

JAMES NEWBURY MP

Member for Brighton



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Parliamentary Speeches

2022



FOREWORD

With lockdowns and the harsher elements of the pandemic behind us, our community has blossomed again. We spent two years missing the joys of life. Spending time with family, sitting in the grass at a local park, and enjoying the sand between our toes under the hot sun of summer. Seeing our neighbours enjoy those things again has been special. Throughout the year, we also went through a Federal Election in May, and a State Election in November. Both elections showed us that the community has changed what it expects from their political representatives. The community expects their elected leaders to have integrity, behave with respect, and have vision for the future of our State.

At the State Election, the community of Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood, Hampton, and Hampton East re-elected me to represent them in the Victorian Parliament. Despite a half a percent reduction in the State Liberal vote in the Lower House, there was a net five percent swing towards the Liberal Party in Brighton. Our community deserves a strong, modern voice, who stands up for our community. I am committed to being a representative who works tirelessly and lives up to those ideals.





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PARLIAMENT SPEECH DEFINITIONS

As set out in Parliament, Members speak on various debates in the Legislative Assembly. Different rules and time limits apply for each type of debate. Debates allow Members to cover a wide range of issues that are important to them and their constituents.

Debate on Bills and Motions

Members may speak on proposed legislation or a motion that is before the Parliament. An example of a Motion being a 'No Confidence Motion' or a speech on a Bill being referred to as a Second Reading. The contribution must be relevant to the issue and is time limited. The Chair decides whether or not a Member's speech is relevant.

Matter of Public Importance

Two of every three sitting weeks, Members debate a 'Matter of Public Importance'. Each Party and the Independents rotate who proposes the topic for discussion. The debate covers current issues of public interest.

Grievance Debate

Once every three sitting weeks, Members debate the question: 'that grievances be noted'. The debate is wide ranging. Members use the debate to raise concerns about individual constituents or other significant issues. Each Member may speak for fifteen minutes.

Adjournment Debate

The Adjournment gives Members the chance to request action on topical issues from the relevant Minister. A Minister is then required to respond to the issues raised, either in the Chamber at the end of the debate, or within thirty days, in writing.

Members Statements

Each sitting day, Members may make statements on any topic of concern. Members often use this time to speak about individual constituents or organisations in their electorate.

Constituency Questions

Members have the capacity to ask 'Constituency Questions' of a Minister. The questions must relate to matters in a member's own electorate. Any Member, except a Minister, can ask a Constituency Question. Members have one minute to ask their question. Ministers do not answer the question immediately. Instead, they must provide a written answer within thirty days. This gives the Minister and the relevant Government Department time to research the issue.

SPEECHES TABLE

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	ELECTORATE	PARTY	SPEECH COUNT
Andrews, Daniel	Mulgrave	Labor Party	790
O'Brien, Michael	Malvern	Liberal Party	535
Foley, Martin	Albert Park	Labor Party	511
Staley, Louise	Ripon	Liberal Party	467
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	Labor Party	455
McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Liberal Party	400
Pearson, Danny	Essendon	Labor Party	377
D'Ambrosio, Lily	Mill Park	Labor Party	374
Pallas, Tim	Werribee	Labor Party	355
Thomas, Mary-Anne	Macedon	Labor Party	353
Kealy, Emma	Lowan	National Party	333
Southwick, David	Caulfield	Liberal Party	321
O'Brien, Danny	Gippsland South	National Party	311
Guy, Matthew	Bulleen	Liberal Party	308
Newbury, James	Brighton	Liberal Party	305
Walsh, Peter	Murray Plains	National Party	305
McGuire, Frank	Broadmeadows	Labor Party	300
Angus, Neil	Forest Hill	Liberal Party	285
Wells, Kim	Rowville	Liberal Party	284
Sheed, Suzanna	Shepparton	Independent	279
Wakeling, Nick	Ferntree Gully	Liberal Party	277
Green, Danielle	Yan Yean	Labor Party	276
Kilkenny, Sonya	Carrum	Labor Party	272
Carbines, Anthony	Ivanhoe	Labor Party	267
Merlino, James	Monbulk	Labor Party	267
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	Labor Party	257
McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	National Party	251
Read, Tim	Brunswick	Greens	251
Hamer, Paul	Box Hill	Labor Party	249
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Liberal Party	246
Edbrooke, Paul	Frankston	Labor Party	246
Hennessy, Jill	Altona	Labor Party	246
Fowles, Will	Burwood	Labor Party	245
Connolly, Sarah	Tarneit	Labor Party	245
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Fregon, Matt	Mount Waverley	Labor Party	217
Dimopoulos, Steve	Oakleigh	Labor Party	215
Hibbins, Sam	Prahran	Greens	213
Riordan, Richard	Polwarth	Liberal Party	212
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	Labor Party	212
Battin, Brad	Gembrook	Liberal Party	208
Blandthorn, Lizzie	Pascoe Vale	Labor Party	204
Suleyman, Natalie	St Albans	Labor Party	204
Vallence, Bridget	Evelyn	Liberal Party	203
Theophanous, Kat	Northcote	Labor Party	202
Northe, Russell	Morwell	Independent	202
Cheeseman, Darren	South Barwon	Labor Party	200
Wynne, Richard	Richmond	Labor Party	196
Rowswell, Brad	Sandringham	Liberal Party	195
Morris, David	Mornington	Liberal Party	195
Pakula, Martin	Keysborough	Labor Party	186
McGhie, Steve	Melton	Labor Party	185
Sandell, Ellen	Melbourne	Greens	184
Carroll, Ben	Niddrie	Labor Party	180
Settle, Michaela	Buninyong	Labor Party	176
Tak, Meng Heang	Clarinda	Labor Party	174
Hodgett, David	Croydon	Liberal Party	174
Cupper, Ali	Mildura	Independent	174
Richards, Pauline	Cranbourne	Labor Party	173
Crugnale, Jordan	Bass	Labor Party	171
Halfpenny, Bronwyn	Thomastown	Labor Party	171
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BRIGHTON ELECTORATE

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HOME INVASIONS

Wednesday, 9 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:53):

People deserve to be safe in their homes.

Last week a family in Elwood Street, Brighton, was left terrified by a group of three thieves who had broken into their family home and confronted them.

There have been similar home invasions around Albert Street. Any home invasion needs to be stamped out, but this Labor Government cannot keep ignoring these repeated attacks on local families.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON BEACH BATHING BOXES

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:41):

The iconic Brighton Bathing Boxes are under threat. Several of the boxes at the South end of the beach are under threat of tide and erosion. Brighton Harbour was recently dredged to remove built-up sand.

Instead of sending the dredged sand to Brighton Beach the Labor Government took it to Elwood Beach.

Labor is doing nothing to protect the iconic Brighton Bathing Boxes.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON ROAD SAFETY

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:41):

Brighton's road safety is ignored by Labor. Horrified residents often witness dangers at the intersection of Dendy and Hampton streets.

VicRoads has advised residents that an upgrade is unlikely to be implemented. The intersection is near to the notorious Dendy village, where repeated calls for upgrades to pedestrian safety have shamefully fallen on deaf ears.

Labor needs to stop ignoring road safety issues in Brighton.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

BRIGHTON SAVOY REHABILITATION

Tuesday, 8 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:41):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Minister for Health, and I ask: what are the requirements for operating a rehabilitation program for alcohol and drug addiction treatment?

Minister, for background, over the last three months the Brighton Savoy, a family-owned hotel, accommodation, and wedding events venue has been utilised by a rehabilitation service.

The program provided at the Savoy, operated by a private drug and alcohol lifestyle treatment and management provider, includes a base 28-day program, with group and behavioural therapy, stress and meditation training, all meals, group personal training and one-on-one counselling.

A number of constituents are seeking to understand what the legal and regulatory requirements are for operating the rehabilitation service in the Brighton location and whether the local community has an opportunity to be advised of the program's operation.

Most that have been in contact are simply seeking to understand the rules around rehabilitation services, and the State Government's prompt clarification on the requirements would be appreciated.

I look forward to receiving the Minister's response.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

SHANE WARNE

Wednesday, 9 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:52):

Shane Warne was one of the greatest cricketers that ever lived.

When he bowled, he delivered magic, and he was an icon whose story and achievements will live through the ages, but that was not the Shane Warne we saw in Brighton.

You did not have to talk to Shane for long before feeling the love he had for his kids, Brooke, Jackson and Summer. As he said, ‘... being a decent dad is the biggest achievement, it’s what life is all about’.

In Brighton that is the Shane we saw, but we also saw his support for kids far beyond his front fence.

During its operation the Shane Warne charitable foundation donated over \$4 million to six young people. Its last donation of \$340 000 went to Will Murray, a young bayside boy who became a quadriplegic after a tragic accident. Bayside’s local sporting clubs saw that side of Shane too. He would often get out and train with local clubs, helping young kids learn sport.

The other thing you could see in Shane in spades was his unwillingness to conform, his big laugh and his permanent smile. Put simply, as only Aussies would say, Shane was a top bloke who had no tickets on himself. Brighton is broken-hearted to have lost Shane so young. He and his family are loved in my community.

As Shane once said, Brighton was his patch. On behalf of my community, he was part of our patch, and we will miss him.

Rest in peace, legend.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

BRIGHTON HOME INVASIONS

Wednesday, 23 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:40):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Premier, and I ask: how many homes need to be invaded in Brighton before the State Labor Government stops ignoring the safety of my community?

Victorians have a right to be safe in their homes, yet there has been a frightening increase in the number of home invasions in Brighton.

Over the long weekend there was a home invasion in Bay Street, Brighton. Disturbingly the homeowner was there during the event. Sadly, the crime follows a number of similar intrusions.

Only weeks ago, a group of three thieves broke into an Elwood Street, Brighton, family home and confronted the family. I am also aware of similar crimes in Downes Avenue and Martin Street.

All of the crimes have occurred within one large block of Brighton. Understandably the pattern of these crimes is causing significant concern in my community. Despite my raising these crimes in Parliament, the Government is playing ignorant and has done nothing.

It is time that the Premier does something to ensure Brighton homeowners are safe in their homes.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ELWOOD FORESEHORE REDEVELOPMENT

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:35):

Port Phillip council is proposing to redevelop the Elwood foreshore and shift almost 300 car parks into and around Head Street in Brighton.

Head Street is a municipal boundary, and many residents believe the move is cynically designed to shift the problem out of Port Phillip.

The draft plan should be rejected by Councillors

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ST KILDA STREET, BRIGHTON

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:35):

The Bayside residents near St Kilda Street have had enough of unlawful traffic, associated noise and a lack of action from the Labor Government.

As Paul said, these hoons seem to think they can treat this as a speedway. This is costing people's lives, and the noise level is greatly compromising the amenity of the Bayside area.

