking about today?'. I am linking it directly to this strategy because the point that I am making is that there are a range of benefits that are urgent and we simply cannot let this project become a political football where process is stretched and processes are abused in order to play political games. I think the motives of Mr Davis —

Mr Finn — Consultation — out the window with you lot.

Mr MULINO — I will take up that interjection because, as I said, it is ridiculous that Mr Finn throws these bald-faced untruths around in this chamber. There was incredible consultation; a business case was released in a way that is unparalleled. I would love Mr Finn to stand up and explain what business case documentation he released on east–west. What did you release on the east–west link? I am responding to this because you keep shouting out untruths. You say that nothing was released on this, and my response is that a lot was released — more than for just about any other road project. The irony of you, Mr Finn, throwing that kind of accusation around, given your behaviour on east–west, is absolutely remarkable.

The point I was trying to make is that I think the motivation for the two parties on this is quite different. I think Mr Davis is actually trying to thwart this in quite a cynical way. I do not want to speak for the Greens, but I suspect there is a genuine concern, and Ms Hartland has talked about this a lot. As Mr Leane said, she has talked about local concerns, and I think the government has genuinely tried to reflect a lot of those local concerns in the project documentation. With the Greens there are some longstanding issues that they have put on the record, and we may not ultimately agree on some of them. When it comes to Mr Davis, I think there is something a little bit more concerning going on. That is really what I link back to this particular motion. Mr Davis has form when it comes to stretching process. I think he has an agenda here when it comes to this project, and it is a very dodgy one.

Let us look at the documents that have been released. On the business case —

Honourable members interjecting.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Melhem) — Order! It is getting a bit noisy, and I think Hansard is having difficulty following the debate. I ask members on both sides who would like to contribute to the debate to put their names on the list.

Mr MULINO — Thank you, Acting President. This was the first government in Australia to publicly release a business case at such an early stage of the development and delivery of a project of this nature. The business case included an assessment of why the project is needed, a network solution and an assessment of the qualitative and economic benefits options for tolling and potential effects and how they would be managed. Again, this relates directly back to the motion because the business case clearly sets out the urgent need for this project.

The business case, as I said earlier, was an independent piece of work done by the government from the government's perspective, from a public policy perspective, in essence setting up and developing the public sector comparator, which of course it is critical that the government establish in a transaction of this nature. The topics covered by the business case included the critically important network dimensions, and that again goes to the urgency of this project — the fact that it is going to have an impact on the major road network right across our city and indeed beyond the city. This affects regional cities, this affects the whole state and it affects the connections to the port. It is absolutely critical to the whole state, so that network solution was worked through in the business case and then released at an early stage in the process.

The environment effects statement documents were 10 000 pages of analysis. Again, it is important to put this on the record because Mr Davis in his contribution alluded to the fact that there has not been enough information put on the record and there has not been enough consultation. So it is important to put on the record that 10 000 pages of the analysis, of the effects of the project and how they would be managed, have been put on the record. These included 17 technical reports, and those were designed specifically to meet the scope required by the minister. They included thousands of pages of traffic modelling, showing the outcomes in 2031 with a project and a no-project scenario — what you might call the Andrews government scenario and the Finn scenario. Of course the Andrews government scenario is a far better one when it comes to travel times.

Mr Finn — The Finn scenario; now that could take off in a big way.

Mr MULINO — Yes, let's see how people like that scenario in 2031 — the no-project scenario.

Mr Gepp — Let's do nothing!

Mr MULINO — Yes, let's do nothing! I think you would find transport times would be significantly higher. The business case included noise modelling until 2031, a human health assessment and a social impact assessment. All of these are absolutely important. Again, I think it is important to note, and this is something which I think everybody in this place would welcome, that the breadth of analysis of projects of this sort is getting wider over time. The analysis of projects of this sort is including more and more topics of interest to the community. If one went back decades, you probably would not find there was analysis of human health as explicit as it is in this project. It is a good thing that analysis of this sort is being undertaken. As I said, it is not just undertaken but it is put on the public record.

There were 10 000 pages put on the public record. I do not doubt that Mr Davis has read it all. He has undoubtedly been very diligent about this process, and that probably makes it even more scandalous for him to assert that there has not been public disclosure of information. Let me clarify: I use the word 'scandalous' figuratively. I certainly do not mean to assert a breach of any ethical standards — I just want to put that on the record.

Of course the documentation covered the full gamut, including contaminated soil and other groundwater and ground movement issues. It is all on the public record. I think it is important for that to be stated in response to Mr Davis's assertion in his contribution that there has not been enough disclosure. There has been a lot of disclosure. I think you would be in a strong position to argue that there has been more disclosure on this project than any other road project, and that is good. That is a good thing. At the public hearings for the environment effects statement there were 40 expert witness reports and 73 project notes, and 343 tabled documents were produced and presented.

Mr Gepp — How many?

Mr MULINO — There were 343 — that is significant — and 504 submissions.

Going back to Mr Davis's contribution on this motion, it is absolutely clear that there has been a vast amount of not just disclosure of analysis but also engagement with the community. That engagement with the community has led to changes in project design. It has led to more open space. It has led to changes in route

alignment along the way. It is a good thing that there has been that iteration throughout this process.

Partnerships Victoria requires the release of a project summary within 60 days of financial close. It also requires the release of contract documents within 60 days of financial close. The project summary and project agreement were released at the first opportunity, immediately after financial close and significantly ahead of the required time. Again, there are more significant documents, this time on the commercial side. We have acquitted our obligations — again I say onerous obligations, and I think appropriately onerous disclosure obligations — when it comes to the contract documents and project summary. We acquitted them as soon as we could. We did not wait until the 59th day, and that is a good thing. So there is even more information on the public record when it comes to the commercial side of this transaction. We are working with the community. We are bringing the community along with us.

The project summary includes important matters of a commercial and contractual nature. It includes key features of the project, project objectives, the procurement process, obviously the parties involved and the financial outcome, including the value of the project and the cost to the government. It includes key features of the contractual documents, and it includes a summary of joint procurement through a competitive tender of the design and construct contractor, so key contractual and key commercial features.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — I was waiting for Mr Finn to finish that. It trailed off a little bit, but I think we can all interpret what we will out of that. The project summary is another document that is absolutely critical. Just for a moment to reflect on that fact, I think over the longer term there has been a broader trend to disclose more when it comes to these kinds of arrangements. Again I think that is a good thing. I suspect that is something that people right across this chamber could agree with. There is also a Partnerships Victoria requirement which assesses the value for money of the final offer. We have also released the project agreement and schedules comprising of 1500 pages. It is not just page count that matters but also the content. This is a long document but it includes an outline of the basis on which Transurban has been engaged to finance, build and operate the project and provisions relating to risk allocation. Of course risk allocation lies at the heart of many of these transactions. Defining risk clearly and allocating it to the party best suited to bear it is one of the key ways in which these kinds of arrangements

ultimately benefit the taxpayer, so transparency around risk allocation is important.

Also in that document, the project agreement we released, is the basis for financing the project and what happens if the state cannot secure the necessary approvals, and the scope and performance requirements. Key commercial and financial aspects of this project are absolutely critical to assessing whether or not the taxpayer is receiving value for money, and they are on the public record. If those opposite wanted to engage in an informed debate, I would be really interested to hear from them. I would really be interested to hear from them as to what better value for money proposition they have to offer.

Mr Finn — Well, if you sit down and let us get on with the next debate, we will.

Mr MULINO — You will have time very soon, and I want to hear specifics as to what you are offering.

Mr Finn — I will.

Mr MULINO — I doubt it. Finally, the concession deed amendments have also been released. This includes adjustments to the various CityLink tolls, a 10-year extension and details around that and finally an exposure draft of the West Gate tunnel bill. The point here is that there was an explicit reference in Mr Davis's speech in support of this motion that somehow there has not been a release of documents, that somehow the project is shrouded in secrecy and the community has not had any role in engagement. Yet when you look at the facts, thousands of pages have been released when it comes to the public policy case, thousands of pages on the environment effects statement and thousands of pages on the commercial and financial sides of this transaction. So there is that. There are also the processes of engagement that have been undertaken where we have had literally hundreds of submissions, not just hundreds of submissions that were put on the shelf but submissions that have had a real impact on this project and have actually seen changes to this project. I think that is important. It is critically important that one sees a project actually iterate if we are to undertake that kind of process.

Finally, and again this goes specifically to this motion because this motion is about the Minister for Planning's involvement, as I alluded to earlier, the normal process and the process that will be complied with by the government and the planning minister is under section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Because we are talking about the planning minister's role in this, I think it is worth dwelling for a

moment on the planning minister's assessment of the EES. In December 2017 the planning minister delivered his assessment of the project based on the EES, on submissions to the public hearings — and we heard earlier how voluminous they were — and also on the advisory committee report. Overall it was found that the project will deliver substantial benefits to metropolitan Melbourne and in particular to the residents of Melbourne's west. But of course, as I mentioned earlier, it will deliver benefits broader than that. It will deliver benefits beyond Melbourne — to Geelong, to regional cities — to the whole state and indeed beyond our state because of improved links to the port. There are so many benefits to this: economic benefits, social benefits — benefits that are hard to quantify.

The planning minister made a number of recommendations to improve the project, and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety minister accepted all of those. I think it is critical for me just to finally talk about a number of those improvements to the project, because they reflect the fact that the project has been improved based on all of that consultation. It absolutely and clearly rebuts the assertions made by Mr Davis in his contribution that there has not been consultation. There has been consultation, but there has also been action on that consultation.

Improvements to the project that were recommended by the planning minister and which the roads minister accepted include noise reduction measures along Millers Road; voluntary acquisition of properties along Hyde Street, which are already affected by a public acquisition overlay; noise walls along existing and future public open space along the corridor; the redesign of the MacKenzie Road off-ramp across the Maribyrnong to reduce the visual bulk and improve amenity; and importantly, the lowering of the Wurundjeri Way extension to improve the amenity of this urban renewal area and improve access between North Melbourne station and Docklands. Further traffic management work will be undertaken in North Melbourne and West Melbourne, in concert with the City of Melbourne, to cater for the changing traffic patterns in these areas. There are others. I do not have long here to speak, so I will not go through the exhaustive list, but I think it is important that we talk about the fact that not only has there been this consultation process but there have actually been improvements directly arising from that — improvements that have been accepted by the Minister for Roads and Road Safety.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — Anybody from the public who listens to those opposite sniping constantly about process can look at what has actually happened, and they will see the results. They will see a project that has actually been improved. They will see a project that on a number of important dimensions has had material iterations throughout a process that has involved active engagement with people from the community and with experts.

In summary, I want to say that this motion is concerning for two reasons in particular. One is that it stretches a process that I think sets a dangerous precedent. Frankly this is an abuse of this place by Mr Davis. Now, Mr Davis has been around a long time and he knows the procedures of this place well. He spends a lot of time thinking up what I might describe as creative ways to use the processes of this place, but I think this is dangerous as a precedent. I think that before anybody votes for this they should think long and hard about what kind of precedent it sets for a clearly defined process in an act — section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 — to be subverted and to be kind of worked around. One has to ask why we are setting this precedent. Why are we setting a precedent where documents of very ambiguous status — photocopies of documents, documents that have not come through a minister — might be tabled and acted on and revoked? Who knows what it is that is planned? The first reason is that there is a really dangerous procedural precedent that might be set here today, and I think that is something we should all think long and hard about.

The second major reason why I think this is a concern is because of the specific project that it relates to and the fact that what we are really talking about here, I think, is clearly not an attempt by Mr Davis to correct some lack of documentation or some flaw in process or consultation. Clearly this is not about that; clearly this is an election year attempt to throw the sand in the wheels of a major project. I think those opposite realise it is going to deliver a lot of benefits, and they do not want that. They want to stop things happening. In government they could stop things happening by sitting on their hands, and that was very effective. That is quite easy. But now they have shifted mode; now they want to stop things from happening by getting in our way.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — Well, I think the people of Victoria will see through this, and I cannot wait for Mr Finn to repeat a lot of his interjections in here out in the community — ‘We don’t want projects’, ‘We don’t want solutions’. What is it he wants? He is going to be

judged on the fact that there is a lot of bluster but there are no solutions. He is going to be judged on that. We are going to be judged on the fact that we will have a lot of concrete achievements. We will have level crossings removed, schools built, roads opened and train stations fixed up. We are going to have hospitals built. We are going to have a lot that we have achieved.

At the last election those opposite had not done anything, but they had made dramatic promises. They had fake tickets to airport rail links. They were handing out tickets for these things that did not exist, saying, ‘In 2030 you’ll be able to redeem this ticket’. That is what they did. When we go for re-election we will have real projects, real deliverables.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MULINO — You can tell Mr Finn does not like it one bit. Deep down I think he is worried that he is not going to have anything to offer his people. He is thinking, ‘I could attack the government, but that’s just not going to cut it’, and he does not like it. I think he is fast-forwarding in his mind to November 2018, and he does not like what he sees. So he is projecting a bit; he is venting. I do not mind. I am happy to cop a bit of a spray in here. That is fine, because no-one is listening to Mr Finn. I think he knows that when it comes to 2018 what he says in here is not going to be convincing to anybody out in the real world.

People in this chamber have got to ask themselves: is Mr Davis’s motion something we want to vote in favour of? Do we want to put up ambiguous documents — documents of ambiguous status? Particularly in light of the fact that we have an assurance —

Mr Davis — On a point of order, Acting President, I think the member is suggesting that amendment GC65, on the departmental website and in the *Government Gazette*, is an ambiguous document. I am not actually sure he is suggesting that. Is he?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — There is no point of order. Mr Mulino to continue.

Mr MULINO — To clarify, what is ambiguous is the process that Mr Davis is supporting through this motion. The minister is going to table these documents. That is the right way to do this, not the way that Mr Davis is suggesting, so we will oppose this motion.

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (11:14) — I am pleased to rise to join the debate. Mr Davis has been here a long time — longer than most of us — and yet he can come up with new and

creative ways to subvert the proper processes of the Parliament year in and year out. We will be opposing this motion partly because this is a great project that needs to go ahead, partly because of the legal ambiguity that Mr Mulino has just referred to and partly because it is just really stupid. The Minister for Planning, Mr Wynne, has clarified to the house through correspondence this morning to the President, for the avoidance of any possible doubt, that a notice of approval for amendment GC65, for the West Gate tunnel project, which he approved and gazetted late last year, will be tabled in the next sitting week.

Mr Davis interjected.

Ms PULFORD — It will be tabled in the next sitting week in accordance with the time line specified in section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This needs to be done properly. This is important. We know that the Liberals have turned their backs on the traditions of the party and have become either economic do-nothing merchants or project wreckers. We are determined to deliver this project.

Because it has not been much of a feature of the debate yet, for the record I would like to go through the extensive consultation process that sits behind this project. The project went through a rigorous environment effects statement (EES) process, which ensured that the community got to have its say. The issue around congestion, particularly in the western suburbs of Melbourne, is a subject that has been very important to very many members in the community for as long as any of us can recall. This extensive community consultation on the project included public meetings and presentations. There were 504 submissions received on the EES.

During the exhibition period there were public meetings and information nights explaining the EES documents. These events created a great opportunity for local residents to speak to members of the project team, learn about the design proposal or learn more about and talk about the details in the document. The EES hearings were chaired by a panel of independent experts who heard from all submitters who chose to attend. Attendees included councils, residents, agencies, community groups and individuals with an interest in the project. These hearings occurred in Footscray throughout August and September of last year, and the committee provided its report to the Minister for Planning on 23 October.

The public consultation on this project has been extensive. I know the Liberal Party are looking for any fig leaf to hide their opposition to this important

economic project and important transport project, but for them to say there has been a lack of public consultation on this project is completely and utterly false.

As Mr Mulino indicated and as I mentioned at the outset, this is also quite an unorthodox parliamentary process. The Planning and Environment Act is very clear. The minister must table the document and has 10 sitting days after it is gazetted to do so, and that time has not yet expired. We are in full compliance with the act, and it is important for a project of such significance that we are and that the Parliament respects that. The amendment will be tabled at the appropriate time. This is a pretty ordinary stunt by Mr Davis, particularly his insistence on proceeding in the context where Minister Wynne has made clear his intention to table that notice of approval for amendment GC65.

I would also like to reflect on where the National Party is in this debate. There are hundreds and hundreds of jobs in regional Victoria that are at risk because of these games that the Liberal Party are playing. These are important jobs for communities in north-eastern Victoria, and I am sure Ms Symes will have more to say about this in the course of the day. But The Nationals are, in their usual ineffective way, absolutely silent when it comes to sticking up for communities in regional Victoria. I will just talk a little more about what this project will mean for people in regional Victoria.

Think about all of those people and businesses in communities — big communities like Geelong, big communities like Ballarat —

Mr Finn — On a point of order, Madam Acting President, you may have heard a little bit earlier a point of order was taken. The President ruled against that point of order on the basis that the lead speaker, he said, had the ability to take a wideranging view of the motion, which he certainly took full advantage of. The President then overruled the point of order. Now, clearly this minister is debating the next motion — she is talking about the details of the benefits, or so-called benefits, of the tunnel project. That has little to do with this motion. This is a motion about tabling a document. It is not about the overall project.

Ms PULFORD — On the point of order, Acting President, the member is verballing the President in his ruling from earlier today. The President recognised that the way that Mr Davis has constructed his motion does go to questions around facilitating the delivery of the project. I had been on my feet less than 5 minutes when

I made but one utterance about some of the communities that will benefit from the project.

Mr Finn — You're talking about regional Victoria. What has that got to do with the document?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order!

Ms PULFORD — Do you know where it is?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order!

Ms PULFORD — It is like at the end of the road. In fact it is the middle of the road. It starts down the road.

Mr Finn interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Order! Members, I would like to make a ruling on Mr Finn's point of order. There is no point of order. The President has certainly already provided guidance to the house that this is in fact a very broad motion and therefore it gives members a great deal of scope.

Mr Finn — It's not a broad motion at all. Good to see the coalition's still intact.

Ms PULFORD — That the coalition is still intact goes to the question of the spinelessness and pointlessness of the National Party really. But if I could get —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — Minister! Mr Finn, your comments are extremely close to reflecting on the Chair.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you, Acting President, for your ruling. This is an important project. It is an important project for people in Melbourne's west, it is an important project for all those in the state who care about the strength of our economy and the modernisation of our infrastructure — the infrastructure that Victoria's growing population needs, the infrastructure that we know that the coalition in government will never build. They built next to nothing, did next to nothing in four years, and what they are promising Victoria in the future should they be successful is a whole bunch of roundabouts, like that interchange at Huntingdale Road — a whole bunch of them all over the place. They cannot be trusted to build the infrastructure, let alone deliver the services that communities need.

Mr Ramsay — What happened to the \$5 billion budget?

Ms PULFORD — Mr Ramsay, if you would like to add your name to the speaking list, we would be very

interested to hear what you have to say about it, and we would be very interested to hear what Mr O'Sullivan has to say, because The Nationals have been missing in action on this debate to date.

This is an absolutely essential project for many, many communities in regional Victoria. It is an essential project for many communities in northern Victoria where the employment benefits — the job benefits that come from this project — are enormous. And of course it is of great benefit to industry in Victoria, and of great benefit to people in the western suburbs of Melbourne, who have for so many decades dealt with great amounts of congestion.

I spend a fair bit of time on the West Gate Bridge and the roads under it that you go on when you are trying to avoid congestion on the West Gate Bridge. This project is going to be such an important part of providing better access to Melbourne and better access to the port for all those people who are travelling on that congested and aged infrastructure.

This project is important, and it is absolutely essential that the Parliament does not create a state of legal uncertainty, which is what in essence Mr Davis is proposing. There are no legitimate grounds for the opposition to revoke this planning scheme amendment, and the way in which they are seeking to do it I think should be of great concern to all of us.

Mr Davis and other parties in the Parliament — I believe the Greens — are happy to throw out the usual rule book in terms of how the house deals with the tabling of documents, particularly in relation to their operation under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. This is a very, very dangerous course of action that they are all embarking on.

This project will slash congestion. It will create 6000 jobs, many in quarrying, many in construction. It will take 28 000 vehicles and 8000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 off the Bolte Bridge. It is a congested part of Melbourne, and it is one where this project will create great relief, so the project needs to go ahead.

We do not shy from a debate in the Parliament about the project — about the merit of the projects or indeed around the planning mechanisms by which the project is allowed to proceed. We are more than happy to do that, and we do look forward to making the case for this very important project in the second item that is listed for general business today, but this motion is about laying before the house a copy of the amendment. It seeks to subvert the usual way we do business. It seeks

to jump ahead of the process that is prescribed in the legislation, the process that the planning minister has indeed himself indicated that he will be following, as he is required to, by tabling amendment GC65 in relation to the West Gate tunnel project in the next sitting week.

Mr Davis is jumping the gun. He is bending the rules in a way that I think is very dangerous. It is not the first time he has done it, but he has found a new way to seek to do it. The Greens, at least they are consistent. They do not like roads, so I suppose we cannot be too surprised that they do not like this one. On the Liberal Party, when you think about some of the leaders in our community who speak for industry, who speak for businesses that will benefit from this project, they are aghast at what the Liberal Party is becoming and indeed has become.

The government today will be opposing Mr Davis's motion. We will be insisting on proper process and the proper application of the legislation that governs arrangements such as this. We will be pursuing our responsibility to the Victorian community to deliver significant projects that will be of benefit for the whole community for decades to come. We are in full compliance with the act. We will table the amendment at the appropriate time.

Mr Davis's stunt really ought not be given the time of day or the time the house is seemingly planning to give it today. I guess with the strange internal dynamics within the Liberal Party it was Mr Davis's turn. Mr Davis's ongoing audition for Ms Wooldridge's job is a matter between the two of them. For us, we are focused on the integrity of this project and the processes that support it.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (11:29) — I am happy to speak on this very confusing motion from Mr Davis.

Mr Ramsay — It does not take much to confuse you.

Mr LEANE — I appreciate that, Mr Ramsay, and maybe you can help me out during this process, because this morning the President read out a letter from the Honourable Richard Wynne MP, which is dated 7 February. It opens with 'Dear President', but the 'President' is crossed out and replaced with 'Bruce'. The letter is headed 'Amendment GC65 — West Gate tunnel project' and says:

I refer to amendment GC65 that I recently approved and gazetted in December 2017.

I wish to inform you that it is my intention to table a notice of approval for amendment GC65 in the next sitting week in

accordance with the time lines specified in section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

It is signed 'Richard Wynne MP, Minister for Planning'.

Then this morning we are debating Mr Davis's motion, which is listed as 504 on the notice paper. It says:

That there be laid before this house a copy of amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, which facilitates the delivery of the West Gate tunnel ...

Mr Davis wants to table a document which under the processes of the Parliament and government, which I imagine have been processes for a very long time, is not going to be tabled for another two weeks. He wants to table a document that —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr LEANE — This is why I embrace your assistance. Mr Davis wants a document tabled today that is to be tabled under the correct processes in two weeks time.

Mr Dalidakis — It's back to the future.

Mr LEANE — It is funny you should say that, Mr Dalidakis, because I wish this was Back to the Future IV. It would be much more entertaining than this stunt by Mr Davis. He wants to go through some sort of back-to-the-future experience.

Mr Dalidakis — Where is your DeLorean, Mr Davis?

Mr LEANE — DeLoreans that can go into the future, Mr Dalidakis, have got no hope under this particular group of members that are holding back the electric car. They are standing in front of the electric car, and today Mr Davis wants to embrace a DeLorean that can take us two weeks into the future. Then he gets up and says — in the way that only Mr Davis can do it, as genuine as you could get — 'No, this is not a stunt'. Well, yes, it is a stunt, and unfortunately the opposition has become the Stuntorama Party.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr LEANE — The coalition, Mr Ramsay, and you being a traditional Liberal, used to be pro-development, the coalition used to be pro-jobs, the coalition used to be pro-industry, the coalition used to be pro-business, but the arguments that we have been hearing in recent weeks in this chamber leads them all the way to the opposite. It is not like this is something new and out of

the blue. It is not like attacking an important project for the good people of Victoria is new and out of the blue from this opposition. The opposition has opposed every major project that this government has embarked on, and when they are finished, they love them — like the level crossing removals. They try and buy themselves in, get selfies in front of them and say, ‘I called for this six years ago’. But calling for something is a bit different to actually delivering. You are fantastic at calling for things. You are the best at calling for things, but actually delivering —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEANE — On the level crossing removal program, for every grade separation the Liberals have run a campaign protesting it. If the best outcome were that a rail bridge goes over a road, they would protest that. If the best outcome were a road bridge going over the rail, they would protest that. They protest any outcomes. Then when it becomes popular they say, ‘We called for that’.

