

JAMES NEWBURY MP

Member for Brighton



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Parliamentary Speeches

2019



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BRIGHTON ELECTORATE

MEMBERS STATEMENT

STREET2BAY PROJECT

Wednesday, 20 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:01):

Some estimate that 80 per cent of the plastics in our marine environment come from our streets. It is a confronting statistic.

Understanding the type of litter that feeds into our bay led the 1st/14th Brighton Sea Scouts to lead an initiative called the Street2Bay Project.

The project will conduct 500 street-litter audits around the bay, focusing on microplastics.

I joined in for an audit in Brighton recently and saw the importance of the project for policymakers. It was confronting to see that roughly one third of the plastic waste was from cigarette butts.

I congratulate Brighton and Scouts Victoria on their project and for the estimated 5000 volunteer hours that will be committed to the initiative.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON ELECTORATE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Wednesday, 20 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:02):

My community is also in desperate need of two pedestrian-operated crossings. The first is on Glen Huntly Road in Elwood, outside Elwood Primary School.

VicRoads crash data reportedly shows that in the last five years there have been 17 incidents along the strip. With a primary school and a secondary school nearby, there is a pressing need to keep our local children safe.

The second proposed site is on Hampton Street in Brighton, near the Dendy shopping village. There have been a number of pedestrians injured along Hampton Street too.

It concerns me that there are now two unfunded sites in the electorate that are in need of a pedestrian-operated signal. What is even more concerning is that there have been safety issues near to both locations.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

GRENVILLE CROSSING, HAMPTON

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:15):

Despite Public Transport Victoria previously confirming that the Grenville Street railway pedestrian crossing in Hampton is one of the worst in the state, it being the site where Hampton grandmother Gloria Holmes was tragically killed soon after Public Transport Victoria cancelled safety works there, the Minister for Transport Infrastructure has now advised that she has sought advice on the issue.

Minister, we need more than delays by this government passed off as bureaucratic red tape; we need action now.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

GROSVENOR STREET, BRIGHTON

Tuesday, 27 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:40):

Faced with the wrecking ball, this government has failed to protect the historic Tudor-style home at 38 Grosvenor Street, Brighton.

The house was designed by Home Beautiful journalist Esmé Johnston in 1930. Almost 1000 people called for action but their calls have fallen on deaf ears.

It is another example of this government failing to protect our heritage.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

BRIGHTON BATHING BOXES

Thursday, 28 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:50):

My question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

With the public consultation process for the Draft Marine and Coastal Policy recently closing, I ask the Minister whether the government will immediately confirm that it has amended its' policy, which called for the removal of bathing boxes from the Brighton foreshore.

The Brighton bathing boxes have been a feature of our foreshore for almost 150 years.

Since the policy was released thousands of people have contacted me and called on the government to stop the removal of these much-loved icons.

Indeed not only are the bathing boxes internationally recognised, but the Dendy Street Beach site is also listed on the Victorian Heritage Register. The boxes are a major tourist attraction for this state, and their removal would be akin to scrapping the penguin parade at Phillip Island.

It is absurd to think the government has released a policy which encourages the removal of these iconic boxes.

I look forward to the Minister's response.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

GRENVILLE CROSSING, HAMPTON

Thursday, 31 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:56):

Hundreds of people use the Grenville Street pedestrian rail crossing in Hampton each day.

Despite a tragic death occurring there earlier this year and the community calling for enhanced safety, the government has refused to act for years.

We know that in 2017 Public Transport Victoria confirmed that the crossing was identified as a higher risk crossing. But only months before the tragic death there, the government suddenly shelved plans to upgrade the crossing.

From November the government is going to shut the crossing, and I quote 'while we investigate'.

Recently, a groundswell of the Hampton community met at the crossing to deliver a simple message to the government: do not close the crossing, just fix it now.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

ELSTERNWICK PARK NATURE RESERVE

Tuesday, 26 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:49):

My constituency question is to the Minister for Water, and I ask: can the Minister advise me as to what investment the state government has made towards the redevelopment of the Elsternwick Park Nature Reserve?

After the 12-hectare golf course at Elsternwick Park North closed, Bayside Council confirmed that it will convert the site into an environmental wetland of regional significance. The decision was overwhelmingly community led.

The Reserve will be a place for the community, a place for wildlife and a place that will help mitigate the risk of flooding in Elwood.

With 2,352 properties in the Elster Creek catchment identified as being at extreme risk of flooding, building flood mitigation into the site is vital but beyond the financial capacity of the local council.

Despite the overwhelming need this government has yet to commit a single dollar to this important environmental work.

With the site master plan scheduled for completion early in the New Year, a lack of state support would put a dagger into the environmental project and in truth means the government has refused to protect Elwood from flooding.

I look forward to the Minister's response.

ADJOURNMENT

GRENVILLE CROSSING, HAMPTON

Thursday, 28 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:44):

My adjournment this evening is to the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is for the Minister to immediately reopen the Grenville Street pedestrian rail crossing in Hampton and enhance safety at the site.

Earlier this week almost 200 people from Hampton met for a community meeting following the state government's closure of the Grenville Street crossing. Shamefully, Labor Members and Ministers hid and refused to attend.

The meeting unanimously called on the government to immediately reopen the Grenville Street pedestrian crossing and fund and install gates and bells.

The crossing closure has had a profound effect on my community. A recent Bayside Council pedestrian count found that hundreds of people use the crossing each day, including the elderly, disabled, and the special needs children from Hampton Life Saving Club's Starfish Nippers program.

It is particularly concerning that local residents have reportedly been ignoring closure fencing and running across the train tracks. In fact, I understand that train services have been delayed at the crossing because of safety concerns, another reason for immediate safety action.

The government closed the site, claiming that it had listened to the community. That could not be further from the truth.

We have also been told that it will now take a year for the government to investigate and potentially design changes. Documents obtained through freedom of information expose that mistruth: 18 months ago Public Transport Victoria completed safety designs. The designs have already been done. I make those designs available to the House.

In April 83-year-old Hampton grandmother Gloria Holmes tragically lost her life when she was hit by a train at the crossing. It is not the first death to have occurred there. Public Transport Victoria acknowledged the inherent danger in April 2017 when they confirmed the crossing:

...has been identified as a higher risk crossing, and therefore is one of the 9 high risk pedestrian crossings planned to be upgraded during 2017/18.

Documents obtained through freedom of information also reveal that funding was allocated in 2018 but then pulled before the election, when Public Transport Victoria advised that:

...a sudden change in the risk profile of certain level crossings in Victoria required other crossings be prioritised...

My community has asked me whether grandmother Gloria Holmes would be alive today had that funding not been ripped away and the safety works completed.

Sadly, we will never know.

I look forward to the Minister's response.



COMMUNITY GROUPS

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYSIDE DOG ALLIANCE

Tuesday, 7 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:51):

I also recently met with Amanda Levi of the Bayside Dog Alliance. The Alliance recently celebrated its' second anniversary, having been set up as a voice for dog owners and carers in the Bayside region.

The Alliance estimates that there are between 18,000 and 19,000 dogs in the Bayside region, which reinforces why their issues need to be on the agenda of policymakers and representatives.

The Alliance has proposed a number of issues for consideration. These include gate and fencing changes at certain parks, pet registration incentives for young animals and the need for a dog agility park in Bayside.

I congratulate the Alliance on its' advocacy and look forward to working with it on these important issues.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ELWOOD SAILING CLUB

Tuesday, 30 April 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:18):

Situated on the beautiful foreshore, Elwood Sailing Club is an active part of Elwood and a hub for the local community. The club membership remains strong. Amongst many events, the community joins together outside the Elwood Club each year for Anzac Day. Up to a thousand attend the event.

Unfortunately many elderly people, including ex-service people, who visit are unable to utilise the facilities because it lacks a lift. The club does need additional work, including upgrades to the kitchen, but a lift would be a game changer for the club and community access.

I congratulate the club on the important role it plays as a community hub in Elwood.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME

Monday, 27 May 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:43):

I recently met a beautiful young girl called Chloe. Chloe has a rare genetic disorder called Prader-Willi syndrome.

It is a randomly occurring disorder where some of the genes in chromosome 15 are inactive or missing. The syndrome affects development and growth.

I recently joined five-year-old Chloe and her family in Hampton for an awareness walk, Finding 15. Hundreds of people from my community joined us.

On the first weekend of May inaugural Finding 15 walks were held across five locations in Australia—an incredible coming together of people across the community.

Chloe, you are a very brave girl and I am so proud to know you.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

KIDS FOUNDATION

Wednesday, 5 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:56):

Childhood injuries are reportedly the leading cause of death and hospitalisation in Australian children aged between one and 14 years.

After encountering a young girl with cigarette burns on her hands some 40 years ago, Dr Susie O'Neill has dedicated her life to children at risk, and in 1993 established the KIDS Foundation.

The foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that directly touches the lives of more than 100,000 children each year.

The organisation proactively delivers programs aimed at both prevention and injury recovery. Proactively the organisation runs programs that teach children to manage injury risk and to be safe, whilst the organisation also creates a better life for those living with serious injuries and burns.

The KIDS Foundation does special work in our community, and Susie O'Neill is an incredible woman.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

1ST/14TH BRIGHTON SEA SCOUTS

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:14):

I would like to pay special acknowledgement to the 1st/14th Brighton Sea Scouts.

Two of their Venturers, Thomas Joyce and Felix Cousins, were recently presented with the Queen's Scout Award, and group leader Janet Cardell was presented with the Wood Badge. All three have shown extraordinary scouting commitment.

I was also touched to be inducted as an honorary leader of the scout group.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:14):

After 30 years leading the Brighton Hebrew Congregation, Rabbi Levin retired.

I recently joined the congregation as Alex Tsykin was inducted as the new Rabbi.

I warmly welcome Alex, his wife, Ahuva, and their four beautiful children into the Brighton community.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ROYAL BRIGHTON YACHT CLUB

Tuesday, 13 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:26):

Congratulations to Royal Brighton Yacht Club, which has been awarded the title of Victorian Yacht Club of the Year.

In other terrific news, the club will be hosting the 2023 Etchells World Yachting Championships. The Championship is one of the yachting world's most coveted trophies.

The Club has excelled in membership growth, top quality services and facilities.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON GOLF CLUB

Tuesday, 13 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:25):

Each year the Brighton Golf Club ladies hold a charity day. This year the ladies raised almost \$7,500 for Sacred Heart Mission.

I recently volunteered for lunch service at the mission. They serve lunch for up to 400 people each day.

The Brighton Golf Club ladies should be congratulated, especially considering they are not a large club. Congratulations to President Marilyn Jamieson and the whole team.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

CHURCH STREET TRADERS

Thursday, 15 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:51):

My constituency question is to the Minister for Police, and I ask the Minister: what law enforcement measures are in place to protect Church Street Traders in Brighton from swarming?

The Church Street Traders, ably led by President Keiran Cromie, have raised with me the growing prevalence of swarming.

Swarming is where groups of offenders swarm shops to steal goods and run off with them. By working as a group, gangs know it is much more difficult for small businesses to protect themselves.

The Traders and the Executive Director of the Australian Retailers Association, Russell Zimmerman, have both confirmed with me the prevalence of swarming, and called for enhanced police presence in our shopping strips.

I look forward to the Minister's response.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

SANDRINGHAM ATHLETICS CLUB

Tuesday, 27 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:40):

Sandringham Athletic Club, which is based in my electorate, is almost 90 years old. The membership is strong. The Stawell Gift winner and Tamsin Lewis are members, and Cathy Freeman is a club mentor.