Residents deserve more than to be ignored by Labor.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

RAILWAY CRESCENT, HAMPTON

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:56):

Local residents are right to be concerned about light pollution in the extended car park on Railway Crescent in Hampton.

State Labor has already forced a cruise ship-sized development into the Hampton village, and residents are being told to simply put up with the dust, destruction, noise and now beaming lights.

What is clear is that the Government does not care about local residents or their amenity.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON CRIME

Thursday, 7 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:54):

Victorians have a right to feel safe in their homes.

Disturbingly, there has been a frightening increase in the number of home invasions in Brighton.

As a recent victim said to me: it is extremely disconcerting how brazen these criminals are. There are clearly not sufficient deterrents in place to prevent this type of behaviour. Most alarmingly, the police said this was occurring every night.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

SHANE WARNE

Thursday, 7 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:28):

Shane Keith Warne, what a bloody legend!

When Shane Warne passed it felt like Australia had collectively skipped a beat. Though we miss and mourn those who pass, there are some who touch us so deeply that we hold our collective breath when they pass and openly grieve as a community. Well, Australia stopped when Shane passed.

He has left a significant imprint on our nation: one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Century, the greatest Australian captain we never but should have had. Deep and heavy footprints he has left across his 52-year life, a life filled ten times over.

Shane was a man of profound achievement, a man who like most of us started as a boy kicking a football and playing backyard cricket with his brother, dreaming about his future. The difference is that boy grew up and became a rockstar of cricket—a rockstar who delivered magic when he bowled.

Over recent weeks we have all seen the outpouring of love for Shane, and he was loved for many reasons. Part of that love can be explained quite simply. In many ways Shane embodied the Australian character.

He was an underdog who took up cricket after being denied his football dream. He was egalitarian—he never had tickets on himself, no tickets despite becoming the cricketing legend who delivered the Gattling ball, the Boxing Day hat-trick and took a career haul of 708 test wickets. He was a larrikin and a self-

described bit of a bogan in the best possible way, a bloke who took a sandwich maker and plastic cheese with him to India. He was a man with a big smile who never took himself too seriously.

Perhaps what we all loved so much about Shane was that despite his skill and achievement he was authentic. Of course, he made mistakes, like we all do, many of which he lived through publicly, but he owned them. He was a bit of a scallywag with a cheeky laugh, and not just the laugh—he really loved to sledge, and I confess I fell victim to it more than once.

I recall Shane arriving at an event in Brighton once soon after coming back from overseas. He had a fresh haircut. He had an undercut. I mentioned to him that it was a seriously edgy new look, and he paused, looked me dead in the eye and said, 'I've done you a favour, James'. Can you imagine my response? I stopped absolutely dead. He had stumped me. I asked how the king, someone who I had idolised since I was a teenager, had done me a favour. 'Well,', Shane said, 'now Brighton won't just be talking about your hairstyle, mate'—and he delivered it deadpan, before lighting up, overly pleased with himself.

Despite the sledge, I should point out that the event was in support of a Bayside sporting club, and that is the way he was: giving up his time to help kids. He would often get out and train with the local clubs, helping young kids learn sport. In fact, whenever he would attend he would arrive, speak as briefly with the team executives as he could without being impolite and then head straight out onto the field, where he would spend hours with the kids.

He also gave to the community through the Shane Warne charitable foundation, which while it operated donated over \$4 million to sick young people. And let us not forget his charitable \$1 million donation to the bushfire appeal when he sold his iconic baggy green cap.

Shane was an incredibly loved person in Bayside. He was part of our community, and he gave to our community—a boy from Sandringham Primary, Hampton

High and Mentone Grammar.

As he would often say, Brighton was his patch, and he had certainly worked his way through a lot of Brighton property. Now, he has done all of Brighton.

With that in mind, I want to acknowledge his parents and children, who spoke so beautifully at the recent memorial: Summer, who was so deeply honest and raw. Jackson, who spoke so openly of missing his best mate; and Brooke, who has always been such a brave eldest sibling.

To his family, we as a Parliament send our condolences, and on behalf of my community: Brighton will miss you, Shane, very much.

Rest in peace, legend.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

ESPLANADE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Thursday, 7 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:51):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: will the State Labor Government consider installing a pedestrian-operated signal crossing across The Esplanade near Were Street in Brighton?

Green Point in Brighton is as iconic as it is loved. It is an informal place used by the community and a site of regular organised events. Brighton residents often pour across the arterial road to attend local occasions. Sadly, there is no safety infrastructure or crossing at this dangerous crossover.

As Bayside Council has written to me, currently there are no pedestrian crossing facilities along The Esplanade between Dendy Street and South Road. Council is supportive of a new pedestrian crossing at this location. The Esplanade is an arterial road under the care and management of the Department of Transport.

Or VicRoads, who have written:

DOT has assessed your request and support the installation of pedestrian operated signals in the location ...

It is time for Labor to stop ignoring the safety of the community in Brighton and deliver a crossing over this much-used site.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

NORTH BRIGHTON RAILWAY NOISE

Tuesday, 3 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:04):

Residents who live near North Brighton railway station are concerned about increased train noise. It is affecting their amenity significantly.

Sixty neighbours to the train line, led by Julian and Maria Fraraccio, have petitioned the State Government saying the noise is 'Extremely upsetting and stressful' and 'most of us cannot have a safe enjoyment of our home and garden area'.

Labor must stop ignoring my community.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

RAILWAY LINE NOISE

Wednesday, 11 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:43):

The State Labor Government refuses to invest a cent in my community. Despite investment along other train lines, the State Government has treated the Sandringham line like a leper.

One of the troubling issues for residents living nearby to the line is the impact of train noise on neighbours' amenity. Sandi, who lives near Hampton station, has said:

The horns are a huge health hazard, the interrupt sleep, communication and add to anxiety ...

Linda, who lives near Brighton Beach station, has said:

... the noise has become louder, more frequent and higher pitched and living here has become unbearable.

Amanda, who lives near Middle Brighton station, has said:

Train horns now reach over 100 decibels. This has significantly and detrimentally impacted our health and well-being ...

And Julian, who lives near North Brighton station, has said:

This is extremely upsetting and stressful to us which live close to the railway line.

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Minister for Public Transport, and I ask: is the State Labor Government planning to help my community with train noise or keep ignoring it?

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON HOME INVASIONS

Thursday, 26 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:47):

Enough is enough.

My community not only deserve to feel safe in their homes, they deserve to be safe in their homes. Brighton has been victim to repeated terrorising home invasions this year.

Earlier this week a gang of seven invaded a home in Yuille Street, Brighton, and later in the night a home in Chelsea Street, Brighton.

The gang was armed with kitchen and flick knives.

In Yuille Street an 83-year-old homeowner was forced to defend himself and chased the gang out of his house as they attempted to steal his car.

The gang then targeted a home in Chelsea Street before the police were called by neighbours.

The gang tried to flee the scene before crashing their getaway car into a tree. The vehicle the gang was driving was reported as stolen during a home invasion last week.

My community has been repeatedly targeted by home-invading gangs.

This year alone the Brighton community has been victim to similar crimes in Bay Street, Downes Avenue, Elwood Street, Martin Street and Sussex Street.

All these terrifying crimes have occurred within one large block of Brighton. How many violent crimes have to occur in Brighton before Labor stops ignoring my community?

Local residents across Brighton should not have to go to bed knowing that their surrounding streets have been victim to terrorising crimes over recent months.

The State Labor Government cannot keep ignoring my community.

Enough is enough.

ADJOURNMENT

BRIGHTON POLICE STATION

Tuesday, 8 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (19:20):

My Adjournment is to the Premier, and the action I seek is for the Labor Government to commit to opening a new Brighton police station.

Everyone has a right to feel safe and be safe in their homes, yet we know that many people in my community have not been.

My community is fortunate that Bayside has one of the lower crime rates in the state. Concerningly, though, the crime rates are not low across all types of crime, especially in the case of aggravated burglary.

We know that because of data provided by the Crime Statistics Agency. The data shows a 10-year high in aggravated burglaries, with 105 offences recorded in 2021. The figure is four times that of 2014—it was 26 in that year.

And even though 2022 data is not yet available, Victoria Police has confirmed that incidents have increased this year.

The local area commander recently said the area had:

... seen a number of serious incidents recently ...

and that there:

... has been an increase in offences ...

On the ground in my community, we also know there has been an increase because we have seen a number of violent incidents.

Two weeks ago, Brighton was victim to three home invasions and a police shooting, with many more crimes over recent weeks.

Over the long weekend in March there was a home invasion in Bay Street. In that instance the homeowner had recently gone through a particularly difficult personal issue, and the crime must have had a compounding effect.

For background, there have also been similar incidents in Chelsea and Cochrane streets, Downes Avenue and Elwood, Kinane, Martin, Sussex and Yuille streets in recent months. These issues have been raised in the House repeatedly, most recently in March, April and May.

My community deserves more than being ignored when it has called for action—and, frankly, when a Brighton woman put her voice to the fear of many, Mrs Judd deserved a lot more than being sneered at and victim blamed.

Every woman deserves to be heard when they speak out irrespective of what postcode they live in.

It is clear that the Bracks Labor government's closure of the Brighton police station was a mistake.

As a community we welcome Victoria Police launching Operation Ibis, which aims to target aggravated burglary in my community, but this fix needs a permanent solution.

And I call on the Premier and the Labor Government to commit to a new Brighton police station.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

GLEN HUNTLY ROAD CROSSING LOCATION

Thursday, 9 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:51):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and I ask: when will the Minister commit to moving the proposed signal pedestrian crossing in Elwood to where the safety issue actually exists?

The Elwood community has been calling for a proper crossing on Glen Huntly Road for over a decade. We need a safe place to cross over busy Glen Huntly Road where the two sides of the Elster Creek track intersect, especially as the site services several schools and a childcare centre and is heavily utilised by pedestrians.

VicRoads has acknowledged the urgent need for a crossing, confirming it is 'a high priority'.

I understand the Department has engaged on installing a new crossing, but it has proposed a location near Mitford Street, 100 metres from where the crossing is actually needed.

At the last election the Liberal Party committed to funding the crossing. Labor instead installed a sign 200 metres down the road.

Rather than getting it wrong twice, can the Minister install the crossing on Glen Huntly Road where it is needed, joining the Elster Canal Path?

MEMBERS STATEMENT

CRIME IN BRIGHTON

Wednesday, 22 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:49):

Victoria Police's deputy commissioner Rick Nugent confirmed an increase in aggravated burglaries in my community, saying, 'We have seen an increase in Brighton'.

In the reporting period to March there were six aggravated burglaries compared to none in the year prior.