If we did have a DeLorean and we went into the future to when this project is finished, we would see them queuing up out in the west and saying, ‘We actually called for this’. They would say, ‘Actually, our one was better’, in relation to their argument about the east–west link, ‘but this one is all right’. All the statistics and other factual indicators were that the east–west link was not better. The best way that the previous Premier could defend the east–west link, and I remember that he said it time and time again —

Mr Dalidakis — Forty cents in the dollar.

Mr LEANE — I will get to that, Mr Dalidakis. I appreciate that you say that. The best defence that Premier Napthine could come out with in relation to the east–west link was to say, ‘It’s a game changer’. I used to think, ‘What does that actually mean — a game changer?’. We talk about the fact that there is not enough information about the West Gate tunnel project, but that is not true at all. The record of the Liberal Party is its release of a short-term business case and blatant lies about the east-west link project. They said that the business case prescribed that for every dollar spent on the east–west link the return would be \$1.40. When the facts came out the return was 45 cents. For every dollar spent the return was 45 cents.

The business case for the West Gate tunnel has been delivered and it is transparent. There is no short-term bogus business case, and \$1.30 will be returned for every dollar. Purely on those facts there is no argument about which project should go ahead. It is a shame that

the Liberal Party has got to the point where, as I said, they are anti-progress, they are anti-roads, they are anti —

Mr Dalidakis — Everything.

Mr LEANE — Mr Dalidakis is right again. That leads to the question: what do they stand for any more if they oppose every project, if they oppose business, if they oppose industry and if they oppose jobs? There are 6000 jobs with this project. We are not talking about them all being direct jobs. The boom that this project will bring to industry in the west, where there is a high concentration of industry, will be amazing. It will be fantastic. As we know, being a Labor government, when we have major projects we make sure that there is a 10 per cent apprentice and trainee guarantee. With the 6000 jobs there will be something like 600 apprentice and trainee positions created. We know that this government makes sure that when there are tenders to be subcontracted we have agreements with the major contractor that they will take into account social enterprises being able to tender for packages.

Only two days ago KnoxBrooke and their Yarra View Nursery won the tender to supply trees and other vegetation for the Mernda rail project. That might not sound too exciting, but when you find out that Yarra View Nursery employs hundreds of people with intellectual disabilities it is a fantastic outcome. But there is only that outcome because this is a Labor government. I have been fortunate to see what has been committed to in the social inclusion and training agreement between the main players. This project will deliver so much to the community during its construction stage.

This is an important road and it has got to be built. The fact that this government ensures that everyone benefits during the construction stage and beyond on all our major projects is something that makes me very proud. I know this Andrews government will go down as one of the greatest governments that the great state of Victoria has ever had — one that actually did stuff. You hear all this angst about consultation, but consultation for the opposition is opposing everything. ‘Any outcome, we oppose it’; that is what their consultation is. Talk about consultation and their angst about consultation.

I will tell you what: there was not a lot of consultation by the previous government because there were not a lot of major projects. There was nothing to consult about. There was nothing done. Even with election commitments it was amazing how the previous government thumbed its nose at things it had

committed to do if it formed government. It formed government and broke probably 80 per cent of its election commitments — and did not care.

I will tell you what: the good people of Victoria cared. What the good people of Victoria want is for governments to get on with good projects and get on with funding and delivering services and not cutting services or money for infrastructure. They want projects that will create jobs.

In the construction industry, that I used to be in, even the lower level players are flat out because a lot of people are getting soaked up by big government projects, which means the medium-size builders and contractors are busy. It means that the lowest level, as in the single traders and the small family businesses, are flat out. They appreciate what this government does. They appreciate that this government is committed to projects that stack up, projects where the prescribed business case will deliver \$1.30 for every dollar spent. They appreciate that this government does what it says it is going to do and is committed to it.

Far be it from me to give the opposition advice, but I think the opposition are barking up the wrong tree again —

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Leane's preamble to his contribution was that he is confused. I want to confirm that he is confused, because he has spent his entire contribution talking about a motion that I suspect will come before the house after this one has been debated and voted on. This motion is about tabling a document; it is not about jobs in Victoria or bigger projects or a whole lot of other things that Mr Leane has talked about for the last 10 minutes. It is about the simple tabling of a document that has been gazetted now for two months and is in the public arena. I ask you, Acting President, perhaps to help him with his confusion and ask him to come back to the motion we are debating now, and he can have a little chat to us about the motion that is coming up next in relation to some of the more detailed requirements around that motion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Dunn) — There is no point of order, Mr Ramsay. As I have already indicated, it is a fairly wide ranging motion that is in front of us.

Mr LEANE — Mr Ramsay wants me to get back to where I started. This motion calls for a document to be tabled in two weeks. I think the confusion is really with Mr Davis and his colleagues on the other side. As to

whether that is confusion or a planned stunt, I think it is a planned stunt, and we will be opposing this motion.

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (11:44) — I looked at the notice paper and read this motion, and it was a bit of a head scratcher, I have got to say.

Mr Ramsay — Were you confused too, Mr Gepp?

Mr GEPP — Well, I think we are all confused, Mr Ramsay; I think we are all confused by those opposite. One of the reasons I am confused — and I have not been here as long as you, but some of those situations may well be resolved in November — is that when I look at the act and what is required of the minister, I fail to see how Mr Davis could bring such a motion into this place unless it was a stunt. Of course the stunt is that they do not want this project. That is the reality. They do not want this project, so what they do is they misuse the procedures — the orders in this place — to bring something forward so that they can then stand up and waste all of our time for the next few hours to try to revoke this amendment.

Earlier today the Honourable Richard Wynne, MP, our Minister for Planning, wrote to the President. The President read out that letter this morning. It is dated 17 February 2018, and it reads:

Dear Bruce —

that is personal —

Amendment GC65 — West Gate tunnel project

I refer to amendment GC65 that I recently approved and gazetted in December 2017.

I wish to inform you that it is my intention to table a notice of approval for amendment GC65 in the next sitting week in accordance with the time lines specified in section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Being one of the newer members in this place I thought I had better inform myself about the Planning and Environment Act and make sure that the assertion contained in the letter from the minister is accurate. When you read section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act it says:

The Minister must cause a notice in the prescribed form of the approval of every amendment to be laid before each House of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is approved.

A notice under subsection (1) must state whether the Minister prepared the amendment under section 20A.

So I thought, 'Oh, well, okay. We've ticked off the first box that it is within the first 10 days'. We then go to section 20A of the act, 'Minister may determine to

prepare prescribed amendments — exception to sections 17, 18 and 19', where it says:

- (1) The regulations may prescribe a class or classes of amendment to a planning scheme for the purposes of this section.
- (2) The Minister may determine to prepare an amendment in a prescribed class or classes in accordance with this section.
- (3) If the Minister determines to prepare an amendment in a prescribed class or classes in accordance with this section, sections 17, 18 and 19 do not apply in respect of that amendment.
- (4) In preparing an amendment referred to in subsection (3) to a planning scheme applying in a municipal district, the Minister must consult with the municipal council for the municipal district unless—
 - (a) the amendment is being prepared at the request of the municipal council; or
 - (b) the amendment is of a class exempted from this requirement by the regulations.

When you actually turn to the act and ask yourself whether in fact the minister, as he wrote in his letter to the President earlier today, is in accordance with the act, the answer can only be a clear yes. So it really does become a bit of a head scratcher. I notice Mr Ramsay has now left. We are confused, then, as to why Mr Davis has brought this motion on here today. One can only draw the conclusion that at the end of the day they do not want this vital piece of infrastructure, this vital piece of work, to go ahead and will stop at nothing in order to achieve that.

It is a consistent pattern of behaviour. Every Wednesday since I have been here what we have heard from somebody opposite, whether it is Mr Davis or any other member of the opposition, is that they stand up and they bleat. They bleat about documentation, they bleat about process and they bleat about consultation. But of course it is all a ruse, because at the end of the day what they do not want is for these projects to go ahead. They will stop at nothing. Mr Davis is particularly good at this; he is particularly good at trying to throw up curve balls to this place and use procedures in this place to stop the progress of vital projects going forward.

Of course they have a very detailed track record when you go back, just over my short time here, and look at some of the projects they have blocked, including, for example, the Markham estate last year which, by the way, they were very much supported in opposing by their partners today, the Greens. Can you believe it? The Greens opposed a public housing development.

The reality of the Greens is that unless they are actually under the shadow of the inner-city buildings then really we have got to question what it is that drives and motivates them. So it is not surprising that we are here again today. It is not about the tabling of documents. That is not the real objective here. The real objective is that Mr Davis, the rest of the opposition and the Greens want to knock off this vital piece of infrastructure.

I go back to just prior to Christmas, when the Leader of the Greens was interviewed about what she wanted to achieve as the new Greens leader in this place. She said it was about progressive government. 'I stand for progressive government', she said. 'What I want to achieve in 2018 is progressive government'. Well, the first problem with that of course is that she is not in government. But if you put that aside, what have we seen since the arrival of the Leader of the Greens in this place? She voted against public housing developments and she is now standing up to oppose a vital piece of infrastructure which delivers jobs — 6000 jobs. So if you are Green, not only do you no longer support public housing development but you also do not support projects that create jobs.

Let us have a look at what this project will actually deliver. Six thousand jobs —

An honourable member — How many?

Mr GEPP — Six thousand. You could only dream of it. There are 500 apprentices, trainees and graduates and up to 150 jobs for former auto workers. Those people, by the way, were friendless when it came to the federal conservative party. When they had the chance to do something on the auto manufacturing front, they failed dismally, as they are failing again on the jobs front.

What else will this project do? It will take 28 000 vehicles and 8000 trucks off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 off the Bolte Bridge. Mr Finn was in here earlier, flapping his gums —

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr GEPP — Thank you, Mr Leane, I might take up that interjection because I have found something in *Hansard* from 2007 where Mr Finn stood up in this place and talked about infrastructure projects and he talked about, as I alluded to, the roads situation being just absolutely horrific. I will not even attempt to do the big, booming voice of Mr Finn and all the theatrics that go with it, but the West Gate Freeway was something we all held up as something to be proud of.

In fact I recall when working at the late, lamented radio station 3DB in the 1980s — let us hope Mr Finn gets the opportunity to reacquaint himself with radio after November this year — that the West Gate Bridge was the ‘gateway to tomorrow’. That was the way it was promoted. Right now it is the gateway to nowhere, because if you get on the West Gate Freeway, it really is a gamble as to how long you can stay on it and whether you will get off it, because this thing usually gets blocked up at about 6.30 a.m. and might unclog itself by 10.00 a.m. if we are lucky. The rest of the time it is an unmitigated disaster. I have seen the West Gate Freeway blocked back to Werribee. Mr Finn identified that 11 years ago, and yet today the government has developed — in consultation with the community, and I will come to the consultative process in a moment — and has got a real plan to ease congestion for western metropolitan Victorians, including people in Mr Ramsay’s electorate of Western Victoria Region.

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Mr GEPP — Ask them, Mr Ramsay, when they come to town, how much they enjoy getting banked up over the West Gate Freeway. Now we have got a plan to deal with that that will bring real economic value to this state, to the people of Victoria, to the people in western metropolitan and western Victoria, and what happens? Those opposite want to block it. They do not want to do it. They do not want the \$11 billion boost that this will give to the Victorian economy. The one thing is this mob has got nowhere to run, they have got nowhere to hide. This year they will be compelled to tell the Victorian people what their plan is, and guess what? They do not have one. They do not have a plan.

What they do is come in here and they are like the Boy George song — they are a chameleon. Today it is jobs. Tomorrow it is infrastructure. There is always a reason as to why something cannot get done. They are a bunch of naysayers. They just do not want to do anything, not even an \$11 billion boost to the Victorian economy that takes 28 000 vehicles a day off the West Gate Bridge and 22 000 off the Bolte Bridge. Then we will finally get thousands of trucks off local streets. Go and tell the people of Francis Street, Yarraville, why you oppose this very important piece of infrastructure. You will not do it because those people will tell you that they have put up with, for far too long, trucks screaming past their front doors, and why? It is because those trucks cannot deliver their important freight over the West Gate Bridge and to the ports et cetera because of the congestion.

So we have got a plan. The planning minister has gone through a thorough consultative process with

504 submissions — a detailed consultation with the community, a real business case that delivers real economic activity and pluses for this community. Contrast that with the do-nothing four years. I will be interested to hear Mr Finn later on today. Eleven years ago he realised that there was a need for this to occur, and what has he done? But do you know what they are really upset about? It is that they do not know whether the crustacean muncher over in the other place is going to come out and support the project. He will because he copycats every good idea, and it is only a matter of time.

Business interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

NAMING AND SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Ms Mikakos

The PRESIDENT (12:00) — Order! This morning, prior to me asking Ms Mikakos to withdraw from the chamber for half an hour, I had sought a withdrawal of a remark she had made, which Ms Wooldridge sought to have withdrawn. My request to Ms Mikakos to leave the chamber was because she was talking and continued to talk while I was on my feet. However, I have not resolved at this point the request that the remark made this morning be withdrawn. I would now seek Ms Mikakos to withdraw that term.

Ms MIKAKOS (Minister for Families and Children) (12:01) — President, as you know, I have a great deal of respect for you and for your position as President of this chamber, and that respect continues. However, as a matter of principle I feel very strongly about this issue, and for that reason I cannot withdraw the statement that I made.

The PRESIDENT (12:02) — The minister has refused to withdraw her remark, and therefore pursuant to standing order 13.04 the question is:

That Ms Mikakos be suspended from the service of the Council during the remainder of the sitting day.

I advise members that this motion may not be amended, adjourned or debated. Therefore I will immediately put the question.

Motion agreed to.

The PRESIDENT — On that basis I would ask Ms Mikakos to leave the chamber for the remainder of this sitting day.

Ms Mikakos withdrew from chamber.

BLACK SATURDAY

The PRESIDENT (12:03) — Earlier today a number of members referred to the ninth anniversary of Black Saturday, which saw such devastation across Victoria, the loss of many lives and the disruption of many lives. There are continuing issues and trauma associated with that disastrous day in Victoria's history. On the basis that this is the ninth anniversary of that occasion and in respect of those who did lose their lives or who were otherwise drastically affected by that event, I would ask members to rise in their places for 1 minute as a mark of respect.

Honourable members stood in their places.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:05) — President, I apologise that the opportunity was not afforded to me earlier. As a consequence of the question that you put and that the house agreed to, Ms Mikakos is not in attendance at question time today. I will be answering questions on her behalf. Ms Tierney is at a family funeral interstate and is also not in question time. I will take questions on her behalf.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE***Fire Wise funding***

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (12:05) — My question is to Minister Dalidakis, representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Volunteer Country Fire Authority (CFA) members are critical to rural Victoria. Last year it was reported that funding for the *Fire Wise* newspaper had been cut without notice or consultation. The paper has been produced since 1947 and is a highly regarded information resource read by thousands of volunteers and paid staff within the CFA. It has given brigades and firefighters opportunities to contribute items and make comments on a wide range of issues. My question is: why was funding for the *Fire Wise* newspaper cut?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:06) — I thank the member for his question. The government shares Mr Purcell's strong support for our emergency services. As has been my practice in the chamber, given that it relates to the portfolio of a ministerial colleague in the other place, I will take that question on notice and endeavour to get a response as quickly as I can.

Supplementary question

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (12:06) — I thank the minister. There is a general belief among volunteers that have spoken to me that the funding cut is a deliberate ploy to limit the voice of volunteers by removing their access to independent discussion. The cut to the *Fire Wise* newspaper funding has led to rumblings about a review of CFA funding to Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV), which is the group's only source of funding. My supplementary question is: is the VFBV funding under review?

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (12:07) — Again I thank the member for his question, and I will pass the supplementary on to the minister in the other place. Can I also make it clear that the government has invested significantly in our emergency services and in our CFA and supported our volunteers, so I look forward to seeking an answer from the minister concerned to reinforce our support for the volunteers, the CFA and our emergency services and to try and clear up the concern that the member has.

Heavy Vehicle National Law

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (12:07) — My question today is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, represented by the agriculture minister. Come 1 July 2018 there will be new laws introduced into Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Queensland which will place a burden of compliance for vehicles entering a property on the owner of the property — for example, a farmer. It seems that as well as all the knowledge, equipment and systems required to deal with their own farming activities, farmers will now be responsible for and therefore have to know about and enforce compliance on vehicles entering their property. This means that a farmer will have to know what and how much is loaded on a truck and how it is restrained; ensure the truck is fit for purpose, mechanically safe and roadworthy; ensure the driver is in a suitable state to drive; and understand the safety risks of any activity related to the transportation of goods, amongst other things. This is clearly a case of making someone else responsible for something they cannot control. My question to the minister is: will the minister strike a blow for common sense and refuse to implement these changes in their current form?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:08) — I thank Mr Bourman for his question, and I will seek a response from Minister Donnellan. I will just make the comment that if these new laws are to come into effect on 1 July, there has no doubt been a

very lengthy process including, one would assume, a parliamentary debate where there was ample opportunity for these issues to be both ventilated and responded to. That said, the responsible minister will be in a vastly better position than I to provide a detailed answer given this matter sits within his portfolio, and I will seek a response for you.

Supplementary question

Mr BOURMAN (Eastern Victoria) (12:09) — I thank the minister for her answer. I guess I can be pedantic and say perhaps it was done by regulation. Will the minister work with the agricultural sector and find a way through this that does not place an unfair burden on farmers?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:09) — I thank Mr Bourman for his further question, which of course I will refer to the relevant minister. I can certainly assure Mr Bourman that our government always takes every opportunity to work with our farming communities and their organisations to ensure that they have the support of government that they need. The intersection of road safety issues of course is particularly important in farm workplaces. We only have to look at the special two-page wraparound in today's *Weekly Times* to remind us of the paramount importance of safety on farms, where we have a hugely disproportionate gap between the proportion of the workforce in Victoria that are in agriculture and the proportion of people who are injured at work or in fact are killed in their workplace that also work in agriculture. So I am sure Mr Donnellan will also be very mindful of that.

Forest Industry Taskforce

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:11) — My question is for the Special Minister of State. Minister, prior to its demise the Forest Industry Taskforce held multiple negotiations about taking coupes off the table due to the high conservation value of the forests within those coupes. Can the minister confirm that two of those coupes nominated for consideration comprise a mix of wet and damp forest located on Granite Mountain on the Errinundra Plateau?

The PRESIDENT — Ms Pulford. Sorry, Mr Jennings.

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:11) — Thank you, President. I can understand your potential confusion about Ms Dunn's direction of her question to me. She has actually directed most questions in relation to this matter to my colleague, but

because it is actually related to the task force that I had some engagement with I believe that is the reason why she directed it towards me, so it is not out of order.

I would actually say that the task force did not reach their demise so much as actually have an inconclusive truncation of how far they could pursue their work. In fact they never terminated their own reference, and their reference has not been terminated by the government either. So just in case that is an issue you are interested in now or subsequently, it may well be that the task force is involved in ongoing conversations with the government in the future.

In terms of the specific question that she asked in relation to coupes that were up for consideration by the task force that may have appeared on the timber release plan and may have been subject to the harvesting regime in a previous harvesting season, and in this case this harvesting season, that level of detail in terms of the specificity of the two coupes in question I cannot confirm or deny, although there is a chance that in fact they were subject to consideration. I will have to take some advice on that question and provide you with an answer.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:13) — Thank you, Minister. Indeed the process of the Forest Industry Taskforce of course referred to these particular coupes as 'HPIPPAS'. It is an interesting acronym that went along with it, to assist in the answer of that question.

In terms of the two coupes that are now being logged, certainly following the dismantling of a blockade organised by environment groups and concerned community members, Minister, why is the Andrews government trashing its own task force process by logging coupes held to be critical by some members of the task force?

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:13) — I can understand Ms Dunn's construction of it, so let me be generous in recognising that she could put that construction on it. Even if these coupes were identified as an area of concern, they were subject to consideration about what options there may be in relation to preserving coupes for further consideration before releasing them for harvesting. That was the nature of the discussion, and the task force itself had a divergence of views and aspirations in relation to the desirability of that relating to any particular coupe, including these ones. So the portrayal that the task force did have a view on that subject I would say was perhaps not consolidated, and those coupes have actually been

released in accordance with VicForests's obligations in relation to timber harvesting, but I will have a look at that matter.

Rubicon Valley logging

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:15) — My question is for the Minister for Agriculture. The native forests of Mount Torbreck are critical for the proposed Healesville to Eildon walking trail and four-wheel drive tracks, which would create hundreds of jobs as part of the great forest national park. VicForests has announced it will log these forests. This would mean the last high conservation value forest in the Rubicon Valley would disappear, damaging the prospects of a transition to a future based on sustainable tourism. Has the minister conducted an assessment of the damage to the local economy from logging these remnant forests in the Rubicon Valley?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:15) — I thank Ms Dunn for her question and her interest in the economic impact of both the forestry industry and also the nature-based tourism industry. I can assure Ms Dunn that the government sees a strong future for both industries. We are making a great many investments in nature-based tourism opportunities and see great potential for employment growth for communities right across Victoria, and right across regional Victoria in particular, on the back of our very strong reputation as a desirable destination. I had the opportunity in early January — I know it is not quite in the area that Ms Dunn is asking about — to see the \$31.5 million investment going on in the Grampians National Park. It is, as we stand here today, the single biggest investment in a nature-based tourism experience that has been made in Victoria for a very, very long time. Certainly the government is acutely aware of the economic impacts of both industries and the economic contribution to the state made by both industries, and that information is certainly well understood by government by subregion and by a statewide picture.

Supplementary question

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:17) — Thank you, Minister. Is VicForests logging the Rubicon Valley to deliberately jeopardise its inclusion in the great forest national park?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:17) — It is such a loaded question. There are certainly a number of people in the community, Ms Dunn among them, who aspire for the creation of a great forest national park. As Ms Dunn is well aware,

the government continues to work with environment groups and with industry stakeholders on the ongoing challenges and some of the difficult questions that exist around the sustainability of the forest industry and how we balance the needs of that industry with the protection of those environmental values and the great benefit that they provide in both an environmental and an economic sense. VicForests undertake logging activity to fulfil their contractual obligations. They have no agenda other than to fulfil the task that is required of them.

Kangaroo pet food trial

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:18) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, there are a number of Victorian pet food businesses and professional shooters that are processing kangaroo carcasses under the kangaroo pet food trial, including Victorian Petfood Processors, who operate in Hamilton, Camperdown and Seymour, and Countrywide Pet Foods in Stanhope. Minister, when will you stop the uncertainty and make the kangaroo pet food industry permanent?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:19) — I thank Mr O'Sullivan for his question. I would remind Mr O'Sullivan that the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change is the right minister to be asking this question of, but given that there is interest in the community about the answer to this question, with your forbearance, President, I might try and provide Mr O'Sullivan with some information about this. It is the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) that is responsible for managing kangaroos. A kangaroo pet food trial was commenced in March 2014. In September 2016 it was extended until March this year. Members might be interested to know that as of the end of 2017, 87 622 kangaroos controlled through authorised activities had been processed into pet food. The pet food processors from the start of the trial until mid-2017 employed more than 25 staff, which is a significant thing indeed, in addition to both direct and indirect benefits to shooters.

There is an evaluation of the trial currently underway, and the preliminary evaluation indicates that it has been successful in reducing waste associated with kangaroo controls and it has, as I indicated, created new employment opportunities in regional Victoria. DELWP, the environment minister's department, is currently evaluating the outcomes, and a decision will be made once that has concluded. But we are very conscious of the fact that the trial is ending at the end of March.