The club's track in Hampton was last upgraded in 1999. I look forward to working with President Ruby Holten and Treasurer Greg Scerri on enhancing club facilities.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON BOWLS CLUB

Tuesday, 27 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:40):

The Hampton Bowls Club will soon celebrate its' 70th birthday. Hampton Bowls is a hub for my local community. In the last year alone social activity has doubled and many community groups call the club's facilities home.

I recently bowled the first jack for the season. I wish the club, Board Chairman Jim Tait and President Ivan Silver well for a successful season.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON CROQUET CLUB

Tuesday, 27 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:41):

Brighton Croquet Club will soon celebrate its' 110th birthday. The club is an institution, as too is its' hearty mushroom soup.

The club is concerned about overdevelopment in every one of its neighbouring streets.

I recently hit the first hoop of the season. I wish club president Marguerite Russell and all club members a successful season.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ELWOOD BOWLS CLUB

Tuesday, 10 September 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:38):

Elwood Bowls Club is a community hub with a terrific age mix of members. Part of that success is the club's close relationship with Elwood College.

Another reason is that the club provides a great opportunity for locals to get together, meet new people and enjoy a game of bowls.

I recently opened the season for the Club. I wish Club President Owen Hourigan and the whole team every success for the season.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYCISS

Tuesday, 10 September 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:38):

The Bayside Community Information & Support Services is a not-for-profit charity that provides a range of much-needed services to my community.

I recently met with Manager Karyn Doyle and the team to talk about the incredible work they provide, including up to a dozen food and blanket care packages for the homeless each week.

Their work, with the support of Bayside volunteers, is invaluable.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ELWOOD SCOUT GROUP

Tuesday, 10 September 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:38):

The 1st Elwood Scouts Group is an institution in my community.

I recently celebrated the year with the group and congratulated three Scouts who were awarded the Australian Scout Medallion. I also recognised Group President Mark Richardson for 10 years of volunteerism.

I congratulate Group Leader Tony Ashcroft, Leader Catherine Gulliver and the group on their successes and wish them well for the future.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON MEN'S SHED

Tuesday, 10 September 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:39):

Men's Shed has opened a new site in Dendy Street, Brighton. The shed is an updated version of the backyard shed, an iconic part of our culture.

The community-based organisation provides men with the opportunity to come together to exchange ideas, learn new skills, work on community projects and most importantly build long-term friendships.

I wish Roger Tyler and the shed team every success.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ST LEONARD'S UNITING CHURCH, BRIGHTON

Thursday, 17 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:59):

St Leonard's Uniting Church in Brighton has launched a special coffee mug challenge that encourages each of us to put aside \$4 each week.

The funds raised will be directed entirely towards those suffering homelessness.

Congratulations to Minister Kim Cain and Barry Schofield from the church on the initiative, which is now being rolled out across the Uniting Church.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

CABRINI BRIGHTON

Thursday, 17 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:59):

We have all been touched by a friend, relative or loved one who has had dementia.

Cabrini Brighton recently launched a joint partnership project with Dementia Australia aimed at creating a purpose-designed dementia-friendly rehabilitation environment in a hospital setting.

The initiative is an Australian first and one that respectfully supports our relatives, friends and loved ones.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

VICTORIAN AMATEUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Thursday, 17 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:00):

The Victorian Amateur Football Association, which is based in my electorate, is the largest community amateur sporting organisation.

Though certain core facilities at Elsternwick Park have been updated, other associated infrastructure critically requires improvement.

For example, there is currently no spectator seating, there are not enough public bathrooms and the field has poor lighting.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYLEY HOUSE

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:56):

Bayley House is a special organisation that offers support to the intellectually disabled.

The organisation has operated for seven decades, and their Christmas concert is a much-loved calendar feature.

I want to acknowledge the leadership of Board Chair Rhonda Whitfield and Chief Executive Officer Warwick Cavanagh.



SCHOOLS AND KINDERGARTENS

MEMBERS STATEMENT

HAMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tuesday, 19 February 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:48):

I rise to congratulate this year's school leaders at Hampton Primary School. As a new Member of Parliament one of the greatest joys I have had was to meet the 30 new student leaders at Hampton Primary School as they were presented with their leadership badges.

What impressed me was not just the 30 that were awarded a leadership role but the 30 more children that put up their hand for a leadership position. I congratulate the new leaders and those other children who bravely put up their hand.

Hampton primary is a special school located in the heart of Hampton. Like Hampton itself, the school's population has grown dramatically. It has roughly doubled in size over the last decade. There are now over 700 students.

That growth has meant the school's infrastructure does need improvement. With an outdated gym that only seats 200 students, the school has developed a plan to build a multipurpose netball facility that can serve as a sporting hub, a school meeting place and a facility for the broader community to use.

I commend the school, led by principal Sue Knight, on their vision. I intend to encourage the government to recognise that vision and invest in the school's future needs.

Finally, I would encourage all members of this place and my whole community to join me at Hampton Primary School's twilight carnival on Friday, 1 March.

ADJOURNMENT

ELWOOD COLLEGE

Tuesday, 19 February 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (19:15):

My adjournment matter this evening is to the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the Minister to commit to funding the proposed Phoenix Centre at Elwood College in Elwood.

Elwood College has a vision to rebuild their existing theatre and gymnasium as a sports, recreation and arts hub that they are calling the Phoenix Centre. Their Phoenix Centre vision would include development of a new competition compliant multi-lined netball-sized indoor court with spectator seating; change rooms and toilets; a recreation/dance/rehearsal studio; multipurpose recreation rooms; court and theatre foyers; dressing rooms; and a refurbished theatre. The sports hub would include an indoor netball facility and covered outdoor basketball courts.

With a shortage of community sporting space in the City of Port Phillip, the project is timely and much needed. In fact the Phoenix Centre project would be a game changer not only for Elwood College but also the Elwood community more broadly. Their vision is backed up by a comprehensive feasibility study and business case that clearly identify a current and growing shortage of sports courts in the region; the significant role the theatre plays for community performing arts participation; and that the facilities are needed to improve sport, recreation and performing arts opportunities for students and the broader community.

Elwood is a vibrant and growing community. In fact over the next six years Elwood College will grow from 900 to 1500 students. And what makes Elwood College so special is that it is the heartbeat of the Elwood community. Not only

is the site an important place for learning during the day but it is also a place for the community outside of school hours. Community groups actively use the space to recreate, to perform and to practise their arts.

I cannot reiterate how strongly I support Elwood College and their vision for the Phoenix Centre. I congratulate the school, led by Principal Rhonda Holt, and the school parent body, who have done much of the heavy lifting in putting pen to paper on this project. I call on the Minister, in the lead-up to the budget, to recognise the importance of Elwood College and their proposed Phoenix Centre and to commit to funding this important project and make this vision a reality.

ADJOURNMENT

ELSTERNWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wednesday, 6 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (19:09):

My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the Minister to commit funding to Elsternwick Primary School.

Elsternwick Primary is located in a part of my electorate that will see significant change over coming years. That change offers the school an opportunity as more families move into the area. Having spoken to the school council and many in the parent body, I know that parents are enthusiastic about the future, but they have impressed upon me how imperative it is for this school to receive the funding it needs.

Nestled amongst gum trees, Elsternwick Primary School has serviced the region for 130 years. There are currently 560 children at the school. Though it is historic and beautiful, managing the original buildings and maintaining the gum trees does expend a significant proportion of school funding, leaving additional works up to the hardworking parent body's generous goodwill.

The new principal has led positive change for the school. I have found his passion for children's literacy particularly impressive. Children have been given the opportunity not only to build reading corners in each classroom but to design them in a creative way.

Parents have spoken to me about the way their children are embracing books in the classroom. I remember finding my love for reading and taking part in the 'ribbit' reading challenge as a boy, setting myself the goal of attaining the '100 books read' certificate.

Elsternwick Primary is adjacent to the New Street public housing site, which is one of

the sites earmarked by the government for renewal. Currently there are 127 low-level apartments there. Under the renewal project we will see the number grow to some 300 apartments, 160 of which will be earmarked for private ownership.

No matter what your view of the development design, it will bring significant change and growth to the area, as too will the activation of one of the ovals at Elsternwick Park south for sport during winter and the repurposing of Elsternwick Park north into an environmental park and wetland.

In short, many more people will be living and recreating in the area over the coming years. That brings opportunity for Elsternwick Primary, but only if the school's infrastructure is ready.

To meet that future demand the school will need air conditioning in their main building, repair of the historic but rotting window frames, an upgrade of their prep and gym bathrooms, refurbishment of their outdated portable classrooms, including the removal of asbestos, and improvements to their oval and tired play equipment.

I call on the Minister, in the lead-up to the budget, to recognise the importance of Elsternwick Primary School and commit to investing the funds the school needs to meet future demand.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

LADY FORSTER KINDERGARTEN

Tuesday, 7 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:50):

Lady Forster Kindergarten is a special kindergarten located on the Elwood foreshore that celebrates its' 95th anniversary this year. Lady Forster is also unique in that it is located right on the beach.

Lady Forster is an integrated part of the Elwood community and also delivers an exceptional program through its' coastal curriculum in which children learn about the bay and the foreshore ecosystem.

I recently visited Lady Forster to welcome a South Korean delegation who were visiting Australia. The delegation leader spoke to me about the similarities between our foreshore and Busan in South Korea, where they are from. The delegation also took part in a welcome to country ceremony.

I congratulate the kindergarten on being leaders in their field and for hosting the recent delegation.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

GARDENVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tuesday, 30 April 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:17):

Gardenvale Primary School is a special school that is uniquely set across two campuses in the same Brighton East Street.

Led by Principal Janine Hall and Assistant Principal Julie Pitts, the school represents what is best about our education system and what can be achieved for our children.

The school are frontrunners at teaching our children about environmental leadership. The school have implemented community rubbish clean-ups that they call 'emu bobs', they encourage a zero-waste approach and have removed bins from the playground, and they encourage children to bring reusable containers for canteen lunches.

At a recent school assembly that I attended we learned that two children had been so disturbed by beach litter that they spent their holiday cleaning.

I congratulate the school on its' environmental leadership.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON BEACH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Monday, 27 May 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:22):

Brighton Beach Primary School is a historic school in my community. It was opened in April 1878 as an orphanage.

After receiving a sweet email from students Madi and Cerys I recently joined a school assembly. The two girls had written because they wanted a Torres Strait Islander flag to fly because, in their words, 'We wanted to show that we are inclusive of all Australians and cultures'.

At the assembly I presented the flag and congratulated the winners of a recent spelling bee competition.

I was most impressed by the school leadership program, which allows the children to develop action plans that encourage communication and friendship. Leaders take active roles, like becoming yard peacemakers and promoting engagement at a designated friendship tree. The leaders will then work to take their plans to the wider Bayside community.

I want to congratulate Principal Beverly May and Assistant Principal Kim Ancrum for their positive leadership of the school.

ADJOURNMENT

GARDENVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tuesday, 28 May 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (19:06):

My adjournment matter is to the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the Minister to commit funding to Gardenvale Primary School.

Gardenvale Primary School is a special school that is uniquely set across two campuses in the same Brighton East Street. The school will soon celebrate their 100-year anniversary, having opened in 1922. A key feature behind the school's longstanding success has been the ongoing commitment of families to the school community.

