



# FINN IN THE HOUSE

**Speeches February to June 2020**



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## Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to support the minority report that has been put forward, and in doing so may I commend Patrick O'Brien and his team on putting together a program which was quite impressive.

I think it is safe to say the Economy and Infrastructure Committee is one of the busiest committees that the Parliament has ever seen or is ever likely to see in 100 years. They worked exceedingly hard to put together a program that had us meeting night and day. I am surprised that we did not actually get a call to meet on Christmas morning. Nonetheless, I thank Patrick for his work.

I support the minority report largely because there was a fair section of this report that did not actually fit the terms of reference that we were given. I sat during a large portion of the hearings thinking to myself, 'Why are we listening to this?', because it was not actually in the terms of reference. That confused me a little bit, but I did go into this with an open mind because there were views being expressed that I had not been exposed to before, and I was certainly very interested in hearing what people had to say.

But at the end of the day I came to the view that I had to get up in the house today and issue a warning to farmers in the agricultural industry throughout this nation, and that is that their livelihoods and the industry are on the line because the animal activists are organised and they are coming to get you. And if you think you are safe, you have got another think coming because these people will pursue you. They are fanatics, they are extremists and they will stop at nothing to rip down the agricultural industry, the farmers of Australia, and that is something that I for one do not want to see.

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — There are two things the Andrews government absolutely excels in: its corrupt activities are only shaded by its incompetence. The West Gate Tunnel debacle brings both together beautifully. The stench of dodginess has hung over this project since day one. Questions surrounding the role of the Treasurer, a shareholder in Transurban, in awarding the contract of the tunnel project were only added to prior to Christmas, when we discovered that discussions on the current project were being held with Transurban before the 2014 election. At the very time then opposition leader Daniel Andrews was touting his \$550 million shovel-ready western distributor, he was in discussions with Transurban about this multibillion-dollar monstrosity Victorians now have to deal with. What sort of shysterism is this?

The West Gate Tunnel Project now faces a dodgy future—entirely appropriate, given that everything about it so far has also been incredibly dodgy. Even by Labor's standards the West Gate Tunnel Project is a monumental stuff-up. Once again the people of Melbourne's west suffer, but ultimately every Victorian will pay for years to come for this stuff-up. The Andrews government continues the long tradition of Labor governments in this state: one great stuff-up after another.

## Bulla bypass

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads. Minister, with each passing day the Bulla bypass becomes ever more necessary. As employment at Melbourne international airport continues to grow, so does the traffic on Sunbury and Bulla roads. As the population of Sunbury and many towns in the Macedon Ranges continues to grow, so does the traffic on Sunbury and Bulla roads. When the multiple developments planned for Sunbury open, the resulting population explosion in the town will increase traffic on Sunbury and Bulla roads to intolerable levels. Minister, my constituents in Sunbury, Bulla and surrounds have needed the Bulla

bypass for decades. Will you be the minister who actually builds this long-overdue piece of infrastructure?

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Premier, and it concerns his comments in the media of recent days where he has said that the issue of contaminated soil and the dumping of contaminated soil from the West Gate Tunnel Project will soon be resolved. Now, I cannot tell you, President, of the horror that people in the western suburbs have felt at the prospect that this toxic soil will be dumped at Ravenhall or indeed will be dumped at Bulla, as has been previously suggested. It is truly horrendous to think that governments automatically regard the west of Melbourne as the dumping ground for all manner of unfortunate substances.

Now, we already have the situation where we have a tip that is being expanded by the government, which will be probably the biggest tip in the Southern Hemisphere. Already the tip that is there now is creating no end of trouble for local residents. The current tip is most unwanted; the expansion is definitely unwanted. I know that right through Caroline Springs, Deer Park, right down through to Werribee there is a huge amount of opposition to the expansion of this tip. The prospect of having toxic soil dumped at that tip or in the surrounds of that tip has absolutely outraged the local residents, and I cannot blame them one little bit, because we are not just going to have this soil dumped in our midst if this plan goes ahead but of course it will be on our roads. We will have dust flying left, right and centre during the summer months, and it will be something that is just totally unacceptable to my constituents and, I have to say, totally unacceptable to me as a local member.

Unfortunately at the moment I am the only member in the west who is speaking up about this, but I call on all the other members of Parliament, whether they be Labor or Independent, to also take a stand against this toxic soil being dumped in the west. I ask specifically for a guarantee from the Premier that the west of Melbourne will not be used as a dumping ground for this toxic soil, which is being dug up from the West Gate Tunnel. A guarantee from the Premier is something that we would expect, we

would hope for and we really want as soon as possible.