Supplementary question

Mr O’SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:21) — Thank you, Minister. It certainly was in agriculture, but now it might have changed to the environment department. My supplementary question is to you or to the environment minister in terms of the way you wish to answer the question. Minister, these businesses have employed workers to process kangaroo carcasses from the trial, which has been running very successfully, as you have outlined, for four years. Why won’t the Andrews government guarantee the future of these jobs and make it a permanent industry?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:21) — As the Minister for Agriculture and as the Minister for Regional Development, I am doing my best on behalf of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. I would just reiterate my previous answer: there is an evaluation underway, there was a trial and the trial was extended. The early mail on this is that it has been effective in controlling population numbers, effective in creating jobs in regional Victoria and effective in creating opportunities for hunters. When the evaluation is done I am sure the environment minister will have some news that she will be happy to share with everyone in due course.

Heyfield timber mill

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (12:22) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. Minister, one of the last Australian-owned furniture manufacturers located in Reservoir contacted me in January. They are very unhappy with the Andrews Labor government because, due to the reduction of timber supply to the Heyfield mill, two of the timber sizes they use to make furniture and sourced from the Heyfield mill are no longer being produced. Minister, as the government owns the Heyfield mill, can you please advise when the timber supply will be fully restored?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:22) — On the part of the question that relates to the operation of the Heyfield mill, I will refer that to the Minister for Industry and Employment. As we have indicated, I think both I and Mr Jennings, in answers to questions about the Heyfield mill since the new ownership arrangements came into place, we believe it is appropriate, in fact essential, that the minister responsible for the regulation of timber harvesting is not the minister responsible for the operation or oversight of the mill.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Ms PULFORD — We have told you before. If you did not hear, I —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Ms PULFORD — So I will seek a response to that part of the question from Minister Carroll. In relation to the question about the availability of supply, there probably would not be another room in the state with 40 people who have heard this answer more times than this room full of people. But in case anybody has forgotten, in dealing with supply to the Heyfield mill we had a very difficult set of challenges that we inherited from the former government. Protections around —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Ms PULFORD — You know how it happened because I have explained it to you about a million times. Protections were put in place by the former government that had the inevitable consequence of placing pressure on the available resource — significant loss. On this anniversary of Black Saturday, where we took a moment to remember the enormous losses that so many in the community experienced — and indeed, Mr Ondarchie, you spoke about this in the house earlier today yourself — one of the losses perhaps less talked about on such an anniversary is the significant impact on the timber industry both in plantations, and we have seen the results of that more recently with the closure of Carter Holt Harvey in Morwell, and also in our native timber industry.

We had and continue to have real pressures around availability of supply that came to a crunch in relation to the Heyfield mill. We also had my predecessor in the agriculture portfolio, who I think had given the former owners of the Heyfield mill the impression that there would be loads of timber forever. Those things did come into conflict. The government was absolutely determined to create the best possible jobs outcome at a workplace where the former owners had said on probably half a dozen occasions that they were closing. That mill is not closed. We are very proud of that decision and that intervention, but the responsible minister for the other part of your question is Minister Carroll, and I shall seek an answer for you.

Supplementary question

Mr ONDARCHIE (Northern Metropolitan) (12:26) — Thank you, Minister, for rewriting history. Minister, this company in Reservoir uses these two timber sizes to make chairs for the aged-care sector. Victorian plantation timber is not an option for these products, and using imported timber would make this

company less competitive than imports. Minister, with used timber supplies affecting supply chain businesses like this one in Reservoir and given your answer to the substantive question, what are you doing to increase the availability of native timber to ensure supply chain businesses are not severely affected?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:26) — I think I went to this in some detail in my substantive answer, and indeed the exchange between Ms Dunn and Mr Jennings earlier in question time also goes to this question. I understand that these businesses that are supplied by a company like Heyfield cannot be replaced with plantation timber. They are different types of trees. That is in fact something that we were incredibly conscious of when we decided to intervene and make sure that the Heyfield mill was still operating; without the government's intervention it would not have been. On the question of output from the Heyfield mill, I will again refer that question to the responsible minister.

Cross border commissioner

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:27) — My question is to the Minister for Regional Development. Minister, Labor member for Northern Victoria Region Mr Gepp told the Swan Hill *Guardian* about the establishment of a cross border commissioner, and he said, 'Certainly it will get up under Labor. I can promise you that'. Minister, will the Andrews government establish a cross border commissioner, as Mr Gepp has promised, and match the Liberal-Nationals policy?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (12:28) — I love getting regional development questions from The Nationals, so I do thank Mr O'Sullivan for his question. I suppose I am not really allowed to ask the questions, but I wonder if you have reinstated the regional development portfolio yet, because that was a terrible oversight. That was one of those kind of toenail moments of awkwardness and embarrassment. The Nationals could barely organise pouring beer in a bar, but I will respond on the question of a cross border commissioner. The cross border commissioner is an idea that has been generated by our regional partnerships reform — a really exciting one.

Ms Wooldridge — You want to copy us? Give us the business case then.

Ms PULFORD — Well, you copied them.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms PULFORD — No, that is not how it happened. What happened is that the regional partnership came up with this idea, proposed it to government and presented to government on it. I am very pleased that the Liberals and Nationals have finally decided to take this reform seriously.

Ms Wooldridge interjected.

Ms PULFORD — I was complimenting you for stealing your idea from a locally generated initiative. I had the opportunity to meet with the New South Wales cross border commissioner so that I could better understand the way they operate, and I think it is a fascinating model. New South Wales shares more borders with other jurisdictions than we do, but we certainly have communities across the north and north-east of the state, and of course in the west in my own electorate, that encounter on a daily basis the challenges of living in a cross-border community.

Now, there are some well-established relationships. You think about Albury-Wodonga and the health service —

An honourable member interjected.

Ms PULFORD — No, really. You guys do not understand it and I am trying to explain it to you. The model that they have in New South Wales is really interesting, and it is unique in the commonwealth. So we are very interested in looking at this further. There is a business —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — There is way too much interjection from the opposition on my left. The minister is responding to the question and has provided some what I would have thought was useful context to the question of where the government might be going. Given the way the question was posed, I think that some of the comments she has made about what opposition policy has been as well were pertinent in this instance. But I want to hear the final answer, and I expect the minister to be heard in silence.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you, President. As I was saying, I had the opportunity to meet with the New South Wales cross border commissioner. I think it is fair to say that the New South Wales cross border commissioner would very much like there to be other cross border commissioners for him to undertake his duties with. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Deputy Premier in New South Wales last year and to talk to him about his experience of the cross border commissioner and how it operates in the context of the

operation of the bureaucracy. That minister is a Premier-in-cabinet minister but also minister for regional development.

We have been supporting the development of the business case. It is being led by the regional partnership that initiated it, but it is consulting very closely with all the others too because there is a great interest in this. I think it is a terrific idea, and I am very, very pleased that The Nationals and the Liberals are listening to what we are hearing from regional communities through the regional partnership reform.

Supplementary question

Mr O'SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (12:32) — My supplementary question, I had one for a yes answer and I had one for a no answer, but I am no wiser as to which one I should ask, so I am going to take a stab and I am going to ask one of them. Minister, under Labor's proposal —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I also want to hear the supplementary question, as indeed I wanted to hear the minister's answer.

Mr O'SULLIVAN — Minister, under Labor's 'maybe' proposal — if it happens — will the cross border commissioner's office be located in Mildura?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (12:33) — Again, the discussion that I had with the New South Wales cross border commissioner was really helpful in terms of informing me and government about how they operate on a day-to-day basis, whether it is about plumbing registrations or whether it is about a little girl who needs to get to the local disability primary school but her nearest school is on the other side of the river. These are the kinds of things that they work on a day-to-day basis. I think it is a really exciting opportunity.

When you think about the potential locations for a cross border commissioner, Mildura certainly springs to mind — it is close to South Australia, it is close to New South Wales and it has access to an airport for accessing other communities around the state. Certainly the budget of the New South Wales cross border commissioner is substantially spent on travel expenses, so any future cross border commissioner would probably largely operate out of the car, but Mildura is not a bad suggestion.

Greyhound racing

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:35) — My question is to the Minister for Agriculture. The code of practice for the keeping of racing greyhounds was to be released before Christmas. This did not occur, and it still has not been released seven weeks after Christmas, causing considerable concern among industry participants. Given the level of angst the draft document caused, can the minister explain why this 2017 release date has not been kept?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:35) — I thank Ms Bath for her question. There have been many discussions occurring over recent months with the greyhound owners and breeders incentive scheme and with Greyhound Racing Victoria. The draft code is very close to finalised. Anyone who Ms Bath is talking to who is feeling anxious because they do not know where this is up to, I would encourage them to get in touch with the breeders and trainers organisations and the industry bodies, because they are very, very engaged in ongoing development and finalisation of the code.

Supplementary question

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (12:36) — I thank the minister for her response. Minister, can you at least guarantee owners, trainers and breeders that there will be no changes that will incur costs or administration requirements that will force owners and trainers out of the industry?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Agriculture) (12:36) — Thank you. Unlike The Nationals in New South Wales most famously, who took kind of an extraordinary approach to greyhound racing — it had this terrible detrimental effect and resulted in a backflip which means that they are a good 18 months behind our efforts in cleaning up the greyhound racing industry — as members here would recall, it was probably about three years ago to the day that *Four Corners* aired its exposé on live baiting, and the Minister for Racing and myself initiated —

Ms Bath — On a point of order, President, we have 20 seconds left and this has no relevance to the question, it is talking about an interstate situation, and I ask you to bring the minister back to answering the question.

The PRESIDENT — The minister to conclude, and yes, I am mindful of the question that was put.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you, and I thank Ms Bath for her interest in this. We are working very closely

with industry to ensure that they have the social licence to continue. We certainly do not want anybody to be shutting down; we want everyone to be operating at higher and better standards. There were I think 68 recommendations between the Perna and Milne reports. This was recommendation 1 in the Milne report. Many of the other reforms have occurred. The Parliament has considered legislation, and greyhound racing in Victoria is very strong and is operating with much higher animal welfare standards as a result of the approach we took, which was different to the approach your friends in New South Wales took.

Eureka Stadium

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:38) — My question is to the Minister for Regional Development. Minister, last year the Ballarat City Council was forced to spend \$5.5 million to compulsorily acquire land from the North Ballarat Football Club due to your government's botched redevelopment of Eureka Stadium. Minister, can you confirm that since then the Andrews government has provided the Ballarat City Council with a licence for land at Eureka Stadium that was unlawful and that the Andrews government was later forced to revoke?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (12:39) — I thank Mr Morris for his question. I think that he is talking about the acquisition of a piece of public land that may or may not be the responsibility of the minister for the environment or the planning minister, but I take the opportunity to respond to Mr Morris's absurd assertion that the Eureka Stadium project was botched.

The Eureka Stadium project was a stunning success. It was an incredibly ambitious timetable to get that stadium up to AFL standards in time for the setting of the footy fixture in around September 2016 and to have it concluded in time — I think there were about three weeks to spare — to have that amazing match between the Western Bulldogs and Port Adelaide at Ballarat. The stadium was a sellout. It looks magnificent.

Mr Morris — On a point of order, President, I understand the minister is trying to absolve herself from answering this question. However, I would say that the minister is directly connected to this project. I am aware that she has made comments about the fact that other ministers with other portfolios have been addressing this specific issue, but I am certainly aware that there have been conversations between the City of Ballarat and the minister's office with regard to this land and the revocation of this licence. So I would seek that the

minister answer this question that has been placed before her.

The PRESIDENT — The minister has not concluded her answer yet in any event, so if the minister is aware of that matter in terms of her jurisdiction, as you suggest, she will no doubt explain that to the house, or indeed she might take the option of seeking further advice.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you, President. I do think it is at least a bit incumbent — and we do try very hard to be helpful — on members to work out who is the responsible minister for the stuff that they are asking about.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms PULFORD — And the redevelopment has occurred. The project has been delivered, and the project has been a stunning success.

Mr Dalidakis interjected.

Ms PULFORD — Yes, I think Mr Morris is sad about not being in the photo. When the Liberal Party was in government, do you know what it delivered for Ballarat, in contrast to GovHub, which will create 500 jobs in construction and 600 ongoing jobs; the station precinct upgrade; the bike path; and the Mair Street upgrade? In contrast to the fact that Ballarat is basically turning into a building site —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am not trigger-happy, but I have sent out a minister today, very reluctantly in the sense that I do not like getting to that situation, but members on my left might have regard to the fact that I am always very keen to maintain the balance in this house and I do not like to see ministers subject to a barrage of interjections. The Minister, without assistance.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you, President. I do love talking to Mr Morris about our record of investment in Ballarat versus his, and perhaps we could continue this over a cup of tea somewhere in the civic hall precinct.

Mr Morris interjected.

The PRESIDENT (12:42) — Order! Mr Morris, 15 minutes. Perhaps I was too subtle.

Mr Morris withdrew from chamber.

Ms PULFORD — Thank you. I think I had nearly concluded, but just for the avoidance of any doubt, I am not the responsible minister for the land transfer issues that Mr Morris referred to. I am aware of the issue in a general sense. I live in Ballarat, in fact not that far from the stadium. I will do my very best to seek a response from the responsible minister, who I believe is probably Minister Wynne.

The PRESIDENT — Minister Pulford, we are in an unusual circumstance. I would normally accord Mr Morris a supplementary question. I am prepared to give that supplementary question to Ms Fitzherbert, because presumably she has it. However, I will allow you the discretion of indicating whether you would be prepared to take a supplementary question in this circumstance or not. If you say no, then I will not call on the supplementary question.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Minister, will you take the supplementary question or not? It is up to you.

Ms Pulford — Yes, that is fine.

The PRESIDENT — On that basis, Ms Fitzherbert, are you in a position to put a supplementary question?

Ms Fitzherbert — I certainly am.

The PRESIDENT — All right. Ms Fitzherbert, on behalf of Mr Morris.

Supplementary question

Ms FITZHERBERT (Southern Metropolitan) (12:44) — Minister, I do appreciate the context you have been able to provide, but I take you back to the original question and ask: is it the case that the Andrews government was later forced to revoke the licence for land that was provided in relation to the stadium lands?

Ms PULFORD (Minister for Regional Development) (12:45) — I thank Ms Fitzherbert. Maybe she should move to Ballarat; she would make a better representative than Mr Morris.

The PRESIDENT — That is unnecessary.

Ms PULFORD — I apologise, President. I will seek a response to this question from Minister Wynne. Just for the benefit of members, the stadium upgrade project was a project that I had responsibility for. It was delivered by Ballarat City Council. The stadium sits on land owned, managed and maintained by Ballarat City Council. It was Ballarat City Council, to the best of my

knowledge, that acquired some of the land in question, and that was a decision of council to resolve an issue the council had to hand. The issue of land access is and has always been quite separate to the question around project delivery. Project delivery has gone ahead. The project was concluded around July last year. Again I encourage members to work out which minister is responsible for the things that they are inquiring about, but I will do my best to help.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Mr JENNINGS (Special Minister of State) (12:46) — I have the following 34 written responses to questions on notice: 11 893, 12 349–78, 12 404–6.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Written responses

The PRESIDENT (12:46) — In respect of today's questions, I require written responses to Mr Purcell's question to Minister Dalidakis involving a minister in another place, both the substantive and supplementary questions, two days; and Mr Bourman's question to Ms Pulford, both the substantive and the supplementary questions involving a minister in the other place, two days. On Ms Dunn's question to Mr Jennings, Mr Jennings has indicated that he is prepared to provide further written advice with regard to both the substantive and the supplementary questions. Minister, can I have an indication: in terms of providing that answer: does it involve other ministries or is it directly within your jurisdiction? Do you want one day or two days?

Mr Jennings — I will take two.

The PRESIDENT — Two days; thank you. Ms Dunn's question to Ms Pulford, just the substantive question, is one day. Mr Ondarchie's question to Ms Pulford, the substantive and the supplementary questions, is two days. On Mr Morris's question to Ms Pulford, just the substantive question; she offered to do the supplementary, but I do not believe that that actually requires further advice in the context in which it was asked or framed, so it is just the substantive question. Because I understand the minister has provided the house with an indication that other ministers are involved in that, notwithstanding that the question was put to her, I will allow two days.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTIONS

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mrs PEULICH (South Eastern Metropolitan) (12:48) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. In the context of the number of outages that we have seen as a result of increased demand and decreased supply following the closure of Hazelwood, I ask: would the minister provide the details of the suburbs which have been affected by the electricity outages; what the impact has been of these outages, especially those experienced on 29 January 2018, across South Eastern Metropolitan Region; the number of homes and businesses that have been affected; and the period of time that they were without electricity? Could the minister rule out the rationing of electricity to avert future blackouts?

Northern Victoria Region

Mr GEPP (Northern Victoria) (12:49) — My question is for the Minister for Police. It is about the Mildura youth commitment program in my electorate and in the lower house electorate of Mildura. In July the minister announced an almost \$200 000 grant for Sunraysia Community Health Services. The Mildura youth commitment program project will involve young people aged between 10 and 14 who have already had contact with the justice system and will work to help prevent them from reoffending through early intervention and diversion programs. The project will also work with Victoria Legal Aid, La Trobe University and the Northern Mallee Community Partnership organisation.

According to the Crime Statistics Agency, over the past year crimes such as serious assaults, sexual offences, aggravated robbery, criminal damage, burglary and theft have significantly dropped in Mildura, and there is no doubt that Mildura is a safer place to live and visit than previously. I have been asked by constituents about the progress of this program in relation to tackling youth crime and repeat offending in Mildura. Can the minister inform my constituents about how this program is progressing and if there are any further plans for programs or grants that the minister is considering to continue the downward trend of youth crime in Mildura?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:50) — My constituency question is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety in relation to the north-east link. Before the

north-east link is completed, what local treatments will the state government provide for Rosanna Road? Will there be truck bans on Rosanna Road once the north-east link is opened?

Western Victoria Region

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (12:51) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Honourable Luke Donnellan. It is in relation to the Drysdale bypass, to which I have drawn his attention previously in an adjournment matter. The answer I seek from him is about the concerns raised by the Bellarine Community Council about the VicRoads proposal of three sets of traffic lights as part of the bypass proposal, which in fact will have a significant impact on the safety of the school precincts that border the proposed route of the traffic flow and some other cultural issues. I understand that VicRoads have now approved the route of the bypass and that tenders are going out for contractors to build the road, but I have grave reservations about the proposed intersections. I ask him to review the current VicRoads proposal to see what impact those three sets of traffic lights will have on traffic flow and the safety of the children in the school precincts.

Eastern Victoria Region

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (12:52) — My question is to the Minister for Education in the other place, Mr Merlino. It relates to the alarming rate of suicide, which is the leading cause of death for Australian children aged five to 17, and the announcement on Friday, 2 February, of a \$7 million plan to address bullying in schools, with \$4.8 million to go towards mental health services for government schools to respond to complex issues, and that relates to Bully Stoppers, Safe Schools, e-Smart and Respectful Relationships and new initiatives to tackle racist bullying. What work will be done to ensure that these resources can make a difference across regional and rural schools and that communities can in fact tackle bullying and improve the mental health of students to help them achieve their best in a classroom and to minimise the risk of self-harm and suicide amongst that five to 17-year-old age bracket?

Western Metropolitan Region

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (12:53) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. Work on the Tullamarine Freeway widening project has been continuing for what to locals seems like forever. It is not unusual for motorists on the Tulla to face speed restrictions of 60 to 40, to 80, back

to 40, back to 60, back to 80 and then back to 40, sometimes in a very short length of road. Nor is it unusual for motorists to find the freeway closed completely at various times of the night, with drivers expected to find an alternative route home. Quite frankly we are getting mighty sick of it. It has been suggested to me by some constituents that VicRoads may actually be deliberately dragging out this process. Will the minister categorically deny that the government is delaying the end of this project to enable a grand opening campaigning event in November?

Northern Victoria Region

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (12:54) — My constituency question today is for the Minister for Health. It revolves around an issue that commenced with the Minister for Early Childhood Education. I had the pleasure of announcing funding for the Heathcote children's centre, which is actually going to be formally renamed once the name has been decided. The exciting thing about this project in Heathcote —

Mr Ramsay interjected.

Ms SYMES — Potentially, Mr Ramsay. The exciting feature of this facility in Heathcote is that it is the first time that long day care will be available for families in Heathcote, so it is a very exciting development. My constituency question is specifically in relation to the shade grant applications that the Minister for Health manages, because it is great to announce \$650 000 for child care, but I would really like to add a shade sail, and I would like to know the timing of the announcements for the successful grant recipients.

Northern Victoria Region

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (12:55) — My question is for the Minister for Public Transport. The Mooropna railway station was destroyed by fire in the early hours of Saturday, 13 January. The station has been an important part of the proud Mooropna township, and its loss caused shock throughout the local community. The complete lack of response from the Andrews Labor government to the fire and the lack of plans to replace the station have caused great concern within the Mooropna community, and frankly they deserve better.

While the *Shepparton News* called for a replacement of the historic station building, Mooropna is a very proud and parochial community, and as I have said from the start, any future station rebuild must be born from extensive consultation with both residents and local rail

passengers as to the type of station and facilities they need. I welcome the minister's delayed response to the fire with her announcement that consultation with the community will be undertaken, but the question the Mooropna community want answered is: when will the minister provide an unequivocal commitment to funding for rebuilding a railway station at Mooropna?

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (12:56) — My question is directed to Jill Hennessy, the Minister for Health, and it pertains to the new breast cancer centre of excellence which is currently being built within the grounds of Maroondah Hospital. I notice that this is progressing well, after being there a few times, to the point that I am hoping that it will be completed soon. It will house BreastScreen Victoria, which is currently working out of three houses in Grey Street, Ringwood East. They do a fantastic job. It is amazing what they can do out of non-purpose-built facilities, so there will be some wonderful work that they will be able to do at this new facility. The question I ask the minister is: what is the proposed date that BreastScreen Victoria will be able to move into the new centre of excellence?

Western Victoria Region

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (12:57) — Thank you, President; it is good to be back I must say. My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and it is in relation to the preposterous plan that has been proposed by the Andrews government with regard to Sturt Street, Ballarat. One of the concerns that many people have is the impact that this particular proposal is going to have on the heritage nature of our magnificent boulevard. There have been some assurances given about trees, statues and monuments, but I just wanted to get an answer from the minister, an ironclad guarantee, if this preposterous plan is to go ahead — I certainly hope it does not — as to whether there will be any trees at all removed from Sturt Street or any other locale as result of the cycling measures put in place by this government.

Sitting suspended 12.58 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65

Debate resumed.

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

Debate adjourned until later this day.

INTERNATIONAL DRIVERS

Mr PURCELL (Western Victoria) (14:05) — I move:

That this house notes that —

- (1) international visitors to Australia are not required to take any tests prior to driving on our roads, the only requirement is that they carry an English translation of their international licence;
- (2) international licence-holders are a danger on our roads, particularly as —
 - (a) international licence-holders were involved in 3.46 per cent of all reported crashes in 2017;
 - (b) 21 per cent of crashes along the Great Ocean Road from July 2012 to June 2017 were caused by international licence-holders;
 - (c) 1.52 per cent of fatal crashes in Victoria in 2017 involved an international licence-holder;
- (3) in New Zealand, a campaign is in place to require international licence-holders to display a T-plate —
 - (a) at present New Zealand road laws relating to international drivers are the same as Victoria;
 - (b) New Zealand has had some success with a visitor driver training program that international licence-holders are encouraged to complete, which includes an online assessment and certificate of completion that drivers can present to car rental companies;
 - (c) the program is widely promoted by car rental companies throughout New Zealand;
- (4) the Labor government introduced a visiting driver road safety program on 23 December 2017 that mirrors the New Zealand program that includes bilingual videos, digital advertising, social media and promotional materials within rental car companies, but does not require international licence-holders to be assessed in any way;

and calls on the government to extend this program to include compulsory driver training and certification before they are allowed to drive on Victorian roads.