Since March, a period not reported in data, my community saw three home invasions and a police shooting in one week in May alone.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYSIDE POLICE STATION

Wednesday, 22 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:50):

On Saturday night the 24-hour Bayside police station was closed. No services were available to my community despite the latest crime data showing an increase in aggravated burglary in Brighton.

My community knows that the Bracks Labor government's closure of the Brighton police station, announced in the 2007–08 budget, was wrong.

Labor must commit to a new Brighton police station.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

CRIME IN HAMPTON

Wednesday, 22 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:50):

Residents of Hampton are concerned about local crime. Last week alone a car was stolen in Ludstone Street after the offender broke into a home to steal the keys and a family in Barnett Street had their car broken into.

As a local resident said to me, there have been a huge number of break-ins, it is getting out of control, and it is in broad daylight.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON CAR BREAK-INS

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:22):

The streets across Brighton, Elwood and Hampton are regularly targeted by thieves who break into cars.

Over the weekend a Brighton family was hit not just on Saturday, but thieves returned on Sunday and broke into a second car owned by the family.

Police privately report car theft being a big part of their local work.

Labor cannot keep ignoring my community.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

POST-WAR MODERN HERITAGE STUDY

Tuesday, 16 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:43):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is for the Minister for Planning, and I ask: can the minister advise whether the government intends to reject a recent heritage overlay application from Bayside City Council?

For background, Bayside Council recently completed a post-war modern residential heritage study.

The study recommended the inclusion of certain properties into the heritage overlay, including 49 in Beaumaris, plus a further group of eight as a group listing; seven in Black Rock; 15 in Brighton; seven in Brighton East; four in Cheltenham; one in Hampton; and six in Sandringham.

Council considered that report in July, removed almost 30 of the properties and resolved to apply to the minister seeking authorisation to commence the planning scheme amendment on the remaining recommended properties.

The single property recommended for inclusion in Hampton is at 27 Bolton Avenue. This recommendation has caused significant confusion and distress to its owners, as the heritage assessors only visited the property from the street.

The recent council decision will have a significant impact, and the homeowners are deeply concerned about the substance of the recommendation.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

YALUKIT WILLAM NATURE RESERVE

Wednesday, 17 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:41):

After a journey of over five years, the community was heart warmed to attend the official opening of the Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve.

The 13-hectare environmental space, which includes a chain of ponds, has been converted from a golf course.

At the opening Bayside council officially renamed the reserve the Yalukit Willam Nature Reserve. The clan are the river people of Port Phillip.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

DENDY STREET PEDESTRIAN RAIL CROSSING

Wednesday, 31 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:47):

Together with the Brighton community we have spent years calling for the upgrade of the pedestrian rail crossing at the New and Dendy streets roundabout because of a lack of funding in our community and ongoing neglect.

The Labor Government has finally been shamed into funding an upgrade. This upgrade is a win and an acknowledgement of the tireless advocacy of my community.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

END OF TERM

Tuesday, 20 September 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:38):

At the 2018 State Election my community of Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton sent the strongest possible message.

They made it clear that they would not be taken for granted and demanded a modern representative voice. It was a message that I heard.

Over the last four years I have taken every opportunity without fear to raise local issues and be a strong voice. It is with great pride that the issues I have championed have repeatedly been raised with the Premier as the eyes of Victoria have watched.

At a state level I have upheld my commitment to ensuring that the Liberal Party has a vision for the future and is a party that is representative of modern Victoria—and we are.


In that purpose I have been guided by the lodestar that everyone should be supported in being who they are and all they can be.

But there is more to do, which is why I have put my hand up again to represent my community—the community my family and I call home.

We need to fix our broken health system, care for our natural environment, preserve the character of our community and make sure that we get our fair share of services, because we do not from Labor.

As a Parliamentarian I want to ensure we have a future where everyone has the chance to get ahead, be treated with respect and have a Government that does not only care about numbers but cares about people too. That is my commitment to our community.





COMMUNITY GROUPS

MEMBERS STATEMENT

STARFISH NIPPERS

Wednesday, 9 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:52):

As Hampton Life Saving Club says, every summer something magical happens when the Starfish Nippers members arrive on Hampton beach.

Starfish Nippers is a modified program designed for young people of all abilities.

Starfish includes kids with autism, attention deficit, global development delay, Down syndrome and a wide variety of other medical and intellectual challenges.

It is a wonderful program led by a wonderful Club.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON RSL SCHOOL PROGRAM

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:40):

Hampton RSL have shown incredible community leadership in the way they pass on history to the next generation through their Gallipoli Memorial Garden school program.

I recently joined Hampton Primary School to visit the garden to learn about the 92 Bayside diggers who fell at Gallipoli.

Thank you to President Lieutenant Commander Helen Ward and chairman of Friends of Gallipoli John Basarin for the school program.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON LIFE SAVING CLUB

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:35):

Hampton Life Saving Club is a wonderful organisation.

On top of teaching young people important skills, they are advocates for all abilities, including girls participation, environmental protection and mental wellness.

A Guy Liberal government will deliver \$125 000 to support the redevelopment of the club.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

GARY NASH

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:55):

Congratulations to Hampton Rovers President Gary Nash, who was recently awarded a Victorian Amateur Football Association Certificate of Merit.

The award recognised Gary's significant contribution to the Hampton Rovers Football Club.

His contribution includes playing 193 games, being a former Senior Captain, and being both a Club Life Member and an inductee into its Hall of Fame.

Congratulations to Gary on the well-deserved award.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYSIDE INCLUSIVE SPORTS DAY

Thursday, 7 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:54):

Congratulations to Bayside sporting clubs who recently hosted the second Bayside Inclusive Community Sports Day.

This year the sporting clubs partnered with Blind Sports Australia to expand into becoming an all-inclusive event.

The event featured modified versions of sports to enable the participation of people who are vision impaired.

Congratulations to Rachel Black from Bayside Hockey and all of the clubs involved.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON ROVERS ANZAC GAME

Tuesday, 3 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:03):

Thank you to the Hampton Rovers Football Club and president Gary Nash for hosting their annual Anzac game.

Our community appreciated Hampton RSL executive members Bill Mirabito, Corey Denning, and Arron Scott performing part of the Anzac ceremony before the game.

Bill—or Choc to locals—was also awarded an important service award by the Salvation Army.

Congratulations to the Rovers, who then won their game by 137 points.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ELWOOD CROQUET CLUB

Tuesday, 3 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:03):

Elwood Croquet Club and its 60 members recently celebrated its 95th birthday.

The event was an opportunity to acknowledge the club's founding women and the hurdles they overcame, Mrs Robinson, a former St Kilda mayor, and the way she fought for its establishment.

When she moved that council expand the club a fellow councillor outrageously alleged that the ladies had got around councillors.

Congratulations to the club on the milestone.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Tuesday, 3 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:04):

The Baptist community has been worshipping in Bay Street, Brighton, for 171 years.

On Sunday the newly renovated church reopened its doors. Hundreds of local residents visited to see the new site, which now operates in partnership with Crossway.

Best wishes to the Brighton pastor, Brendan Smith, and the congregation.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYSPEAK

Thursday, 9 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:42):

Bayspeak is a public speaking competition for secondary school students in Bayside organised by Bayside Rotary Clubs and Toastmasters.

Congratulations to the 13 schools and over 50 students who took part.

The 16 junior and senior category student finalists delivered a range of thought-provoking speeches last night.

A special thank you goes to Brighton Rotarian Arthur Hubbard for his work on the competition.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

TACTYCS PROGRAM

Thursday, 9 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:42):

Up to 500 at-risk young people between 12 and 24 will be helped by getting them into team sport.

The Rotary Club of Brighton and Team Sports 4 All have been successful in a joint Federal Government grant of \$350 000, which has allowed the organisations to set up a TACTYCS program.

Thank you to Brighton Rotarian, Jo Kwok, for her leadership with this work.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

STARFISH NIPPERS AWARD

Wednesday, 17 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:40):

Every summer something magical happens when the Starfish Nippers members arrive on Hampton beach.

Congratulations to Zoe Murdoch and the Hampton Life Saving Club on winning Life Saving Victoria's inaugural inclusion award for the Nippers program.

The inclusive program is designed for young people of all abilities. The club are community leaders in all-abilities and women's participation, environmentalism and mental health.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

**HAMPTON ROVERS
WOMEN'S CLUB**

Wednesday, 17 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:41):

Congratulations to the Hampton Rovers football club's senior women's team on their historic win.

The team recently won the club's first senior women's premiership, an incredible achievement for the club but also the broader Hampton family.

The win of two points followed a blistering 24-game winning streak. What a win for the Rovers!

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYSIDE COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RELIEF

Wednesday, 31 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:47):

A big thank you goes to Bayside Community Emergency Relief and especially their President, Deb Brook, for spearheading a recent food drive, which will support those in need.

The food donated by Haileybury families was recently delivered to Bayside Community Information and Support Service.

BayCISS is a not-for-profit charity that provides a range of much-needed services to my community—and welcome to new executive officer Rose Paduano.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON BOWLS CLUB

Wednesday, 31 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:47):

Despite having a competitive streak, my form certainly was not up to that of Claire Smyth, the Club Champion at Hampton Bowls Club.

On Sunday we both bowled the first jack to declare the greens open for the grand season opening day. The Club is much loved in Hampton.

My congratulations go to Club President Ivan Silver and the team on a fantastic day and terrific club.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

WATTIE WATSON OVAL PAVILION

Thursday, 1 September 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:44):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Minister for Community Sport, and I ask: is the state Labor government considering committing financial support towards the upgrade of the pavilion facilities at Wattie Watson Oval in Elwood?

The oval is heavily utilised but neither the State nor Council has addressed the needs at the pavilion.

The pavilion change rooms are not female friendly. The facilities are comprised of a central change room and adjacent shower space. This space is not adequate for the number of overlapping teams changing.

On Friday a local Sporting Club contacted me to advise that over the previous weekend a 12-year-old girl walked in on a middle-aged man naked in the change rooms at the pavilion—very, very upsetting for the community.

Despite continuing advocacy to Port Phillip Council, Council's position is that the change room facilities were built to unisex design principles. In fact, Council staff bizarrely advised me that boys and girls could use the space and showers at the same time and somehow coordinate usage.

Quite frankly Elwood has had enough. Labor cannot keep ignoring my community.



SCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS

MEMBERS STATEMENT

CLEAN UP CLUB

Wednesday, 9 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:52):

Elwood Primary School has a big heart for the community and the environment.

It was heart-warming to hear that three young students have taken on leadership roles and created a school Clean-up Club because, in their words, 'We need to keep our environment safe'.

The Club is even enticing support through weekly mystery clean-up prizes.