**COUNCIL | Questions without notice  
06 February 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My question is to the Leader of the Government, representing the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, news media has been reporting the state government was warned as far back as 2017 that contaminated soil could become a major problem for the West Gate Tunnel works. Minister, the Victorian public has a right to know. I therefore ask exactly what sites are under consideration for dumping toxic spoil from the West Gate Tunnel Project and along which routes this dangerous, toxic contaminated soil and dust is intended to be transported.

### *Supplementary question*

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish the minister all the very best in getting an answer from any of those colleagues. Minister, isn't it a fact that Labor and Transurban's sweetheart West Gate Tunnel deal is too risky to proceed with and the project is in complete chaos as a result of the very contamination of which you were warned in 2017?

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
06 February 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel secret discussions

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Premier. The history of the West Gate Tunnel is, at best, chequered. My constituents looked on in amazement as the government's \$500 million 'shovel-ready' western distributor became Transurban's multibillion-dollar project that we know today. Many of my constituents are totally perplexed as to why they are already paying higher tolls to pay for a tunnel that they may never go anywhere near. They are astonished that they will be paying these higher tolls for longer to pay for a project that now looks in doubt. Revelations late last year have merely added to the questions surrounding this project. Premier, how can you justify touting the 'shovel-

ready' western distributor publicly while at the same time being in secret discussions with Transurban over what we now know as the West Gate Tunnel?

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
06 February 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — The adjournment matter that I have this evening is for the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. As I have expressed on a number of occasions this week, there is deep concern throughout the western suburbs about the prospect of contaminated soil from the West Gate Tunnel Project being dumped in Melbourne's west. This is something that does concern us. To put it quite bluntly, we have had a gutful of being the dumping ground of Melbourne. We have a huge rubbish tip out there, and one that is actually going to be expanded significantly. We have the prospect of another one down in Werribee, and we have just had enough of putting up with all of this—

*Ms Crozier interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well indeed, just as they tried to dump the youth justice jail down in Werribee South, in fact, as Ms Crozier reminds me. We all remember what happened there.

My concern particularly is about what will happen if the contaminated soil is dumped in Melbourne's west. What I am very keen to know—and I know my constituents are very keen to know—is exactly where the government intends to dump this soil, but also what sort of contaminants are in the soil and what impact these contaminants will have on people's health if they are exposed to them.

There are a good many residential areas around, for example, Ravenhall, around Caroline Springs, right down through Werribee, and that is an area that is expanding, is growing at a rapid rate, to say nothing of Deer Park and surrounding areas there, and they are absolutely horrified at the prospect that contaminated soil may be dumped near them. I can assure you, as a resident of Bulla, that I am horrified that that soil may be dumped somewhere near me, because Bulla is another area that has been mentioned.

*Mr Davis interjected.*

Mr FINN: It is on the hit list, it would appear, Mr Davis. I am very keen to find out where the dumping will take place and the impact that the dumping will have—the dumping of the soil that is, President, I should point out—on the health of those who may

be exposed to it. I ask the minister to collate that information and not just to provide it to me but to make it public before any decision is made so that people know exactly what to expect if we get a whole heap of contaminated soil in our backyards.

**COUNCIL | Questions without notice  
18 February 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Contaminated soil on the site of the West Gate Tunnel is believed to contain a number of carcinogens and asbestos. Will the minister inform the house of any advice she has received from her department on the health impacts of this soil inhaled as dust by humans?

### *Supplementary question*

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Thank you, Minister. It seems the only responsibility the minister has is to buy the next shout in Bali. Minister, the Andrews Labor government is preparing to dump millions of tonnes of toxic soil in Wyndham. Is the minister prepared to provide extra facilities and resources to that community to deal with the impact of the exposure to contaminants of locals and the health effects on thousands of Wyndham residents—men, women and children—inhalating carcinogens or asbestos, or both, as dust from the government's big dump?

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
18 February 2020**

## Toxic soil protections

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Minister, the Andrews Labor government is preparing to dump millions of tonnes of toxic soil in the City of Wyndham. Many thousands of people in that municipality are deeply concerned about the impact of this toxic soil on their health and on the environment. We should keep in mind this toxic soil will be dumped near the Werribee River, allowing toxins to seep into that river and ultimately nearby waterways. Minister, what extra resources will you provide the Environment Protection Authority Victoria to ensure it is capable of

responding to all complaints related to the toxic soil and providing necessary protection for the Wyndham community?