It is my pleasure to move this motion today for a number of reasons, but particularly because of the increased number of crashes, including fatalities, on roads in my part of Victoria. While Western Victoria Region has a huge number of tourist attractions which include many that are day trips, like Sovereign Hill, there are many that are not able to be done in a day trip. These include the Great Ocean Road to the Twelve Apostles. To drive the Great Ocean Road to the Twelve Apostles one way takes something like 6 hours. Unfortunately when tourist companies are selling this as a tourist attraction they convince people that it is

possible to drive to the Twelve Apostles and return as a day trip. It can be done, but quite often this happens after tourists arrive in Australia following a long trip. They hire a car, and increasingly they do hire cars, but after that long trip they get on the road through Geelong and down the Great Ocean Road to the Twelve Apostles and then come back. What that means is that they can be on the road for 10 or 12 hours, and many do not have the experience to do that.

My motion really has three parts. The first is that currently there is no test for international drivers. International drivers on our roads are currently required to carry a foreign licence with an English translation, but that is it. If you are on a temporary visa, for instance, you can drive for the length of the time that you are on that visa without any further testing. If you are on a permanent visa, you are able to drive on Victorian roads for six months. If you are over 21 years of age and have held a recognised foreign licence for three years or more, you can actually get a Victorian licence without any further testing. It could be that you held a licence in some far-off part of the world. You may never have driven. In some parts of the world it is very easy to get a licence. It is certainly much more difficult in Victoria.

So it is possible that you could have obtained a licence where completely different conditions exist. Therefore if you have had that licence for three years and you come to Victoria, you can get a Victorian licence. This is not uncommon throughout Australia, but it is certainly not in the best interests of the education process that we put our teenagers and young adults through to get a licence in Victoria. It is quite stringent, and it should be stringent. It is only fair to ensure that young people are safe on our roads when they get an opportunity to drive.

The statistics point out that international drivers are a danger on our roads. As the motion says, international drivers were involved in 3.46 per cent of reported cases in 2017. More importantly, though, is that when you look at the Great Ocean Road that figure goes to 21 per cent. Close to one-quarter of all accidents along the Great Ocean Road involve drivers with international licences. A number of these are quite serious accidents, and I will go to that a little bit later on.

Currently in Victoria we have something like 2.8 million international visitors a year, and this is very important to the Victorian economy because they spend somewhere in excess of \$7 billion per annum. It is an industry that we need to protect, but we need to make those visitors feel safe, we need to make Victorians feel safe and we need to make our roads safe.

As well as this, you can look at the number of those international visitors who actually go down the Great Ocean Road. The Great Ocean Road is becoming more and more popular. While I said earlier there are many great attractions in country Victoria, the Great Ocean Road is by far the one you need to travel the longest distance along and the one that is so often promoted as a day trip. The efforts to try to change this to make it into more of an overnight stay have never worked because the tourism packages that are sold are actually sold before anyone gets to Australia, and they are sold under the belief that the trip is a few hours along the Great Ocean Road to the Twelve Apostles and then beyond, and then some way to return home.

Many of the tourists who do the trip along the Great Ocean Road find that they get 6 or 8 hours into their trip and would prefer to stay, but because they have booked their accommodation they find they need to get back to their accommodation as quickly as possible. What this means is that they will turn on their GPS and Google Maps. Google Maps will take them the shortest way, but unfortunately the shortest way often entails a trip along some very narrow, unsealed roads that were never designed for heavy traffic or driving at high speeds. This quite often causes a major problem. Due to fatigue drivers often cross over the centre lines, stop suddenly or take other measures that cause accidents.

New Zealand experienced similar problems. Even though they did not have the same issues of long-distance driving and the number of miles travelled, they were proactive and put together a good package that the state government has partially mirrored. The reason they did that is that they have actually published statistics that are much better than ours in Victoria. In my researching it was very difficult to find out how many road users are international drivers. The New Zealand statistics say that 6.2 per cent of fatal or injury-causing crashes involved foreign drivers. It is estimated that less than 1 per cent of drivers at any one time are international drivers. New Zealand have what they call a T-plate campaign, which was launched last year and which requires international licence-holders to show tourist plates. I believe this initiative would certainly help in Victoria.

It has been argued that if we did such a thing it would discourage tourists from coming to the state. I am not convinced that that is the case. I think that we as a state have a lot to offer, and I think that we would lose more if we do not make our roads safe and if we did not make the experience enjoyable. Unfortunately the experience of the tourist industry and international tourism is that some of these long-haul journeys are not enjoyable experiences. Some of the surveys that have

been done of international visitors show that they are marking down their experience simply because of the length of the journeys and also because of the expectation that they can get there and back very quickly.

New Zealand also have bilingual videos, digital advertising, social media promotion and promotional materials for car rental companies. I am sure many members in the house are the same as me, but when you go overseas and hire a car the last thing you want to do is sit down and watch a video or read the brochures that are in the vehicle. The first thing you want to do is get the keys, get in the car, head out on your journey and sort it out later. The issue that arises from that is that we find that people with little experience get on the road. They have no assessment done and there is no assessment component. There is no requirement for training by any of the hire car companies.

Traditionally the majority of our tourists who took long haul journeys actually took organised tours — they were not free agent tours — but there has now been a serious move towards hiring cars and driving long distances. Many of our tourism areas are different. I am using the Great Ocean Road and the Twelve Apostles as an example. In my part of western Victoria we have a huge number of great tourist attractions, including Tower Hill, Budj Bim and many others, including the Grampians. These are not promoted as day trips. The issue we often have is many accidents. Locally we get daily reports of serious accidents occurring along that stretch of road. I am sure it is the same in other parts, but it is certainly desperate.

In the busy period the Twelve Apostles alone get something like 10 000 visitors a day. In 2017 — last year — there were over 2 million visitors to the Twelve Apostles. Most of those visitors come down the Great Ocean Road. That is a lot of visitors and a lot of extra people to have on that road. As I said, it is a 6-hour journey, and that is without stopping to have a break of any description.

The road was actually built in the early 1930s as a memorial to those who lost their lives in the First World War. It was meant to be a memorial to those who lost their lives in the First World War and not a memorial to those who lost their lives driving on the road. Unfortunately it is becoming that more and more. Anyone who travels that road will see a recognition of the lives that have been lost there. It is a 240-kilometre stretch. It takes 6 hours, and many people try to drive it and return in a day. Most believe that they can do it in a much shorter period of time. I believe there is a definite

need to require people to have some form of test before they go and drive on our roads.

Just to give you an example of some of the accidents that have occurred on that particular road and in some other parts of western Victoria, these are just the more recent ones. On 6 February there was a nose-to-tail accident when a hire car driven by a foreign national failed to stop and hit the rear of the last car in a stop line. That car was being driven by a Chinese national and the impact caused her car to hit the car in front, which was also being driven by a Chinese national. The police actually commented after that. Their comment was:

'Police are concerned about driver behaviour and safety of all road users, especially with the Chinese New Year being celebrated on Friday, 16 February ...

'These celebrations have in the past seen a large number of tourists travel down the Great Ocean Road.

'We are asking all drivers to be patient and alert due to the expected increased numbers of foreign nationals on the roads at this time ...

So the police are pleading with people to be careful. They are pleading daily with locals to be careful, and I know as a person who drives around western Victoria that it is at the top of your mind every time you come to an intersection. You think, 'I wonder who's going that way, I wonder who it is, I wonder whether they will stop'.

I reported to this house not long ago that I was only a few metres away from my office just before Christmas when a Chinese national went through a give-way sign and T-boned a local. He saw the give-way sign but did not know what it meant, so he went straight through it. Luckily nobody was hurt; obviously it was a lucky escape. Such reports are quite frequent.

The day before — this is on 5 February — Sergeant Greenwood said about international motorists that there was concern about the horror stretch of road. A newspaper report states:

Sergeant Greenwood said in addition to speeding, motorists travelling on the wrong side of the road and failing to obey signs due to a language barrier were issues police faced regularly.

'We have people turning out of car parks onto the incorrect side of the road or people stopping abruptly when they see something that interests them, perhaps a koala' ...

...

'We've certainly found international tourists are over-represented in trauma' ...

That is a quote from Sergeant Greenwood himself.

Another quote came out of the Ballarat *Courier* when on Thursday an Indian on a student visa was driving on an international drivers licence and allegedly crashed, causing the death of a Fernhill father after a head-on collision. Serious accidents are happening far too often.

In the Warrnambool *Standard* on 8 January they went and did a survey and I think found that more than 75 per cent, actually well into the high 70 per cents, of people surveyed said — these were international drivers and international tourists themselves — that they felt there should be more stringent rules and a better test. A Canadian visitor, Anne Marie Barakar, said:

... the idea of tighter licensing requirements for overseas drivers seems like a good idea.

Ms Barakar, 33, who was visiting Tower Hill with Australian relatives, said she did not feel safe driving on Australian roads because she drove on the other side of the road in Canada.

The closest she has come to driving in Australia was in a car park and her unfamiliarity with the car's layout and Australian road rules persuaded her to leave the driving in Australia to her Australian relatives.

Nine News reported on 31 December that the brother of a man killed in a car crash near the Great Ocean Road on Boxing Day had made an emotional plea for tougher conditions for international drivers. Nine reported:

George Hullo, 52, died after a collision on the notoriously dangerous intersection at Birregurra Forest on December 26.

A 27-year-old Chinese national has since been charged with dangerous driving causing death and dangerous driving causing serious injury.

On 20 December 2017 the *Geelong Advertiser* reported:

A European man who was driving on the wrong side of Cape Otway Road when he collided with a truck last week has died in hospital.

...

It comes as a Chinese woman fights for life in the Alfred after pulling out in front of a ute on a 100 km/h stretch of the Princes Highway, at the Cape Otway Road intersection ...

These are only some examples of many that I could take you through. Unfortunately this is such a serious issue that we are losing lives not only of visitors but certainly of Australians who are being crashed into. My proposal is that we would have a simple test that would determine whether you understand the basic rules of driving in Victoria. I have been told that we have an international convention that says if we require a pre-test for driving in Victoria, that may well happen to

Victorians and Australians travelling overseas. For me I say that is a great thing.

I, like many here who have driven overseas, can very clearly remember looking the wrong way at a roundabout. Luckily the passenger I had with me stopped me in time so that I did not cause a major accident. After growing up and driving while looking to the right it is very easy when you are on the other side of the road to look right instead of left and to turn out into traffic. I say it would be a good thing if we were required to have a test prior to driving in any other part of the world, because I would challenge any member here as to whether they do actually know the road rules when they go driving overseas.

I thought it would be interesting to have a look at, for instance, the blood alcohol limits in different parts of the world. Some are in excess of what ours are, like in Swaziland, where you can drive from .1 to .15 and there is no problem, but if you go to Hungary, for instance, the limit is zero. So you should not drive in Hungary if you have some remains of alcohol of any description in you as the limit it is zero. In Brazil and Canada, for instance, it is 0.08, and in places like Jordan, you would understand they are zero. Some of these countries actually have immediate jail sentences if you exceed their limits. To not know that when you leave this country and go and drive in another part of the world could land you in jail, and that is something we do need to take into consideration.

Some of the driving laws in other parts of the world we would regard as being crazy, but if you were driving in these countries, you would need to abide by them so you would need to know what they are. For instance, if you are driving in Costa Rica, you can drink any alcoholic beverage while driving as long as you do not get drunk, but you go to jail if your blood alcohol level is more than 0.75. So if you are in Costa Rica, you need to know that otherwise you will finish up in a Costa Rican jail. Despite not ever having been there myself, I can assure you it would not be a pleasant place to spend any time, and who knows how long you are going to spend there. It is the same if you go into China. The level in China is 0.03, and you will finish up in big trouble if you exceed that limit.

Here are some of the other laws that you need to know. Eating or drinking, even water, is illegal while you are in Cyprus. In Russia driving a dirty car is an offence. It can be dirty inside or outside; you are breaking the law if you have a dirty car in Russia. If you run out of fuel on a German autobahn, it is not regarded as being unlucky; it is regarded as unnecessary stopping and is against the law. In Spain those who require vision

correcting glasses must carry a spare pair of glasses with them. So if you are driving in Spain and you wear glasses and you do not have a spare with you, you are breaking the law and there are quite severe penalties for it.

In Sweden you must drive with your headlights on 24 hours a day. This is even through summer, when there is 24 hours of sunlight. You still must have your headlights on, and there is a serious punishment if you do not. If you are driving in France you are required to have an unused breathalyser kit with you, even if you are riding a motorcycle. Passengers who travel with a drunk driver in Japan are breaking the law, even if they are not drunk themselves. Drivers who unnecessarily raise a hand from the steering wheel in Cyprus are breaking the law. It is surprising, but apparently in Alabama it is illegal for people to drive while blindfolded. I am not sure whether it is illegal in Victoria to drive while blindfolded, but I think it is something that we need to know.

As I said, my proposal is that we do not let this carnage continue and that we conduct a simple test prior to allowing anyone onto our roads. Just in summary, the types of questions that I would propose — it could be an online test, but I think they need to be simple questions — include: what side of the road do you drive on in Victoria? What are the speed limits? What is the legal blood alcohol limit? Who do you give way to at a roundabout? What are the speed limits in school zones? Do you know what is meant by a give-way sign? What do double lines on a road mean? Do you need to wear seatbelts? Can you smoke in a car? They are very simple questions that would at least make people realise that we do have laws and that they need to do something about abiding by them.

To summarise, the intent of the motion is for us to consider that there are a lot of issues in regard to international drivers. The number of accidents is increasing significantly with the increased number of self-drive holiday tourists coming from overseas. We need to do something, and we need to do it before we impact the tourist industry too much. We need to make certain that people on our roads are safe. We need to make certain that all of the requirements and road laws that we have are understood and that we protect Victorians and international visitors to this country. With that, I commend my motion on international drivers to the house.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (14:34) — I am pleased to make a contribution to the motion of Mr Purcell. I want to make a couple of points and indicate that the opposition will also circulate some

amendments. First of all there is a problem and an issue. Non-Victorian licence-holders are over-represented in the accident statistics in some areas of the state, particularly the south-west. I think that is a fact. The local police certainly point to that fact, and I make the point that my colleagues in the lower house Roma Britnell and Richard Riordan have been very active on this issue, and Sarah Henderson has had quite a bit to say as well. Mr Ramsay will have some more to say in a moment too.

The point here is that Mr Purcell has brought this motion which draws attention to what is an issue, and that is a useful step. I am informed that more than 20 per cent of the accidents along that area in the south-west, particularly along the Great Ocean Road, are non-Victorian licence-holders, and that includes work visa holders, tourists and others. There is, according to the police and local communities, a genuine issue.

There is an issue with the road structure itself, and I think more can be done here. I want to put on record the opposition's view — the Liberals' and Nationals' view — that there is more that can be done with a better plan for the Great Ocean Road. This is an important road experience and an important tourist asset. It is an important asset that many of our people visit and international and interstate tourists also visit. It is a road experience, so let us be quite clear about that. You cannot opt out of the road experience itself; that is part of the arrangement. But there is no management plan to deal with this challenge. There is no plan that says where people can stop and what an appropriate distance is and no advice to people in a structured way. Without being too strong on this, I think that the government has dropped the ball on this matter. There is no management plan, no advice to people and no clear support for where they can stop and how they can manage this process.

It is also clear that the alternate routes are not as well flagged and optioned as they could be. I do, as I said, want to pay particular tribute to the work of Roma Britnell and Richard Riordan in the Assembly and their advocacy on behalf of their local communities. I note Mr Purcell has brought this motion to the house but I also want to put on record that I do not think everyone thinks he has done as much work as he should have on this previously. I do not believe the contact with Corangamite and Colac Otway has been as strong as it should have been in advocating for this prior to this motion. I think local members have to bring things to the chamber but they also need to do more work in the local community. It is no use being relatively quiet on

something and then bringing it forward; it has got to include both of those particular steps.

I do want to say that there are different programs around the world that the government can look at to get a better outcome with respect to this undoubted problem. Our tourism industry is very important, and that is why the coalition is determined to see a better approach to this but an approach that respects that we have got legitimate interests and equally need to in no way diminish the need for better road safety. The truth of the matter is we have got a program where we are trying to push towards lower numbers and potentially zero road incidents and road deaths, but you cannot do that if you do not tackle the challenge of a significant pool of, in this case, non-Victorian licence-holders, and that has not been the approach of the government.

I know through my conversations with Roma Britnell and Richard Riordan in the Assembly that there is a significant call from local police, the local community and local councils for this to be dealt with in a structured way. That means management plans, it means looking at the alternatives, it means education and it means support for some of those people.

I am happy for my amendments to be circulated. I move:

1. In paragraph (2), omit the words 'are a danger' and insert in their place 'have a higher rate of accidents'.
2. Omit all words after 'and calls on the government to' and insert 'report on the effectiveness of this program over the six months ending 22 June 2018, including updated statistics on crashes, accidents and fatalities by international licence-holders on Victorian roads and along the Great Ocean Road'.

One of the things that I want to point particularly to is that there is a need for better statistics and better information. We have a lot of anecdotal information and we have the information from the police, but I think having structured statistics and information and presenting that in a way that brings it to the fore in the minds of the public is a worthwhile amendment to the motion. In a reasonable sense my view is that those statistics of crashes, accidents and fatalities involving international licence-holders or, in the words I would use, non-Victorian licence-holders would be valuable not just in the south-west and along the Great Ocean Road but on Victorian roads more generally. I think this motion, if it is amended in this way, could lead to a better set of statistics and hence better decision-making by governments and agencies into the future.

I do not want to prolong this. I want to make the point that there is a problem with this category of

non-Victorian licence-holders. It is a growing category and the government has no management plan for that locally in the south-west or along the Great Ocean Road or indeed statewide. If our road traffic objectives are to be achieved statewide, the statistics are important and the government might bring a greater focus to this in terms of a management plan both statewide and in local areas. I think a lot more could be done constructively, and I think it should be done constructively in that way.

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (14:43) — I am pleased to speak on Mr Purcell's motion. Unlike Mr Davis, I do not question Mr Purcell's intent or his work towards what he has done to get this motion to this point. I think it is very much in line with Victoria's proud history when it comes to road safety.

The Parliament has a proud history of parties, as a rule, working in a collaborative way. That has brought Victoria as a jurisdiction to a point where jurisdictions all around the world look to us in road safety initiatives. Victoria has been at the forefront all the way back to it being the first jurisdiction to mandate the wearing of seatbelts by people. When you think about that in this day and age, you wonder about our little jurisdiction leading the way on such an important road safety necessity. I think we can all be proud of successive governments, no matter what flavour or party, leading the way on road safety across the world from, as I said, our little jurisdiction. As I said at the outset, I think we should welcome debates, discussion points and motions brought to this chamber when it comes to road safety./ They are healthy debates.

I have got to say successive governments of all political flavours have been successful in the road safety space because of a number of aspects, one of them being that when anything gets introduced into our road safety regime it is critical that it is evidence based. Looking at the statistics on international drivers compared to Victorian drivers, and for that matter interstate drivers, I think some more work needs to be done on whether there is evidence that this jurisdiction should introduce a T-plate-type system.

I will get to Mr Purcell's very real concern about the Great Ocean Road. These sorts of incidents in these sorts of areas are peculiar to our jurisdiction, and the statistics show that when there are accidents involving international drivers, the majority of them are not down to drivers not understanding the road rules; the majority of accidents come down to issues like — and I think Mr Purcell touched on it as well himself — being fatigued and disorientated. Some good work is being done by VicRoads around signage and obviously instructions to remind people to keep left, particularly

on that particular road. There is also a program introducing information such as traffic signs and safety signs in different languages, as in some of the signage is in Chinese for the obvious tourist base that is attracted to our particular jurisdiction.

I will go into the statistics on the Great Ocean Road and international drivers as an overall picture. International drivers, as far as the crash statistics in Victoria are concerned, make up 2.6 per cent of drivers that are in accidents. We always strive for statistics to be better, but as I was talking about before, initiatives worked on need to be evidence based before our road rules are changed. That is an argument that our experts — and we have many experts in Victoria — will argue to the end on that particular issue. So 2.6 per cent of crashes that happen in the state involve international drivers. As I said before, the evidence around whether those accidents occurred because international drivers did not understand road rules does not necessarily stack up to 100 per cent of that 2.6 per cent.

With some of our information, particularly that provided by international brokers that sell packages to Victoria overseas — Mr Purcell touched on the understanding that it will take you 2 hours to drive down the Great Ocean Road being the biggest furphy they can sell — there is an area where I think Victorian departments involved in this are completely committed to trying to improve. When people come to Victoria they find it does not take 2 hours, it takes 6 hours. If you are going to stop at a beach and have a swim, do not have a swim where there are no waves and it looks nice and calm because that is where there is a rip. There should be an education program around our beaches and areas that are, for lack of a better word, foreign and that people have not experienced when they come to our great state from overseas.

The statistics around international drivers involved in crashes are not any greater than for interstate visitors. Interstate drivers are involved in 3.1 per cent of the crashes that we unfortunately experience in Victoria. That is a bigger problem, and it is evidence based. It is not a great problem when you compare it with Victorian drivers that are involved in crashes, but there is a bigger issue with interstate drivers in the statistics than there is with international drivers. When you take away the international drivers and interstate drivers it is obvious that 94 per cent or so of the crashes that we unfortunately experience in Victoria involve Victorian road users. There may be some Victorian road users that are not 100 per cent familiar with all the road rules and regulations themselves, but I would be pretty confident that a lot of those particular crashes may not necessarily have occurred because a Victorian driver

did not know the road rules. As I said before, sometimes it can be through fatigue, but sometimes it can be through people just completely ignoring road rules.

As I said, this is a jurisdiction where we have a great history of all flavours of government and all members of government, particularly with the Road Safety Committee, working together on safety methods and improving ways for our drivers and other people that drive on our roads to be a lot safer.

Mr Davis indicated to this side of the chamber, only while Mr Purcell was on his feet, that he would move amendments to Mr Purcell's motion. I have been here quite a while. When I was a whip in opposition there was sort of an unwritten agreement between everyone that you would not actually amend a general business motion unless the person moving the motion was agreeable and there was consensus and agreement. It is rare, and I think it is poor form. General business is obviously done on a non-government day, but we were there a few years ago, and as I said, I was a whip in opposition.

Mr FINN — And you will be here soon.

Mr LEANE — Maybe not me, Mr Finn. I do not think I have another 12 years-plus in me to actually end up back over there. I know I am very resilient. I just always thought there were some unwritten agreements here, and that was one of them. But we are in new times.

The problem with Mr Davis's amendment 1 to Mr Purcell's motion is that it is actually not factual. He wants to change the motion to omit the words 'are a danger' and insert 'have a higher rate of accidents'. As I have quoted from the statistics, that is actually factually incorrect when you take into account that 2.6 per cent of crashes in Victoria involve international visiting drivers. That is not an amendment that this side of the chamber will accept. It is important when you have a motion and someone wants to amend it that the person who wants to amend it can put something down that is factual, and when you go through the statistics it is far from factual.

On the issue that Mr Purcell brings to this chamber today for our discussion, the Victorian government does not disregard the issue. I have to say that there has been work done in recent times, I think particularly because of concerns brought by members of regional areas, in particular on roads like the Great Ocean Road, which is obviously sold as a tourist road. There are concerns around that.

Tourism Victoria recently launched a program called the visiting driver road safety program, which is there to raise the awareness of visiting international drivers. That is part of an important area where there will be work done, in particular with the advice that hire car companies are imparting on people that they are hiring their cars to. Mr Purcell is right; it is an area that is growing. There are more tourists coming to this jurisdiction than ever before, and about a third of them choose to hire a car for some period in their visit while they are in our jurisdiction. So there has been work done with Tourism Victoria, and this program has recently been launched. It focuses on visiting drivers and particularly on an awareness of the busy holiday periods, when they are visiting a lot of the time, and an awareness that the roads will be unfamiliar to the visiting drivers — and the roads include, as I said, tourist roads like the Great Ocean Road, where there is some concern.

The program, as I stated, includes safety information such as in brochures, videos and other promotional material targeted at international drivers. As I said, some of it is actually designed for hire car companies to improve on the information that they have previously been imparting to drivers. I have hired cars in other jurisdictions around the world — not too many — and hire car companies are very keen on you not destroying their car.

Ms Shing — They certainly are.