A positive ethos is a hallmark of Gardenvale Primary School. That ethos can be seen across everything the school does and the way the children interact with each other and the wider community. You can also see that ethos in the school mascot. The school has developed a mascot called HERRRBY based on the values of honesty, empathy, respect, resilience, responsibility and being yourself.

The one piece of the puzzle that is missing for Gardenvale Primary School is government investment that backs the school and ensures that it is ready for the future. This historic school is deserving of investment. Their needs are worthy.

Despite being such a close-knit school, they are unable to meet together unless they assemble in the schoolyard. It means that the school often cannot meet during summer heat or winter rain. The school would dearly like to have a covered meeting space. To that end they have a plan to install a permanent shade structure in the yard.

Additionally, the school has a proud tradition in the creative arts. One of the difficulties for students with the current art facilities is that the art room is on the third floor of the school and only accessible via a single small set of stairs. Not only is accessibility a concern for students with physical challenges, but the lack of easy access would also be of concern should the school require urgent evacuation.

To enhance their art program the school has proposed turning an external ground floor building into an art space. Such a conversion would be of reasonable cost but overwhelming benefit.

Finally, under current policy the school is provided minimal funding for its' administration of the two campuses because the campuses are in the same street. Despite their proximity, the administrative costs of running the school would be the same as if the campuses were miles apart. Administrative funding recognising this challenge would be welcomed.

Gardenvale Primary School, led by Principal Janine Hall and assistant principal Julie Pitts, is an integral part of my community, and I look forward to the Minister's response.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON SECONDARY COLLEGE

Wednesday, 5 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:55):

Brighton Secondary College is an impressive school led by Richard Minack that prides itself on providing inclusive, comprehensive and wide-ranging educational opportunities. It is also a large school that serves 1200 students.

I recently visited the school for arts and international week. For the first time the school hosted a smoking ceremony and welcome to country. As part of the welcome, Boon Wurrung elder Janet Galpin spoke about the importance of leading lives with purpose.

The school has an incredible arts program. In late March, I attended the school's annual house chorals competition. One of the highlights of chorals is a performance by the teachers. Congratulations also to Ellie Kara on being awarded best solo performance.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ST COLUMBA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (10:14):

St Columba's Catholic Primary School is a special school in my community. The school, ably led by Daniella Maddalena, was a finalist in the ResourceSmart School of the Year Awards.

In 2018 the local foreshore became the classroom for students as they transformed their learning process and learned about Indigenous history, scientific knowledge and improving the Port Phillip environment.

I congratulate the school on their initiative and leadership.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

LADY FORSTER KINDERGARTEN

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:33):

My constituency question is for the Minister for Education, and I ask the Minister whether this government has a secret plan to close Elwood-based Lady Forster Kindergarten by not renewing its' lease.

Lady Forster Kindergarten is a special kindergarten located on the Elwood foreshore. It celebrates its' 95th anniversary this year.

Lady Forster is also unique in that it is located on the beach. Lady Forster is an integrated part of the Elwood community and also delivers an exceptional program through its coastal curriculum, where children learn about Port Phillip Bay and the foreshore ecosystem.

The kindergarten is an integral and much-loved part of my community, and it is unthinkable that the government could be planning on shutting the doors on the kindergarten and the hundreds of Elwood families it services.

I look forward to the Minister's response.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

WILSON STREET KINDERGARTEN

Tuesday, 13 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:25):

One day each week Wilson Street Kindergarten runs Bush Kindergarten.

Bush kinder is preschool education for children held exclusively outdoors and encourages children to play, explore and learn in the natural environment.

I recently joined the group as they built, climbed, and had a lot of fun.

Congratulations to Debbie Roper and the team at Wilson Street Kindergarten on the initiative.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ST LEONARD'S COLLEGE

Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:59):

I recently took part in a panel discussion hosted by the student-led sustainability council and youth action groups from St Leonard's College in Brighton.

The panel focused on student-raised environmental issues. Students from across all year levels took part and asked questions which proved their interest in the future of our local natural environment and the good health of our world.

Congratulations to Riley and Ashley and Principal Stuart Davis on their initiative and leadership.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BRIGHTON BEACH CLEAN-UP

Thursday, 31 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:56):

Eight-year-old Milla started cleaning Brighton Beach after school because she wanted to see our beach clean.

Soon Milla enlisted the help of her mother, Marta, and classmates from Firbank Grammar School. Together they collected over 100 kilograms of rubbish.

Last week I joined Milla and her whole year level as we collected almost 12 kilograms of rubbish from our foreshore.

Milla is an extraordinary young girl.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

BAYSIDE UPSTANDERS PROJECT

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:55):

Each year 100 children from five Bayside primary schools, including Brighton Beach Primary School and Hampton Primary School, work together on the Upstanders project.

The project teaches children not to be bystanders to bullying.

The project began under the leadership of Brighton Beach Principal Beverly May.

With one in four children affected by bullying, this project is making a difference in my community.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

SUE KNIGHT

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:56):

Sue Knight has led Hampton Primary School as Principal for 10 years.

Sue is a wonderful community leader who encourages children to be enthusiastic, curious learners.

Thank you for your leadership, Sue.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

RHONDA HOLT

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:57):

After 10 years as Principal of Elwood College and seven years as Principal of Elwood Primary School, Rhonda Holt is moving into the Department.

Rhonda is the backbone of education in Elwood and will be sorely missed.

We wish Rhonda well.



ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Wednesday, 20 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:43):

I am particularly pleased to rise on this issue.

At the outset I want to put my view on record. Traditional energy resources are limited. Our climate is changing. Renewable resources on the other hand are sustainable, support a balanced environment and can be naturally replenished. Renewable energy is the future. We as legislators need to lead and support the transformation of our energy market to renewables.

Those comments are not simply motherhood statements. The Australian Energy Market Operator has also projected that Victoria's energy industry will shift towards renewables. AEMO has projected fundamental change in our energy generation over the next 20 years. Its report Integrated System Plan, released mid last year, predicts that roughly two-thirds of power generation will come from wind and solar, and I quote:

Record levels of newly committed renewable generation development ... is already on a path to wide-scale, fundamental transformation.

As a new legislator in this place, that gives me comfort because I know that positive change is well underway and that transformation will happen in my lifetime.

What concerns me is that Victoria is unprepared for that wide scale transformation. On a state-by-state comparison Victoria is notably behind. All states have aggressive plans for renewable transformation. However, this

government is yet to develop the strategic planning pieces that will support wide scale transformation. We need to do more than set aspirational targets.

We need only look over our border into New South Wales to see how that government has supported change in a concrete way. In November 2018 that government released its particularly strong road map through its Transmission Infrastructure Strategy. The Victorian government has yet to show similar leadership.

We have already been handicapped by this lack of strategic planning. Industry is becoming increasingly concerned that this government needs to do more than set targets. In fact industry is now concerned that without a plan the government's target will become unachievable. Industry is also concerned that the government has not got a grip on the regulatory reform needed to make this plan happen, especially when Labor's default position is not smart regulation; it is over-regulation. Twenty years ago Victoria was a national leader on energy. Twenty years ago we were a net exporter of energy. Labor has been in government for most of the last 20 years. We are now a state of blackouts and a state that is forced to import energy.

In late January hundreds of thousands of Victorians suffered blackouts, and it was not the first time that we have seen them. Many Victorians were affected, including residents in my own electorate in Brighton, Brighton East, Elwood and Hampton. I recall a constituent of mine phoning me in tears because he was so concerned about his 74 and 76-year-old parents. I also remember the effect of blackouts on my local small businesses. When a small business is forced to close its doors early it hurts them. It really hurts them. Those Victorians affected by blackouts were left angry by the misleading statements of our government. In fact only a day before this year's blackouts Minister D'Ambrosio guaranteed Victorians that she was absolutely confident there would be no blackouts.

Those broken promises left Victorians incensed, and it was disappointing to see our Premier overtly and trickily mislead Victorians as to the cause of the

problem. Instead of showing leadership and setting out a pathway for change, the Premier diverted the issue and blamed a former Premier. The Premier's intervention was political and cheap. What the blackouts have shown is that we are not properly prepared for the transformation of our energy market. With all due respect to the member for Mill Park, you can see that in the drafting of the matter of public importance.

What industry has consistently said to me is that cultivating a renewable energy industry will not happen overnight, and it will not happen by itself. Effectively we are heading down a path of fundamentally changing our energy market model from a model with a small number of energy generators to one with tens of thousands of generators. It is exciting, but there is growing concern from industry that it will take more than a target to achieve that change. One of their chief concerns is the issue of transmission and connectability. Our model has not been designed to plug in numerous thousands of new energy generators, nor do our current regulations support such a transformation.

Changing our energy generation model will require significant strategic planning and infrastructure work. Only recently Stuart Benjamin of the government's own Grampians New Energy Taskforce highlighted that point. He belled the cat by saying that limitations on infrastructure are inhibiting renewable projects, and I quote:

We've got \$3 billion worth of projects currently underway ...and if some of the limitations that we're seeing in terms of infrastructure are addressed, we could possibly double or even triple that number.

James Prest of the Australian National University's Energy Change Institute has voiced similar concerns. Although the Australian Energy Market Operator has suggested as much as 5 000 megawatts of renewable energy could be generated in the state's west, Prest says:

It's really a bit like building a high-tech, modern greenhouse for agricultural production, and then attempting to get the produce to market down a one-lane bush track, which frequently becomes flooded.

That analogy paints a very clear picture.

It is not just industry experts who have spoken about these issues. The Australian Energy Market Operator itself says in its Integrated System Plan report, and I quote:

The projected portfolio of new resources involves substantial amounts of geographically dispersed renewable generation, placing a greater reliance on the role of the transmission network. A much larger network footprint with transmission investment will be needed to efficiently connect and share these low fuel cost resources.

We need the right infrastructure, and this government should have planned for it yesterday.

One of my other great concerns is not just lack of preparedness. I am also concerned that other states are receiving a competitive advantage because our government has been slow in this policy space. In January the federal Labor Party turned its back on this state. They turned their back because they know that this government has not put in place the strategic plans to transform our energy model.

In January, federal Labor announced a \$1 billion commitment to make Gladstone in Queensland the hydrogen capital of Australia. There is no doubt in my mind that hydrogen is a particularly exciting fuel and an opportunity for our country. The federal Liberal Party recognises that opportunity too. Hydrogen is close to zero emissions, and with help it can be commercially viable. Other countries have recognised its potential and are getting on board. In its recent report, Gas Vision 2050, Energy Networks Australia has said, and I quote:

Exporting hydrogen from Australia ... provides a significant economic opportunity. For example, Japan has developed a roadmap for hydrogen,

and Japanese businesses are looking at Australian natural energy resources to supply that hydrogen.

Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Finkel, who is also chair of the Hydrogen Strategy Group, has said, and I quote:

Australian hydrogen exports could contribute \$1.7 billion and provide 2800 jobs by 2030 ... (with) many of the opportunities ... concentrated in regional communities.

Yet despite the federal Labor leader hailing from Victoria, he turned his back on this state. Federal Labor's decision giving preference to Queensland is wrong and shows that Bill Shorten is no friend of Victoria. I am yet to hear a whimper from this state Labor government on that announcement.

Only this week, BAE Economics released its report into the economic consequences of alternative Australian climate approaches. The report assesses the two major federal parties' approaches to emission reduction, namely the coalition's intention to meet its Paris agreement commitment of 26 to 28 per cent emissions reduction by 2030, and Labor's target of 45 per cent emissions reduction over that same time frame. BAE's report found that under a worst-case scenario, Labor's policy approach could cost 336,000 jobs by 2030.