Well done to Foxx, Ella and Annalise for this wonderful initiative.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

PORT PHILLIP CHILDCARE CENTRES

Thursday, 10 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:50):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Premier, and I ask: is the State Labor Government considering committing financial support towards the upgrade of three childcare centres in my region before they are forced to close?

Port Philip Council is being forced to close three childcare centres, including the Elwood Childcare Centre.

The centres are aged and need significant upgrades which the Council cannot afford. Labor has been using weasel words and will not commit to financial support.

For background, the Elwood Childcare Centre is a community-run centre that has operated since 1985. It offers 35 places per day. Currently there are 16 full-time staff, 55 families and 65 children enrolled.

The Centre's closure would have a significant impact on Elwood.

Council has previously confirmed that there is already a shortfall of childcare places in Elwood.

Elwood knows the State Government does not invest in our area and remembers their plan to kick Lady Forster Kindergarten out from the Elwood foreshore.

Premier, will you save the kindies? Yes or no?

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ST PETER'S KINDERGARTEN

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:40):

Brighton's St Peter's Kindergarten recently held a welcome to country and smoking ceremony for their young children.

The children loved the experience, with four-year-old Fiona saying, 'This land belongs to the Aboriginal people. They have been here for a really long time, before we lived here, and we need to look after the land'.

Congratulations to the whole team on the wonderful initiative.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

PORT PHILLIP CHILDCARE CENTRES

Thursday, 24 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:13):

My Adjournment is directed to the Premier, and the action that I seek is for the Premier to personally intervene and provide financial government support which would stop the closure of three childcare centres before they are forced to close.

Port Phillip Council has proposed to sell three childcare centres in its portfolio: Eildon Road Children's Centre in St Kilda, Elwood Children's Centre in Elwood and the Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten in Balaclava.

As the Premier may be aware, Elwood Children's Centre is in the Brighton electorate. For background, the Elwood centre, based at 46 Tennyson Street, is a community-run childcare centre and kindergarten that has operated since 1985. It offers 35 places per day. There are currently 16 full-time staff, 55 families and 65 children enrolled there.

All three centres proposed for closure are operated from aged council-owned buildings which require significant maintenance upgrades, so much so that Council cannot afford to fund the upgrades without State Government financial support.

When Council sought financial support from the Government last year the Department advised by email on 5 August 2021 that support would not be available to the centre as they did not meet certain grant requirements.

Closure of the Elwood centre would have a significant impact on my community. Let me tell the Premier why. Council has previously confirmed that there is already a shortfall of childcare places in Elwood in the southern end of the municipality, and further, under the proposal Council would vacate Elwood Children's Centre in December 2023, Eildon Road would vacate in December this year and the North St Kilda site would be closed in December 2023.

The cumulative effect of the closures would be a net reduction of 160 places—160 places!—in a part of the municipality where there is already a shortfall.

But the best way to describe how strongly the closure of the Elwood Children's Centre would affect my community is to refer the Premier to the words of local Elwood mothers. As Bel said to me recently:

Losing Elwood Children's Centre would put families and single parents such as myself at risk. To be honest with you, James, I actually don't know what I will do if ECC is forced to close.

Or, as Pennie has said to me:

Keeping the centre open is also not just about the kids. This is about women. Working Mum's, Single Mum's, Stay at home Mum's, Mum's looking to re-enter the workforce. We need to support women ...

Premier, Labor needs to stop neglecting my community. It is time for the Labor Government to step up and do the right thing.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, HAMPTON

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:36):

St Mary's Primary is a remarkable school in Hampton.

The school will soon celebrate its centenary and it currently teaches almost 290 students.

The school has a vision to invest in a \$3 million extension of their junior school block but needs State Government support.

The extension will include more classrooms, a new STEM space and the creation of a multipurpose room.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:56):

Each year Rotary Club of Brighton volunteers conduct mock employment interviews with year 10 students from Brighton Secondary College.

The interviews are an opportunity for the students to present a résumé, hone their presentation and receive constructive feedback.

The interviews are a wonderful initiative, and Rotary's Director of Youth and Vocational Services, Jo Kwok, deserves congratulations for her work.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

PORT PHILLIP CHILDCARE PETITION

Thursday, 7 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:55):

My community has spoken out loudly and said that it supports community-run childcare in the Port Phillip municipality.

Disturbingly, three centres in Port Phillip are under threat of closure, the Eildon Road Children's Centre in St Kilda, Elwood Children's Centre in Elwood and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten in Balaclava.

The centres are operated from aged Council-owned buildings which require significant maintenance and upgrades—upgrades the council cannot afford without State support.

Yesterday representatives and parents from the centres presented Port Phillip Councillors with a petition calling on the Council to not sell their centres. It has been signed by 3,200 people.

It shows loud and clear that my community supports the centres.

The Council needs financial support from the Labor Government. Labor needs to step up, do the right thing and provide support.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

BRIGHTON SCHOOL FUNDING

Tuesday, 24 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:55):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is to the Minister for Education, and I ask: has the Minister reviewed why the State Labor Government is awarding schools in non-Labor metropolitan electorates substantially less school funding than those in Labor electorates?

The Budget overview openly boasts that Labor is neglecting children in non-Labor electorates.

The overview states that of the 13 new metro school constructions, 85 per cent are in Labor electorates; 82 per cent of the 22 school upgrades are in Labor electorates; and 82 per cent of the metro special school upgrades are in Labor electorates.

We also know that in the budget last year 80 per cent of the 35 metro school upgrades went to Labor electorates and 85 per cent of the 78 metro school upgrades announced in November 2020 went to Labor electorates.

The statistics are more than just facts; they show that Labor is treating kids differently if they live in Labor-voting electorates.

If the Minister had any honour, which he does not, he would review his own funding approvals.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

FIRBANK ARTS PRECINCT

Thursday, 9 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:43):

Firbank Grammar School has unveiled its new, inspiring, world-class \$5.5 million arts precinct.

The precinct has been designed with specialist spaces for all forms of creativity and will promote women's participation in art.

My warmest congratulations to Principal Jenny Williams, the school Board and the entire school community on this project.

Our region is fortunate to welcome this new creative space.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:21):

It is time to put children first and invest fairly. An elected Liberal government will provide \$7.7 million to Hampton Primary School to develop a master plan and build brand new multipurpose facilities.

The facilities will include an indoor sports area with a netball court, specialist teaching rooms, change rooms and a canteen.

Labor has forgotten my community. The Liberal Party is a champion of Brighton.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

PORT PHILLIP CHILDCARE CENTRES

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:21):

Investing in our kids sets them up for life.

An elected Liberal Government will provide \$5 million to three Port Phillip childcare centres that need refurbishment.

Council is being forced to close three centres, including one in my Elwood community. The centres are aged and need significant upgrades, which council cannot afford.

The Liberal commitment will save the three local childcare centres.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BLUFF ROAD, HAMPTON

Tuesday, 2 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:22):

The Hampton community is deeply concerned about the safety of children.

Following a serious incident, parents and educators at the Bambini childcare centre on Bluff Road have put together a petition to voice their safety concerns.

The petition has already gained almost 400 signatures. Safety near the centre is a serious concern, and we cannot afford to see another accident.

Labor must stop ignoring Hampton.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wednesday, 31 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:48):

An elected Liberal Government will provide Brighton Primary School with \$9 million to begin transformational improvements to the school.

The \$9 million commitment will ensure that students and teachers will be able to enjoy a multipurpose library, STEM, an arts facility and the development of a master plan for future works.

Labor has forgotten my community. The Liberal Party is a champion of Brighton.



ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

REGULATORY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (REFORM) BILL 2022

Thursday, 10 February 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:07):

I rise to speak on the Regulatory Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2021.

This is an Omnibus Bill. It covers a variety of issues that are loosely held together under the umbrella of streamlining regulation. Though some of the proposed measures are not contentious, others are highly dangerous measures that have been slipped into the bill under the guise of being benign.

For background and in summary, changes are being made in response to the pandemic, including things like making changes to online meetings and AGMs, fee relief to accommodate loss of earnings and changes in relation to tobacco inspectors. There are also changes in relation to the world becoming more digital. Those changes relate to legislative requirements for public notices, a matter that I will be speaking about later; electoral maps being moved online; and changes in relation to pharmacies. There are also changes being made in relation to the teaching crisis in Victoria—changes in relation to the registration process, and I will speak about that matter later too. Finally, in substance, significant changes are being proposed to the electoral process—electoral reform—some of which include clarifying the number of posters that can be displayed, bans on mobile billboard advertising and, most dangerously, the postal voting process, and I will speak about that in substance. There are also some other changes in relation to some tidying up.

A month ago, President Biden gave a speech on protecting the right to vote, and in that speech, he said:

... for the right to vote and to have that vote counted is democracy's threshold liberty. Without it, nothing is possible, but with it, anything is possible.

And further:

To them—

the 'them' he was referring to were people undermining, in his view, that right—too many people voting in a democracy is a problem. So, they're putting up obstacles.

These electoral reforms proposed to postal voting are designed to create an obstacle to postal voting in Victoria. They are aimed at bastardising the availability of vote information and options available, including options and information available to the elderly and to the disabled groups we know are the parts of the community that most benefit from the option of postal voting. If I can use an analogy, we will all understand, the postal voting reforms proposed in this bill are designed to run sandpaper over the Victorian electoral cricket ball. They are aimed at squeezing the life out of postal voting. We will oppose this Bill, and in Government we will restore those rights for the community.

Almost 1 million people in Victoria receive information at each election about postal voting, primarily through political parties providing an application form to the community. Parties provide information to the community, and to a small degree—a very small degree—information is provided through the Victorian Electoral Commission. The best part of 1 million people at a state election would receive information that way and the electoral commission would provide information to, as it currently stands, roughly 80,000 people. 80,000 people are registered for a permanent postal vote and almost 1 million people receive information—paid for by the parties, mind you, not paid for by the taxpayer—through that process. This Bill proposes to stop almost 1 million people receiving that information and cut it down to the 80,000 people or anybody who gets added to that list prior to the election. It is extraordinary and, as I started with, it flies in the face of what is happening in democratic

systems around the world. It flies in the face of what other major countries, like the United States, are doing. In fact, the United States is currently battling on these very issues, fighting on these very issues, and I will come back to that later.

To give some background further to those statistics on postal voting, of all votes cast at the last election 7.6 per cent were postal votes. There were roughly 3.5 million votes cast—3.7 million if you include everything that was knocked off—and 281,000 were cast via postal vote. So almost 300,000 people cast their vote by post. Think about that. Almost 300,000 people cast their vote by post, and the electoral commission has a list of 80,000 people.