**COUNCIL | Members statements  
18 February 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Even by Labor’s appallingly low standards the Andrews government’s plan to dump millions of tonnes of toxic soil near homes in Wyndham is truly despicable. In particular the betrayal of his constituents by the member for Werribee on this matter is beneath contempt. Mr Pallas should continue to follow his usual practice and stay well away from Werribee. Toxic soil will not be the biggest threat to his health if he does otherwise.

The Minister for Health’s disgraceful performance during question time today confirms what locals already know—that the Andrews government could not give a stuff about the people of Wyndham. This is simply a fact of life. The Premier does not care about them. Their local member does not care about them. Indeed this whole stinking government does not care about them. Enough is enough. The time has come for Labor to earn its keep. The people of Werribee have supported the ALP for generations. They are now wondering why. In return they are dumped upon by a government that does not deserve that support in any way. The good people of Wyndham have had a gutful of this outrageous treatment by Labor. Who in this house can blame them?

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
18 February 2020**

## Jasvinder Sidhu

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this afternoon for the attention of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. There has been in recent times, as reported widely in the media, an incident in the Wyndham area involving a chap called Jasvinder Sidhu. My understanding is that this chap works for a Labor minister and has been involved in some very—

*Ms Symes interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well, that is my understanding. Who does he work for? He is a Labor staffer of some sort. My understanding is in fact he claims that he is very close to the Premier. He claims he has a direct link to the Premier, and that is a concern in itself.

The reason I raise this matter this evening is because this chap, who I understand has been involved in some pretty heavy branch stacking work out in the west, has allegedly been involved in what can only be described as severe religious vilification. Apparently, according to newspaper reports, this Mr Sidhu:

... told a meeting of Punjabi-speaking Indians he was trying to recruit to the party that Turkish and Lebanese Muslims were sponging off taxpayers.

‘They have all arrived by boats and as soon as they arrive they are given pension, Centrelink, and also rewarded with houses and medical services immediately ...

Now, my understanding is that there was a physically violent altercation at this particular meeting, which was a direct result—

*Ms Symes interjected.*

Mr FINN: You were there, were you? Were you there? You would be about the only Labor MP that was not there if you were not. There was a physical altercation there, and that was a direct result of the comments that he was making about the Muslim community. I am sure members will agree on both sides of the house that this is not something that we welcome in Victoria. We have got pretty much a bipartisan view on welcoming people from various parts of the world to Australia. For somebody to conduct themselves in this way with a view to political advancement I think is absolutely disgraceful. I am asking the minister to investigate this particular incident to see if we do have a case of religious vilification and to provide for me a report on what exactly happened and what he intends to do about it.

**COUNCIL | Reference  
19 February 2020**

## Environment And Planning Committee

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Before commenting on the comments by Dr Cumming I just want to commend Mr Melhem. I did not realise that he had such a tremendous sense of humour. To be congratulating Minister D’Ambrosio on anything would have to be one of the greatest jokes we have ever heard in our lives. It is obvious that the Melbourne comedy festival is not far away, and Mr Melhem is clearly perfecting his act. He has done a good job here today, because if

ever there were a minister who should not be on the front bench, who should not be in cabinet, it is Lily D’Ambrosio, because she has stuffed up everything she has touched, and that includes very much the environment portfolio. I think it is very, very sad indeed.

*Ms Shing interjected.*

Mr FINN: We know why she is there; we all know why she is there. She is the right gender and she is the right faction, and that is the only reason that she is there, because she has certainly got no ability.

I want to commend the author of Dr Cumming’s speech. I think it was a very well constructed speech. It covered a lot of areas, but I have to say that I was somewhat disappointed that Dr Cumming continued a pattern which she has well established now, and that pattern is one of ignoring a number of very serious environmental issues in the west of Melbourne. Dr Cumming may well laugh at this, but I can assure her that the people of Werribee, the people of Wyndham, the people of Ravenhall and Caroline Springs and Deer Park are not laughing, and neither are the people of Brooklyn laughing.

I refer specifically to the big issue that of course is causing outrage in the Wyndham community as we speak, and one that will impact on the quality of air for people in Wyndham and surrounds—and of course that is the plan by the government to dump millions of tonnes of toxic soil near schools, near homes, near playgrounds in Wyndham. That is something that I am surprised about, I have to say, that Dr Cumming has not only failed to mention in this motion but indeed failed to mention at all in this house. As a result of the member for Werribee, the Treasurer of the state, sticking his hand up and saying, ‘We’ll take your toxic soil’, it seems the government have decided that that is exactly what they will do, that is exactly the action they will take—they will dump these millions of tonnes of toxic soil, carcinogens, asbestos. It is just an appalling situation.