What the report should remind this Parliament is that transformative change must be planned and done responsibly. As a state, we must also be ready to put our best interests first. When it comes to renewable technology like hydrogen this state should be leading this country.

I call on this government to bring together the best minds in this state and put in place a roadmap that will see the transformation of our energy market become a reality.

Members interjecting.

ADJOURNMENT

WASTE AND RECYCLING MANAGEMENT

Thursday, 21 March 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:11):

My adjournment matter this afternoon is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the action I seek is for the Minister to provide a written update to me on what concrete plans the state government has to deal with Victoria's recycling future.

As you know, there has been a recycling crisis gripping Victoria. The clock started ticking when China decided that it would no longer accept our recyclable waste. Despite the increasing urgency, we did little at a state level to develop infrastructure and prepare us for the inevitable crunch. That crunch hit in February.

In February the stockpiles of recyclable material became dire. As a result the government authority charged with environment protection ordered that recyclable stock be thrown into general landfill.

Victorians are champions of sustainability. That is why it is a national disgrace that the state government has sat on its hands and done little to develop infrastructure that could support the sustainability of recyclables.

As at 12 March, I am advised, Port Phillip council had diverted almost 658 tonnes of recyclables to landfill at a cost of \$79,000. Elwood, which falls into Port Phillip council, is part of my electorate. Elwood residents are incredibly

concerned about the environment and are leaders in sustainability matters.

The remainder of my electorate falls into Bayside Council. Although they are not affected, I understand that Bayside currently collects, on average, 210 tonnes of recyclables per week. With the landfill levy at \$64.30 per tonne, a similar diversion would cost Bayside approximately \$13,500 per week. In addition to the landfill levy, fees of \$18,000 per week would also be payable by Bayside to dispose of recyclables to landfill.

Residents across my electorate are overwhelmingly frustrated by the recycling crisis. They want to know how we as a state will get ourselves out of this mess. I am yet to hear a whimper from the government that sounds even remotely like a solution.

Residents in my community want to know that their policymakers value sustainability. Residents constantly ask me what the government is doing to invest in waste-to-energy technologies.

They have also asked me repeatedly why the Premier has trialled initiatives in other policy areas but does not support trialling environmental policies, like a container deposit scheme, that would help sustain our environment.

These are valid questions from my constituents. Some \$500 million has been paid by Victorian households and businesses as a bin tax to increase recycling and reduce waste to landfill, money that just sits in the government's bank account. It is time to do something. It is time to move forward and plan for a sustainable future. I look forward to the Minister's response.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

Wednesday, 1 May 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:02):

A strong Australian economy ensures prosperity—prosperity for our state and for our community to reach their full potential. As a nation we have had almost 30 years of consecutive economic growth. But a strong economy should never be taken for granted. Many in our community have only ever experienced a flourishing economy where interest rates are low, as too is unemployment. They have never experienced a contracting economy, let alone a recession. Those that lived through the last recession know that economies are not always prosperous.

That is one of the reasons it is so important to be represented by a fiscally responsible government, because governments have a role to keep the economy strong and a role in ensuring that a strong economy delivers community benefit. As we know, governments have control of some policy levers that can stimulate growth or undermine it. By its delaying of the state budget we now know that the Victorian government intends to pull the wrong policy levers. We know because the government has delayed the budget in the hope of political advantage until after the federal election.

The budget delay is in addition to turning this Parliament into a part-time Parliament. In comparison to the rest of Australia, in terms of sitting days this Parliament is almost the least active in the country. This government has set a part-time parliamentary pace to hide from accountability and it has delayed the budget to hide the growing financial challenges of profligate spending as parts of the economy soften. Unfortunately we must endure this ongoing charade for a further month, until 27 May.

What we already know is that Victoria is the highest taxed state in Australia

and this government has introduced 12 new or increased taxes. It is now safe to assume that the government will announce new and higher taxes in their budget later this month. We know because the Treasurer has effectively confirmed it.

Last month the Treasurer said that the budget would be 'a budget of hard choices', and only yesterday he would not deny making changes to tax arrangements. We know that it is safe to assume that Victorians are about to be hit by new taxes because the government is spending more than it has to spend. That projected spend led the Treasurer to reveal in the final minutes before the election that the government intended to double the state's debt ceiling. That intention will lift the debt ceiling from 6 per cent to 12 per cent of gross state product.

Not long after the election we learned from the Parliamentary Budget Office that Labor's policies will blow out net debt from \$22.5 billion to \$38.8 billion over the next three years. In other words, Labor's net debt to gross state product will increase from 5 per cent to 7.3 percent over that period. Although the government would have you believe that all of their spending is on infrastructure, we know that is not true.

As we saw in the Victorian Public Sector Commission report, the state's bureaucracy has grown by over 30 percent in less than four years. This level of spending is only sustainable if money keeps pouring into the state coffers, and we now know that rate is slowing and will slow further. There is growing concern that if federal Labor is to implement its policy agenda, that slowing will become more profound.

At a state level stamp duty makes up about 30 per cent of the total tax take. We know that the slowing property market and the real reduction in property prices will have a growing structural impact. Part of that gap is currently being filled by other property taxes, including taxes on investors who own multiple properties, taxes on overseas investors and taxes on vacant properties. Under this government land tax collections have increased from \$1.7 billion to \$3.4

billion— a 96 percent increase. Despite a slowing property market, the land tax bills arrived this year based on property valuations made in early 2018. Constituents have looked at their bills and repeatedly asked why those bills are based on above current market value.

Almost two months ago I wrote to the Premier and asked him directly, and it took him a month to refer the letter to the Treasurer. The Treasurer still has not shown the basic courtesy of responding. With a delayed budget you would think the Treasurer has had the time to attend to basic courtesies.

Almost a month ago I wrote to the Treasurer about the vacant residential land tax—another letter the Treasurer has disappointingly failed to respond to. One of the most short-sighted effects of that tax is that it does not account for diplomats and defence workers who travel overseas to represent our state or our country. It is unreasonable for the government to expect Australian families willing to represent our country to choose between selling their family homes and incurring a heavy tax punishment for their service.

Because economic responsibility has been a hallmark of the current federal government I believe this government has been constrained from some of the more extreme views in their party room, including a push to introduce death taxes.

By contrast, the federal Labor opposition has unashamedly modelled itself as a big-spending and big-taxing alternative. Setting aside whether this approach is electorally appealing, federal Labor's fiscal policy approach is a genuine risk. Labor's underlining intention to redistribute assets is a risk to Australians who have worked hard for their whole lives—Australians who will be self-reliant in their retirement. But more than that, Labor's policies will not only impact upon private assets.

Labor's aggressive policies were designed to curb aspects of a strong market, especially in the area of property and asset holdings. That aggressive approach will have a profound impact on those areas as they have now softened. Many, including business, are now concerned that federal Labor's policy approach,

described by some as the politics of envy, might tip the scales on a fragile economy.

A federal election campaign is a cauldron where weaknesses in our politicians and their policies are exposed. During the campaign federal Labor's policies have been exposed as lacking depth. This should worry Australians because policies need to be more than sound bites. Despite the federal Leader of the Opposition brushing off these issues as well meaning, it is clear that Labor knowingly intends to implement punitive policy and in some cases implement policy that it does not fully understand. That is why when asked about the real cost of Labor's election policies, the federal Leader of the Opposition has repeatedly refused to answer the question. If we look to their state Labor counterparts, it is safe to assume that the real cost will not be fully revealed until after the election, and it will surely be a massive cost blowout. Like this government with its hiding of the state budget, federal Labor will do everything it can to hide its true intention.

What we do know is that if federal Labor is elected, new taxes will start on 1 July. In fact a vote for the federal Labor Party is a vote for \$387 billion in additional taxes. That is equivalent to an extra yearly household tax bill of \$5400 within a decade. It is worth looking closely at some of those policies to see what impact they will have on this country and on this state, especially as the federal opposition leader has publicly forgotten what his own policies are.

Only recently, when asked if Labor planned to introduce new taxes on superannuation, the federal Leader of the Opposition claimed they had 'no plans to increase taxes on superannuation'. No plans? In fact, Labor has announced four superannuation policy taxes, four taxes that will see a \$34 billion hit to 1 million Australians. Those policies include abolishing concessional catch-up contributions, hitting 230,000 people; reversing deductions for personal contributions, hitting around 800,000 workers; reducing the non-concessional contribution cap from \$10,000 to \$75,000, hitting around 2,000 people; and reducing the threshold on concessional contributions from \$250,000 to \$200,000.

When challenged on his claim that Labor has no plan to increase superannuation taxes, the opposition leader bizarrely suggested that he must have forgotten those four taxes. That is right—the alternative leader of this country has a policy platform that will hit hundreds of thousands of Australians and he would have us believe that he has forgotten they exist.

But Labor has not only been forgetful with policy. Over the election campaign we have seen their policies unravel, policies that have been shown to lack substance or depth. It is clear that those policies appear to have been announced without a responsible understanding of their impact. One of those areas is carbon emissions and renewable energy. Labor has announced an intention to cut carbon emissions by 45 per cent and set a 50 per cent renewable energy target. Despite those policies requiring a significant economic transformation, the policies disturbingly lack a plan for delivering them. When asked about the cost of the policy, the Leader of the Opposition said:

I can't tell you what that cost will be ...

It gets worse—one of his own shadow Ministers said that the policy is 'impossible' to cost. But we know that is not true, because BAEconomics has costed them. BAEconomics recently released its report *Economic Consequences of Alternative Australian Climate Policy Approaches*. The report found that under a worst-case scenario, Labor's policy approach will cost the Australian economy \$472 billion, cut more than 336,000 jobs and increase wholesale electricity prices by more than 58 per cent.

And Victorians should know what a lack of policy detail in this space looks like, because this state government's own renewable transformation policy similarly lacks policy depth. This state government is yet to develop the strategic infrastructure planning pieces that will support wide-scale renewable transformation. Effectively, both state and federal Labor have aspirational targets but are yet to develop the infrastructure roadmap to get us there. The BAE report should serve as a wake-up call. Transformative change must be

planned and done responsibly.

Alarming, the environmental policies that Labor has announced are not the only ones that lack depth or that have the potential to cause economic damage. Labor has announced its intention to change negative gearing and capital gains tax arrangements. Currently, 1.3 million Australians access negative gearing measures. Two-thirds who negatively gear a rental property have a taxable income of less than \$87,000 and almost three-quarters have just one investment property. In short, Labor's housing policies will hit some of the hardest working in our community. Industry has also exposed the broader danger of the policy.

Moody's Analytics economist Katrina Ell has said that 'already-slowing conditions in the investor segment of the market would be exacerbated', and that:

As investor participation had already slowed, national home values would be expected to reach a slightly deeper trough and have a slower recovery...

In addition, the Master Builders Association of Victoria has reviewed the policy and found it would lead to up to 42 000 fewer new dwellings being built, 32,000 less full-time jobs and an \$11.8 billion drop in building activity. Master Builders Association chief executive Denita Wawn has said that there is no longer a need for Labor's policy, as the property market has cooled and investor activity has curtailed. When the blowtorch was turned up on Labor's policy, they simply deleted it from their own website.

Victorians should not only be concerned about what Labor means for the federal economy; they should also be concerned about aspects of their world view. We must never forget that Labor's deputy leader, Tanya Plibersek, once described Israel as a rogue state and its Prime Minister as a war criminal. Similar views have recently been expressed by a growing chorus in their ranks. Former Labor member for Fremantle, Melissa Parke, was forced to quit as a candidate in this election after claiming that Israel has a fully fledged system of apartheid.