Mr LEANE — Yes, and they are quite stringent about what you need to know and ticking a box and understanding the local road rules and so forth, so I think that anything we can do to help them with what they are already doing, such as this initiative, will be good.

Mr Purcell talked in his contribution and his motion, about what New Zealand has initiated. This program is actually modelled on the successful visiting driver initiative in New Zealand. The program that Victoria and Tourism Victoria have embraced is modelled on that particular driver initiative. It is a partnership with the road safety experts in this jurisdiction that governments of all flavours have relied on. It is being delivered and has been ticked off by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), Victoria Police (VicPol) and VicRoads, and in this case with this particular program the government, Tourism Victoria and the minister enlisted the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism board for its expertise on some of the iconic tourist roads which we promote and the particular safety initiatives and awareness that people that use those roads need to have. Obviously VicRoads provides

detailed links for tourists about the road rules, and it initiates that through, as I said, organisations that will be engaging and attracting tourists to Victoria. The more people we have that are lucky enough to see how fantastic our state is from other jurisdictions around the world, the more we should welcome them.

As I said before, taking on the real concern of Mr Purcell and others in this chamber, VicRoads has installed more than 100 'Keep left' signs and road directional markers along the Great Ocean Road. With the concerns that people are not focused on keeping left because they come from a jurisdiction where they keep to the right when they are driving on a road, that could not be more clearly indicated. Because of concerns, which have been raised here today, VicRoads has also installed road directional signs in Chinese, because as we know a lot of tourists are coming from China to see the Great Ocean Road and the beaches along it, which are a wonderful asset and some of the greatest places to visit in the world. It is a fantastic thing that we have a lot of people from other jurisdictions coming to see it, but we do accept that we should be doing anything we can to make their trips and others safer.

Getting back to the statistics, there is no indication and no evidence that accidents involving international tourists make up the greater part of accidents on any particular road in Victoria. There is work to be done, and we accept that, but there are no great statistics. As I said as I rattled out the stakeholders that governments have dealt with for many, many years when it comes to road safety, the TAC, VicRoads, VicPol and other important players in road safety, if there is going to be a change to our road rules, have always relied on it being evidence based. But this particular issue does not necessarily stack up.

In saying that, there are some measures that the government has embarked on and will embark on further to make international drivers more aware. The Victoria Tourism Industry Council has put out its own media release concerning this particular motion and concern. They have stated that they strongly oppose any notion that international licence-holders be required to display T-plates and undertake local certification prior to driving on Victoria's roads. They see this as a restriction as their industry will be impacted by this particular onus. They are very reliant on visitors to Victoria being able to do the self-drive portion of their holiday, and they are concerned that any sort of T-plate and certification would be an impediment on a fantastic industry that Victoria has which brings a great deal to our state and our economy.

They do acknowledge that road safety is vitally important to Victoria, and they do not discourage any sort of approach that would help raise awareness and move things forward in a suitable way. They do support the visiting driver road safety program launched last year, and they are happy to work, as an industry, closely with the hire car industry on educating international visitors with quality and appropriate information that they can embrace in their particular language.

I think the Victoria Tourism Industry Council is in a similar position to the government. When it comes to road safety the government does always — and we think we should — rely on the experts, being VicPol, the TAC and VicRoads, with their zealous belief that if road rules are going to be changed, it should be done in an evidence-based way. It should not be done in the way I think some federal members of Parliament have done it, saying that the sky is falling in this area as far as international drivers go and casting general slurs on international drivers. But when it comes to Victoria, according to federal politicians the sky is falling in on everything. Everything is falling when it comes to federal politicians talking about Victoria — a state that is creating more jobs than any other state, creating more infrastructure in public transport, schools and hospitals, providing more services and employing more nurses, police and teachers. Federal politicians seem to be obsessed —

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, I wonder if you could ask the member if it is his intention to filibuster us to sleep for the next 35 minutes on a motion that he has yet to speak to and is yet to give an indication of whether he is going to support or oppose it.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Thank you, Mr Ramsay. Mr Leane has many more minutes to speak, and that is not a point of order.

Mr LEANE — I accept that this might not be one of my more entertaining contributions, Mr Ramsay. This is a serious issue and I am a serious person, so I need to take this seriously. I think there is a concern when we have federal members saying that international drivers are inherently more dangerous drivers than the local product. That is not supported by the facts and the statistics.

Ms Shing — Scaremongering.

Mr LEANE — It is a bit of scaremongering.

Ms Shing interjected.

Mr LEANE — Well, at the moment the federal Liberal MPs are, as I said, obsessed with talking down Victoria, and I do not know why, particularly when they brag about the job numbers, and the job numbers are being created by this great state. There is a lot that they brag about. I see a trend there. I do not know if it is a political trend, but I see a bit of a trend starting to happen there. If I was cynical, I would say that.

In closing, as I stated, Mr Purcell has brought a motion to debate here around road safety, which we all should appreciate. It is an area that we all should be pushing in the same direction. Anything that gets people focused on how our roads could be safer, whether it be for Victorian drivers, international drivers or interstate drivers, has got to be a worthwhile exercise. As I stated, though, I think the federal government needs to continue to take our advice on evidence-based ways of going forward if there is going to be a change. That is not to say that we should ever stop considering ways and ideas and motions for possible improvements to make our roads safer.

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (15:10) — I rise to speak on Mr Purcell's motion. I welcome the opportunity presented by this motion to discuss several important issues. The first is the importance of the tourism industry to our regional economy and the promise that this industry holds for regional communities. The second issue I would like to discuss is the dire state of our country roads and the need for greater investment in our country road network.

Mr Purcell, a member for Western Victoria Region, has put this motion to the chamber. This motion reflects the growing concern across his electorate with the road safety situation, particularly along the Great Ocean Road, which has been exacerbated by the steep increase in visitor numbers. This huge increase in visitors to the Great Ocean Road is of course a good problem to have. I am sure there are many people living along the Great Ocean Road and its hinterland that are delighted with the increasing popularity of the road. There are all sorts of businesses that are opening or expanding due to the increased visitation — craft breweries, dairies, ice cream shops, chocolate manufacturers, wineries and bed and breakfasts, to name a few. My office has spoken to some of these small businesses, and they are delighted with the increase in tourist numbers to their small towns along and near the Great Ocean Road. It has allowed them to hire more staff, grow their businesses and see a future for the towns. Indeed the Great Ocean Road is a prime example of the sort of tourism that can thrive and grow once we end native forest logging. The Otway Ranges, which are the centrepiece of the Great Ocean Road, dividing the Surf

Coast from the Shipwreck Coast, was subject to ruthless native forest logging up until a phase-out commenced in 2002, with the last forest coupe felled in 2008.

It is a wonderful success story. The Otway Ranges represent the only high-rainfall tall forest region in Australia where an existing native forest woodchip industry for both the domestic and export markets has been totally removed. The Otway Ranges are now home to a growing ecotourism industry attracting lucrative investment and creating many sustainable jobs. Much credit is due to the campaigners in the local community that worked for nearly a decade to get the ban in place and then to come together to ensure there was an economic transition away from logging to tourism and high-value agricultural products. It is this type of transformation that we can expect if this government comes to its senses and ends native forest logging across Victoria once and for all.

We can create the great forest national park in the Central Highlands and the Emerald link in East Gippsland, giving a new lease of life to regional towns, just like has been experienced along the Great Ocean Road and its hinterland and particularly noticeable in towns like Forrest, a delightful town.

Mr Ramsay — Get to the motion.

Ms Shing — This is about driving.

Ms DUNN — Yes, indeed, and you can drive to a town like Forrest in the region and enjoy the delights of Forrest, a once timber town but of course a thriving tourist town now with some wonderful attributes to it, including boutique breweries well worth a visit.

Tourism Victoria conducts a survey of the composition of the visitor market to the Great Ocean Road, which is useful to understanding the drivers in the growth of the tourism market. The most recent figures, from April 2016 to March 2017, show that there were 2.9 million domestic daytrippers to the Great Ocean Road who spent \$284 million in the region, so just shy of \$100 per visitor. Ninety-eight per cent of these domestic daytrippers used a private vehicle. There were nearly 2 million overnight visitors from within Australia who accrued over 5.5 million visitor nights in the region. Spending \$816 million, 92 per cent travelled by private vehicle.

International overnight visitors comprised 218 000 people who cumulatively spent more than a million visitor nights in the region, which is an impressively high average of five nights per visitor. They spent \$103 million in the region, or nearly

\$500 per visitor, making them a very lucrative market. No tourism agency, commonwealth or state, publishes data on international daytrip visitor numbers. This is unfortunate, considering there is anecdotal evidence that they comprise a large proportion of visitors to the Surf Coast and Shipwreck Coast.

I have been advised by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, the peak body for tourism operators in the region, that up to 180 shuttle buses visit the Great Ocean Road during peak periods. Most of these daytrippers are international visitors, and most of them spend money at the numerous places they visit along the way. This is high-density, high-value visitation that generates a lot of employment for tourism operators and brings a lot of money to the region, albeit from people that are in the area for only about 12 hours.

Another growing and lucrative market is the self-drive international daytripper category. Unfortunately we do not have visibility on just how many people decide to self-drive, but anecdotally it would appear that an increasing number of visitors from Europe and Asia are deciding to drive the Great Ocean Road independently, and who could blame them? It is one of the most stimulating driving experiences on the planet. I put it up there with the Big Sur coastline in California or the Amalfi Coast in Italy. It is something Victorians can be truly proud of. Statistics are not available, but it must be assumed that they are spending at least as much as domestic daytrippers when the hire of a vehicle is included, so it would be more than \$100 per visit.

It is this self-drive international visitor market, both daytrippers and overnighters, that is the subject of the concern of Mr Purcell's motion. Mr Purcell's motion does make a respectable effort at providing some statistical evidence. We can thank the rigorous data collection by the Transport Accident Commission for the statistics on the fraction of accidents across Victoria that involved international drivers. It would be great if the commonwealth and state tourism agencies could move to that veracity of data collection as well.

Mr Purcell notes that 3.46 per cent of all reported motor vehicle accidents and 1.52 per cent of all fatal motor vehicle accidents in 2017 involved an international licence-holder. Statistics on the vehicle kilometres driven by international licence-holders are not available, so it is not possible to determine whether this is over-representative or not.

Mr Purcell's motion also states that 21 per cent of crashes along the Great Ocean Road from July 2012 to June 2017 were caused by international licence-holders. Considering there is no data available on what

proportion of drivers along the Great Ocean Road hold an international drivers licence, it is not possible to determine whether that figure is over-representative. There is no definitive evidence, therefore, to come to Mr Purcell's conclusion that international licence-holders are a danger on our roads.

The conclusion that we can draw is that international drivers are involved in some accidents on the Great Ocean Road, and this needs to be addressed in the broader context of road safety on the Great Ocean Road and, more broadly, in regional Victoria. Any death on our roads is one too many, and the community and the government need to continue to work to reduce deaths on the state's roads.

Over the busy summer holiday period the state government has made some effort towards driver education targeted at international self-drive tourists and reducing hazards along the Great Ocean Road. There are signs in Mandarin, barricades to prevent people parking on the shoulder near the Twelve Apostles, parking attendants at the most popular sites and a 40-kilometre speed limit along some stretches of the road. I encourage VicRoads and Visit Victoria to conduct an evaluation of these interventions to determine whether they have made a difference to driving behaviour. In addition hotel concierges and car rental companies have been encouraged to disseminate safety information to international tourists prior to them renting a vehicle.

I note that the government released a safety video for international drivers. The English version, released on 17 December 2017, had only 400 views as of Monday this week. The Mandarin version, released on 22 December, had only 222 views as of Monday, 5 February. Considering Daniel Andrews spent \$281 469 over 24 months to promote himself on Facebook, I suspect he would be rather disappointed that these videos have not reached the number of eyeballs to which he is accustomed. The reach of these safety videos is clearly not good enough, as there would be thousands of self-drive international visitors in regional Victoria on any given day during the summer. More needs to be done for this safety information to be viewed by target audiences.

I would like to go now to the New Zealand experience that Mr Purcell refers to in his motion. It talks about the visitor driver training program. It is my understanding that the program itself has been in place since October 2015. All rental car companies and operators are encouraged to make sure every overseas driver is adequately prepared for driving in New Zealand and understands what is different about driving in New

Zealand. There is the need to complete an online assessment and print a certificate of completion, which you can present to your car rental provider to show you have taken steps to prepare yourself for driving in New Zealand. There are even incentives around that. Some rental car companies will also give you a discount on the cost of car rental or the cost of ancillary charges at least equivalent to the cost of the completion certificate. The one thing about the particular scheme that is running in New Zealand and worth noting is that it is not mandatory. It is certainly strenuously encouraged, but it is not mandatory.

What Mr Purcell's motion does not address, although I am sure he is very conscious of this, is that the main cause of vehicular accidents in regional Victoria is the parlous state of our country roads. Dan Andrews is the toll road Premier. He is committed to spending \$23 billion on metropolitan toll roads in Melbourne, making building toll roads the single largest infrastructure initiative of his government. While Dan Andrews is happy to prop up the profitability of Transurban, he has ignored country roads.

In 2017 three out of five road fatalities occurred in regional Victoria. The feedback from businesses and peak bodies along the Surf Coast, Shipwreck Coast and in the Otway Ranges is that while they welcome the influx of tourism, the road infrastructure clearly was never built for this volume of traffic or the speeds at which the roads are signposted. Any visitor to towns such as Timboon, an inland gateway to the Twelve Apostles, will have to navigate soft and eroded shoulders, potholes and patchy surfacing. This is not good enough, and it needs to be addressed for the sake of the local communities and the tourism industry.

The Premier needs to cancel the West Gate tunnel and the north-east link, and instead devote some of the saved billions to fixing the parlous state of our country roads. This is an issue that has been debated about in this house before, including in a motion calling for the re-establishment of a country roads board. And it warrants restating that the Victorian government, including VicRoads, is too focused on metropolitan Melbourne instead of on the needs of regional Victoria where most of our road casualties occur.

I note that the Liberal federal member for Corangamite has also chimed in on the issue of international drivers on the Great Ocean Road. Ms Henderson has been quoted in the *Advocate* saying international self-drive visitors are a 'moving time bomb'. Ms Henderson has also said the 'use of international driver licences to travel to and along the Great Ocean Road must also be urgently reviewed'. Clearly Ms Henderson is trying to

imperil the growth of international tourism with the racist overtones in her comments. Ms Henderson's proposed fix is stickers on the windscreens of rental cars that say 'Drive on the left' — hardly a comprehensive solution.

I note that Ms Henderson has spent much of her time in the federal Parliament advocating for road construction. Ms Henderson has rented billboards, organised campaigns and spammed her constituents numerous times about road construction. The problem is that Ms Henderson wants to build the east-west link, a proposed toll road which is nearly 100 kilometres away from her electorate. Ms Henderson has bizarrely claimed that resurrecting that debunked toll road project would somehow lead to more jobs in her electorate.

Mr Ramsay — On a point of order, Acting President, I fail to see what the member for Corangamite has to do with this particular motion. This is a motion by a state member for Western Victoria Region in relation to an appropriate education program for international visitors, particularly to the Great Ocean Road, with respect to driver safety. I ask you to bring her back to the motion and to stop referring to federal members of Parliament.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten) — Thank you, Mr Ramsay, that was not a point of order in this regard. The lead speaker has got some time.

Ms DUNN — Thank you for your ruling, Acting President. The member in question, Ms Henderson, talked about international self-drive visitors being a 'moving time bomb', and made direct reference to the Great Ocean Road, which is why, just for clarity, I am referring to this member in the particular contribution that I am making.

Nary a word has Ms Henderson spoken about the state of inland country roads in the hinterland of the Great Ocean Road, which is one of the major causes of road casualties in her electorate. State and commonwealth governments need to work together to ensure the investments made on road safety on the Great Ocean Road proper are extended to the hinterland. We need to ensure that safe roads, designed for the increasing amount of traffic they are carrying, are built across south-western Victoria and indeed across regional Victoria. Let us not target international drivers when it is clear we have a broader road safety problem, born out of decades of neglect and a lack of funding in our country road network.

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (15:26) — I see I need to make a very short contribution, but I would just like to make a couple of points. Firstly, in relation to the motion put forward by Mr Purcell, there is no doubt from the number of community meetings that I have attended, including with the Assembly members for Polwarth and South-West Coast, Richard Riordan and Roma Britnell, that there is concern amongst the community with respect to driver behaviour, particularly that of some of our international visitors to the coastal areas of western Victoria and specifically the Great Ocean Road.

There is no doubt that the increased number of visitors from Taiwan and China, which now represent about 9 to 10 per cent of total international visitors, are having difficulty in negotiating some of our road rules in the state of Victoria. There is a need for more focused driver education in relation to their familiarity with our road rules in this state.

I have had personal experience with this. In fact only the other day I was driving to Birregurra, where there is to be a meeting of the community and VicRoads with respect to some of the dangerous intersections there. They have been well publicised by our local Assembly members, Richard Riordan and Roma Britnell, particularly how dangerous they are for some of our international visitors who are not aware of the low-visibility and the quite quick approaches to these intersections, which they do not actually have to face in their own countries.

Having said that, we have a couple of amendments to the motion which recognise the current program in place in relation to driver education. As indicated by Mr Davis, we would like to see the merit of that program in six months time. He is calling on the government to report on the effectiveness of this program which has been successful in New Zealand; we look forward to that response.

I would also just quickly like to say that with 5.9 million day visitors annually to the coastal areas in western Victoria and the significant increase in international visitors, particularly non-English speaking visitors, we do have a responsibility for this, despite the filibustering of both the Labor Party and the Greens in relation to this very important motion that Mr Purcell has brought to us. This is important to those who actually live in western Victoria regions. I note that the best Labor could do was provide a contributor from the metropolitan area, and I suspect Ms Dunn rarely sees the sites of western Victoria either, given that she is also a metropolitan MP. Strangely enough, the two parties that spoke for the longest time do not even live

in the areas of concern in respect to this road safety issue.

Having said all of that, I hope the house will support our amendment in relation to this important matter. Unfortunately time does not allow me to continue, so on that basis I will finish my contribution.

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

Debate adjourned until later this day.

PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT GC65

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

That there be laid before this house a copy of amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribymong, Melbourne, port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, which facilitates the delivery of the West Gate tunnel project, and was gazetted on 7 December 2017.

Ms SYMES (Northern Victoria) (15:30) — I want to make some very brief remarks in relation to this motion. I have put my name on the speaking list for Mr Davis's other motion regarding amendment GC65, so I will give a more detailed contribution at that point in time. But what I want to put on the record very specifically relates to the confinement that Mr Davis was arguing — what debate on this motion should have been confined to — and that is in relation to the ability of the house to call for the tabling of this amendment. I am not a planning law expert. I did all right in my results at uni for planning, remarkably, but it was some time ago.

I have had some time to look at the Planning and Environment Act 1987 particularly in relation to the specific provisions about the Parliament's power to revoke an amendment under section 38. What is not in dispute in this matter is that the notice of the approval of the amendment was published in the *Government Gazette* on 7 December 2017, meaning that the approval came into effect on the date of the publication of the approval in the *Government Gazette*. The minister is required under the Planning and Environment Act to cause a notice of the approval of the amendment to be laid before each house of Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is approved. Section 38(1) is very clear. It states that the minister must cause the notice to be laid before the Legislative Council.

I do not dispute that this chamber has the power to call for the documents to be laid before the Council, and of

course this is what the specifics of Mr Davis's motion ask for. It asks:

That there be laid before this house a copy of amendment GC65 ...

et cetera. That is specifically what the motion asks us to do. But that cannot in itself mean that such notices have a legal effect as notices under section 38 of the act. Section 38, if you read it, imposes a duty and a power on the minister, and of course the minister must perform his or her duties in compliance with that act.

We have heard from the minister today by way of a letter that he sent to the President that he intends to comply with his responsibilities under the act and indeed will be laying before each house of the Parliament the required documentation within the 10 days as required. His letter specifies that that will be done next week. Section 38 does not empower anyone else, not even a member of the Legislative Council, to exercise this power given by the Parliament to the minister.

Mr Davis is talking about the exercising of a power by a minister, and I am confident that such action can lead to the tabling of the documents. That is fine; they are already publicly available documents. I think that what is going to happen is that somebody in the table office will have a very large job in dealing with the administrative processes of tabling documents that are publicly available. In fact it does not alter the status of those documents. It does not enact section 38. It does not allow the revocation processes provided for under the Planning and Environment Act.

Let us table the documents, but the motion is legally ineffective and cannot start the revocation process. Of course the revocation process is open to the Parliament once the minister has acquitted his responsibilities under the act, and he has said he will do that next week. This motion is simply a stunt, and it is not even a good one. In fact that is probably a good enough reason for me to oppose it.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (15:34) — I note the lengthy filibustering that has been indulged in by the government here today to prevent the tabling —

Ms Symes interjected.

Mr DAVIS — You were but the earlier ones were filibusters of the most obvious kind. This was all designed to slow down or prevent tabling and to take the time of the day to prevent the chamber from being able to table the document and to be able to move to the

following motion, which I will move in a moment, and to seek to revoke planning scheme amendment GC65.

Let us be quite clear here. This was gazetted on 7 December, and that is not in dispute. The minister has delayed and shillyshallyed in tabling this. It is very clear why the government is doing this. They want to try and build up an apparent head of steam on the project so that they can turn around and say that anyone who revokes the project some months later will be getting in the way of a project that is in full swing. The opposition wrote directly to the Transurban West Gate tunnel consortium and made it very clear that they should not incur substantial costs and they should await the conclusion of the formal processes. The government here is trying to block the planning revocations that can occur under this process, and it is doing the same, let us be clear, in its attempt to slow down the process with respect to the toll deeds as well. By trying to slow those down it is trying to build up a head of steam and make it more difficult for the chamber to exercise its lawful rights.

Let us be quite clear here too that what we are in fact talking about is the statutory processes that are laid out in acts of Parliament. In the case of the deeds the statutory rights under the Melbourne CityLink Act 1995 are laid out very clearly, with the ability of the chamber to take certain action. In the case of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 section 38 lays out a very clear course for the chamber. Ms Symes has just read a statement that no doubt she was provided with —

Ms Symes — I wrote it myself.

Mr DAVIS — I watched you read it all, and that is fine. I am just noting those points. But it is clear that the Parliament may revoke an amendment, and that is not in dispute. I am pleased that she admits that. It does put duties on the minister, who must cause a notice to be sent. But it does not say at any point in the section that the minister is the only one who can table a document.

Ms Symes interjected.

Mr DAVIS — It does not say that. I have read it closely, and I have also had some legal advice on this, and it is very clear that he is not the only person who can table it. The chamber is quite within its rights to table a document and to take —

Ms Symes interjected.

Mr DAVIS — No, you conceded that the chamber can table a document, although we had some different views from people earlier in the day. I do not believe,

and nor do people who have advised me, that there is any matter that prevents the document from being tabled in a straightforward way and then dealt with by the chamber under section 38(2). It is the case that an amendment can be revoked wholly or in part by a resolution passed by either house of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after the notice of approval of the amendment is laid before that house. It does not say that it has to be laid by the minister. It does not say that at any point.

This is a government that is desperate to try to obfuscate and drag the process out. If the government were interested in allowing the Parliament to have its say in the proper way, it would have tabled the document more quickly. We know what the government is up to. In fact the letter from the minister today is very much a case of a response to this motion brought to the chamber today. The minister, I would put to you, would not have brought the tabling of the notice of approval forward to next sitting week without the actual pressure of a motion in front of the chamber today —

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr DAVIS — Well, let me ask another question: on what day does the minister intend to bring it to the Parliament next sitting week? You do not know. I suspect he will bring it late in the week and he will try to delay it further and try to push it out into the distance. That is what the government is trying to do on this. The government does not want the Parliament to have its say.