I have to say the many people who have contacted me, particularly since I put out a phone call on Friday night alerting people to what the government had in mind, have expressed total outrage as to the government’s plan, and not just outrage. They have expressed to me that they feel totally and absolutely betrayed, because many of these people have been Labor voters all their lives. Werribee is a traditional Labor area, as they like to say. In fact Labor like to think that they own Werribee. In fact they like to think that they own

the west and, as a result, they can do whatever they like to the people in the west and the people in the west will just roll up and vote for them again next time.

Well, as we know, that did not quite happen at the last election as a result of Mr Pallas's involvement in attempting to get the youth detention centre. I notice that Minister Mikakos is in the chamber at the moment—she will know all about that. As a result of Mr Pallas's involvement in that youth training centre debacle, he is now down to a margin of around about 4 per cent. It is one that obviously he thinks he can ride through, because he stuck his hand up and said, 'Well, we'll take your waste. We will take all that waste from the West Gate Tunnel Project and we'll dump it in Wyndham Vale,' as I said, near houses, near schools.

That soil contains some pretty vile stuff, some pretty dreadful stuff, I am told, and it is something that is a direct and immediate threat—or if it is dumped, it will be—to the health of people in Wyndham. And it is not just the people in Wyndham Vale but the people along the route that the trucks will take to dump this soil, because what we are going to see is that this soil obviously will become dust, this dust will come off the trucks and people will be breathing in this stuff.

I asked the Minister for Health—as if I would expect to get an answer from the Minister for Health on this—because this of course is a health matter. Why would the Minister for Health be even mildly interested in a health matter? Why would she be even mildly interested in answering a question on a health matter? Why would she care? Why would she care about the health of the people of Wyndham? That is not something that she is even mildly concerned about, and she displayed that in question time yesterday when I asked her about the impact of this toxic dust that people in Wyndham and surrounds will be inhaling if the government goes ahead with its plan. The minister batted it off. 'No, look, silly Lily can answer that one,' she said. She did not want to know. Then I went on to ask if she will provide extra resources to protect the people in Wyndham from the health threat that this toxic soil will pose, and again she did not want to know about it and refused to answer. We know where she is coming from, we know where Tim Pallas is coming from, we know where the Premier is coming from, and the people of Wyndham are a very, very distant last as far as they are concerned. On the list of priorities

the people of Wyndham are way, way down the bottom somewhere.

I have to say to you that the many, many people I have spoken to over the last week are infuriated over what the government is proposing. In the last sitting week of this place I did invite other members in the west, including Dr Cumming, including Mr Melhem, to join me in opposing this big dump by the government. None—not even one—have contacted me with a desire to fight this plan. It is just incredible, extraordinary, that members of Parliament, supposedly representing the western suburbs of Melbourne, will not stand up for the people of the west of Melbourne on this issue or, it seems, on a number of others. That, I think, is a disgrace. It is a disgrace, and those members who are sitting idly by and not involving themselves in this issue and not wanting to know about it should be ashamed of themselves. They should go into the hall of mirrors and have a good hard look at themselves, because their attitude leaves much to be desired. And let me tell you, it is not lost on the people in Wyndham. They will remember who stood by them at this particular time and they will remember those who turned their backs and walked away. They will remember those who did not want to know, those who said, 'You can have your toxic soil; we're not going to help you.' That is something you can be absolutely sure of; that is something you can take to the bank. The people of Wyndham will well remember that. It is I think just beyond understanding that members of Parliament would not stand up for their community; it is beyond understanding.

As I said, I have been approached by many, many hundreds over the last week or so who have expressed their anger over this. It is a very multicultural community in the west, particularly in Wyndham. I have been approached by many of the leaders of multicultural groups in the west who have expressed their concern, because believe it or not it is not just Anglo Celts who are affected by this stuff; it is people of Chinese heritage, it is people of Indian heritage, it is people of a whole range of heritages who will be breathing this stuff, whose health will be affected, and that is something that we all should remember—that every man, woman and child is under threat from this stuff, and these people over here, and Dr Cumming I include, are not interested. She has put up this motion today, but she does not want to know about the Wyndham solution. She can come up and stand in front of me as much as she likes. That is not going to impact me; that is not going to worry me, I can assure you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr): Order!