So, you can see the difference between what the Electoral Commission will provide if these reforms are approved by the Parliament: the gap is not even a third compared with how many people cast their vote by post. And I think we all expect, and know, that the number of people who will vote prior to election day will only substantially increase. I understand the Australian Electoral Commission is anticipating half of all voters at the federal election will vote prior to election day, and I think we can all probably expect at least a similar number in Victoria. At the last election almost 300,000 people cast their vote by post, and I think we can expect a significant increase in all forms of prior-to-election-day voting. This reform will clearly put a dampener on that. It will bastardise that process.

Interestingly, out of the 3.5 million voters there were 119 complaints about postal voting. Even if you look at the almost 300,000 people that cast their vote by post, the number of complaints about postal voting was tiny, infinitesimally small, and we see proof of that point in the satisfaction rate of people who cast their vote by post. In fact, postal voters were some of the most satisfied people of all voters in information provided by the electoral commission to this Parliament in a prior committee. Postal voters were happy with the process.

We also know that postal voting is on the increase. There was almost a static number change at the last election, but there certainly has been over time a

substantial increase. And interestingly enough, the Electoral Commission noted that part of that increase—and I will refer to their submission to the committee of this Parliament:

... was due to the fact that some political parties had distributed information encouraging people over the age of 70 to apply for

— general postal vote—

... status.

The Electoral Commission confirmed that especially for people over the age of 70 there was an increase in participation because political parties had distributed information encouraging people to vote. And Labor knows that. The Government knows that. That is what these reforms are about—these reforms are targeted political reforms to undermine the anti-Labor vote.

I mentioned earlier that under these reforms there will be significant restrictions on the way people can receive postal vote application information both through the list currently held by the electoral commission, which the commission advises me is 80,000 people, roughly speaking, and through Australia Post. Well, the electoral commission has advised the Parliament that ‘very few obtained their postal vote application from the post office’. It was 5 per cent at the last election.

When I asked in Government briefings, noting this enormous reduction in information provided to the community, provided to the elderly, provided to the CALD communities, how this policy reform will address those concerns and what the election commission will do—I asked on notice for that information to be provided—you will be surprised to hear that the Government did not answer that question. They have not answered the question. In the briefing their initial response was, ‘The CALD community can find out when they go to the post office to pick up an application form, and there could be alternate languages on the back of the form’. So, they can find out they can apply when they fall into a post office, accidentally come across an application form, turn it

around and perhaps find a language that can be read. I mean, you would almost have to fluke it, because only 5 per cent obtain their postal vote application through the post office anyway.

Mr Wakeling interjected.

Mr NEWBURY: They clearly will not know that it is there. It will be a fluke if people in the CALD community find out, and the Government has no response—absolutely no response.

I mentioned earlier the number of complaints about postal voting. There were also specific complaints related to postal vote material—77, and I will put that into context. At the last election there was a total of 861 complaints made to the Victorian Electoral Commission, with 77 relating to complaints about political parties distributing postal vote applications—77 of 861. If I can refer to the Electoral Matters Committee report on the last election in relation to postal vote complaints, there was an infinitesimally small number of complaints relating specifically to the material that was provided. So, of the 77, from memory five complaints were specific to the material inside. As the VEC said to the committee:

Five complainants were unsure if the material had come from the VEC or the Liberal Party but felt that it must be against the rules.

So, of all the complaints received, which were from a very small number of the people who vote—3.5 million people voted, 861 people made a complaint, 77 people made a complaint about postal votes—five complainants were unsure about the difference between the material and a party. Five. On that hook the Government has put this reform before the Parliament—using that hook.

We can see the debate going on in the United States at the moment about changes to voting rights. There have been extraordinary changes across the States to voting rights—extraordinary changes. In fact, last year there were over 2200 election-related bills introduced into state legislatures. Thirty-eight States enacted at least one voting law reform last year. If you go to Voting Rights Lab's recent report, *A Tale of Two Democracies*, 22 States enacted legislation to

expand or improve mail voting, two States adopted new voter mail systems and 11 States enacted restrictions to that process, including restricting third-party ballot-related reforms, which is what we are talking about here.

I referred to President Biden's remarks at the start of my contribution. If I can add further to that, and he is specifically talking about state reform here:

And what's been the reaction of Republicans in Georgia? Choose the wrong way, the undemocratic way. To them, too many people voting in a democracy is a problem, so they're putting up obstacles ... voting by mail is a safe and convenient way to get more people to vote, so they're making it harder for you to vote by mail.

'They're making it harder for you to vote by mail'. Further:

That's not America. That's what it looks like when they suppress the right to vote.

That is what this Bill does. It is aimed at suppressing the right to vote.

By contrast, in New South Wales, with four by-elections this coming weekend the New South Wales Government empowered the Electoral Commission there to provide a postal vote pack to every elector. Talk about a sharp contrast to this state. We are ripping the option away. We are strangling the right—the Government is proposing to strangle that right—and in New South Wales they are providing a vote pack to every single voter. And I will note the Opposition there has been supportive, and they have also talked about the impact of reforms of this nature on the CALD community. They have been outspoken on that. To know that the Government has provided no assurance to those communities—no assurance that they will not be disenfranchised in this State—is disgusting.

We will oppose this Bill—we absolutely will oppose this Bill—and in Government we will restore those rights to the almost, at the last election, 1 million Victorians to receive the information they need to make a decision about how they

vote. On this one measure alone Victorians should be concerned. Victorians should be concerned about the pattern of behaviour from this Government in undermining democratic institutions, a Government with a track record of closing Parliament and trying to kill electorate office attendance. I mean, this Government's record on democracy is shameful, absolutely shameful. It is not the only electoral reform. That one is the most pernicious, but there are also other reforms that do not make sense.

The Labor Party, in the committee stage of the 2018 state election inquiry, recommended that mobile billboards have a 100-metre ban from early voting centres, so of course the Government has used its Parliamentary power to pick that up as a reform in this Bill. When questions were asked about that proposed reform and its workability, there were no answers. The proposed law does not provide any discretion; it just says that if a mobile billboard passes the 100-metre space, that is a breach. What about voting centres on main roads? That is a breach. It is a breach. It is totally unworkable.

I will now move to the publication element of the reforms, and this should have every regional member in this place concerned. Anyone who represents a regional community should be deeply, deeply concerned, because in simple terms what this Bill does is it moves the publication requirements of certain Government matters online.

Has anyone thought about what that does to regional media? Has anyone engaged? Because as far as I have seen, the engagement on this Bill has been zip. I think Departments have spoken to each other—I am sure that is the case—but regional media partly survives on some of these publications and the capacity for work to be published. And the local communities want it; the local townships want to read about what is happening in their community. I worked for a former Premier who would go back to front of his local newspapers, and he would know every single thing that was happening in that regard. I would refer the Chamber to the Leader of the House's comments in this place in June, when she said, with crocodile tears:

... the ongoing decline in the number of regional journalists and regional media outlets that is contributing to an ongoing diminution of the ability for regional communities and regional voices to have their stories told ...

... we are witnessing the ongoing, sad decline of regional media newsrooms.

She then gives a whack to the federal government and says they should be focusing on support for regional journalism and regional newsrooms.

I would say to the Leader of the House and the Labor Party: look at your own Bill. What crocodile tears! The Leader of the House stood there and through crocodile tears wept for regional media, and then has been part of a Cabinet that has spearheaded a knife through regional media. The Victorian Country Press Association wrote yesterday:

Regional news providers across Victoria including our own have deep concerns about—

this bill—

which will be presented to the Victorian Parliament in tomorrow's sitting.

The reforms, if passed will take away the Government legislated mandate for local councils to place their public notice and community information classifieds in regional Victorian local newspapers, taking away yet another revenue source and effectively negating even more council connection with their local communities. It will also potentially lead to all local Government classified advertising migrating to a purpose-built Government web platform. This could potentially remove local regional newspapers from receiving any local government advertising. Internet in country areas can be unreliable and unlike city folk, country people rely on their local paper for this information.

The Warragul Gazette said:

This Bill amendment I believe is happening tomorrow will be another huge nail in the coffin of regional publishing. The threat is real, that if this bill is passed

that we, like many the regional publishers will be hundreds of thousands of dollars in ad revenue down, being redirected to a platform that provides no community interest, no investment in local jobs, no avenue to the community for council and political parties, and removes one of the primary roles a regional newspaper does which is be a source of local news and information for the community we serve.

Well, that is emphatic, isn't it? And where is the Leader of the House now, protecting regional media? Trying to fix a Labor implosion, talking about who has been kicked out of Labor caucus—

Mr Wakeling interjected.

Mr NEWBURY: Yes, threatening to kick people out of Labor caucus. Instead of standing here talking about, through a Members Statement, what you think you should say, why don't your actions meet your words instead of doing the exact opposite? This Bill will hurt regional media, and every regional Member—and as I look around there are very few in the Chamber—should touch base with their outlet and ask them what effect this Bill will have.

I would finally like to mention the reforms relating to the teacher shortage and quote from media reports:

Almost one in three secondary school teaching jobs in Melbourne's north and west are going unfilled and teachers warn the situation will grow worse amid expected staffing shortages forced by the Omicron wave.

Further:

The Department of Education and Training report reveals specialist subjects including languages and technology are chronically short of qualified teachers, with roughly three in 10 advertised roles resulting in no appointment, while 20 per cent of advertised maths and science roles go unfilled.

And further:

... regions suffer the greatest recruitment challenges.

And where is the shortage? To quote another media report:

... the number of Victorian teachers applying for jobs in Queensland has grown from 0.1 per cent in 2019 to 2.9 per cent this year.

This Bill does attempt, almost three years into a pandemic, to address that. There is a crisis, just like there is a crisis in health, and this Bill attempts almost three years into a pandemic to do something about it, so perhaps within the next year or two years there will be an effect, with the changes made in this Bill.

This bill is dangerous. This Bill hides dangerous changes to the democratic system in what is being put up as an Omnibus Bill, a simple Omnibus Bill that makes regulatory reform.

How many media releases have you seen about the bill and the electoral reform— how much fanfare from the government of fanfare? None.

We will oppose this Bill, and in Government we will restore the right for people to choose to vote through post and provide them with the information they rightly deserve.

BILL DEBATE

CONSERVATION, FORESTS AND LANDS AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Wednesday, 9 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:49):

It is a pleasure to rise on my first bill as Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change on the Conservation, Forests and Lands Amendment Bill 2022, but I rise on this particular Bill with a heavy heart—with a very heavy heart—because I look around the Chamber and I see colleagues who have spoken to me about the impacts of this Government's decisions in this industry, the policy decisions this Government has taken and the impacts those decisions are having on industry, on businesses, on flow-on businesses and on their families, and it breaks your heart. It breaks your heart to know what the Government promised, how they broke their promises and the impacts that is having on some of the townships and families around Victoria—the real impacts.