Alarmingly, Western Australian Labor MP Josh Wilson was also exposed for suggesting at a meeting attended by Labor senator Sue Lines that Israeli checkpoints were a place that Palestinians went to die. In addition, Labor's Northern Territory Senate candidate resigned after sharing videos of a known anti-Semite.

Disturbingly, in my own community, Labor has preferenced a candidate in Goldstein who is the convenor of a Melbourne fan club of that anti-Semite. And Labor did not just preference him once—the same candidate ran as a candidate in my electorate in the state election, and Labor preferenced him then too. On several occasions, the Brighton Labor campaign made official complaints about the preferencing deal to their party's head office. Not only did they maintain their preferencing arrangement, but they did a deal with the same candidate six months later. Shame! These repeated examples of anti-Semitism show an alarming pattern of behaviour.

Only today, another candidate, Luke Creasey, who is Labor's candidate for Melbourne, has reportedly been exposed as having shared rape jokes and pornographic material. He has not been disendorsed.

Australians need to think long and hard at this election about the policies offered and about who they trust to keep the economy strong. A federal Labor win will embolden this state government even further. In fact I think this state government forever dreams of being bigger spending and bigger taxing. A federal Labor win will absolutely guarantee it. It will lock it in. The choice on 18 May is not between the status quo and perfection.

The current government is a competent government and a government of good character led by a Prime Minister who is a very, very good man. Again, the choice at this election is not between the status quo and perfection; it is a choice between the current government and Bill Shorten.

ADJOURNMENT

BULLYING

Thursday, 2 May 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:32):

My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the Minister to update me on what policies and programs the government has in place to assist with the complex issue of ameliorating the bullying of young people. One of the frightening things about bullying is that because of social media children can now be cyberbullied at home. The only way for our children to be shielded is for us to accept that locking our front doors will not lock out a bully. We also need to encourage children to understand that they have a right to personal space. Moreover, an added challenge is encouraging a bullied young person to let someone know.

A recent study conducted by Yourtown revealed that only 40 per cent of cyberbullied young people had disclosed their experiences to a parent or carer. Studies have also shown that one in four Australian students are bullied, one in five are cyber bullied and children who are physically bullied are six to nine months behind their non-victimised peers academically.

I recently met with Monique Mastrobattista. Monique was bullied to breaking point after bruising her face falling down stairs at school. Rather than giving up Monique wrote a book to help other young people. The book is called *My Discreet Bully*. Monique visited this Parliament—in fact she stood right there—and told me her message: get kind. Monique's positive message affirmed my view that parents and carers have primary responsibility for building self-esteem and encouraging positive thinking amongst our young children.

Chelsea Blake Aylward from my community is helping to do exactly that. She has created beautifully illustrated 'I am me' positive affirmation cards that encourage positive thoughts. The cards are based on dealing with bullying and improving self-esteem and body confidence. I often spend time reading the cards with my own daughters, and I have chosen to provide sets of the cards to all of the primary schools in my community.

Many of the schools in my community are taking a leadership role in this space. For example, Gardenvale Primary School has developed a school mascot called HERRRBY, based on the values of honesty, empathy, respect, resilience, responsibility and being yourself. Though just a mascot, HERRRBY has brought an incredible culture to the school, so much so that HERRRBY is part of the school vocabulary, and if children make asides, others will remind them that HERRRBY would not say something like that. Principal Janine Hall and her team are doing an incredible job.

It is heartening to also know that there are also incredible organisations working on these issues, including the Alannah and Madeline Foundation and Bully Zero.

I look forward to the Minister's response.

BILL DEBATE

APPROPRIATION (2019-2020) BILL 2019

Tuesday, 28 May 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:43):

The Premier claims this budget ‘strikes the right balance’, and the Treasurer claims his budget is ‘fair’. Laughably, the budget has been slapped with cheap slogan wrap claiming it delivers for all Victorians. Well, Victorians will work out the truth; they will not be fooled by this government’s ridiculous spin. And my electorate has already worked out that it has been ignored again.

I say to this Parliament and to Victoria: this is a budget that has no puff. And this is a budget of envy—a budget that strikes at the heart of Australia’s egalitarian nature. This is a budget moulded in Bill Shorten’s image and values—values rejected by the Australian community only two weeks ago at the federal election. Make no mistake: the federal election was a turning point for our nation.

Australians delivered a profound message. This budget shows that the state government has ignored that message. Few elections have so clearly tested the essence of our two major parties. At the federal election Labor stood on a policy platform true to their socialist roots. Their policy agenda, like this budget, was envy based.

By contrast, the federal Liberal Party was returned on an egalitarian policy agenda, on a belief that hard work should be rewarded, a belief that when you have a go, you will get a go. Australians rightly rejected Labor’s approach, and

yet this state government has released a budget that has cooked in that failed ideology. This budget proves that the state government is cut from the same cloth as its federal comrades.

Victorians deserve governments that are fiscally responsible, who manage their money fairly and well, because governments should apportion funds based on need and take seriously their responsibility to keep the economy strong as well as ensuring that a strong economy delivers community benefit. Governments can do that through the policy levers they control. Done right, those levers will stimulate growth. Done wrong, those levers will undermine it. This budget shows the government intends to pull the wrong policy levers.

This government's policy approach is simplistic and lazy: spend more, borrow more, tax more. Victoria is the highest taxed state in Australia. Since it was elected, the government has introduced or increased taxes 20 times. This budget alone increases tax revenue by a further \$832 million. Taxes are now up by 36 per cent. This has returned an additional \$24.4 billion. Debt has increased by \$35 billion—from \$20 billion to \$54.9 billion. The increase in debt is equivalent to \$14,000 for every Victorian household. Land taxes are up by 109 per cent. Payroll taxes are up by 27 per cent.

Public sector wages have blown out by 42 per cent. And yet, laughably, the government claim to be prudent financial managers. Bizarrely, the Treasurer appeared to contend in question time today that it would be economically irresponsible not to increase taxes.

Ms Addison interjected.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wendouree!

Mr NEWBURY: Treasurer, prudent financial managers do not overspend. Nor is it particularly clever to fill the overspending gap with borrowings and increased taxes, especially when that budgetary tactic lacks a defined strategic approach.

This week the New Zealand government will release their budget. That government has announced structural budgetary reform. Though I am not advocating on behalf of the detail of that reform, the New Zealand government has flagged a number of systematic changes that are worth recognising. Last week the New Zealand Finance Minister stated his belief that there are two weaknesses in the budget process: firstly, that governments do not take a whole-of government approach to developing policy and, secondly, that budgetary decisions are arbitrary.

To counter that, the New Zealand budget will set five priorities and any new spending measure must advocate one of those policy criteria. The approach is aimed at forcing government agencies to work together. Yet again this budget is built on windfall gains through privatisation, increased GST revenue and increased property tax revenue. The property taxes add insult to injury to the existing structural unfairness.

Despite a slowing property market, this year's land tax bills arrived based on property evaluations made in early 2018. It is fundamentally unfair that property taxes, which hold up the budget, are based on above current market values. Another unprincipled element of the budget is the vacant residential land tax. As I have previously raised, one of the most short-sighted effects of the tax is that it does not account for diplomats and defence workers who travel overseas to represent our state or our country. Why should this government expect Australian families representing our country to choose between selling their family homes or incurring a heavy tax punishment for their service? Having found that the previous property tax measures are not enough to fill their ever increasing spending shortfall, this budget has increased further punitive class-motivated measures aimed at, as the Treasurer says, those who can 'afford to pay'. That type of language exposes the cheapness of the Treasurer's politics.

These new measures have been introduced at a time when the Victorian executive director of the Property Council of Australia, Cressida Wall, has

warned that, 'The state government would be foolish to further attack the property industry'. The chief executive officer of Real Estate Institute Victoria said 'The reliance on property taxes is of great concern' and also that the government 'can't keep dipping into the same revenue pot'. Whilst stomping on the property industry, the Treasury yesterday claimed that he could see 'green shoots' in the property sector. Well, Treasurer, we all know through this budget that you are pouring Roundup on those green shoots.

What is also so offensive about the new measures is that they breach Australia's egalitarian ethos; they are discriminatory. So too is the government's dental policy for school children. Now before I make my comments about the dental policy, I would like to give the member for Albert Park, who has shown an odd and ongoing fixation with me, an opportunity to pick up his HB pencil and prepare for his next fanciful and frankly simple parliamentary contribution.

I come from a family of dentists. My father was president of the Victorian branch of the Australian Dental Association and my grandfather was president of the World Dental Federation. In fact my grandfather pioneered the introduction of fluoride in Victoria in 1977. Fluoridation arguably led to the greatest reduction in dental decay in this state. My family has made a significant contribution to public dental health and their contribution recognised the importance of broad-based policy implementation.

By contrast, the government's dental policy is discriminatory. The government has effectively said that children's oral health is less important to children who attend Catholic or independent schools. One-third of children attend a Catholic or independent school; in fact roughly 45 per cent of senior schoolchildren who have their adult teeth attend a Catholic or independent school. In many regional parts of this state the majority of kids go to a Catholic school. Why does this government believe those children are less worthy? All members on both sides of the chamber should stand up for the almost 450,000 children

ignored by this policy.

It is not just me that has seen the flaws in this policy. The president of the peak dental body, Dr Kevin Morris, said yesterday: This money could be better spent providing treatment to children and adults in existing clinics in both the public and private sector willingly ignoring parts of our community is a hallmark of this government—a government that has repeatedly turned its back on my own community and I turn to those issues.

My community knows that our local services and infrastructure are out of date. On my election I committed to being a voice for the forgotten needs of my community, a voice speaking on behalf of the quiet people in my community. Even though taxpayers' funds should be invested based on need, we know this government has made investments based on political advantage. I recently heard a marginal member on the other side of the chamber exclaim that for him and his electorate budget day is like Christmas. Well, of course it is, because this government uses the budget to pork-barrel shamelessly. In fact a school leadership figure in that electorate recently joked with me that the local schools are trying to think of creative ways to take up the money they do not desperately need because the government continues to offer them blank cheques. Yet the neediest causes in my community have been willingly ignored.

On 15 April 83-year-old Hampton grandmother Gloria Holmes took her dog for a walk. It was her regular walk, a walk that her neighbours had seen her walk many times before. Tragically, as Gloria crossed over the rail line in Hampton, she was struck by a train. The most devastating aspect of the tragedy is that my community has called for safety improvements at that rail crossing where she was struck for years.

In fact in April 2017 Public Transport Victoria stated that the crossing: ... has been identified as a higher risk crossing, and is therefore one of the nine high

risk pedestrian crossings planned to be upgraded during 2017/2018.

Despite that promise, the crossing was not updated. When the agitated community contacted Public Transport Victoria demanding to know why the works had been delayed, they stated, two weeks before the last state election, that: A sudden change in the risk profile of certain level crossings in Victoria required that other crossings be prioritised.

A sudden change in the risk profile weeks before an election? Since then a departmental source has advised that the then Minister's office was involved in the decision to deprioritise safety improvements at the Hampton crossing. Let me say that again: I was advised that the Minister's office was involved in deprioritising that crossing.