Let me be quite clear about what is occurring in the commentary of some groups out there at the moment when they say that this revocation process is in some way bad for the state. Let me be quite clear: a contract is signed subject to the law of the land, and if the law of the land actually lays out a process by which approvals for that project are required, then that law of the land trumps the contract. Let us be quite clear here too: the government knows that and Transurban and its consortium also know it because they advised the stock market of that exact point. The approvals need to be provided. The government is trying to string this out because it is desperately worried that the chamber will actually take a view on the revocation process. If the chamber does take a view on the revocation process and revoke the planning scheme amendment, it will be much more difficult for the government to complete this process and achieve this particular outcome.

I want to be quite clear here too: the opposition has been very clear in its opposition to this particular

project. It is a bad project. It is not the project that the government promised at the election. If the government were coming forward with a \$500 million slip road that they said was shovel-ready, we would not be opposing it because we would believe that they actually had a clear mandate. That is not what they are building; they are building something 12 times larger and 12 times more expensive and that does not solve the transport problems of metropolitan Melbourne in the way that it should. Indeed there is a whole series of issues around tolls, and I will deal with those at some considerable length in the debate on the next motion.

But it is clear that a series of new imposts is going to be imposed. One is a charge along the road that the government proposes to build. I think there would actually be very few people who would argue against that. There is also a new city access charge so people in the west and the western side of the state are going to be clobbered; they are going to be smashed very hard —

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr DAVIS — ‘No new taxes or charges’ was the promise at the last state election. This is a new tax, this is a new charge and this differentially clobbers people in the west of the state and the west of the metropolitan area.

Further than that, two separate areas are going to be very much hit as are the users of the current CityLink road — not the western road but the CityLink road as it currently exists. There will be a ratchet of charge increases — 4.25 per cent a year from 2019 to 2029. This will be like a ratchet going up and up and up, way above the CPI, smashing everyday families, smashing small businesses week after week. From 2019 to 2029 the charges will go up. These are charges that are levied to the north of the metropolitan area. People who come in on the Tullamarine Freeway and the M1 to the south and the south-east are going to be smashed by those additional charges. They will not use the road that is being proposed here. They will not even use that road yet they are going to be charged to fund a road that they will not use.

Then on top of that Transurban gets a long period of additional time to charge the jacked-up tolls. This will hit the hip pocket of families massively. They are going to be smashed in the south-east of Melbourne, smashed in the north —

Mr Finn — And the north-west.

Mr DAVIS — And the north-west of Melbourne and smashed in the east of Melbourne by these very

high tolls for a road that they will not use. This is a bad project. That is why we are seeking to move this process forward and force the government to bring forward the documents in a timely manner.

We will go further in terms of following up the deeds with respect to the tolls and the contracts that the government may have signed — the various treaties and arrangements that the government has with the Transurban consortium. We will seek to get those documents and take steps with those.

This motion is a very straightforward motion that seeks to simply table what is a public document. The reason we are tabling it is very clearly to exercise the rights of the chamber and not allow the government to use trickery, delays and obfuscation to seek to deny the chamber the rights that it has under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. It is very clear. Let us be clear what happened in 1987 when this bill that led to that act went through. The Parliament ceded planning powers to the minister but it retained to itself, separately in both chambers, the right to revoke those planning changes that may be made by a minister from time to time. It did that because it wanted to put a check, a balance, on bad projects or projects that were not in the public interest, and this one is not in the public interest. For that reason we seek to table the planning scheme amendment today.

It is very clear when you read all of those sections in the context of the objectives of the act, which are to give Parliament the maximum opportunity to allow maximum transparency and to make sure that the Parliament actually has the powers or is able to exercise the powers in a timely way. This attempt by the government to slow things is absolutely disgraceful.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 24

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

Noes, 12

Dalidakis, Mr	Melhem, Mr
Eideh, Mr	Mulino, Mr
Elasmar, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Pulford, Ms
Gepp, Mr	Shing, Ms

Jennings, Mr
Leane, Mr

Somyurek, Mr
Symes, Ms (*Teller*)

Pairs

Ondarchie, Mr

Tierney, Ms

Motion agreed to.

The Clerk, pursuant to order of Council made this day, presented notice of approval of amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, as published in *Government Gazette* on 7 December 2017, together with amendment and associated documents published by Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Laid on table.

The PRESIDENT — Before members resume their seats can I indicate that in accordance with the Parliamentary Salaries and Superannuation Act 1968, due to the suspension of Ms Mikakos as minister from the service of the house today, which was determined earlier today by the house, the President can choose a charity to which the day's pay due to Ms Mikakos can be allocated. I advise the house that it is my decision that I will be forwarding that amount to Afri-Auscare Inc., which is an organisation in Dandenong that supports African youth. It has a very successful basketball program for young men and, as I understand, has also gone into women's teams. They are called the Black Rhinos, and it has been a remarkably successful program.

The organisation operates without government grants, which is to my disappointment because indeed it is an organisation that has a lot to do with supporting young people who have got into trouble in the youth justice system and has attempted to ensure that they have perhaps a better understanding of their responsibilities as young citizens. It is run by a woman I have a great deal of respect for, and I think that in the circumstances it is a very appropriate charitable organisation to which to direct what is a relatively small sum but I think an important sum in the context of the work that they do.

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (15:55) — I move:

That, in relation to amendment GC65 to the Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, port of Melbourne and Wyndham planning schemes, which facilitates the delivery of the West Gate tunnel project, this house —

- (1) notes planning scheme amendment GC65 was gazetted on 7 December 2017;

- (2) notes section 38(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 requires the Minister for Planning to cause a notice of the approval of every amendment to be laid before each house of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is approved; and
- (3) contingent on any tabling of the amendment, and pursuant to section 38(2) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, revokes amendment GC65.

I am going to cover some ground again to put forward a structure and some systematic points, but much was covered in the earlier debate, which was arguably broader ranging than the actual motion to table the amendment. Nonetheless, the chamber has heard many arguments backwards and forwards.

I want to indicate that the reason the opposition is moving this motion is that we believe the West Gate tunnel project is a bad project. I will lay out the details of that clearly. The second reason is that we think there are issues of process that have occurred. The third reason is that we believe quite strongly that the government has — and the reason this motion is brought today in this format is consistent with the Planning and Environment Act 1987 — shillyshallyed, delayed, dithered and sought to obfuscate in the tabling that should have occurred approximate to the time. I understand occasionally there might be a reason why there is a delay with a planning amendment, but it is pretty clear in this case that the government is seeking to, how can I say, build momentum on the ground with respect to this project and proceed in a cavalier manner, a manner that is not well thought through, to try to build pressure on parties in this chamber in order to argue that the project has so much momentum that it could not possibly exercise the rights that are laid out for the chamber in section 38 of the Planning and Environment Act.

The opposition wrote to the consortium on 29 December a long and detailed letter indicating our view that the project is flawed and indicating that we would be exercising our rights in the chamber if possible to, one, use planning powers to deal with this poor project and, two, deal with the matters around tolls. We were quite clear. We urged the consortium not to incur substantial costs until the lawful planning processes are complete. To try to jump the process, to try to build this momentum and to try to say, ‘No, you can’t do this and you can’t do that’ — because we have delayed a long period and the process has moved forward — the Premier, in what is a very clear attempt to thumb his nose at the Parliament, went out and announced the project was commencing the week before this Parliament sat this week and did so —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr DAVIS — No, he actually said he is starting — boom, boom — and actually he knew full well that the planning and the toll deed-related processes were not complete. He knew that, and this attempt to push forward in a risky manner puts the state at greater risk. In an effort to deal with that we wrote formally to Transurban under the hand of Mr Guy, the Leader of the Opposition; the Leader of The Nationals, Mr Walsh; the shadow minister for roads and infrastructure, David Hodgett; and the shadow Treasurer, Michael O’Brien.

We tried to clearly lay out the opposition’s position and to urge them not to incur substantial costs until the lawful processes under the Planning and Environment Act and under the toll provisions in the Melbourne City Link Act 1995 were concluded. The government is playing a similar game with the toll deeds. It is now saying that it will not table those until 2020 or 2022. It is going to try and push them way out into the distance. What is the intent of the government doing that? The intent of the government doing that is to try and make it more difficult for the Parliament to exercise the rights that it has under the Melbourne City Link Act. It is very clear that those powers are to disallow those tolls, or changes and variations to tolls.

I want to lay out some of the points I made just before the conclusion of the last motion and lay out some of the concerns that we have around the tolling arrangements. Let us be clear: this is a project that is funded substantially by new tolls and new taxes. As I have said, there are very few people who would have an argument with a toll applied to a new road. Some might, but many would not. In that sense that is the one charge that I think is less objectionable. The new tax that Mr Finn called out about before — the city access tax — is a brand-new tax which breaches the Premier’s promise before the state election. That there would be no new taxes, no new charges, no new levies and nothing beyond CPI is what he said. He said it out on the front steps of Parliament, he said it down in Frankston, he said it everywhere. This is a direct breach of his promise to the people. ‘I promise that, to the people of Victoria’ is what he said the night before the election. This was a direct lie. There are more than a dozen new taxes and this is yet another one — a city access charge which smashes people in the west of the state.

On top of that there is also the extension of the toll arrangements, and this occurs in two forms. The first form is a ratchet that is there between 2019 and 2029. Those tolls go up 4.25 per cent per year, every year, for a decade. Those tolls are applied to people coming from the north-west of Melbourne along the Tullamarine

Freeway, either from the country or the city, and they are going to get clobbered with these new tolls for that road, but not for the road that they will not use. They are going to get the chance to pay for the road that Transurban and the government have cooked up together. They will get to pay these massive new tolls, as will people in the south and the east on the current CityLink road, the M1, as they come in. So they will pay to access that, with the ratchet going up year by year between 2019 and 2029, smashing people in the south-east of Melbourne and smashing people in the east of Melbourne; smashing them day after day, week after week.

We have got the Premier saying today, 'Oh, well, we are worried about the economic impact on families'. Well, all the new taxes and the new tolls that he is trying to put in place will smash family budgets. They will hurt families, they will hurt businesses, they are a breach of his election promise and they are all done to help his mates at Transurban. So let us be clear: this is a problematic arrangement. On top of that, in the early 2030s, under the CityLink arrangements, will the tunnel come back to the state in good order? No, that is not what is going to happen. It is going to be extended for a decade or more into the future. So you pay the higher tolls soon, you pay the higher tolls later and you keep paying the higher tolls week after week, day after day, every time you use the CityLink project, and it is far above CPI. All of this is from a Premier who said he would not increase taxes, charges, levies or other arrangements beyond CPI. I can tell you that CPI is less than between 4 and 5 per cent now, and everyone will need to concede that it is far less than that.

So that is a ratchet that is built into funnelling and fuelling the revenue for Transurban. They are very happy. They are a firm, they are out there, they want to build this for the consortium. They are entitled to put their case, but it is the government's job and the Parliament's job to actually stand up and scrutinise these things and decide whether they are in the public interest. I say that this project is not in the public interest for Victorians and Melburnians. It is a project that has been poorly designed and will be paid for in this difficult way that will hit families.

This is not what the government promised prior to the last election. I have said to people repeatedly that if the government today was seeking to build the shovel-ready, roughly \$500 million — and I am happy to be corrected by a small amount on this — West Gate project, or the slip-road that would go to the port, that would be one thing. But three years later they are building a completely different road, which is 12 times more expensive and with a whole set of new

cross-subsidies from toll payers across other suburbs. Whether they be in the north-west, in the east, in the south or in country Victoria, those who come into the city will be smashed by these tolls week after week, month after month, family budget after family budget, to pay for what Daniel Andrews has sought to put in place.

So that is why we have really significant concerns with this project. There are issues around the planning process. I do not think anyone thinks this is a great planning process that has operated here. This is again another case of the government riding over the community in a way that is going to have a predetermined outcome. This is a market-led proposal by Transurban that the government is dealing with. There is nothing wrong with proper market-led proposals, but all of the information is that this proposal was cooked up before the state election.

The government was not honest and direct with the community. They talked about a different road and now they bring forward this, but all of the information is that this was cooked up by the then opposition with Transurban prior to the election — they came forward. It is the government's job to stand up and say, 'No, this is not in the public interest. It might be in the interest of your stakeholders' — and that is Transurban's job as a firm. They obviously want to make an income. They have got a consortium that is going to do part of this work and they want to go forward. But it is the government and the Parliament's job to stand up and say, 'This is not the process that is required; this is not a process that is in the interests of Victorian taxpayers, Victorian voters and the Victorian community more generally'. And those who would pay those tolls week after week, month after month in their jacked-up form know that this is not the right way to go.

I want to also deal with the claims by some, and I referred briefly to this in my earlier motion, that this is in any way like what the former government did with the east-west link. That process was completed. Whether you thought it was a good process or a bad process or whether the road was a good road or a bad road, that process was legitimately completed under the arrangements at the time, and the Labor government then tore up the contract at a later point. This is a very different case. We are actually still in the period when the approvals that are required have not yet been delivered. The government is seeking to avoid the scrutiny and seeking to avoid the outcome of that, and the Parliament actually has the opportunity to look at these matters before the process kicks off in a robust way. I understand firms and consortiums have got to do some planning, but the government is taking substantial

steps when those processes are not completed and is seeking to avoid those processes by building a certain momentum and saying, ‘No, no, no. You in the Parliament, how dare you exercise the rights that are given to the Parliament in statute and actually take a step that you believe is in the public interest?’.

This is a real try-on — that is what it is. The government is seeking to push this forward to try and frustrate the democracy that operates in this state, trying to frustrate the Parliament, seeking to delay the tabling of the amendment and trying to delay the tabling of the toll deeds. I make it clear that we will in future days move a documents motion to seek some of those amended toll deeds. This is a question that the government has not dealt with. They are saying, ‘We’ll do this much later. We’ll try and put the Parliament and the community on the hook’.

Mr Jennings — Within 10 days.

Mr DAVIS — We will see about that. The point here is this is a bad project. It is a project that does not deliver properly for Victorians. It is a project that is driven by cross-city tolls that will force people who do not use these planned roads to pay massive tolls, and the outcome for the community near the road that is proposed is not the best outcome. The city of Melbourne has been very clear: this does not get the best outcome for the city of Melbourne, and there has been a lot of discussion at that level. Funnelling the traffic right into an inner-city hub like that one is not the way that we should choose to build a road in this day and age, if I can put it in the vernacular.

Further, you have got to ask the question about the impact on areas in the west, and my colleague Mr Finn will have more to say about that. Those in the west have a legitimate call to say, ‘Indeed we are being treated differently because of that city access charge’. I tell you what: it is very clear, going back to Rod Eddington and his work, that we do need an additional road between the east and the west, but it is not this model. This is a bad model. It is not the model that was put out and it is a model that has no serious support anywhere. A number of key academics have come out and made points about this, and I am not going to necessarily agree with everything they have said, but I do note the strong cacophony against this particular project both on process and on the actual outcome of the process.

What I have done today is to move initially a motion to bring this forward so that it can be tabled and to then try to deal with it within the terms of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Ms Symes tried at an earlier

point to argue that section 38 of the Planning and Environment Act must be read in such a way that only the minister can table this document.

Ms Symes — No, that is not what I said.

Mr DAVIS — No, you tried to argue it, and I disagree entirely. The object of the act makes it very clear that transparency and openness are required here. Those issues are advantaged by bringing it forward and allowing the tabling to occur. It is not advantaged by government sitting on these matters for a lengthy period of time.

Ms Symes — Why does the act say 10 days then?

Mr DAVIS — Because it puts an outer boundary on it. That is what it does; that is all it does. That does not mean it cannot be done earlier and it does not mean it cannot be done by others either. That is the point here. The government is seeking through process to try and delay it out as far as it possibly can and to try and build activity here, incur more costs and make it more difficult. That is not in the state’s interest. It is in the state’s interest for these things to be dealt with swiftly. The Parliament is entitled to ensure that its options and ways forward are respected and maximised by dealing with these things in a timely manner, not pushing it out by 10 sitting days.

Why did the minister not table it last year? I will tell you why the minister did not. He could have tabled it in the early period of December last year. He chose not to do that, and he is even going to push it out into later next sitting week if he gets the opportunity. He will try to push it out to Thursday in the next sitting week, try and push the decision on this way out into even March or if he can into April, and in doing so try to frustrate the options of the Parliament under the law and try and thereby close down the choices. The chamber is entirely entitled to operate within the law and maximise its opportunities to deal with this point. What I say here very clearly is the chamber is entitled to do that, and I will seek the support of the chamber in doing that.

I want to say something further about Transurban’s grip on the government. It is very clear there is a close tie-up with Labor, and I for one say, yes, Transurban is a private company; it is entitled to make its own decisions in its own interests. But it is not entitled to do planning and transport policy for the state. It is not the planning authority for the state. That job relates to the government and it relates ultimately to this Parliament. I think we are in a sinister new zone where this firm has too much say, too much power and too much control over the Andrews Labor government. I think it is

driving planning policy in a way that is not in the interests of the state. I am very happy to put that on the record, and I think that many have that view more broadly than I do. I have spoken to many people across the west and many people in other parts of the metropolitan area and in the country, and that view is now widely held — in country Victoria too.

Ms Symes — North-east Victoria too?

Mr DAVIS — I have actually spoken to a number of people in north-east Victoria too.

Mr Gepp — How many?

Mr DAVIS — I cannot tell you the exact number, but it is a number. The community in the north of the state, in the west of the state and in the east of the state will be called upon to pay tolls for a road that they may well not use. It is a very interesting point to see people in the north of the state being forced to pay tolls for a western road that they may not use. With those comments, I commend this revocation motion to the chamber and seek the support of the chamber.

Mr MELHEM (Western Metropolitan) (16:17) — I am pleased to stand here and speak on the motion. I listened to Mr Davis. He spoke for 30-odd minutes but he did not actually talk much about the actual resolution itself.

Mr Finn — How long are you going to talk for then?

Mr MELHEM — I am going to talk for 60 minutes, Mr Finn. Mr Davis did not talk much about the motion at all. I thought the motion was in relation to the —

Mr Finn interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Are you finished, Mr Finn?

Mr MELHEM — Thank you, Acting President. The motion talks about the planning scheme amendment and the Planning and Environment Act 1987, it talks about tolls and it talks about other matters which are subject to different processes altogether. Mr Davis hardly touched on the actual motion. He spent 90 per cent of his time talking about other matters which do not relate to what he is asking. He spoke this morning on the motion about the tabling of planning scheme amendment GC65, which was tabled and has actually been on the public record since 7 December 2017 — I am not sure what the logic was behind seeking the tabling of that particular document when it

is in the public arena — and then he went on to talk about this house, this Parliament, the role of this house and so forth.

I just want to quote something his beloved leader, the Honourable Matthew Guy, said in this place in 2010. Recently we have been sort of bombarded with various motions to revoke various planning schemes and so forth. Since Mr Davis became the shadow Minister for Planning he has decided to turn this house over to his own portfolio and just revoke everything and disagree with everything. There is a long list, including the revocation relating to the Ormond development. However, the current opposition leader, in this place in April 2010, spoke on a Greens motion to revoke an amendment to the Williamstown planning scheme. The now Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly said, and I quote:

We have clearly stated that we do not want to turn the upper house of Victoria into a responsible authority on every planning matter around the state. If we choose one, then we choose every one of them to deal ourselves in on.

That is the end of the quote. That is the Leader of the Opposition, that is Mr Davis's leader. I agree with Mr Guy's words in the quote: I think we need to know our place. There is a separation of powers between the executive government and the Parliament. The executive is charged with running the state, making decisions, planning, delivering infrastructure projects et cetera. That is not the role of the Parliament — that is where Mr Guy was coming from. But obviously Mr Davis decided, 'No, I don't agree with my leader, so therefore I'm going to move all of these motions'.

Mr Gepp interjected.

Mr MELHEM — I will come back to that, Mr Gepp, because in the previous Parliament the former government, the opposition today, always had this argument and had a go at the Greens every time they tried to move a similar motion. They had their day moving a motion like this, and now they have gone to bed with them because that is their agenda.

That was history, 2010, nearly eight years ago. But not long ago, on 20 November 2017, there was another quote from the opposition leader, the Honourable Matthew Guy:

What Melbourne needs to do is take the politics out of our infrastructure delivery. I mean, there's no more arguing. We need to start getting on with some of these plans to free up traffic congestion.

Mr Gepp — Who said that?

Mr MELHEM — The Honourable Matthew Guy.

Mr Gepp — When?

Mr MELHEM — 20 November 2017.

Mr Gepp — Three months ago.

Mr MELHEM — Yes. This lot here are in disarray. Their leader will say one thing but we have the shadow planning minister — he wants to be a minister again, but good luck — doing quite the opposite. His leader stated it publicly back in 2010 and again in November 2017. I do not think these guys know what they are doing. I do not think the left hand knows what the right hand is doing. They are quite confused. They were in government for four years; they did not really do much for four years. They then woke up about three-quarters of the way through and said, ‘We’ll pick up the east–west project coming out of the Eddington report’, which Mr Davis referred to earlier. He referred to the Eddington report from when he did his transport plan in the late 2000s. They decided they want to up pick the east–west link, but I think they got it the other way around. If you go back and read carefully what Sir Rod Eddington actually said in his report, from memory I think the western section was supposed to be first, not second. That did not go ahead because Victorians voted that they did not want this project.

Since we got in in 2014 we have been doing so much, so many projects around the state —

Mr Ondarchie — Media releases. That’s all you do.

Mr MELHEM — Media releases? I must be on a different planet, Mr Ondarchie. Let me name them for you. How many level crossings have we delivered so far?

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr MELHEM — It was your project?

Mr Ondarchie — You are delusional.

Mr MELHEM — Fifty level crossings was part of our plan. How many did you have? You did not have one.

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr MELHEM — How many? You are telling me. You are telling the story. How many — one, two? Did you deliver two?

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Come on, you are telling the story. You did not deliver much, let me tell you. You

did not deliver much. Going back to the things you were supposed to deliver, going back to my electorate, because we are talking about the west and talking about my electorate, you were supposed to deliver on a station which was funded by the Brumby government — the Caroline Springs train station. When you got into government the first thing you did was cancel it. It has been delivered. We have delivered it now, and it is working really well and people are enjoying using that train station. They use it to come to the city. That is great. What else did you deliver? Regional rail? We did that; you did not deliver that — I mean, seriously.

Mr Davis went on to talk about it being a bad project and it being a bad process, and he talked about the toll extension. He forgot to mention that with the toll extension — and you might not like the contract — there are two ways that project can be delivered. It can be delivered by the current arrangement the government is talking about: extending the toll. Fair enough. If you want to have a debate about that, that is fair enough. I think it is a good debate to have. The alternative is: do not extend the toll and it comes out of general revenue and basically all taxpayers pay for it. They are the two options available. We do not have to decide today about which option. We would like to, but if that is going to be a problem, if it is too difficult and we need a bit of time to talk about that, we have got until 2022 if we want to proceed and put in legislation to change the toll legislation to allow the extension of the CityLink toll for another 10 years. It is not due until —

Mr Ondarchie interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Mr Ondarchie, I am relaxed with either option. And guess what? I live in the western suburbs. My office is less than a kilometre from where the sod was turned last week. It is only about a kilometre from where the project is about to commence and construction is about to start. It is about a kilometre. I work on Hyde Street. It is going to happen where I work, and I live in the western suburbs and I talk to people in the western suburbs.

An honourable member — Do you?

Mr MELHEM — I talk to the people in the western suburbs, and they tell me they cannot wait. They cannot wait. They cannot wait for that project to actually be completed. Mr Davis talked about — and Mr Finn interjected a number of times about — the east–west link. Look, I make no apology; I am a selfish person and I like my constituents and I like the western suburbs, and I want to put them first before any other

suburbs because that is where they live and they are who I report to. If we want to get the West Gate tunnel built before the eastern section, so be it. I am not going to be apologetic. I think it is good. That is exactly what we are doing.

Under the east–west I think the line goes 2030 or 2040 maybe. That is with the West Gate distributor or the West Gate tunnel — whatever you want to call it. The western section of the east–west was not even there. You could not see the line. Let me go through the lines about the project start and completion dates. There are some lines about the eastern section.

Mr Ondarchie — You supported it!

Mr MELHEM — Yes, I did — and the western section is in the never-never.

An honourable member — The never-never?