In my mind the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change is killing the harvesting industry by stealth.

The Premier stood up and set out a policy agenda with a 2030 date attached to it and committed to the community that current levels of harvesting would be maintained to 2024. That is not what is happening, that is not what the Minister is doing and that is not what this Bill will allow the Minister to do and what industry knows the Minister will do with those powers, because today industry is 50 per cent down—50 per cent down. We are at the start of 2022, and it is 50 per cent down. By the end of the year, it will be 75 per cent down. So, while the Premier stood up and gave a commitment for 2024, we know today in fact

industry is 50 per cent down and by the end of the year will be 75 per cent down. There will not be an industry next year, in 2023. That is the result of this Minister's actions by stealth. Her behaviour has been cruel to industry towns and their families.

When this Bill was first introduced the one word that stuck out and the one word that the government has repeated—and we will hear it all day from government speakers—was certainty: 'The purpose of this bill has been to provide certainty'. I am sure it is in the top line of every government speaker's talking points. Well, we heard that word last year, didn't we, when there was an overhaul of the timber code. What did the Government say? What did the Government say was the reason behind that? Certainty. What is the reason for this Bill? Certainty. What is the reasoning behind the review of the code currently underway? I will let you guess. Does anyone want to have a guess? Certainty. So three times in 12 months the Government has said to the community, 'We are doing things in this space to provide certainty'. Well, at the absolute least this Minister is incompetent—at the absolute least. How can you possibly take action three times in the same space in 12 months and come back again and again to provide certainty? There is no certainty. You do not have to go very far and you do not have to talk to much of the community or industry in this sector before you will hear the word 'uncertainty'. We know that we cannot trust the Government to provide certainty, because they have not, over and over and over again.

So, we know that there is currently a 50 per cent reduction. We also know that supply is 50 per cent down. We also know that the remaining supply is partly propped up by other states. Other states are propping up our supply. We know that roughly 75 per cent of the approved coupes on the timber release plan are subject to court injunction. Can you imagine that, 75 per cent? Can you imagine if any industry had three-quarters of their activity shut down effectively by injunction?

We know that that is the Government behaving by stealth because they have not fixed it—they have not done anything about it. We also know that there are 10 contractors currently out of work as a result of a court injunction, affecting up to 80 jobs. These are families—each one of those jobs is part of a family—so an effect on 80 people is an effect on hundreds. There are two sawmills that are currently standing down employees or reducing staff, and by May there will be three more. Australian Paper has 1000 employees. How will they be by August— those 1000 employees—when they have no supply? By August, will they be able to operate? All of these numbers, all of these facts, should all go back to reminding us that we are talking about people, we are talking about jobs, we are talking about businesses, and all of these people were promised a continuance to 2024 with a 2030 end date. Well, the facts say otherwise.

I will turn to this Bill specifically. The Government will tell you that the purpose of the Bill is to expand their head of power to make certain guidance around the code, and the expanded head of power will enable the incorporation of documents:

... to confer a discretionary authority on the Minister ... and leave any matter or thing to be from time to time, approved, determined, dispensed with or regulated by the Minister or the Secretary.

I will get to what that actually means a little later.

There is no doubt that we all care about the 7.8 million hectares of public native forests. I am sure every person in this place does. I know I do. 95.5 per cent of it is locked up, and another 5 per cent is on an 80-year rotation for harvesting. What has happened over time is that environmentalists have used a grey area of law to shut down the industry, to shut down harvesting. It is not a claim that I make on my own; it is a statement that the government has recognised. Numerous Ministers have acknowledged that that is what is happening—a grey area of the law is being used as an environmental tactic. Those are not my words; those are the Government's words.

Knowing that we face a grey area of law that is being used in a particular way, instead of doing something about it, instead of providing industry and communities with certainty to live up to the commitment they made, the Government has done nothing, and now they introduce a bill and powers that nobody trusts them with—enormous powers. In a private briefing late last year— limited because this bill has had limited consultation or industry debate—the government described these new powers as enabling the:

... development of Compliance Standards that specifically set out how the timber industry can meet its obligations ...

and the establishment of:

... a legal presumption that operations complying with the guidance outlined in a Compliance Standard will have met the requirements of the Precautionary Principle.

And I will define that a little bit later.

So, in short the standards will give, in the Government's interpretation, industry guidance on what measures can be taken that will comply with the precautionary principle, that is:

The timber harvester can either comply with the standard, or it can apply alternative measures to meet the requirements of the precautionary principle, as is currently the case.

If the timber harvester acts in accordance with the compliance standard, it will be deemed to be compliant with the precautionary principle requirements of the Code.

If the timber harvester does not act in accordance with the compliance standard, the question of whether the timber harvester has acted in accordance with the precautionary principle requirements of the Code can be investigated ...

For background, and I touched on it earlier, the precautionary principle is a grey area of law. It makes a contribution to sustainable use of natural resources by requiring their use to be, amongst other things, prudent, and that was the underlying definition in *Telstra v. Hornsby*. As the Department has set out, the precautionary principle is a rule of environmental prudence that concerns the management of environmental risks where there is uncertainty in order that human actions are calculated or designed to prevent or avoid actual degradation to the environment associated with such risks. Precaution requires decisions, actions or conduct that may have adverse environmental consequences to be properly informed and subsequent responses to be properly calibrated to risk and what is and is not known. It is a grey area of law—a grey area of law that is being used tactically. I mentioned earlier *Telstra v. Hornsby*, and in application I will note a further judgement describing that the principle as a need to take precautionary measures is triggered by the satisfaction of two conditions, precedents or thresholds: a threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage and scientific uncertainty as to the environmental damage.

The reason I have set out the concept, apart from to give background to the grey, is to also make clear the balance between protection—which I am sure everybody in this place cares about, I am sure that industry cares about and I am sure that communities care about and the broader community cares about—and workability. Mark Poynter, who was an architect of the code, made clear what he meant when writing a code to take into account that balance, and if I can quote from him:

The code is designed to enable practical and economically workable timber production in a way that minimises its environmental impacts. The code is a workable compromise between the needs of conservation and the practicalities of cost-effectively producing timber.

He uses the word ‘compromise’, but I think we can say ‘balance’ is equally appropriate in that context. His view, if I can go further, is that now the code is

being seen by some, including at a political level:

... as a potential vehicle for ending timber production rather than enabling it.

Well, that is what is happening; industry will not be operating next year. It is clear that the potential vehicle for ending timber production rather than enabling it is the case. It is what is happening. It is what is happening on the ground.

So what are the problems with the Bill in general terms? Well, it is a short Bill, because what it does is it gives the Minister endless power. It is a very short Bill that says, 'The Minister can have lots of power'. As environmental groups have described it, it is a God power. That was quite a neat little description—a God power. In short, there is no scope around the power, no scope at all. There is no scope around how the power is used. There is no scope around the power at all. That is concerning. That should concern every Member in this place—that a Minister has asked the Parliament for power with no scope—and we know that what the Minister is asking for in receiving that power is that they can, as they have asked for, have the power to provide guidance to industry.

Well, what would you do if you were asking for power at that level, of that broadness, in that way? You would provide some certainty around how you will consult with the community, how you will consult with industry. Well, the Minister has refused to do that. There is no guarantee and there is no assurance that consultation will take place, that engagement will occur. In fact effectively the Minister has simply said, 'Trust me'. Well, I do not think anyone does. I do not and, sadly, neither does industry. In fact industry has gone to the Minister and said, 'We need certainty, and we are willing to consider what you are asking for on the basis that you give us some assurance that when you are asking for this much power we will be included in future discussions, included in consultation, and that we will be part of a process'—things that Labor spent a lot of time pontificating on but in this case not delivering. And what has the

Minister said to industry: 'I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to provide that to you. We're putting a bill to this Parliament that is going to give me a lot of power, and you just have to trust us to provide that keyword we talked about earlier, certainty'— another measure seeking to provide certainty.

And further, not only has industry gone to the government seeking some guarantee of engagement, I think one other thing that strikes most people when looking at this Bill is the lack of any check or balance. There is no check and balance. There are no in-built mechanisms for reviewing how the Minister uses what the environmental groups describe as the God power. It is a short Bill that gives the Minister extraordinary power, guarantees no consultation in its use and application and has no check or balance after the use of that power. And throughout the last week, when the Government briefed me as the incoming shadow on this bill, I said to their office, 'In good faith, these are the three issues that I immediately see. Would you mind raising those with the Minister? These are the issues that are being raised with me'. It is not unreasonable to provide some certainty to an industry and a sector that is in so much pain—something; provide a couple of sentences. I put the offer to read those responses into Hansard for the Minister. Now, that does not happen too often. I offered the opportunity to read those responses on those three issues into Hansard, and I would have read them word for word. Guess what? Nothing.

Those three issues have not been addressed. Those three issues that are being raised by industry with government privately are also not being addressed privately. Is there any wonder that the sector looks on and says, 'I don't trust. I don't trust'. If in private conversations the Government is not willing to provide any scope around the use of power or any certainty around engagement while so many businesses are on their knees, is there any wonder that they have a lack of trust? It is only fair and reasonable that there is a lack of trust. And again I say on record: my offer to the Government was genuine, and I would have provided those responses. I would have read them into Hansard in full.

Disappointingly that offer was rebuffed.

I referred earlier to Mark Poynter, who was one of the designers or architects of the original code. If I can read in his concerns:

The obvious problem with the bill is that it would give the minister discretionary power to make changes to the code potentially on a whim, perhaps politically motivated to appease forestry critics. This is a problem because the code's provisions have been carefully determined based on a mix of science and decades of overseas and Australian field observations, the operational practicalities for workable timber production and a recognition that forestry operations are restricted to a minor portion of the forest estate that is designed for that purpose and is therefore not meant to harbour pristine environmental values.

I think when you hear those words from Mr Poynter it is difficult not to go back to the point that I raised earlier—that of balance. The Minister is asking for power that can be misused—it can be misused—at a time when industry is almost shut down. Seventy-five per cent of approved coupes on the release plan are subject to court injunction—75 per cent. Is it any wonder that industry is looking at what the government is proposing and saying, 'Well, do we really want a Minister to have power to so disproportionately affect that balance?'.

In this place we will not oppose the Bill on the basis that industry does need constraint on litigation. They are desperate for a constraint on litigation. They are desperate for certainty.

On that basis the coalition will not oppose this Bill in this place, but I can assure you it is not because there is overwhelming trust in the Minister and the Minister's use of this short Bill with lots of power. In fact it is because when you weigh up the uncertainty, when you weigh up the effect on industry, when you weigh up what people are going through—what families, local townships and people are going through—you need to weigh that up against the hope that something will go right for them, that the Government will do the right thing.