Sadly there are also other safety concerns that have been ignored in my community. For example, the Elwood community needs a proper pedestrian crossing on Glen Huntly Road to service two schools and a kindergarten. The crossing will help keep Elwood children safe. VicRoads crash data reportedly shows that in the last five years there have been 17 incidents along the Glen Huntly Road in the strip near Elwood Primary School. Eight of those incidents have resulted in an injury. Rather than invest in this much-needed infrastructure, the government is committed to installing a speed sign up the road—a speed sign, that's right—and in the wrong spot. In Brighton there are similar safety concerns at the Dendy Village shopping strip on Hampton Street. Sadly there was a death at that site too: 92-year old grandfather Captain Hector Pirie was tragically killed while crossing the road at the village on his motorised scooter.

My community's safety infrastructure needs have fallen on the deaf ears of this government, and so too are the needs of my local schools. As members, we know that schools are the hubs of our local area. They service local children, families and the wider community. They are often the creative performing arts and sporting hubs. My local schools are exceptional but some of their

infrastructure needs are dire. In one primary school the grade 2 classroom roof is being held up by planks of wood that have been bolted into the ceiling and the roof of another main building leaks each winter.

During the last leak one of the classrooms was flooded and was not safe for use. I have been advised that the department will not commit to replacing the faulty roof and may develop a five-year plan to consider it—a five-year plan! So we wait every winter for that repair. In the same building there is a crack so great in one of the walls that you can stand and watch the trees swaying in the breeze on the outside of the building. At another primary school when you walk into one of their demountables you do not see positive learning posters on the walls; you see warning signs around the classrooms urgently reminding you and the children not to disturb the asbestos. In a building of that same school the floor is collapsing with termite damage and the window frames are rotting. None of these urgent needs have been addressed in this budget.

My community are future thinkers, as too are the leadership figures in my local schools. With projected growth in parts of my community, a number of schools have developed proposals to cater for the future needs of children and the community. Brighton Beach Primary School has a plan to convert a central room into a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics teaching space.

Elwood College has a vision to rebuild their existing theatre and gymnasium as a sports, recreation and arts hub. Hampton Primary School, which has doubled in size over the last decade, has developed a plan to build a multipurpose netball facility that can serve as a sporting hub, a school meeting place and a community facility. Brighton Secondary College has a vision to build a performing arts centre, which would service the school and the broader Bayside community, and Gardenvale Primary School has prioritised installing a covered meeting space so the school can actually assemble together, as well as creating a new, modern and accessible arts space.

But it is not only the more expansive plans that have been ignored in this budget; it is the simple ones too. A number of schools, including Brighton Secondary College, Brighton Beach Primary School and Hampton Primary School, have requested a flag pole to fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at their schools. As they are on busy main roads, they have asked to do that proudly. As two young students recently wrote to me, 'We wanted to include the Torres Strait Islander flag at our school to show that we are inclusive of all Australians and their cultures'. These two young girls then asked me who they should write to, to get a flagpole. Well, I have written to the Minister and have been denied a flagpole at that school and all of the other schools that I have mentioned. Sadly, the government denied those children that simple request.

This budget has failed at delivering for all Victorians. It is a budget that spends, a budget that borrows and a budget that taxes. It is a budget that has simply forgotten that my community exists, except when targeting it with punitive and discriminatory taxes, and most importantly it is a budget of envy.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

SOLAR HOMES PACKAGE

Tuesday, 13 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:25):

The solar industry small businesses in my community are hurting. Elwood resident David Tolliday, a senior solar TAFE instructor and small businessman, told me:

“The Solar Victoria program is a disaster and causing untold damage in solar businesses in Victoria. People are losing their jobs, businesses are closing, and the added stress and uncertainty is a real concern for mental health.”

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

HOMELESSNESS

Wednesday, 14 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:13):

This is a difficult issue, because in our hearts we want all Victorians to have a roof over their heads, and yet too many do not. We know that over 24,000 of our fellow Victorians will be homeless tonight, and almost 40 per cent of those people are under 25 years of age; many are young children. Of the 116,000 Australians that now have no home, 7 per cent are rough sleepers.

The St Kilda Crisis Centre, which is at the forefront of crisis housing, had contact with almost 12,500 people last year. They estimate that since 2010 there has been a 66 per cent increase in the number of people across the state who are in need of crisis accommodation and that the cost of providing emergency accommodation has increased by 140 per cent over that same time.

As Members of Parliament, we work closely with service providers who are at the coalface of this issue—providers who, as the Sacred Heart Mission says, are there to offer those in need a welcome, a meal and friendship, especially those young children who are without. Action requires that we understand more than the numerical size of the issue if we are to work towards a policy response.

In its May report, *The Changing Geography of Homelessness: A Spatial Analysis from 2001 to 2016*, the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute found that homelessness is becoming more concentrated in major cities, with two-thirds of homeless people living in a capital city, up from just 50 per cent 15 years earlier. There has also been a significant shift with rough sleepers,

with half now living in the capital city, up from one-third 15 years earlier. The research also showed that rates of homelessness were higher in poorer areas with weaker labour markets and areas that are more culturally diverse. These findings show that the problem is centralising and has a demographic aspect.

The Council to Homeless Persons, which campaigns to end homelessness, estimates that almost 41,677 households are on the social housing waiting list, which represents 82,500 individuals, of whom 25,000 are children. In its report *Social Housing as Infrastructure: An Investment Pathway* the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute estimates that there is a social housing shortfall in Australia of 433,000 places. Victoria has a shortfall of 102,000 properties, which is why it is so heartbreaking to see public housing properties sitting empty.

Public housing has long been a part of the Bayside community. Indeed Hampton is proud that many homes, including the 16 public housing cottages in Koolkuna Lane, are part of our neighbourhood. The Koolkuna cottages are well kept by government, with gardens that are maintained and have a lovely English cottage feel. Yet despite the picturesque setting, of the 16 cottages, 15 sit empty. A number of years ago this government turfed out residents when it hedged its bets on a major housing development occurring at Hampton station. With no sign that the development will go ahead, the 15 cottages in the lane now sit vacant. And to add insult to injury, the government still regularly maintains the gardens.

Sadly, this is the situation not only in Hampton. In 2017, to self-created fanfare, this government announced that it intended to redevelop the public housing site in New Street, Brighton. Tenants were then removed from the 127 apartments. As is the case in Hampton, a huge complex of public housing sits empty. And despite promises to increase public housing at that site by 10 per cent, we know that the redevelopment will see more public housing apartments but a reduced number of bedrooms in each apartment—more

front doors, but with no real increase in the number of bedrooms. Rather than a broad expansion of public housing at the site, we will see almost 160 private apartments built there—rather than generally increasing the public housing.

Despite the government's disappointing management of public housing in my community, there are incredible organisations in my region that are helping thousands of homeless Victorians rebuild their lives. The work of these organisations genuinely takes your breath away. The Sacred Heart Mission assists clients who experience extraordinary disadvantage and repeated episodes of trauma. The mission's CEO, Cathy Humphrey, has said to me directly that the mission is committed to making a sustainable difference in people's lives. Housing does end homelessness, but many of those who have experienced trauma and disadvantage will also require support to stay out of homelessness permanently. As the mission's social policy officer recently put it: Additional services or 'wrap-around services' are required to give people the support they need to stay in housing. This individualised planned support could be focussed on improving mental health and wellbeing, resolving drug and alcohol issues, building life skills, increasing connections with community and contributing to society through economic and social inclusion...

The Salvation Army also aims to make a positive difference in the lives of people who experience crisis and homelessness. The Salvation Army's Upton Road accommodation and learning centre for young people is a prime example of the difference that can be made. The work of program manager Claire Edmanson and her team is commendable.

The centre provides a 24-hour staffed refuge that offers immediate accommodation and programs that build skills and restore confidence. They are programs that cover health, dental care, family reconciliation, employment support and assistance with obtaining rental accommodation. The program is run for up to 10 weeks. To members of this place who are interested, this Saturday centre clients will be running their monthly market, so I encourage

you all to come along, buy a plant, grab a coffee or get a snag and support the centre.

Similar services are also offered by the Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre, which runs a highly structured 24-hour residential alcohol and rehabilitation centre for men. The program, managed by Mark Hammersley, runs for up to 15 weeks. The men, who recently used community facilities in Elwood to paint, completed an exceptional public mural at the St Kilda Baptist Church in Pakington Street.

It is also worth mentioning just some of the other incredible service providers who offer wrap-around services: the 101 Engagement Hub, on Carlisle Street, managed by Paulo Reid, provides daily programs, meals and support; Access Health; and the St Kilda Crisis Contact Centre, who provide primary health care for people who are marginalised and may be experiencing homelessness.

But action on this issue will require more than the dedication of private services and not-for-profit providers. The international lesson is that governments need to take a bigger step and leave a bigger footprint in addressing this issue. Britain is currently in the middle of a substantial public policy debate on how to take further action on social housing. Britain recently marked 100 years since their Parliament passed the Housing Act, which has become known as the Addison act. The Act was the first in that country to provide state funding for social housing. Effectively the Act made housing a social responsibility. Later Acts would extend housing duties to local councils.

There has been recent discussion in Australia about whether our country should legislate a similar duty. That discussion was based on the Welsh Parliament's Housing (Wales) Act 2014, which created a legal duty for local councils to help find accommodation for everyone that seeks assistance.

Most recent estimates suggest that in Britain 4 million households, or 9 million people, live in social housing. Nearly one in five English homes are owned by

housing associations or local councils. Prime Minister Theresa May prioritised social housing and affordable housing. Early in her Prime Ministership she announced that she would, and I quote, 'start a rebirth of council housing', by making billions of pounds available to councils to provide social rent.

In August last year that government released the green paper A New Deal for Social Housing. Only weeks ago, before stepping down, Theresa May announced the next step in that government's social housing process. May announced that the government will be releasing a plan and timetable for social housing reform in September, which will include the creation of a stronger consumer regulation regime, the enhancement of tenants' rights and a further boost to the supply of high-quality social housing.

Though Britain is currently dealing with many other issues, the imminent release of a social housing reform package could generate substantive debate well beyond their borders. The package may shortly provide policy ideas worth exploring in the Australian context. Canada has set a goal of reducing homelessness by 80 per cent over 10 years and set out their strategy in the Reaching Home policy which builds on the Housing First in Canada policy. Canada's Homelessness Partnering Secretariat estimates that between 150,000 and 300,000 individuals experience homelessness each year.

These and other international developments show that there has been a shift in government from managing homelessness to being proactive and working towards preventing it through reportable measurement and strategic planning. These are some of the lessons that our Parliament, and indeed this government, could well consider.

This is a genuine public policy challenge, one that requires more of our attention.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

GOVERNMENT AGENDA

Wednesday, 28 August 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:22):

It would be remiss of me not to start by remarking on the quality, or lack thereof, of this matter of public importance. I heard the member for Essendon waste parliamentary time earlier today droning on about being an avid fan of the Comic Sans text font. I make the point that my four-year-old daughter's birthday invitations are of the same font, and it is clear that those invitations and the member's drafting of this motion are of equivalent quality.

The purpose of this motion is to boast that Labor is spending a lot of other people's money and to take cheap political shots. Only recently ratings agency Moody's fired a serious warning shot. They warned that the government should consider their budgetary and policy approach, but in typical fashion the warning was ignored. Not only was it ignored but the Treasurer doubled down. Moody's warning should not be overlooked. The warning identified that this government's profligate spending, its intention to over-borrow and the softened economy will have a compounding effect.

This government was first elected on a commitment of significant spending, a commitment that grew bolder after it was elected. Ever-increasing tax receipts, especially from property, and income derived through privatisation only enthused the government's first-term spending. But since then the economy has softened and the property market has slowed significantly.