Mr FINN: I was a bit worried she was getting too close there, Acting President, and that is not something that I would encourage. The other issue that Dr Cumming has been completely silent on is the issue of the Ravenhall tip. Now, I have spoken about this on numerous occasions. If you are talking about air pollution, I would have thought the first place you would go would be to talk about what the people in Deer Park, the people in Caroline Springs, the people in Taylors Hill and all that area right through there have been putting up with for years as a result of the Ravenhall tip—the fact that these people cannot open their windows on a warm night because of the stench, because of the smell that they are subjected to from this tip. It astounds me that this would not have been mentioned in Dr Cumming's moving of this motion, because this is a major issue, not just for the west, I might say, but for all of Melbourne, because this tip, as planned by the government, is to be expanded, and this will be the main dumping ground for all rubbish in Melbourne—all Melbourne's rubbish.

Ravenhall is going to be the dumping ground for Melbourne, and that is something that is going to impact a lot of people, because that rubbish is going to be coming from everywhere. Those trucks carrying Melbourne's rubbish to Ravenhall will be travelling and trundling through streets in the eastern suburbs, the northern suburbs, the southern suburbs, all coming to Ravenhall. This is something that does affect every Melburnian and I think really needs to be addressed. I think it is most unfortunate that Dr Cumming has ignored it in this particular motion.

As I said before, I have raised this issue in the house now on a number of occasions. I have spoken at a number of very large public meetings, and I am talking about thousands of people attending these public meetings. I have spoken to councillors; I have spoken to colleagues in both the houses and indeed both parties. Indeed I will give Mr Melhem a pat on the back as at least he shows up, occasionally, to one or two of the public meetings, so I say good on him for that.

But it is a great pity that nonetheless the government is showing that it does not give a stuff about the people of the western suburbs. It cares not for the people of the western suburbs, because it thinks it owns the western suburbs and the people of the western suburbs do not matter. They do not matter, because these people are just going to rock up and they are going

to re-elect their Labor members. Well, let me tell you: that time is fast coming to an end because people have had a gutful of this. When you get to the stage where you are nauseous in your own home because of the smell of the tip in Ravenhall, when that happens, well then that is something that is intolerable. That affects how people live on a day-to-day basis. On a day-to-day basis that is how it affects people. It is something that should be addressed, and I am just absolutely gobsmacked that Dr Cumming did not even mention it in putting up this motion today and indeed has not gone into bat for her constituents in the west of Melbourne on this particular issue, because this is going to impact many, many people—well, it already impacts many, many thousands of people but it is going to impact many, many more thousands—as the west continues to grow.

*Dr Cumming interjected.*

Mr FINN: Hello, cocky! Now, Mr Acting President, you might like to get the cockatoo in the corner to calm down because she is carrying on like a two-bob watch just at the minute. But I—

Mr Meddick: On a point of order, Acting President, despite the fact that Mr Finn clearly feels very passionately about what is going on in the western suburbs, one could be forgiven for thinking that he is arguing against a government motion here. I believe that Dr Cumming has covered all of this in the motion itself, and I would like Mr Finn to return to speaking to the motion itself rather than admonishing the government and personally admonishing Dr Cumming.

Mr FINN: On the point of order, Acting President, I am a little bit confused by Mr Meddick's point of order, because he says that the matters that I am raising are covered in the motion and then he is asking me to come back to the motion, so I am not sure exactly what the point of order is. It is just a tad confusing.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Elasmarr): Thank you, Mr Finn. I know there were some interjections from Dr Cumming, but I ask you to come back to the motion.

Mr FINN: I am happy to continue to speak on the motion. The situation in Ravenhall is one that is appalling. I invite Mr Meddick to visit Ravenhall, to visit Caroline Springs and some of those areas around there on a day when that stench is absolutely putrid. It is nauseating. I have experienced it myself and it is just appalling. Caroline Springs, for example, is a very, very nice place. You drive through Caroline Springs and you say, 'God, I could live

here without a worry in the world. This is just a delightful spot'. But then this stench from the tip has destroyed the lives of many, many people who live there, and it does not matter whether this motion is moved by Dr Cumming, moved by the government or indeed moved by the opposition, this is a matter that should be included in this debate because we cannot turn our back on the plight of people in the western suburbs, as many in this house like to do. I regret that that is the case, but it is the case and it is something that I certainly will not allow to happen.

We are talking about a government planning to extend the Ravenhall tip to make it one of the biggest tips, one of the biggest landfills, in the Southern Hemisphere—indeed one of the biggest in the world. This thing is going to be so big that you will be able to see it from the moon. This thing will be just huge, and it is something that people in the western suburbs should not have to put up with. They should not have to put up with it just because they live in Melbourne's west.