It is sad to say that when you talk to people in this sector what they say over and over again is, 'I don't think I have any hope left'. I have been struck by how many people have said that to me: 'I don't have hope'. They are hoping that the Minister will do the right thing and not use this power in an ideological way. As I said, in this place we will not oppose the Bill.

So I say to the Minister, in summary, the three issues that have been raised over and over again are on scope of power, on use of power and on the unbridled, as environmental groups refer to, God power. They are a real concern, and it is only reasonable that the Minister publicly address those concerns. Providing a talking point I had not even raised when I raised my concerns about the three issues, the Minister's advice was that one of the Government backbenchers would respond to those issues. That is not worth anything, frankly. That is worth nothing. That is worth absolutely nothing. So I say to the Government: the least the Government could do is provide people with certainty. That is the least the Government could do. They could take those little talking points that they are circulating to the backbench and put them on the record in the Minister's own name to give a community and an industry and people who are doing it so tough the certainty they deserve. That is not too much to ask of this Government.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ANNIVERSARY

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:36):

On indulgence, all my love to my wife, Suzanne, as we celebrate our fifteenth wedding anniversary today.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

WOMEN AND MENTORING

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:55):

Women and Mentoring, known as WAM, is an early intervention program that supports women charged with a criminal offence by matching them with one of the organisation's 60 mentors.

The organisation helps 45 women per year, and their client recidivism rate sits at around 13 per cent—far below the higher community average.

State funding has run out, and WAM deserve future funding certainty from Labor.

APPROPRIATION (2022–2023) BILL 2022

Thursday, 26 May 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:14):

I rise to speak on the Appropriation (2022–2023) Bill 2022.

This is an opportunity for me to speak to my community of Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton and on behalf of that community.

Disappointingly the State Budget papers did not commit a single new dollar to Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood or Hampton—not a single dollar, not one dollar.

A budget should be about economic responsibility and a fair allocation of resources, a fair allocation of money. And yet my part of Victoria, part of Melbourne, did not receive one single dollar—not a single dollar.

In terms of the Budget more generally, the Budget figures show a \$7.9 billion deficit and an eye-watering \$167.5 billion state net debt figure by 2025–26. And why does that matter? Because the annual interest repayments on debt are growing from \$3.1 billion to \$6.4 billion in only four years. All of that money, all of that expense on interest, could be saved and spent on something else.

Victorians will now carry twice the debt burden of those in New South Wales and will have a greater debt level than the combination of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. And in terms of tax, this budget includes a \$603 million land tax hit, up 14.2 per cent; \$1.5 billion in stamp duty on land transfers, up 22.6 per cent; \$1.1 billion in payroll tax, up 17 per cent; and, staggeringly, a \$27 billion infrastructure blowout.

Though I would like to be able to talk about any investment in my community, I cannot. What I can talk about is what the Government could have invested in my community and did not. I will take the opportunity to talk about some of the school needs, some of the infrastructure needs, some of the health needs and some of the childcare needs.

When you look at the Budget overview and look to schools, it openly boasts about investing in Labor electorates and ignoring non-Labor electorates. The overview states that of the 13 new metro school constructions, 85 per cent are in Labor electorates, 82 per cent of the 22 school upgrades are in Labor electorates and 82 per cent of the metro special school upgrades are in Labor electorates. This type of pork-barrelling is not new. In the budget last year 85 per cent of the 35 metro school upgrades went to Labor electorates and 85 per cent of the 78 metro school upgrades announced in November 2020 went to Labor electorates. On five out of six occasions budget money went into Labor metro electorates.

In my community over recent budgets Brighton Beach Primary School received zero dollars, Brighton Primary School received zero dollars, Brighton Secondary College received zero dollars, Elwood Primary School received zero dollars, Elwood College received zero dollars, Gardenvale Primary School received zero dollars and Hampton Primary received zero dollars, and yet the Minister for Education denies school fund bias—zero dollars into Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton schools.

When you look at a special school like Brighton Primary School, it is an incredible school, a school that has been in my community since 1875. It has 620 students, and it has developed a master plan to develop projected long-term enrolment growth and address issues with the facilities at the school. It is visionary. What most people do not know is that two-thirds of the school's students are in a dozen demountables that were installed in the 1970s. Two-thirds of our kids were put into those demountables 50 years ago, and nothing has changed. Another fact that most people are not aware of is that the school is home to

20 children with special hearing needs, and those demountables are next to the train line. So we have 20 students with special hearing needs who are in 50-year-old demountables next to a train line. If there was ever a greater need for investment in a school, I cannot imagine what it would be.

I move to Brighton Secondary College, a fantastic school established in 1955. It is home to 1200 students. It is a big, big school for my community—not just my community but also over the road; a lot of students come from Bentleigh. One of the issues in my area is that there is no modern performing arts space, so the college there has developed a plan for a 1400-seat tiered theatre with a stage, curtains, lighting, theatre-style acoustics, audio-visual facilities, music tutorial rooms, equipment and storage facilities to support it, accompanying infrastructure, a foyer area and kitchen facilities—a wonderful, wonderful facility not just for the children of my local area but also for community groups. There is not a dollar for Brighton Secondary College and their wonderful vision.

Hampton Primary School is the hub of Hampton, and it has been teaching children since 1913—another school in my community that is over 100 years old. No-one in the Hampton Primary School community or Hampton more generally can recall the government investing any money in the school, ever. The community of Hampton and the Hampton school cannot recall the government ever investing in that school. That is extraordinary. And it is not a small primary school. The school has developed a vision for a multipurpose netball facility that can serve as a sporting hub, a school meeting place and a community facility, because there is no place for the school to meet. It is a big school with no opportunity and no place for the school to meet.

How disappointing to hear Labor members laughing at the school needs of my community. How disappointing. If I then move to Elwood College, also a longstanding—

Ms Green: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I take offence at what the member for Brighton just said. Labor members were not laughing. There was laughter from staff outside the chamber, so I would just like the member for

Brighton not to falsely accuse us of laughing, because we were not.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Kilkenny): There is no point of order.

Mr NEWBURY: Of course not. Elwood College is an important school in my community, a 60-year-old college with 850 students and 50 international students. There is not a dollar for Elwood College either. That school has close to \$1 million worth of maintenance needs, including the gymnasium roof. The school are in a very difficult position because they have been fighting for their vision of a redevelopment of their gymnasium into what they call the Phoenix Theatre, a new theatre which would be utilised by both the school community and the local community. Elwood College is a hub for the local community. It has a wonderful performing arts tradition. They have got a facility in their current gymnasium and theatre that requires significant works, in fact urgent works. They have not received a single dollar, so they are in a very difficult position as to whether or not to try and invest in patchwork maintenance or hold out hope that one day the Labor Government will remember that Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton exist.

I move to a number of infrastructure projects in my community, especially pedestrian crossings. Members of this house may recall the government's refusal to invest in the Grenville Street crossing in Hampton over the Sandringham train line until an elderly local resident died at the crossing and the government was shamed into investing in the crossing upgrade. There were no safety facilities at the site—none—and one of our beloved local grandmothers passed away crossing that site. But there are a number of other similar sites. The Dendy Street crossing is a crossing utilised by two local primary schools, St Joan of Arc and Brighton Beach Primary School. One of the principals, St Joan of Arc principal Tony McMahon, has said publicly:

The fact that there hasn't been a terrible accident is purely through luck ...

There has been no investment in that crossing upgrade in an estimated 100 years, and the government has done work on that site. They know the safety

issues of that site. It is known to the Government, and yet we have not had a dollar invested in that site. At the Dendy Village pedestrian crossing at Dendy Village, Council has actually installed the associated infrastructure at the site, and VicRoads support the installation. It is a bustling local shopping strip. Again there, a local was killed, tragically, crossing at the village. The Parliamentary Budget Office has estimated a cost of \$900 000 to fix it—again, not a single dollar to that site.

The Glen Huntly Road crossing in Elwood is a crossing point for several schools and a childcare centre. Recent VicRoads data showed 17 incidents at that site; eight resulted in injury to locals—again a \$900,000 cost. At the last election, when this was an issue, Labor installed a sign down the road—not even at the site but down the road. VicRoads has confirmed there exists at that site demand for the crossing as a high priority—not a dollar, again. For an Esplanade crossing near Were Street, which is a crossing point for the community to Green Point, where there are numerous local events, there is not a dollar there either.

For health, there is not a dollar. Sandringham Hospital services 70,000 people in the local area—not a dollar for them. That is a much-needed facility, Sandringham Hospital, and the government has not put a dollar in there.

And finally, in terms of child care, despite the Government announcing a \$47 million investment into Wyndham City Council for childcare infrastructure, the Port Phillip council is being forced to close three childcare centres, including Elwood Children's Centre, because the infrastructure at the sites is so out of date that they cannot afford to fix them and the government has not invested a single dollar there. 3,200 local people in the community have signed a petition over that site.

There are so many things in terms of school infrastructure, health and child care that are needed in my community, and these state budget papers did not commit a single new dollar to Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood or Hampton.

SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (NAZI SYMBOL PROHIBITION) BILL 2022

Tuesday, 7 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:12):

I rise to speak on the Summary Offences Amendment (Nazi Symbol Prohibition) Bill 2022.

Victoria knows that the Nazi swastika represents racial supremacy and is in reality a symbol of mass genocide. The symbol incites hatred and has no place in modern society.

This Bill incorporates that position as a new community standard. It will be a law that incorporates that position as a new community standard, a standard based on our values as a State. It is a standard that the community has been calling for and one that should be brought into place immediately.

This has been a difficult issue and a difficult process, and I am sure it is one that many considered deeply in the drafting of this Bill, because freedom of speech is one of the pillars that sets aside our great democracy, but those freedoms should not come and cannot come at the expense or hurt of others.

As I said earlier, a symbol has the power to incite hate in the same way that a word can or an action can. That was impressed upon me so strongly several years ago, before the Parliamentary Committee referred to by the previous speaker had looked into the issue, before the Government had considered the matter, before any of these issues were raised, when Irma Hanner looked into my eyes at the Jewish Holocaust Centre and talked to me about this issue.

At the outbreak of war Irma returned home to find that her mother had been taken by the Gestapo, and she waited there for two days before her aunt found her. She was later deported to a Czechoslovakian camp, and at the end of the war her mother had not survived. She looked into my eyes at the Holocaust centre and said to me:

A symbol can incite hate in the same way that a word can.

Those words are the ones that I have always used in referring to this issue, her words.

We know, as I said earlier, that this Bill is about values, and it sets in place a community standard. It sets in place a community standard that has so deeply affected the Jewish community. Antisemitism is a significant problem in the community, and it is a huge problem in Victoria. That is why this Bill is so important in this State.