Despite those changing circumstances, the government has not moderated its' approach. That approach has left a structural hole in Victoria's budget,

one of the government's own making. Moody's has recognised this and said the government's capital expenditure program will cause debt to rise more rapidly than revenue and lead to a credit negative. The state's forecast debt has increased from a projected \$20 billion to \$54.9 billion, up by \$35 billion. The increase in debt is equivalent to \$14 000 for every Victorian household. Put simply—true to character—Labor is spending too much and using the Victorian taxpayer's credit card to pay for it.

But the government is not just spending too much. To use the age-old political analogy, there are significant policy barnacles forming on their ship. The problems can be traced to enacting policy that is either driven by class-based politics of envy or ideology. We have seen a growing number of examples of both, including with property tax. Land taxes have doubled over the last five years; they are up by 109 per cent. This government has targeted my constituents with new envy-based property taxes, new taxes designed to target those the Treasurer claims can, and I quote, 'afford to pay'. It was almost Bill Shorten-esque to hear the Treasurer so freely admit his envy-based intention. These new taxes are in addition to existing retrograde taxes, taxes that have left bracket creep go unchecked. The government's class-based property tax approach is highway robbery.

Only days ago I convened a public forum at Brighton town hall with the Shadow Treasurer. The forum provided my community with an opportunity to have their say. Residents lined up to expose the outrageous property tax increases they have endured. In too many cases residents spoke of a tax system which has allowed the land tax bills of some to increase by between 50 and 100 per cent in one year. The message from them was clear: the current levels of property taxation will force some investors to sell. Many suspect this is the aim of the government's approach: to force divestment of housing stock.

One of the most aggressive class-targeted measures in the recent state budget was the removal of the principal place of residence exemption for contiguous land. Put simply, this government is now applying property tax to the family

home. One distressed elderly couple from my community spoke to me, broken-hearted, at being forced to sell their family home. Why? Because their vegetable garden is now subject to land tax, a tax they cannot afford to pay. In my community there are a number of families who have been hit by this new class-based measure, not because their land is unusually large but because of the historic characteristics of the property, or ways in which the land was subdivided earlier.

Property taxes have not only hurt individuals and families in my community; they have also hurt small businesses. One small business in my community has had their land tax double in one year, increasing from \$35,000 to \$65,000. They are a third-generation family business that have been operating in my electorate for 75 years. The tax increase, and I quote them directly:

... places our Business under enormous pressure ...

and—

... also puts in jeopardy the 25 employees' jobs.

Another small business in my community has warned that, and again I quote:

The ongoing viability of our business is in jeopardy.

That business has been operating for over 50 years. They have said, I quote:

... we are now starting to buckle under the weight of land tax to the extent that we have commenced laying off staff and will continue to do so ...

Their business is paying more than \$4,500 in land tax every week—I repeat, \$4,500 every week—before they open their doors. The business has paid \$1.5 million in land tax over the last 10 years. The business owner is genuinely fearful of next year's land tax bill.

Before this year's budget I said in this place that the government would

introduce new and higher taxes, and they did. Sadly I cannot provide my community comfort because I am certain that over this term we will see the nastiest side of Labor exposed as we see the government find increasingly nasty ways to tax Victorians.

The barnacles forming on this government have also been caused by their adherence to ideology over evidence-driven policy. This is especially the case in the environment and energy portfolio space. As a community we are watching a collapse of the recycling industry and a solar scheme that has had a profoundly punitive effect, especially on small businesses. Another alarming example is the lack of grip the government has on energy security. The Australian Energy Market Operator's recently released report is sober reading. I quote from the report's projections for the forthcoming summer:

... all regions other than Victoria expected to meet the current reliability standard ...

And that:

...involuntary load shedding may be experienced in Victoria ... equivalent to between 260 000 and 1.3 million households being without power...

That means over 3 million individual Victorians. And how did the Minister respond to finding out that almost half of our state's population faces power blackout this summer? She said, 'We're in a tricky position'. What an astonishingly trivial response. The Minister and this government have been caught out. They have been pushing wide-scale energy market transformation, but they have not developed a practical plan to make it happen. That is why the government needs to do more than set ideological aspirational targets. We need to develop a practical transformational plan.

On a state-by-state comparison Victoria is notably behind. Gallingly, the Minister admitted that point, when she recently said, 'We need better planning'. Well, I

am glad that the government have recognised their failure, but it is time for the government to do something about it.

It is also time for the government to stop selectively ignoring parts of the Victorian community. The services and infrastructure in my community are out of date and need attention. As I have noted before in this place, earlier this year 83-year-old grandmother Gloria Holmes tragically lost her life crossing over the rail line at Grenville Street in Hampton. Despite Public Transport Victoria identifying the crossing as high risk, two weeks before the last election, safety improvements were deprioritised. It was no surprise to learn that the Minister's office was involved in the decision to deprioritise. After public outcry following Mrs Holmes's death, three months ago the Minister advised that she was seeking departmental advice. Well, we are still waiting.

The secretary of the owners' corporation committee at nearby Edgecliff apartments, Terry Walsh, has rightly described the ongoing delay as 'just not good enough' and said that the government 'just needs to get on and fix it'. So far the only response Mr Walsh received from the government on the issue was what he describes as a 'nonsense letter' from the Minister for Public Transport. Let me assist the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, who has turned handballing difficult issues to Minister Horne into an art form. The independent Parliamentary Budget Office recently costed installing train-activated gates and audible warning systems at Grenville crossing at \$2.1 million. The ball is now in the Minister's court; it is in the government's court. Will this government invest in the safety of Hampton, or will Labor continue to deprioritise my community's safety?

Moody's has fired a serious warning shot and warned that the government should consider their budgetary and policy approach, but we know that they will not because it is far easier to boast when they are spending a lot of other people's money—money being spent on the taxpayer's credit card—than it is to run a responsible government.

CONSTITUENCY QUESTION

HONK AND GO POLICY

Wednesday, 11 September 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:51):

My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Minister for Road Safety and the TAC.

My constituents have asked me to raise the issue that the Minister consider a honk-and-go policy that encourages drivers to honk their horn before leaving their driveways.

With our suburbs densifying, we need to consider new ways to keep our streets safer. Many of my constituents have raised with me their growing concerns over the increasing number of driveway incidents that are occurring in our community — incidents that too often involve young children.

According to Kidsafe Victoria, on average seven young children are killed and 60 are seriously injured each year in driveway incidents. Parents should feel safe to take their child for an afternoon walk or bike ride without the fear of a car racing out of an apartment block driveway.

A honk-and-go policy could make our suburbs and our children safer.

I look forward to the Minister's response.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

MENTAL HEALTH

Wednesday, 30 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:42):

Our mental health is as important as our physical health, yet our focus is often on our physical health.

So too has been the historic focus of government, the development of policy and the investment of public funding. This may be partly because, as the recent Productivity Commission paper *The Social and Economic Benefits of Improving Mental Health* noted, many of the costs of mental ill health are intangible. The commission set out the very tangible costs of mental ill health, including psychological distress, social isolation, lower social participation, stigma and discrimination.

It is worth spending a moment outlining the breadth of mental ill health both in our country and beyond our borders. The Australian Bureau of Statistics National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing estimates that 45 per cent of Australians will experience a mental health condition and, further, that in the 2017–18 financial year there were 4.8 million people—which roughly represents 20 per cent of all Australians—with a mental or behavioural condition.

The most common mental illnesses are anxiety and depressive-related issues. Around 1 million Australian adults have depression. That represents one in seven experiencing depression in their lifetime. Over 2 million Australians have anxiety, which represents one in four experiencing anxiety in their lifetime. These statistics are not cold numbers but show that we will all know a family member, friend or colleague who suffers mental ill health. In fact we will know many.

The picture in Australia is not unique to the one within our borders. The World Health Organization has identified depression as one of the leading worldwide health problems. They estimate that 300 million people suffer from depression worldwide—300 million people. A paper published by the team at the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research at the University of Queensland called Burden of Depressive Illnesses by Country, Sex, Age, and Year found that the Middle Eastern and Northern African regions suffer the highest rates of depression. The report, which also called for more research to be done quantifying the broader costs of mental ill health, concluded that:

... depressive disorders are a global health priority ...

which reinforces the importance of implementing cost-effectiveness interventions to reduce its ubiquitous burden.

Although it is limited, there is some research that has quantified the material costs. The National Mental Health Commission has estimated that the economic cost of mental ill health in Australia is more than \$60 billion each year. The Productivity Commission has highlighted that the costs, and I quote:

... of lower participation and productivity are about double the level of healthcare expenditure on people with a mental illness.

The current work of the Productivity Commission on mental health will no doubt be groundbreaking, and I note the draft report is due to be published tomorrow. In terms of government spending on mental health services, the commission estimates that in 2016–17 the federal government contributed at least \$12 billion to mental health-related services and payments while the state and territory governments contributed at least \$4 billion. Internationally the commission states that expenditure by our combined governments on mental health services is moderate.

Rather than only focus on the broader issue, I would like to take the opportunity to raise an aspect of depression that affects many young families in our community every day, that being postnatal depression.

Up to four of every five women are estimated to develop the baby blues shortly after childbirth. The baby blues usually occur between two and 10 days after childbirth and bring a strong emotional feeling. These feelings tend to dissipate within two weeks.

Beyond Blue estimates that for one in six women these feelings continue and develop into postnatal depression. Usually this form of depression comes within weeks of birth, but it can manifest itself within a year of a child being born. Mothers have described the at times crippling feelings of anxiety and inadequacy but most of all the overwhelming feeling of guilt and shame. Many mothers have described to me the shame they feel for experiencing depression. These conversations are difficult and confronting, but as a community these conversations are important to have.

These conversations are important for both new mothers and new fathers. A number of fathers from my community have approached me to speak about this issue. All of those fathers asked to speak to me separately and privately. Each came from a different walk of life and all had a different story. All had a partner who had been touched by depression after the birth of a child, and many had been touched themselves. In fact one in 10 men will experience postnatal depression themselves. Although there is some degree of public discussion about postnatal depression, there is no doubt that postnatal depression in men is less prominently addressed, and one wonders whether the cold statistics under-report the incidence in fathers.

These conversations with the men who approached me were extremely difficult because most of them saw their role in the family unit as being the supporter of their partner. But as we spoke it was clear the toll upon them was profound and had a profound impact upon them all. Some were overcome by emotion. All loved their partners, even the one whose relationship has since broken down. All of the men said clearly that they had completely misunderstood postnatal depression. All had not seen the signs in themselves and none knew that treatment paths were available to them too. In fact those fathers all similarly to described their guilt in failing their partners and failing

their families.

It did take time in some cases, but all of the affected families did seek help, though most of the men did not seek help from a health professional. Those men who approached me felt that they could have been better equipped. All of those men had attended pre-birth courses and suggested that those courses could be enhanced.

In their report *Healthy Dads? The Challenge of Being a New Father*, Beyond Blue found 45 per cent of fathers are not aware that men can experience postnatal depression, and 43 per cent of first-time fathers see anxiety and depression after having a baby as a sign of weakness—that is half. These findings clearly illustrate that there is one policy area where we can and should do better.

Internationally, mental health is now key policy issue. The World Health Organization's *Mental Health Atlas* sets out up-to-date information on mental health services available worldwide. It is a significant, ongoing document that encourages countries to, and I quote:

... provide comprehensive, integrated and responsive mental health and social care services in community-based settings ...