Mr MELHEM — Yes, the never-never.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MELHEM — So I say, when Mr Finn keeps interjecting: mate, it is time for you to stand up for the western suburbs. You are the parliamentary secretary for the western suburbs.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Stop arguing about wanting to do a little project for other suburbs. Mate, really, get over it and just accept it. Get over it and accept that the West Gate tunnel is a required project. Let me tell you: if you cannot get over it, we will build a bridge for you to get over it, and we will throw in a tunnel for you. Just get over it and stand up for the western suburbs.

Mr Ondarchie — You support the tolling, do you?

Mr MELHEM — I have already answered the question. I am comfortable with either option. The first option — extend the toll — to answer your question, yes, if that is the way we are going to build it. It is no different to when you proposed the east–west link. That was going to be tolled, wasn't it?

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Right. If that is not possible, and you are going to continue opposing the proposition with the current arrangement about extending the toll, then the other option is it just has to be paid by general revenue, and that is fine too. But the thing is we have got four years to make a final decision on that. We have got four years to actually deal with the funding thing.

The other thing is, you have to distinguish between Transurban as a stakeholder and the state government. The project is not being constructed by Transurban. The project is being constructed by a different entity, totally separate from Transurban. That is John Holland and another company consortium. It has nothing to do with Transurban. They are the constructors. The cheque will be paid by the state government and Transurban. That is the funding model. The funding model is done by Transurban and the state government, and then it will be repaid by the toll. But the people who are constructing the project are not Transurban. But I suppose the truth does not really matter in this place with some people.

I will talk about the benefits with this project.

Mr Gepp — How many jobs, Mr Melhem? Tell us about the jobs.

Mr MELHEM — I will come back to the jobs.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr MELHEM — I cannot tell you. Jobs — there are going to be plenty of jobs.

Mr Ondarchie — Starting when?

Mr MELHEM — Starting when? Starting already, Mr Ondarchie. There are workers already on the project. I was there. Construction has started. There are going to be over 6000 people employed on the job, and 10 per cent of the 6000 will be trainees and apprentices. As a matter of fact we are going to set some new records or a new model, which has not happened in this country before, where we are going to establish a tunnel academy where people will be trained to be tunnellers. Let me tell you a bit about tunnelling, because I know a fair bit about tunnelling, Mr Ondarchie. I actually represented tunnellers. Let me tell you, I know how tunnels are built — unlike you; you would not have a clue how a tunnel is built and what is required as far as skills and technology. You do not, but I do. There is a group of specialised tunnellers in this country — there are only a few hundred of them — and they do travel around the countryside whenever tunnelling is done. So you cannot just pick a tunneller and train the tunneller overnight; they are very specialised skills.

The good thing about this project and one of the positive outcomes of this project — because we are going to have two big tunnels, as we know, the Metro Tunnel and the West Gate tunnel — is that we need to have some specialised tunnellers to be trained up, because it is going to be a long project. If we include the Metro Tunnel, at least for the next 10 years we are

going to have tunnelling work taking place in Melbourne. Then if we add the —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MELHEM — North link — I forgot about that. That is another tunnel. We need experienced tunnellers, and instead of importing these tunnellers from overseas and instead of getting tunnellers in from other states, we are going to train our own. So we are establishing a tunnelling academy so we can train Victorians, young Victorians, to become tunnellers. When they become qualified tunnellers and they work on these tunnel jobs, they will be able to provide their services to other tunnelling projects around the country and around the world. Of course they do travel. They are very mobile people. They actually travel. When there is a tunnel to be built, the advertising for jobs for these tunnel operators is a worldwide exercise. That is one of the great benefits of this project — jobs and giving opportunity to our kids, and a lot of them will be from my electorate. They will be given the opportunity to train up and acquire new skills.

We talk about local content. Where do you want me to start? Ninety per cent of the product that is going to be used is local content, whether it is cement or steel. Let us talk about steel. Two big companies in my electorate in the western suburbs, OneSteel in Sunshine and Arrium in Laverton, are going to be rapt because we mandated that the project has got to use Victorian-made steel. Even companies such as Keppel Prince, as far away as Portland, are going to be doing some of the structural work. They will be benefiting from this project.

This project is about nation-building. It is about addressing the traffic congestion issue we have by providing a second crossing. When this project is finished it will give the western suburbs the West Gate Bridge as access to the city and the south-eastern suburbs. We will have the West Gate tunnel, another access point to the eastern suburbs and the city. We will have Ballarat Road. We will have the Tullamarine Freeway. We will have so many options for Western Metropolitan Region and for Geelong. People forget about Geelong. We want to grow our population in regional Victoria, and that is a great effort. It is important to make sure we have got the right infrastructure in place. By our widening the West Gate Freeway to eight lanes each way and providing two ways to access it, you will be able to choose either the bridge or the tunnel. How wonderful is that. But those opposite say, 'No, why should we do that?'

We want to grow our cities. The people of Ballarat also will have dual access. They can take the West Gate Bridge to the M80 or they can take the Tullamarine Freeway, works on which were just completed to provide six lanes each way. They will have options. Hopefully in a few years time they will have a third option. They will be able to continue on the M80 when the north section is completed and joined with the Eastern Freeway and CityLink.

That is what the Andrews Labor government is actually doing. We are not talking about it; we are actually doing it. Your lot sat there for four years and did zip — nothing. What you have been doing in the last 12 months is simply moving revocation motions, whether it is on sky rail, the Melbourne Metro, Ormond railway station, the Markham estate, the Kananook rail stabling facility and so forth. Our friends from the Greens moved a similar motion about the Greyhound Hotel proposal and so forth. That is what has been occupying the other side. Every Wednesday in opposition business they move a motion to revoke something the government is doing, which is basically delivering infrastructure projects for Victorians, which we need desperately. Instead of saying, 'We're going to support this project', or even better, coming in here and saying, 'We're going to do better than you. These projects are not enough. We're going to do more', they say, 'No, we don't like to do anything'. That is basically their motto.

Let me talk about what other people have said about this project. The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) put a press release out saying, 'West Gate tunnel must proceed for the good of all Victorians'.

Mr Gepp — Who said that?

Mr MELHEM — The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They are not normally pro-Labor people. They represent industry and small businesses in Victoria. They are not representatives of big business; they actually represent small business.

In this Parliament I have heard a fair bit from the other side trying to champion the cause of small business during question time, and what they are doing here today is quite the opposite. They are basically doing everything in their power to make sure small businesses do not benefit from this big infrastructure project, adding more costs and burdens to their operations, because a project like this will make travel so easy and save them a lot of time in basically moving from point A to point B, delivering their goods, going out

there and servicing their customers. That is what this project will do.

Talking about the VCCI, which represents the industry, I will read the press release into the transcript:

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry calls for all parties to support the West Gate tunnel project proceeding without amendment or delay.

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Mark Stone, AM, said suggestions the project might be delayed or its funding altered would be disastrous for the state's economy, and the convenience and livability for so many living in the state's west.

Mark Stone, I think, is a very experienced person who has been around for a long period of time representing industry. He is a Member of the Order of Australia, so he is a very eminent person. He came out and made these comments. I tell you what, it is a bit gutsy for a CEO of an employer organisation to come out and attack political parties like the Liberal and National parties. It is quite risky. But obviously he must feel really passionate about the issue and somewhat disgusted about the game being played here. I will continue to quote from his press release:

'This project will deliver a much-needed second river crossing, cut travel times, reduce congestion and boost livability in Melbourne's west and Geelong', he said.

Now here is the punchline:

'It is disappointing that the Liberal-Nationals coalition and the Greens have teamed up to try to block the project'.

That is what I said earlier. It is quite a risk for a person like him in his position to make these comments, because he will have to deal with both sides of government. This lot that he referred to may one day come back and form government. It might be a long, long time away, but it is a possibility. But his making that comment, to me, proves how frustrated the business community is with the Liberal-National parties in relation to that stand. The press release continues:

'The government was elected with a mandate to deliver important projects like this one. Contracts have been signed, work has started and the project should proceed.'

Melbourne needs a second river crossing. The West Gate tunnel project provides that crossing, with benefits for western suburban commuters, freight and export industry.

Importantly the project will create 6000 new jobs, including 500 jobs for people entering the workforce, and up to 150 jobs for former auto workers.

Actually that is another area I want to cover. The automotive industry, as we know, came to an end last year. It was another fantastic decision that was actually

made by the coalition government in Canberra, with Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott and carried through with the current Prime Minister, about making sure they saw the end of the automotive industry. As a result, in my electorate we have lost over 5000 jobs, of which 3000 were in Altona when Toyota shut its doors last year. Some 150 of these workers are guaranteed a start on this project. I think the Andrews Labor government should be commended on making sure we deliver jobs for these workers who lost their jobs through no fault of their own but simply through a bad policy of the Liberal-National parties in Canberra.

I also want to remove trucks from roads in inner-western suburbs and improve environmental and health and safety outcomes for residents. That is something I want to spend a bit of time talking about. One of the biggest issues we have in the west — particularly in the inner west where my office is in Yarraville, around Yarraville, Footscray and Braybrook, but particularly Yarraville — is trucks. Unfortunately, for trucks to access the port at the moment there is no other way for them to get in other than coming through Somerville Road and coming into Francis Street through High Street and Whitehall Street. To access the port they are coming from the western suburbs or Geelong. There is a lot of warehousing activity. Due to a lot of big warehouses being established in the western suburbs of Melbourne in the last 20 years, there is a lot of pressure on infrastructure to cope with the additional numbers of trucks that have to travel through that area to access the port.

You can add to that trucks coming from north-east Victoria, from regional Victoria coming through the M80 and coming through the West Gate in order to access the port. We have tried to make some quick fixes over the last 10 years to get these trucks off the roads. My friend who sits on my right, Ms Hartland — she is not here — has been campaigning heavily in recent years to make sure these trucks are taken off the roads because they are causing some health and safety issues for the people who live in the area.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Let me expand on that a bit. If you look at Yarraville, going back 20 or 30 years ago there were a lot of industrial places there. It is not quite the same as that today. If you turn the clock back 20 or 30 years and then look at today, it is a completely different landscape. It has been replaced by houses — some high density, some low density — and the number of people living in that vicinity is a large number. These people have to put up with the pollution created by these trucks going in and out, and I do not

think any of us, particularly young ones and the elderly, should put up with the diesel fumes and all this pollution generated by these trucks.

Secondly, people are getting run over. Trucks are driving through streets near schools and those streets are hazardous places to be. Over the last few years we have banned trucks from entering roads during certain times. On some streets permanent bans are in place to prevent trucks from entering. That is a quick fix, a primary fix, but we need to look at a long-term fix, which is to take the pressure off the West Gate Bridge and have another entry to the port. Instead of trucks using residential streets, they will be able to use the West Gate tunnel.

That is why I have been amazed and surprised that the Greens are opposing the project. I hope they will reconsider their position and support the project for that reason only. They have been campaigning heavily on the pollution issues, on banning trucks from residential areas, and the answer to fixing that problem is to get these trucks off our residential streets. Without that, we will continue to have trucks roaming our streets and causing the pollution I talked about.

The other thing is why a tunnel versus an open road or maybe a flyover. Like Mr Davis calls the elevated rail a sky rail, we can call these sky roads. We thought that having a tunnel would be very environmentally friendly. Williamstown Road will have a tunnel coming one way, and then further out toward the west will be the second portal. All of that will be underground. The tunnel will have stacks and we will have a filtering system to make sure the noise and pollution is kept to an absolute minimum. There are some really serious environmental benefits to go with the proposal we have been through.

Mr Davis said there was not much consultation, but let me tell you that we have consulted widely. We have talked to people. This was not dreamt up at the last minute. This has been in the planning for a long period of time, and a fair number of consultation processes have been put in place to consult everyone.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Maybe they have not consulted with you, Mr Finn, because you probably did not show any interest. Thousands and thousands of documents and studies have been put in place, because it is very important to make sure that projects like this tick all the boxes in relation to environmental sustainability and the health, safety and wellbeing of people. That is why the process was very thorough.

The planning minister, Mr Wynne, is probably one of the better planning ministers we have had for a long period of time.

Mr Finn — Yes. Just ask in Caroline Springs and Deer Park what they think of him.

Mr MELHEM — I don't think you care about that. You don't care about that, Mr Finn. You're just talk, mate. You're just talk.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — Okay. We will watch this space about what we do. We are actually doing something about it. You will not. I remember when you did not turn up to a meeting in Caroline Springs before the 2014 election to state your party's position regarding the Ravenhall tip. You did not have the balls to turn up. You sent someone to represent you because the position was the Liberal Party —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! Back to the motion, Mr Melhem. Thank you.

Mr MELHEM — The Liberal Party will support the continuation of the Ravenhall tip. That was the position then; that is the position today, but I have pledged. You watch that space.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MELHEM — You watch that space. You can read my report next week.

Mr Finn interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr) — Order! Mr Finn, I have just asked Mr Melhem to come back to the motion. Without interjection, he might go further, thank you. No interjections. Mr Melhem to continue.

Mr MELHEM — Going back to the project, an excellent point, let us talk about the design of the project and come back to the environmental statement in a minute. The project will feature over 14 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths. No-one talked about that, and I am now talking to my friends from the Greens. There will be a new 2.5-kilometre veloway for cyclists, and we will complete the missing link in the Federation Trail. As part of that project there will be 14 kilometres of new lanes for cycling, which I think is a great thing to have in any project. I think we need to encourage people to cycle and encourage people to use public transport. This is not just about building roads. We are building

lanes for cyclists to be able to cycle to work or wherever they are going, and we are making sure we build public transport. Basically it is a three-way approach.

Industrial and other unused land in the inner-west will be transformed by the project, and there will be almost 9 hectares of new green spaces and wetlands — yet the Greens want to oppose this project. We are going to have more open spaces around that area where the project is going to take place.

I have talked about the trucks. It has been estimated that about 9000 trucks will be taken off the local roads. We have a finish date as well: by 2022 this project will be completed. We will have a new 24-hour, 7-day ban on top of the current ban we have in place in the inner-west on Francis Street, Somerville Road, Buckley Street, Moore Street, Blackshaws Road and Hudson Road, and that will be enshrined in law.

Mr Finn — Did Millers Road get a mention there?

Mr MELHEM — Millers Road is right. There are no trucks on Millers Road, Mr Finn.

Mr Finn — There are not at the moment but there will be.

Mr MELHEM — With your effort, you are probably right. If we left it up to you I think that is exactly what would happen.

It will also save up to 20 minutes of travel time between the city and Melbourne's west. We have not talked about crashes. It has been estimated that there will be about a 16 per cent reduction in the level of crashes on these roads, because we will have better roads, better signed roads, better entry and exit points and less confusion with people going left or right when they are exiting. Therefore there is less likelihood of people having to change lanes or race all over the place, and hopefully there will be less chance of people having crashes and so forth.

There will be 17 kilometres of new traffic lanes from Kororoit Creek Road to Wurundjeri Way. There will be a noise wall as part of the design to make sure that noise is not heavily impacting on the livelihood of residents in the area. It is very important when you are dealing with freeways to make sure we have got the proper noise walls in place so people can enjoy quieter homes and parks around the West Gate Freeway.

We are also going to plant more trees: 17 500 trees will be planted, Mr Finn. That is why I am surprised that my Greens friends are still opposing the project. There will

be 110 000 tonnes of steel used, and that will be Australian-made steel.

I refer now to the environment effects statement (EES) process. I have attended a number of community consultation sessions to make sure that people were consulted about the project, that all the options have been explored, and that the view of the community is taken into account — and that we hear their concerns and we address them. Five hundred and four submissions on the EES were received. During the exhibition period there were three public meetings and information nights explaining the EES documents, where local residents were able to speak to members of the project team and learn about the process.

Further to that, the EES hearings were chaired by a panel of independent experts who heard from all submitters. So all submitters who chose to attend — basically no-one was denied the right to be heard — were all heard, as were councils, residents, agencies, community groups and individuals. The hearings were held in Footscray between August and September 2017, and the committee report was tabled on 23 October 2017. These things happened before the project was signed, before the contract and before any of that stuff. So when Mr Davis talks about —

Mr Finn — Do you actually believe this?

Mr MELHEM — I do believe it, because I was there. When Mr Davis talks about there not having been any consultation, well, the facts speak for themselves.

As a result of that consultation the Minister for Planning made a number of recommendations to improve the project, and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety accepted all these recommendations. So we have two separate ministers, one who is in charge of the environmental aspects of the project and the other who is in charge of delivering the project. To make sure there was no conflict of interest, they needed to make independent decisions in relation to their respective portfolios.

The recommendations were accepted by the roads minister, including the need for noise reduction measures along Millers Road in Brooklyn. It also included the voluntary acquisition of properties along Hyde Street, which were already affected by the public acquisition overlay. The reason for that was that some people had come to me and said, 'Look, I understand the tunnel is not going through my property, but I may be affected down the track and I want to know if there is an opportunity for me to have my property acquired'. That is one of the concerns that was raised as part of the

process, and that is where that recommendation from the planning minister came from. It came out of the consultation process, it was accepted and now Hyde Street residents have the option to sell their property or have their property acquired because it is subject to an overlay. That can now happen.

There will be a noise wall along existing and future public open spaces in the corridor as well. Some improvements on noise were sought as part of that process, and that was also accepted by the Minister for Planning. The redesign of the Mackenzie Road off-ramp along the Maribyrnong River to reduce visual bulk and improve the amenity of local areas is another recommendation by the planning minister, which the roads minister accepted.

An important issue was the lowering of the Wurundjeri Way extension to improve the amenity of this urban renewal area and improve access between North Melbourne station and Docklands. Again, that is a further improvement to the project that was accepted. Further traffic management work will be undertaken in north and west Melbourne and across the City of Melbourne to cater for the changing traffic patterns in these areas.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

STATEMENTS ON REPORTS AND PAPERS

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Mr MORRIS (Western Victoria) (17:00) — I rise to make my statement this afternoon on a report in relation to the state budget papers 2017–18.

Mr Mulino — An amazing budget.

Mr MORRIS — It is an amazing budget, I would have to concur, but probably for slightly different reasons than you might like to extol, Mr Mulino. One of the things that is part of this budget is the funding for the desecration of Sturt Street in Ballarat. This is something that is of huge contention presently in the great golden city of Ballarat. Some \$9.3 million —

Mr Finn — A golden city.

Mr MORRIS — A golden city, Mr Finn. Some \$9.3 million of taxpayers money will be spent to desecrate our magnificent heritage boulevard. It is something that locals are stopping me in the street to talk about.

Mr Finn — Why?

Mr MORRIS — Mr Finn, they want to close six north–south crossings of Sturt Street —

Mr Finn — Why?

Mr MORRIS — One must ask why — and then insert a bike path, which appears to be bright orange in the pictures that I have seen. It is bright orange in the representations that VicRoads has come up with. Retrospectively the Minister for Roads and Road Safety has said that it is not going to be bright orange, but it was only after realising the fact that it would be ridiculous to have a bright orange —

Mr Finn — What colour is he saying?

Mr MORRIS — He is not saying any colour. It could be pink, green or purple. Who would know at this juncture, Mr Finn? It could be yellow and black after the result from the last grand final.

More seriously, this is a dreadful plan, and it is one that businesses up and down Sturt Street are up in arms about, because cutting those six north–south intersections across Sturt Street will have a huge impact on the capacity of their customers to get to their businesses.

Some people have been a little confused about who is responsible for this project, and I just want to clarify this. Some people are saying that it is VicRoads; some people are saying that it is the council. I can tell you who is responsible for this: it is the Andrews government. It is Daniel Andrews and his government that are responsible for this. Geoff Howard, the member for Buninyong in the Legislative Assembly, in a media release said:

The Andrews Labor government will build new and upgraded cycling and walking paths across Ballarat to create safer roads, boost tourism, and promote health and wellbeing.

So if there was any confusion about who is responsible for this, Geoff Howard has very kindly stuck his hand up and said, ‘It is us that are responsible for it’.

Mr Finn interjected.

Mr MORRIS — He was once. I think he still is presently, but only just. Anybody in Ballarat who objects to this plan needs to understand that the responsibility for this plan lands squarely at the feet of Daniel Andrews and his government.

I note, however, that some people have been particularly silent about this plan. There are three people in particular that I am thinking of who have been silent about this plan, being the Labor candidates

for Wendouree, Buninyong and Ripon in the Legislative Assembly. We have heard nothing from these Labor candidates about this planned desecration of our main street. So I am calling on these three candidates to state their positions about whether or not they support the closing of six intersections in Sturt Street and the desecration of Sturt Street by placing a bike path up the middle. The community deserves to know what the view of these three Labor candidates is in the lead-up to the next election. I feel that this will be a significant issue in the lead-up to the next election, and these candidates need to make their positions clear.

Somebody else who has been particularly silent on this is the federal member for Ballarat, Catherine King. I think it is important that the people of Ballarat understand what their federal member thinks about this plan. She has been willing to offer advice to all and sundry about every other issue, and about the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka, as she did this morning, in attempting to intimidate and bully councillors into ensuring that the outcome she wishes for the museum occurs. Unlike our federal member for Ballarat, I think our councillors should be able to make decisions based upon the evidence before them — the facts, figures and evidence that are before them — and act in the best interests of our fair city to do what is right by the wonderful people in Ballarat. I call upon those Labor candidates in Ballarat to state their positions. Do you support the desecration of Sturt Street or not?

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:05) — I rise to speak on the budget papers 2017–18, which raises the budget for the Country Fire Authority (CFA). I want to speak tonight about three stations in my region. The first of those is the Shepparton station, which requires a relocation out of the CBD. Currently it is in a block that is between the mall and Kmart. There is a lot of passing traffic on the footpaths. It is not a station where you can drive into the truck room from the rear, so they need to back trucks in and out and dodge CBD traffic and foot traffic as they try to leave under lights and sirens. The brigade has outgrown that facility, and it is just not suitable. They need to be relocated.

The talk of relocation has been going on for over 30 years. We do have funding for the relocation under the 350 growth program, but we do not have a site, and we need the minister to intervene to help to gain a site. The preferred site is Karibok Park in Archer Street, Shepparton, which is an old cricket oval near the youth club hall that is kept by the council. It is Crown land.

The council slash it, but they no longer water it or do anything else. It is not really used as a park. It represents an ideal opportunity to have a relatively central station on a big vacant block of land already owned by the Crown. But the council want to put a retardation basin there, so they are being a little bit difficult in dealing with the CFA.

Three other private properties have been identified, but each of those needs acquisition and none of them is perfect. One of them is in a flood overlay area, which would require ministerial intervention to allow a fire station to be built there. It is also a little bit to the south of the town. One has restricted access, particularly for trucks leaving under lights and sirens. And one is a little bit too far to the east of the town. It does not have particularly good north–south access either. I have asked the minister to meet with the CFA in Shepparton, which I know he is doing next week. I hope he will intervene to make sure that we get an appropriate site for that facility.

The Shepparton East fire brigade has applied for a grant of \$180 000 under the Enhancing Volunteerism Grants program that is open at the moment. They need this to extend their station. They are a growing, vibrant brigade with 27 members, but there is not even enough room in their meeting room for the 27 members to meet. They need to expand their meeting room. They need new change room facilities and a larger storage room. They need new toilets. They only have one toilet, and they want to enhance their female facilities in particular so they can increase the diversity of their brigade and provide for female volunteers. They also need a remote lift door and are looking for \$180 000 for that project.

The Kialla & District brigade are also looking for a grant under the Enhancing Volunteerism Grants program. They are looking for around \$165 000 towards a \$180 000 extension. Again, this is a small but enthusiastic and passionate brigade. They are passionate about participating and supporting their local community. They are committed to broadening their membership to better reflect the gender and ethnic diversity of our local community, but they need assistance. Currently their members have no change room. They change next to moving fire trucks, which is dangerous. To attract a more diverse membership and improve the health and safety of all members, the Kialla & District fire brigade have had plans drawn up for an expansion that involves the construction of male and female toilets and for separate change room facilities to be constructed. As I said, they need around \$165 000 to do this.

These two projects would be a fantastic investment by this government in local CFA brigades in the Shepparton district. I know there are a number of other brigades that are also applying for the Enhancing Volunteerism Grants program, particularly to install remote lift doors. I would encourage the minister to look closely at all applications from the Shepparton district because we need investment in our CFA, which we rely on heavily.