If I can refer to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry's most recent report on antisemitism, which covers the period of October 2020 to September 2021, they found that there were 447 antisemitic incidents logged in Australia over that period.

Of that total, 272 were attacks—physical assault, verbal assault, harassment, vandalism, graffiti—and 175 were threats. In the 12 months previous to the period of that report, the same bodies logged 331 incidents. That is a 35 per cent increase in one year—in one year.

To break down the most recent figures, between 2020 and 2021 the four most significant categories were abuse and harassment, up 14 per cent; graffiti, a 152 per cent increase, and we know that those will be symbols; and stickers on posters the same, a 157 per cent increase. So we know the increase in antisemitism is actually in the use of a symbol. I would note, when I refer to the 447 incidents logged across Australia in one year, that between 2013 and 2020 the average was 280 per year—280 up to 447.

I mentioned just previously about the issue in Victoria, and it is an issue in Victoria. When you look at the incidents that have occurred across Australia, the 447 incidents in the last year, October 2020 to September 2021, 46 per cent of them occurred in this State. Just under half occurred in the State of Victoria. That shows that we do have an antisemitism problem in Victoria, sadly. There is a need for this Bill. The increases that are occurring are in graffiti, stickers and posters, which are symbols.

This Bill is needed. This incorporation of a new community standard is needed. When the coalition announced early in 2020 that it called on the Government to move this amendment, we did so—the Member for Caulfield and former Member Ed O'Donohue—at the Holocaust centre.

We sat with Holocaust survivor Joe de Haan, who had tears in his eyes as we talked to him about what we were proposing to call for, and he said, when told about this policy proposal: 'It means a lot to me, because this symbol of Nazi Germany should have been wiped off the face of the earth years ago. I cannot understand how a person can put this flag in his garden, symbolising the horror and destruction to so many millions. It's about time this flag is going to be banned forever'.

No truer words could be said.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

THORNE HARBOUR HEALTH REPORT

Thursday, 9 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:42):

Thorne Harbour Health's new report, *The Cost of Adverse Mental Health Outcomes in the LGBTIQ+ Victorian Adult Population*, estimates that poor mental health in the rainbow community, who represent up to 10 per cent of Victoria's population, costs \$3 billion.

It also estimates the rate of lifetime mental illness at 73 per cent compared with 46 per cent more broadly. The findings will help us understand the real impacts better.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

MENTAL HEALTH

Wednesday, 22 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:49):

The Australian Patients Association's Australian Healthcare Index, released this week, confirms a lot more needs to be done to support the mental health of our community.

The index shows one in four people say their mental health has declined in the last six months and almost 60 per cent of people have been waiting over three months for mental health support.

We need to do more.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

EATING DISORDER SERVICES

Thursday, 23 June 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:45):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is for the Minister for Mental Health, and I ask: can the Minister advise me as to what the Labor Government is doing to improve early intervention in specialist care services for young sufferers of an eating disorder?

The Australian Patient Association's Australian Healthcare Index, released this work, confirms that the mental health shadow pandemic sting, in the words of the experts, is in the tail.

The index shows that one in four people say their mental health has declined in the last six months and that almost 60 per cent of people have been waiting for over three months for support.

With issues like eating disorders, sufferers cannot wait. We know that the best path to early intervention includes ensuring that general practitioners recognise the condition and connect patients to services. Consideration should also be given to more at-home specialist support to assist families.

We also need to do better in providing specialist care. Children in the southern region have access to services at the Wellness and Recovery Centre Butterfly program through Monash Health, but there are a very small number of places.

We need to do more. We must do more.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Thursday, 4 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:42):

My CONSTITUENCY QUESTION is for the Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment and Climate Action, and I ask: will Labor match the Liberal Party's energy and environment plan for our state's future?

My constituents want to see this plan for the future adopted because they know it will benefit them. Yet on energy Labor has been caught flat-footed. We have seen the market operator suspend the market and warn of future supply shortages.

By contrast the Liberals have a plan for affordable, reliable and clean energy, which includes a legislated local gas guarantee for supply, a \$1 billion Victorian hydrogen strategy and a fix-Victoria's-grid task force to modernise our system.

And on the environment the Government looks tired.

The Liberal Party will turbo-charge solar and batteries through a power-to-the people plan that sees the product installed to 1 million Victorian households by 2035, legislate an emissions reduction target of 50 per cent by 2030 and increase tree canopy coverage across metropolitan Melbourne from around 15 per cent to 35 per cent by 2050.

My constituents want to see this plan matched.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

SACRED HEART MISSION

Wednesday, 17 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (9:40):

Sacred Heart Mission recently reopened their breakfast service, where I rolled up my sleeves to help.

The mission, who are at the heart of the community, already serve meals to over 300 people each day.

Chief executive Cathy Humphrey is retiring after being part of the mission family for 20 years. We wish her well for her next step in life, but she will be very much missed.

BILL DEBATE

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL 2022

Thursday, 18 August 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:04):

Today is a watershed moment in Victoria.

Today this Parliament is seeing legislation that will set a new community standard—a new community standard that will change cultural norms in the ways we can act to stop and prevent sexual violence, not just the things that we can do to assist with reporting but to change cultural standards in a meaningful way at law, and that is what counts. That will make the difference.

During one of the early lockdowns two young girls were raped in one of the local parks in my community, and, without going into details of the crimes, consent was a significant issue. I spoke to one of the victims' family at the time, and her story broke my heart.

It was when I first met Chanel Contos, who has been described as—and I think it is probably even an understatement to describe her as—‘a young trailblazer who sparked a national reckoning with sexual consent’. We talked about these laws, about these issues and the need to change cultural norms in this space. I spoke to her last night after the journey since, and she said to me—and she is more than happy for me to put her words into Hansard:

Switching the narrative from ‘no means no’ to ‘only yes means yes’ will have a significant effect on reducing sexual violence. The concept of no means no isn’t good enough when we don’t teach girls and women how to say no.

These proposed laws are an important step towards reducing violence in our community, and I hope we see them replicated across Australia.

I think it is important to take a moment to also acknowledge Chanel and her work in consent, and the way that she as a young person posted on Instagram about consent.

Some of her friends at the time shared her post about issues that they had experienced in terms of sexual violence. She then started a petition amongst young girls—schoolgirls—that today has 45 000 signatures and almost 7000 girls sharing stories of sexual violence. Children are sharing personal stories like that of the girl who was raped in my park.

There are so many strong women who have been behind what we are seeing today who have said we need a new cultural standard, and we need to move from thinking that the concept of no means no is good enough and at law to say that only yes means yes.

This Bill will have a profound impact on our community, on women and on young girls. It will also have a profound impact on what we teach boys.

So, I am so proud to stand here today having spoken with Chanel when that horrible incident happened in my park. Being able to bring her into the Parliament and inviting all of you to be briefed by her on these issues, to then help her meet with the executive in New South Wales after the briefing here and then to do the same in the Federal Government was important.

Her comments calling for laws of this nature to be rolled out across Australia are such important calls, because what we are doing today is going to make a difference in Victoria.

But we need to make that same difference across Australia, and I would say to every Member in this place it is now not just good enough to help the girls and teach the boys in Victoria.

We now need to use our collective voices to continue these reforms in whatever way we can across Australia.

ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING

THE QUEEN

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:57):

To our new King and his family, it is with a heavy heart that this Parliament and we Members, the voices of our communities, mourn the passing of our great Sovereign and Head of State.

We feel the loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II personally and deeply, right around the world. On behalf of the people of Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton, I wish to express my community's profound condolences.

In the Shakespearean words King Charles III used to describe her reign only hours ago on the floor of Westminster Hall, the reign of his mother has been 'a pattern to all princes living'.

Never before has the world witnessed a monarch so enduring, so steadfast, so resolute and so committed to duty, a Queen who was served by 15 British Prime Ministers, who welcomed over 110 Presidents and Prime Ministers to the United Kingdom and who had links with over 500 charities.

But as an Australian speaking on behalf of my community, I take the opportunity to recognise the Queen's unparalleled relationship with our country and the Commonwealth.

The Queen's relationship with Australia was unique, being the only reigning Monarch to visit our shores. As our great Prime Minister Robert Menzies said of the Queen in his immortal words, 'I did but see her passing by. And yet I'll love her till I die'. His words were spoken on behalf of his generation.

As we look back on her first visit and the words spoken by our then Prime Minister, we can see that the Queen's bond with Australia was ignited then but remained enduring. It was a bond of affection that spanned the seven decades of her reign.

Her Majesty built and maintained her connection to our land across her 16 visits to our country, to Victoria 11 times.

I recall witnessing the Queen speaking fondly of how Australia had grown as a country and a people when she last visited in 2011. As she spoke in our Great Hall in Canberra she said, 'Australia has flourished and achieved excellence on the world stage'. For those who saw her deliver those words, we knew that they were delivered with great fondness and, if I might be so bold as to say, a sense of pride.

Perhaps at its simplest, the explanation for the depth of mutual feeling between our Sovereign and this country was the Queen's genuine fondness for our Commonwealth nation, a fondness that extended and endured across 70 years just as it has across the whole Commonwealth, where she visited every nation and realm as their sovereign.

Before being crowned monarch, she said:

... there is none of my father's subjects from the oldest to the youngest whom I do not wish to greet.

Those were not simply words, but a lifelong commitment borne out in deed.

As Australians we returned her warmth and commitment to our nation when we used the democratic instrument available to us in 1999 to confirm our ongoing link to a Constitutional Monarchy, a link that I supported personally without hesitation and still do.

Shortly after the referendum the Queen spoke of her lifelong warmth for our country on the steps of the great Sydney Opera House, saying:

... since I first stepped ashore here in Sydney in February 1954 I have felt part of this rugged, honest, creative land. I have shared in the joys and the sorrows, the challenges and the changes that have shaped this country's history ...

And further:

... my lasting respect and deep affection for Australia and Australians everywhere will remain as strong as ever. That is what I have come here to say ...

Across seven decades we have been assured of that strength of affection—an affection that has always been reciprocated.

The world we live in now is unrecognisable from that of 70 years ago when Queen Elizabeth II took the throne, and yet over that time, despite a changing world, our Constitutional Monarchy has endured. It is a relationship forged into law but one now that is as deeply held together through affection as it is in constitutional formality. Ours is now a relationship that continues by want and by choice.

We mourn the passing of the great Queen Elizabeth II as both our Monarch and our friend, and we affirm ourselves to our new King, our Head of State, a King who has already proven over his lifetime an affinity with our country as deeply held as that of his mother.

May Queen Elizabeth II now rest in peace with her love, her strength and stay.





JAMES NEWBURY MP

Member for Brighton



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