In its' issues paper the Productivity Commission draws out community-based responses to mental ill health and draws a link between that issue and homelessness. The paper states:

Mental ill health is closely linked with housing problems and homelessness ... In 2017–18, about one third of people who had accessed specialist homelessness services were experiencing mental ill-health.

To that end, last year the government opened five emergency accommodation shelters in Brighton East as part of its *Towards Home* program. The accommodation is based at South Road. At the time the policy was announced my community raised two significant concerns: firstly, that the shelters were

temporary structures and not permanent buildings and, secondly, that the shelters were many kilometres away from adequate services. In short, the program lacked the integrated service focus encouraged by the World Health Organization. Tenants have been living at South Road for much of the year, a number of whom have significant mental health issues. One of the tenants at the site recently met with me to speak about a fellow tenant with serious mental health issues, for whom they believe the government has not provided access to proper services at the site.

Without nearby services to assist, there have been serious issues there at South Road. For example, at 1.00 am on 9 October an assault occurred involving two residents. Police attended the incident after reports of screaming. At least one of those involved in the incident required medical attention. After the incident one of the residents hung blood-covered clothing on the external wall of their property. This has understandably led to distress for neighbours and especially to distress for neighbouring children, who saw the clothing. This was all within sight of streams of young children who use South Road as a thoroughfare to nearby schools each day.

Adjacent neighbours have also reported antisocial behaviour both at the site and in the surrounding area. In fact neighbours have reported damage to their properties, including damage to guttering, damage to roof sheets, broken mailbox locks, plants being ripped out and residents or their associates jumping over neighbours' fences into their private property. Our mental health is as important as our physical health, and governments have rightly shifted their focus to the development of policy and investment in this space. But there is more to be done, in terms of both destigmatising issues like postnatal depression and making sure that our policy responses, including the way that we integrate solutions in a community setting, are adequate and take into account the broader community.

MEMBERS STATEMENT

ANIMAL WELFARE

Thursday, 31 October 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:57):

My community was deeply upset and sickened by the images of racehorses being slaughtered.

Animal welfare laws need to be strong, and my community expects our animals to be properly cared for.

ADJOURNMENT

VISY PAPER RECYCLING

Thursday, 14 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (17:25):

My adjournment matter this evening is to the Premier, and the action I seek is an update on whether the government intends to support Visy's proposal to expand their capacity to enable them to manage all of Victoria's mixed paper recyclables.

Victorians are sustainably minded, and the community expect their policymakers to both value and support sustainability. Visy is one of the most prominent privately owned businesses operating in this policy space; it is an Australian success story. On average each year Visy processes recyclables from 3 million Australian households and businesses. One of the most striking features of the business is that over time they have been innovative and adapted sustainable solutions into their business model.

Visiting the company recently I watched recyclables being delivered to their Springvale recycling material recovery facility. Each day the site processes 550 tonnes of material, with paper and cardboard then shipped to Visy's Coolaroo facility. Coolaroo is a wastepaper and recycling waste management facility. The site processes between 450 and 500 tonnes each day.

One of the significant features of the Coolaroo facility is a cogeneration plant. The \$50 million facility has the capacity to generate thermal and electric energy from residual waste— energy that helps operate the plant. The company is

committed to local industry and has invested \$2 billion over 10 years in the cardboard and paper business.

This will create 5,000 jobs in the Melbourne area. The Coolaroo site, which includes paper mills, cogeneration and a box plant, has proven successful for Visy, and they are ready to expand their capacity to process more mixed paper.

In August the Council of Australian Governments agreed to ban the exportation of paper and cardboard. Unless policymakers act, mixed paper, which makes up 50 per cent of our recycling bin, will go to landfill. Last year Visy approached the Premier personally and sought his support for the expansion. You would expect, with the Premier stating that 'no-one should underestimate our commitment' to investing in renewables, Visy's proposal would have been embraced, especially when other states appear keen to entice the company into their own jurisdiction.

Almost a year after making the approach, the company still waits. Here is an opportunity to support a proven industry leader to expand their capacity and help manage Victoria's mixed paper in a sustainable way. I look forward to the Premier's response.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

ENERGY SECURITY

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

Mr NEWBURY (Brighton) (15:32):

Under Labor, Victoria's energy system is on life support.

And this summer the danger is that our lack of preparedness will see systemic collapse. One point three million homes—3 million Victorians—are at risk of blackout.

The way we produce energy is changing, which requires infrastructure that can generate, manage and move energy differently. That means our state should have led on making structural change. Yet this government has failed to prepare and failed to show leadership in this policy area, and that lack of leadership is a key reason this state lacks a secure energy supply.

With every summer Victoria's energy system is proving less able to cope with demand. But this government has failed to develop a substantive policy response. Instead we have seen this government blame infrastructure, we have seen this government blame other levels of government. The Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change has proven that she lacks policy depth, and the Premier has proven unwilling to correct that in his ministry when it is his responsibility as state leader to stop this spiralling failure.

If the projections of systemic collapse are realised, this summer may prove a tipping point for the people of our state. In January this year a reported 375,000 homes were left without power. Shortly before the blackouts the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change said, and I quote:

'Blackouts are something that absolutely will not be a feature of today...'

And further that the government was 'absolutely confident' there would be no outages. The Minister gave an absolute commitment. By the end of the day hundreds of thousands of Victorians were left without power, including many in my electorate.

One constituent rang me in tears because he was so worried about his elderly parents. They were frail, without power and desperately unable to cope with the heat. He and many constituents were incensed on hearing the government's response. Not only did the government fail to offer a fix but the Minister flippantly noted that blackouts are, quote:

'...something that we would all rather avoid...'

Last year the Premier dealt with blackouts in a similarly poor way, though in that case, in typical fashion, the Premier politically deflected and blamed his government's failures on a government of the last century.

This summer we will again see the government has no grip on energy security and will expose its lack of preparedness. In August the Australian Energy Market Operator made it clear that Victoria should brace for wholesale blackouts this summer, and I quote:

'...all regions other than Victoria expected to meet the current reliability standard...'

and that:

'...involuntary load shedding may be experienced in Victoria...equivalent to between 260,000 and 1.3 million households being without power...'

That is 1.3 million households without power. This summer up to 3 million Victorians could suffer from a blackout. The figures are staggering and represent

wholesale government failure. Rather than acknowledge the structural collapse of energy provision, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change simply brushed off those projections by saying, and I quote:

‘We’re in a tricky position.’

Well, Minister, we are in more than a tricky position. The energy system is failing and this government has proven unable to offer structural policy reform. Sadly, on a state-by-state comparison the Victorian Government has been shown to have their hands in their pockets.

New South Wales is well advanced and better prepared with their strategic planning on energy transformation. In November 2018 the New South Wales government released their energy sector infrastructure road map, the NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy. It is the New South Wales government’s blueprint for the transition of the energy system. The strategy differentiates our two states. The strategy highlights that governments have a responsibility to do more than make a policy decision about the future of energy: any decision must also be strategically planned and involve infrastructure preparedness, regionally targeted opportunities and be in partnership with industry.

Behind closed doors the energy industry often acknowledges the lack of strategic thinking and certainty from the Victorian government. New South Wales has recognised the benefits of a developed plan and identified in their strategy that industry can be confident to invest and be part of energy infrastructure transformation but investment can be regionally targeted to best effect and that investment leads to energy that is more affordable to the end user. This sentiment was reinforced by Energy Networks Australia CEO, Andrew Dillon, who spoke on behalf of industry, saying the strategy was, and I quote:

‘...a vital step towards a more integrated energy system that would deliver greater benefit to customers through a more resilient grid and more

competitive wholesale markets.'

Last week energy Ministers met for the Australian Government's Energy Council. In the lead-up to the meeting the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, in typical fashion, sought to divert attention away from the government's own ineptitude on energy security. Instead of using the meeting to brief the national forum on a reform agenda, our Minister called for changes to the standard that is used to measure reliability.

Tony Wood, the Energy Director at the Grattan Institute, is reported as calling out the Minister's agenda as a tactic from politicians in Victoria who are worried about being held accountable from summer blackouts. By contrast the New South Wales Minister for Energy and Environment, Matt Kean, used the council meeting to brief Ministers on the next step for their state and released their electricity strategy. A core part of that strategy is encouraging private investment and acknowledging that existing planning processes mean that only one in 20 of the proposed renewable projects are approved.

As an aside, it is worth noting that in its Victorian Annual Planning Report the Australian Energy Market Operator reported of our state, and I quote:

'Some investors in Victoria are already facing economic impacts and technical challenges associated with connection to a weak transmission network ...'

In short, the New South Wales electricity strategy is expected to reduce energy bills by \$40 per year, drive \$8 billion in private investment, create 1200 jobs and support the creation of Australia's first coordinated renewable energy zone. A spokesperson for the Australian Energy Market Operator described the new strategy as:

'We expect the NSW proposal...will lower the risk and cost of project development.'

I recently met with Matt Kean and talked about his approach to policy and energy security. Make no mistake, he wants to get things done in New South Wales. He is willing to push the envelope and take a different approach. On a state-by-state basis, he is a V8 Minister to our Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, who is no more than a vintage Volvo. You can see that in their differing approaches to hydrogen. Minister Kean has set out a goal for acquiring 10 per cent of New South Wales gas from green hydrogen by 2030.

Hydrogen is a significant opportunity for Australia and should be a key opportunity for this state to lead in its investment and production. Australia's chief scientist, Dr Finkel, has championed that opportunity, finding that Australian hydrogen exports could contribute \$1.7 billion and provide 2800 jobs by 2030. In its June paper, the National Hydrogen Roadmap, the CSIRO said:

'...the development of a hydrogen export industry represents a significant opportunity for Australia and a potential 'game changer' for the local industry...'

Last week Ministers attending the Council of Australian Governments Energy Council agreed upon a national hydrogen strategy. The strategy recognises, and I quote:

'The potential for a major hydrogen export industry is clear. Markets are growing in Asia and in Europe, and Australia is well-placed to serve this growing demand.'

And further:

'The Strategy calls on the Commonwealth, States, and Territories to create the necessary social and regulatory framework that allows the hydrogen sector to expand.'

We know that New South Wales is hungry to step into the green hydrogen

space, as too is Queensland, whose Minister for State Development has said the state, and again I quote:

‘...views green hydrogen as the long-term future for energy production.’

Victoria, on the other hand, has had a bumpier road, and has an Energy Minister who has chosen not to be our state’s hydrogen champion, which has been noted with concern by industry.

Last week the Energy Ministers spoke about the benefits of a nationally agreed strategy. However, the Minister for Energy in Victoria limp-wristedly noted that hydrogen is ‘just one example’ of energy that ‘could play a role’. Like the increasing beat of a drum, industry continues to question whether the Energy Minister’s heart is in backing the future of hydrogen. It is worth noting that the Treasurer, in his capacity as Minister for Economic Development, is trying to fill the void by telling industry that he will be the lead proponent for hydrogen in this government.

I recently met with representatives of the Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain Pilot Project, who are seeking to turn brown coal from the Latrobe Valley into hydrogen, which will then be liquefied at the port of Hastings. This is a significant opportunity for our state. With our neighbouring states strategically hungry to become national leaders, we do not have time or space to forgive a disinterested Minister for energy.

Again I say, under Labor, Victoria’s energy system is on life support.



JAMES NEWBURY MP

Member for Brighton



**GET IN
TOUCH**



315 New Street, Brighton VIC 3186



03 9592 1900



james.newbury@parliament.vic.gov.au



JamesNewbury.com.au