I tell you what: one of the things that this motion might include, and indeed any inquiry might include, would be the waste-to-energy proposal that has been put forward by Mr O'Brien, the Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. That is a proposal that is very, very worthwhile because it is something that gets waste, which we have an enormous amount of, and turns it into energy, which we do not have a lot of, and that seems to me to be a win-win situation either way. So that is something that I think is a matter that should be examined by a committee that is inquiring into air pollution, because clearly the removal of waste and conversion of waste into energy is something that is certainly going to benefit my constituents in and around the Ravenhall area and in Caroline Springs, Deer Park and surrounds. And I have to say Mr O'Brien's plan has caused a great deal of excitement in that part of the world because they for the first time have seen a positive answer to the problem that they face. There has been a lot of umming and ahing over the years, but here is a positive plan that will end their misery, and that is something that they are very happy and very, very excited about. I certainly look forward to the election of the O'Brien government to ensure that happens. Bring it on—a very good thing indeed.

Another issue that it surprised me that Dr Cumming did not mention is the issue in Brooklyn. I have spoken, again, at a number of public meetings in Brooklyn—usually outdoors because

it is the only place you can actually fit everybody in—on the quality of the air in the inner west, in Brooklyn and surrounds, with the trucks and so forth. The people in those areas have been suffering for quite some years. I note that Dr Cumming did mention Francis Street and did mention Yarraville, and that is a very good thing—I am glad that she did mention that—but she did not mention Brooklyn, which has an issue that has been going on for a long time. The quality of the air in Brooklyn is something that has been a major issue for a very long time, and I think that any representative of the western suburbs who speaks on this subject and does not mention the suffering of the people of Brooklyn is not doing their job, and that I think is very unfortunate indeed.

One of the issues that Dr Cumming made brief reference to was the issue of diesel. Now, as we find out more about diesel I must make, I suppose, some sort of interest declaration here because I have recently been driving a car that is a diesel car. I have never had a diesel car before, but I am now driving a diesel car. We are finding out more and more every day about the dangers of diesel in the air and the fact that it is more than likely carcinogenic and that it does pose a major threat to people's health. And it is something that we should all be very concerned about. I know Mr Davis, the Leader of the Opposition in this place, is someone who has taken a great deal of interest in this particular matter. It is something that has piqued his curiosity, and it is a great pity that he has not spoken on this at some length at some stage, because he is a fount of wisdom when it comes to the dangers of diesel and diesel engines in creating an atmosphere which is dangerous for people to breathe. That is something that I think we should, at any inquiry, most certainly look at. That is a very far-reaching thing because there are many vehicles in Australia, and it seems to me that increasingly vehicles that are driven by mums and dads are now using diesel. We are not talking about semitrailers. We are talking about SUVs. We are talking about cars which indeed are very, very common in the suburbs, and the fact that they are now diesel is obviously going to increase the danger of diesel in the air. The fact that we are breathing that is something that I am concerned about and something that any inquiry, I would hope, would respond to as a matter of urgency.

I am very pleased that the motion today, put forward by the good doctor, has put forward that we would look at practical, real-time, cost-effective mitigation strategies. I think that

## St Albans Leisure Centre

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, and I wish to bring to his attention a tale of two cities, as it were. It has recently been brought to my attention that the Parramatta Leisure Centre—of course in the state of New South Wales—has been granted by the New South Wales government and the Parramatta City Council a refurb to the tune of some \$77 million. That obviously is pretty impressive for the people of Parramatta. But the same cannot be said for the people St Albans here in Melbourne. Western Sydney is obviously doing a hell of a lot better than western Melbourne in this regard because, as I have raised on a number of occasions in this house, the St Albans Leisure Centre needs to be bulldozed and needs to be rebuilt—desperately needs to be rebuilt. We have had no joy from this government at all. One has to ask why that is the case.

If I were a cynic, I might think that because Parramatta is in a marginal seat, that is why they got the \$77 million, and the fact that St Albans is in a safe Labor seat and has a member who is pretty close to useless is why they get no support at all. It is so wrong. The people of St Albans and surrounds need that leisure centre as much as anybody else. They need the ability to exercise. We know that there are some major health problems in the west, particularly with diabetes, and a new leisure centre—I think they are calling it a healthcare hub or something similar to that—is something that would be of huge benefit to many thousands of people in the western suburbs of Melbourne. I hope Mr Jennings is listening to this because this is something that he should take up as well with his cabinet colleagues.