The Mooroopna CFA also have a great project to increase their facilities to cater for members who are female, members who are transgender and members who are same-sex attracted. They will be doing that under the volunteer emergency services equipment program grants later in the year. I would also encourage the minister to support that application from the Mooroopna Country Fire Authority brigade when it comes through.

Standing Committee on the Economy and Infrastructure: RSPCA Victoria

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:10) — My statement this afternoon is on the report from the inquiry into RSPCA Victoria. I congratulate the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, chaired by Mr Bernie Finn, on the work they did looking at the activities of the RSPCA. They made the observation after their public hearings with stakeholders that there was some concern about the organisation moving from being what was an animal welfare organisation to being about animal rights activism. It is pleasing to see the organisation, through its current CEO, Liz Walker, has slowly brought the thrust of its activities back from animal activism to animal welfare, which was in its original charter.

When I talk about the original charter I need to acknowledge the role that the past president of the organisation, Dr Hugh Wirth, played over the 43 years that he was active with the RSPCA. In 1949 he became a member. He also served as president for 43 years, as well as serving on the board of RSPCA Australia. Hugh Wirth was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1985 and Victorian of the Year in 1997 and also carried on his local veterinary practice in Balwyn for over 47 years.

I make mention of Dr Hugh Wirth because sadly he passed away this week at the age of 78. As we know, he had a debilitating disease in Parkinson's disease. I certainly pass on my commiserations to his family. I also want to acknowledge the impact he had on the RSPCA. I was president of the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) between 2005 and 2009. Our paths

crossed regularly while he was president of the RSPCA, and I was representing the farmers group. Obviously we had common interests, particularly in respect to the work that was being done in animal exports, where there was a significant extreme animal activist group that wanted to shut down live sheep exports — not cattle — in the state of Victoria. It was pleasing that Hugh always took a commonsense approach to the issues around animal welfare in respect to live sheep exports as opposed to organisations like PETA and animal activists like Ralph Hanhauser, who wanted to close exports totally. That would have had a significant impact on the viability and profitability of many of our sheep farmers across the state of Victoria.

Then there were the droughts. I googled a number of press releases that Hugh and I jointly made through the RSPCA and the Victorian Farmers Federation, particularly in relation to providing drought aid to farmers across Victoria during those major and significant droughts, which lasted throughout my whole term of president from 2005 to 2009 and were also a large part of Hugh Wirth's term as president of the RSPCA. We worked well together in identifying areas of common concern and addressing them in a rational and sensible manner. I thank Hugh very much for the way he approached the issues around his organisation and our own in order to find a common pathway.

After Hugh stepped away from that organisation it was disappointing to see the membership of RSPCA turn towards animal activism. This was borne out by the inquiry. The mandate expressed through the membership at that time was obviously of concern to farming organisations because the RSPCA became very active in animal rights issues, which was not the foundation premise of its charter. The long and short of it is that it is pleasing to see that Liz Walker, the CEO, is bringing back the charter of the organisation to what it was when it was founded — that is, providing welfare for animals.

I also wanted to acknowledge in this statement my appreciation of the work that Dr Hugh Wirth did during his presidency, which was considerable in making sure that there was an appropriate balance between the needs of his membership, any issues around animal welfare and obviously the common interests of my own organisation, the Victorian Farmers Federation, and farmers generally across Victoria. He made sure that they had a responsibility to meet animal welfare standards without impacting on the business of animal production, processing and sales.

Department of Treasury and Finance: budget papers 2017–18

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:16) — I rise this afternoon to speak on the resources section of the budget papers 2017–18. The section that I am interested in looks at investment into resources and low-emission technologies. In this section it says that the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources ‘fosters innovation, productivity, jobs and trade in the state’s earth resources sector’. Nowhere is this more important than in the Latrobe Valley and the utilisation of our great resource in brown coal.

We have known since the early 1920s, for decades and decades, that brown coal has been used to power our state and keep the lights on, but there are other uses for it and these need to be realised, they need to be enhanced and the government needs to come in and support them. I note that on Australia Day, 26 January — and long may it stay that date — the mayor of Latrobe City Council, Cr Darrell White, in his Australia Day speech spoke very passionately about the use and importance of utilising this great resource and the jobs that it can create in the Latrobe Valley. I endorse his comments.

Today in the Latrobe Valley, in conjunction with Brown Coal Innovation Australia and Federation University, there was a seminar on ‘Carbon to products’. This was a very exciting seminar, and it is a shame that I could not attend due to Parliament sitting. Throughout the day there were a number of innovative discussions between people with great talent and understanding about the use and potential use of brown coal. Gerry Morvell from Brown Coal Innovation Australia made some comments, as did Professor Leigh Sullivan from Federation University. Professor Robin Batterham looked at the utilisation of carbon in the agri-sector space, and brown coal in particular.

One area that is of great interest and which needs to be facilitated is the potential of hydrogen. There have been many people in the valley working on the hydrogen energy supply chain in collaboration with the Japanese government. The Japanese government has kicked in over \$150 billion, along with other partners, including Kawasaki Heavy Industries and J-Power, to form an arrangement with AGL for supply and to create a pilot program to produce hydrogen gas at Loy Yang that could then be transported to Hastings and shipped to Japan. Indeed I understand there are ships being designed to support and facilitate its transportation to Japan.

When I was in Japan I had the pleasure of being a passenger in a hydrogen car. The only emission from that hydrogen car was water. Japan is going to place itself as a hydrogen-based country, and Australia needs to be able to provide a great deal of that energy production. There is an amazing potential for jobs to be created there with our engineers and our skilled workforce and subcontractors. I firmly believe that the Andrews Labor government has had three years to announce its support for this project, and we are still waiting on that. I call on the Andrews Labor government to come to the table and support this important initiative to create a long-term sustainable industry that can provide jobs in our region and provide a low-emission source of power into Japan.

There are many ways in which we can use coal. Coal Energy Australia is waiting in the wings to take coal and refine it into char and then into activated, granulated carbon to be used in a range of products across Australia, whether that be in the agricultural sector or in the cleaning sector. There are many, many applications for that. Again, unfortunately and frustratingly, they are waiting on information from Heritage Victoria to see if that can go through and be created and used in the old Morwell briquette factory, so that factory can be used for the coal tech project and again be used to create jobs.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Energy security

Ms LOVELL (Northern Victoria) (17:21) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and relates to the recent power blackouts experienced throughout my electorate due to high demand for power during extreme heat. The action I seek from the minister is that she take immediate action to ensure adequate affordable power is available to all Victorians so that demand does not outstrip supply. I ask the minister to inform me of what steps she has taken that will ease the concerns of my constituents.

The closure of Hazelwood power station in the Latrobe Valley cost 750 Victorians their jobs and confirmed to all this government’s obsession with renewable energy to the detriment of the state’s power supply. Daniel Andrews and Labor were warned by the Australian Energy Market Operator that forcing the closure of

Hazelwood would see Victorians suffer regular power outages during high usage times due to a shortage of reserve power. The government scoffed at such claims, but on one of the first extreme heat days of the summer that is exactly what happened. Saturday, 6 January, was one the first days of extreme high temperatures experienced around Victoria. In Shepparton the temperature reached 41.2 degrees, which caused an overload of usage and a power outage for 1800 Powercor customers in Greater Shepparton, with power not fully restored until the following morning.

Powercor later confirmed that high loads due to the very hot weather caused the power outage. On the same day other parts of my electorate were also sweltering, with the Macedon Ranges area reaching a temperature of 37 degrees. Many homes lost power for over 6½ hours, once again because of the overload of usage by customers trying to keep cool. To add to the discomfort of Macedon Ranges residents, Powercor was unable to provide a satisfactory response as to when their power would be restored.

Daniel Andrews promised this would not happen. When he forced the closure of Hazelwood with his extreme renewable ideologies, both he and his energy minister put the power supply for the entire state in jeopardy, and on our first extreme heat day thousands of Victorians suffered widespread power outages. The action that I seek is that the minister take immediate action to ensure adequate affordable power is available to all Victorians so that demand does not outstrip supply, and I ask the minister to inform me of what steps she has taken that will ease the concerns of my constituents.

Social enterprise employment strategies

Ms SHING (Eastern Victoria) (17:24) — The matter that I wish to raise today is for the attention of the Minister for Industry and Employment, Minister Carroll in the other place, and it relates to social enterprise and the employment strategies being undertaken to maximise the opportunities for people with specific skill sets and experience to find, secure and retain long-term employment across a range of sectors and industries. In Gippsland in particular we have a very, very significant input into the social enterprise market. We produce a range of goods and provide a range of services that are of beneficial interest to industry.

This has also been something that I have highlighted previously to the minister around the opportunities that exist for social enterprise to create and sustain meaningful employment. The action I would seek from

the minister is that he make sure there are adequate safeguards in place and that he communicate those safeguards not just to social enterprise service providers but also to workers within this sector about the way in which terms and conditions, and specifically the calculation of a supported wage, is determined for individual workers based on their capacity, their output and any limitations that may exist due to their own individual circumstances, and to make that information available to minimise and hopefully remove any possibility of exploitation or underpayment for this group of workers.

Again the intentions are really significant and very positive in the work that has been undertaken, and our *Social Enterprise Strategy* is designed to enhance that work. But in seeking this action from the minister, I would welcome opportunities that can be provided to provide security and certainty for those workers and their families, and also to business around the determination of minimum terms and conditions for people working in this sector.

Assistance dogs

Dr CARLING-JENKINS (Western Metropolitan) (17:26) — My adjournment matter this afternoon is addressed to the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing, Martin Foley, and it is with regard to assistance dogs for dementia patients.

Ms Shing interjected.

Dr CARLING-JENKINS — I thought you would like that, Ms Shing. I am calling on the minister to establish a better program which supports Victorians, particularly those with dementia, in being able to access an assistance dog. This came to my attention very recently when a constituent by the name of Mrs Rushton came through my door looking for any government subsidies which might be available to help her in bringing down the cost of an assistance dog.

This led my office to make a number of inquiries and contact a number of organisations. They contacted the Victorian and commonwealth departments of health, the Department of Social Services, the National Disability Insurance Agency, Dementia Australia, Assistance Dogs Australia, Guide Dogs Victoria and HammondCare. We found out some interesting things. We found out that while the commonwealth government fully funded a pilot program through HammondCare, which was named Dogs 4 Dementia, it is not known if that program will ever reopen. It was a

very successful program and achieved very positive results, but it is now closed.

Considering there is no real assistance in this space, I think there is a real opportunity here for the Victorian government to act to bring something better for Victorians with dementia that can dramatically improve their life. I do note that at the moment Victorians who are living with dementia are being forced to pay as much as \$40 000 to find an assistance dog. That is what my constituent was quoted, and unlike the case with guide dogs, there is no support for many of the patients that are coming through to be matched with an assistance dog.

I am just calling quite simply on the minister to consider the plight of people living with dementia, to consider the improvement in the quality of life that can come simply by having an assistance dog with them in their home, helping them with their everyday life, reminding them when to take their medication — looking after them basically — and dramatically improving their psychological and emotional wellbeing. I call for the government of Victoria to establish a program which supports Victorians living with dementia to access assistance dogs.

Beaumaris Bay fossil site

Ms PENNICUIK (Southern Metropolitan) (17:29) — My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change and relates to the national heritage listing nomination for Beaumaris Bay. I have raised the significance of the Beaumaris Bay fossil site before, first in 2008 with regard to protecting fossils during the construction of the Beach Road bicycle path. In February 2016 I called for the protection of the Beaumaris Bay fossil site in relation to the proposal to extend the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron. Beaumaris Bay extends from Table Rock to Mentone Beach and has been renominated for a national heritage listing for its paleontological and geological significance.

Beaumaris Bay is the only known urban fossil site in Australia and is renowned for its geological value, artistic heritage and Indigenous heritage, such as the ancient middens. It provides evidence of the evolution and extinction of marine biodiversity, reveals the origins of Australia's modern marine life and represents a globally canonical site for understanding the evolution of sharks, whales and penguins. It is also the only known fossil site in Australia that contains a particular class of marine and terrestrial mammals.

On 20 February Bayside City Council will consider its support for the national heritage listing for Beaumaris Bay. The nomination has the support of Museums Victoria, the Paleontological Society of the USA, the Royal Society of Victoria, Professor Tim Flannery, the International Union of Biological Sciences, the Victorian Artists Society, the Boon Wurrung Foundation and many more. There is a large number of local community groups that would also like to see Beaumaris Bay receive a national heritage listing, including the Bayside Earth Science Society, the Sandringham Foreshore Association, the Beaumaris Conservation Society, the Friends of Ricketts Point, the Port Phillip Conservation Council, the Bayside arts group and the Friends of Mordialloc Catchment. The many people and groups who have been working to achieve national heritage listing for this special and unique part of Port Phillip Bay have been advised that Beaumaris Bay is deserving of the nomination with the support of the state and local government.

An extract from the national heritage application reads:

Beaumaris Bay has been nominated for national heritage listing predominantly for its outstanding palaeontological and geological significance. It also has artistic, landscape and Indigenous significance. The Beaumaris Bay cliffs and foreshore yield precious and unique fossils throughout most of their exposure.

The Beaumaris sandstone at the Beaumaris Bay fossil site (BBFS) is recognised nationally and internationally as containing the greatest abundance and diversity of fossils ... of any site in Victoria and Australia. The rocks were deposited about 5 million years ago; a period that is otherwise poorly represented in Australia's geological record.

My request to the minister is that she meet with representatives from the Sandringham Foreshore Association — the group advocating for the national heritage listing of Beaumaris Bay — and, importantly, that she write a letter of support for the renomination of Beaumaris Bay for a national heritage listing.

The PRESIDENT — Thank you. There are those that say there is another fossil site in here, and I certainly need all the protection I can get.

Lara goat farm

Mr RAMSAY (Western Victoria) (17:33) — President, I hope my name and the word 'fossil' was not meant to be any sort of appraisal of my mature years. Anyway, I am digressing. I raise a matter for the Minister for Agriculture concerning an approved 4500-goat farm to be located within my electorate in Lara. The permit, which was approved by Geelong's appointed administrators despite, I might add, very strong public opposition, has a tumultuous history, with

a similar development in Moorabool being rejected at a VCAT hearing.

The current plans for this particular location are to develop a farm and milk-processing facility on the land, which is about 80 to 90 acres. This will increase traffic along Forest Road South in Lara. A large group of residents who live less than a kilometre away from the development have serious concerns relating to a possible Q fever outbreak and what impact that might have on their children in particular, as well as noise and odour pollution. Also, as I have mentioned, there is to be an increase in traffic and there are animal welfare concerns in relation to having quite a large intensive animal industry that adjoins both residential and industrial planning areas.

Nuchev, the developers, are planning to convert approximately 250 000 litres of fresh milk per day from these animals into 30 tonnes of standard whole milk powder, with the processing plant expected to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Such an extensive development with a much closer proximity than the Moorabool facility is causing significant concerns to those residents who live in the local area.

Given the intensive nature of the goat farm, the action I seek from the minister is to take action to make sure that those residents are protected from a possible Q fever outbreak if in fact this intensive goat industry business is allowed to eventuate and also to ensure that the farm has high-quality animal welfare standards for its livestock and abides by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986. However, in doing so I caution her about taking advice from the Animal Justice Party, which seem fit to get itself involved in this particular planning permit and obviously is totally opposed to it.

Knox early childhood education

Mr LEANE (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:35) — My adjournment matter is directed to Jenny Mikakos as the Minister for Early Childhood Education. In raising this adjournment matter I want to compliment the minister on recently being in our Bayswater area and announcing a great project at the Blue Hills Kindergarten, where she turned the sod for an \$8.7 million early learning centre. Knox City Council has been championing this project to get it up and running, and they are very happy that there has been state money delivered to make it possible.

One area that I think Knox council excels in is early childhood learning and their early childhood learning centres. They have made the request of me that if they could meet with Minister Mikakos and further explore

their aspirations in other areas of early learning in the Knox area, they would much appreciate it. If the minister could meet with the Knox council pertaining to early learning in general, that would be fantastic.

Hurstbridge line level crossing removals

Ms DUNN (Eastern Metropolitan) (17:37) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Public Transport in her role with oversight of the Level Crossing Removal Authority. I refer to a recent report to Environment Protection Authority Victoria of pollution to Banyule Creek, Yallambie, caused by the mismanagement of staging operations for the level crossing removal and associated works that are being done in relation to the level crossing removal at Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna.

The staging works are causing pollution in Banyule Creek and damage to the trees. A local resident has documented clay run-off in Banyule Creek; a mound of clay several metres high, which breaches the tree root protection zone of a number of significant trees; and inadequate stormwater protection on the Drysdale Street side of the staging works. The action I seek is that the Minister for Public Transport conduct a review of the environmental practices at the level crossing removals on the Hurstbridge line to ensure environmental pollution regulations are not being breached.

Eastern Victoria Region public transport

Ms BATH (Eastern Victoria) (17:38) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Public Transport, the Honourable Jacinta Allan in the other place. The minister — sadly or otherwise — seems to be playing obstructionist politics in not granting me a meeting with my local Public Transport Victoria (PTV) person. I am asking the minister to write the letter and enable me to communicate in a face-to-face meeting with the Gippsland regional office PTV spokesperson, who at this point in time is Wayne Berryman, or in his absence his equivalent.

As we do see in this job, many people come through my electorate office front door to speak about public transport and the need to improve it or to discuss how it could be improved or their personal experiences with bus services across the eastern region. I have had a number of people come into my office and raise issues with me. Back in October last year I contacted PTV in my area and asked for a meeting. They subsequently told my office that they were happy to meet with me but that I had to go through the minister.

We wrote to the minister back in October, and then a letter came back asking me to identify what I would like to communicate to the public transport representative. I wrote back and said it was about transport across the Latrobe Valley in general but specifically talked about the loss of direct bus access to Federation Training and the bus services in and around Newborough and Moe as well; also the PTV connections between Sale and Maffra and potentially additional bus services; and connections north and south across Gippsland from the Latrobe Valley into South Gippsland and down to Bass Coast. I think these are all quite reasonable discussions that should be had.

In the ensuing months we have had further emails and letters back and forth about what was happening. In effect, from October through to February I still have not had permission to go and speak to Mr Berryman or his equivalent. It brings me to this point, where I need to stand up in Parliament and say: Minister, please stop playing obstructionist politics and enable me to have a conversation about matters that my constituents have asked me to take to PTV and hopefully to achieve some outcomes from that. That is my request.

The Babes Project

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (17:41) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health this evening in the adjournment debate. It concerns an organisation that I have spoken about in the house before. It is an organisation that I have a huge amount of respect for — I think it does magnificent work — and that organisation is The Babes Project, which is much more than a pregnancy support organisation. It actually empowers women to make all sorts of decisions. It gives them the information, the wherewithal, to make informed decisions on a whole range of matters regarding motherhood and their babies.

The Babes Project is run by Helen Parker and her team of volunteers, who run an extraordinarily professional and high-class perinatal support service — that is, from conception until the baby turns one. That includes life skills workshops, antenatal and childbirth education, assistance in engaging with other services and the opportunity to receive material items through their incentive program. Additionally, The Babes Project can support women during childbirth if they have no support at that time. I am sure many of us can understand the difficulties that many women face, particularly young women, who are going through childbirth on their own. The Babes Project makes sure that they indeed are not on their own. The Babes Project says that it believes — and I know it believes —

that ‘all women should have access to the information, support and understanding’ needed to feel equipped for motherhood. This group of young women is absolutely exemplary, and I commend them on the work they do.

They currently have pregnancy centres in Croydon and also one in Frankston. The reason that I raise the matter this evening is that I am very, very keen to ensure that they also open one in the western suburbs. I know that they have been looking at opening one in Sunshine. If indeed that were possible, I would welcome that with open arms. That would be a very, very positive thing for the western suburbs. If we were to have a Babes Project pregnancy centre in Sunshine, it would help an enormous number of people, right up to Bendigo in fact. I am asking the minister to provide the wherewithal, the money, to enable The Babes Project to open a centre in Sunshine.

Australia Day awards

Mr O’SULLIVAN (Northern Victoria) (17:44) — My adjournment matter tonight is for the Premier, and I ask the Premier to write to three significant citizens within my electorate who received Australia Day awards just recently.

I would like to personally congratulate Bill Baxter, who was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in this year’s Australia Day awards. His appointment recognises his significant service to the people and the Victorian Parliament. Bill served our state as a northern Victorian politician in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. He also served as National Party state president from 2007 to 2009 — when I was the state director he was my president. He was awarded life membership of The Nationals as well. In 1969 at the federal election Bill was the campaign director for the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, Sir John McEwen, in the seat of Murray. Bill Baxter was on the frontbench for The Nationals and the coalition for 28 years. He served as the Minister for Roads and Ports in the Kennett government as well as holding a whole range of other portfolios. He served as deputy leader and eventually Leader of The Nationals in this very chamber, the Legislative Council. Bill has put in many years of hard work for this Parliament and his local community in the north, and I congratulate him on his award.

Don Kilgour was also awarded an Order of Australia Medal for his work within the greater community of Shepparton. Don is a former sports radio broadcaster and was elected as the member for Shepparton in the Assembly in 1991. During Don’s time he served as the National Party whip and secretary to the shadow

cabinet. He is also an active member of the Shepparton community and is someone who truly loves the community that he lives in. He has very much encouraged people from his area to do the best they can and for his community to prosper in the best way it certainly has. I would like to congratulate Don on receiving his Order of Australia Medal.

Also receiving an award was Peter Francis Ryan from Dookie. He was awarded it last week at the Australia Day awards. Peter has been deeply influential in the Goulburn Valley. He is a farmer, an educator and a businessman and has been on a whole range of boards, including that of Dookie Agricultural College. He was the CEO of GOTAFE and also the chairman of Goulburn Valley Health for four years. Goulburn Valley Health received \$168 million for the replacement of the hospital when he was the chairman. He has also been on a whole range of other committees within the area and is very well known in his community, particularly with the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project, which is something that he is a very big supporter of.

I would like to congratulate those three National Party giants, and I ask that the Premier write to them and congratulate them on getting their Australia Day awards.

The PRESIDENT — Are there any further members statements? It is an action. It is an unusual adjournment item. I am going to allow it to stand, obviously, but the concern that I have about it is I do not understand why, notwithstanding the great service that those three gave to the Parliament and the people of Victoria, we would not encourage the Premier to in fact write to all recipients in so much as there were many other people who were recognised in those awards for their service to Victoria. I have concern about it in that context.

Responses

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (17:48) — We have had adjournment matters this evening from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change in relation to affordable power; from Ms Shing to the Minister for Industry and Employment seeking to ensure safeguards for workers in social enterprise; from Dr Carling-Jenkins to the Minister for Mental Health in relation to supporting programs for dementia dogs; from Ms Pennicuik to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change asking her to meet with campaigners for Beaumaris Bay; from Mr Ramsay to the Minister for Agriculture asking for the protection

of residents from a disease breakout; and from Mr Leane to Ms Mikakos, as the Minister for Early Childhood Education, asking her to meet with Knox council in relation to early learning.

We had a matter from Ms Dunn to the Minister for Public Transport asking her to review the environmental protections for the Hurstbridge line; from Ms Bath to the Minister for Public Transport asking her to allow Ms Bath to meet with officials from Public Transport Victoria; from Mr Finn to the Minister for Health asking that she open a pregnancy centre in Sunshine; and from Mr O'Sullivan, who was asking the Premier to write to three citizens within his electorate who received Australia Day honours.

Beyond that, can I use my opportunity, as I have the microphone, to wish Ms Hartland well. Tomorrow she will give her valedictory speech as she looks to leave the Parliament. I want to take this opportunity to say that we have not always seen eye to eye, but I have had a huge amount respect for the work she has done in this Parliament. I wish her, her husband and her family very well as she looks to retire and I thank her for her commitment to the people of Western Metropolitan Region. I also thank her for the sacrifice she has made as a member in this place.

Further to that, I also have written responses to two adjournment debate matters.

The PRESIDENT — On that basis, the house stands adjourned.

House adjourned 5.50 p.m.