What I am asking is for the minister to go to the Treasurer and to get the money in the coming budget for the leisure centre in St Albans. My understanding is they are looking for around about \$60 million, which is a saving of \$17 million on what has been received in Parramatta, and I cannot begin to tell the house what an improvement it would be to the lives of so many people in the western suburbs of Melbourne. I ask the minister to

is a very, very good thing indeed, because around environmental issues in this day and age there is a lot of hyperbole—or ‘hyperbowl’, as Julia Gillard once said. There is a lot of hyperbole, there is a lot of nonsense, there is a lot of hysteria about it. We have people in Canberra saying, ‘We’re all going to die,’ ‘The end is nigh,’ and, ‘We’ve only got a few years left before the’—well, I am not sure what happens.

We have had the UN telling us now for about the last 40 years that the end is nigh. They keep crossing off the year and adding another few years, and maybe if we all live long enough, we will see them get it right. But the fact of the matter is there is a lot of nonsense spoken about environmental issues, so it is very good to see that this motion does talk about practical measures to mitigate the foul air in many of our particularly inner suburbs. Although, as I say, when you consider what is probably going to happen in Wyndham very soon, it will be the outer suburbs as well. Already Ravenhall and surrounds are impacted in a very severe manner. That is something that we should do something about as a matter of urgency.

I have to say, I did hear Dr Cumming make a suggestion which I thought was very good and one that I have subscribed to for a very long time. My view, very strongly, is that the greatest enemy of air pollution is trees. We need to plant more and more trees, and I do that. I am going to have to buy a new house soon with a bigger yard because I do love planting trees. My front yard and my backyard are just about full of trees now, so I might have to get a bigger place to plant those trees. I think that is something that we really should be promoting furiously. Was it Bob Hawke many years ago who said he was going to plant a billion trees by it might have been 1990, the same time as kids were going to be out of poverty or something? That was a promise that unfortunately was not fulfilled, but it is something that indeed we should look at. It is something we should look at because trees are the natural enemy of pollution; that is the fact of the matter. All this talk about the dangers of CO2 is largely a nonsense because we know that without CO2 all the trees die. And if all the trees die, we have got no oxygen because they are the ones that provide the oxygen.

As I say, there is a lot of hyperbole, there is a lot of nonsense spoken about in the environmental space. It is something that maybe with the development of a committee inquiry we can get to tintacks with, maybe we can actually get those practical

measures that this motion speaks of. I certainly would welcome that very much because the coalition has for many, many years been a very, very strong supporter of the environment. It has been a very, very strong supporter of conservation. It has been a very, very strong supporter of clean air.

Anybody who heads bush, goes out to the country, knows the delight of waking up and filling your lungs with that pure air that people in the country enjoy. Wouldn’t it be nice if everybody could enjoy that quality of air? Wouldn’t it be nice if we could all wake up in the morning, bounce out of bed and smell that magnificent air instead of some of the crap, quite frankly, that people are expected to breathe in this day and age? It is very sad indeed.

The opposition will not oppose this motion. In fact I think it is probably long overdue. I am hoping, as I say, that we will get the practical measures that the motion speaks of, that we will be able to get some recommendations from the committee that we can put into effect almost—no, not almost—absolutely immediately. I am hopeful that we can get cracking on this, and I am very hopeful that the house will indeed back this motion today.

### COUNCIL | Constituency questions 19 February 2020

## Truganina CFA construction

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question today is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Truganina is a fast-growing community of well over 20 000 within the City of Wyndham. Despite the fact that the Truganina CFA was promised a new station some three years ago, it is astonishing that the government has yet to acquire the land necessary to actually build this new station. This particularly confuses locals, as the minister previously promised the new station would be up and running by June last year, coming up on 12 months ago. Putting aside the government’s disdain for Wyndham and its residents, the time for action is well past. Minister, when will the—to quote your words—‘permanent, modern’ station be opened in Truganina?

do everything he can to deliver this new leisure centre for St Albans, and hopefully we will see this budget with the dollars that the people St Albans so desperately need.

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions**  
20 February 2020

## Werribee freeway noise

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads. Last week I visited Alesia Court in Werribee after a constituent complained to me about noise levels from the nearby freeway. Houses in that court and surrounding streets are very close to the freeway, and I can now believe the horrendous noise suffered by residents. This noise will worsen when the Duncans Road interchange is completed. My constituent explained to me that he sleeps with earplugs and his partner takes sleeping tablets in an attempt to sleep at night. They keep the television on at dinnertime to drown out the traffic noise. Needless to say, leaving windows or doors open to allow a cool breeze is strictly a no-no. This is an appalling situation that needs urgent attention and action. As a part of the Duncans Road works a sound barrier should be constructed between the freeway and houses. Will the minister commit to providing this desperately needed infrastructure?

**COUNCIL | Adjournment**  
20 February 2020

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Premier. As I am sure the Premier would be aware, there is a great deal of concern in the western suburbs and particularly the Wyndham region as to what is going to happen, if anything, with regard to the dumping of toxic soil in that area. Last week it seemed that the local member, Mr Pallas, had stuck his hand up and volunteered Werribee as a site for this toxic soil. Today, after a meeting last night where he was booed and heckled, it seems that he has backed off somewhat from that position, and there is a great deal of confusion now about exactly what is going on.

As you can imagine, the people of Wyndham in particular—Wyndham Vale especially—are horrified at what may be coming their way. The toxic

soil is alleged to have carcinogens and asbestos, and that is not something that they want to see next to their homes. That is not something that they want to have their families, their children, exposed to, and I can certainly fully understand that. But what they really need to know is: what exactly is going on? That is what I am asking the Premier to do now: to tell us exactly what is going on. If the Premier does not know what is going on, if the Premier has no idea what is happening, let him tell us. But if he has a plan, if he has something in place in his mind to dump this foul soil near people—or even away from people—it would be good to know; it really would be good to know. It may allow some people in the Wyndham area in particular to sleep more peacefully at night as a result of an assurance from the Premier that may or may not be forthcoming.

The concerns today have also been expressed by people in Bulla, and certainly as a resident of Bulla I am not all that thrilled at the prospect that toxic soil will be dumped there, because clearly it has to go somewhere. If it is not going to go in Wyndham Vale, it may well end up in Bulla. Or indeed has the Premier got somewhere else in the west that he has in mind? All we need to know is exactly what the Premier has planned. I do not think it is too much to ask. I do not think it is too much to expect. We in the west have become very used to not expecting much from this government, but I do not think it is too much to expect—it is not too much to ask for—some certainty on this issue to make our plans for what is to come. I ask the Premier to come clean, to tell the truth and to reassure, or otherwise, the people of the west about the toxic soil that will be dumped somewhere.

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions**  
03 March 2020

## Sunshine-based medical research

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, Western Health has a real gem in its midst. Professor Tissa Wijeratne is a world-recognised expert—

*A member interjected.*

Mr FINN: yes, he is a Sri Lankan indeed—on the workings of the human brain. Despite constant attempts to poach him by hospitals in Melbourne, interstate and internationally, we can give thanks that Professor Wijeratne

has decided to keep his work based in Sunshine. Ongoing cuts to the health budget are now threatening this world-leading research into migraines and diseases such as Parkinson's. Will the minister ensure \$4 million is provided in this budget to ensure Professor Wijeratne and his team are able to continue his work that is potentially life changing for many millions of people?

**COUNCIL | Members statements**  
03 March 2020

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — There is anger growing in Melbourne's west. Wherever I have gone over the past couple of weeks, the question has been the same: 'Why is this mongrel government dumping its toxic soil on us?'—and let me assure the house, I cleaned that up significantly. Despite voting Labor constantly for generations, locals in the west are bewildered by their treatment at the hands of the Andrews government. 'What have we ever done to them?', they ask me. Particular anger is directed at the member for Werribee, after he apparently volunteered Wyndham as an ideal spot for toxic soil alleged to contain carcinogens and asbestos—the man must have a political death wish.

Sadly, it is not just the people of Wyndham feeling the pressure. Every day for the past week I have been contacted by constituents living near Ravenhall tip and in Bulla expressing concern that their area will be dumped upon by Daniel Andrews. This is an appalling situation. On behalf of the people of Melbourne's west, my message to Labor is this: we have had a gutful. We are not—we are not—your dumping ground. Leave our schools, our homes and our river alone.

**COUNCIL | Motions**  
04 March 2020

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I move:

That this house opposes any decision by the Andrews Labor government, or its agencies, to dump toxic soil from the West Gate Tunnel Project into the Wyndham Vale rail stabling yard as it is situated close to houses, local community infrastructure and the Werribee River.

It is hard to believe that it was three years ago that thousands of people gathered in the centre of Werribee to protest against another decision by the Andrews government to dump a youth detention centre—a high-security youth detention centre—in Werribee South, but gather they did three years ago. They gathered, they fought and indeed they won. The government finally backed away. History is about to repeat itself in my view. Last night a couple of thousand people gathered on what was not the warmest of March nights, it has to be said, to protest about the government's potential plans. We say 'potential' because the government is not telling us anything. This government that is great on consultation, this government that is great on discussion, they are not—

Mr Ondarchie: Transparency.

Mr FINN: Transparency indeed, Mr Ondarchie. This government, they are not telling us anything. So we might actually find out today a little bit more about what the government's plans are, because if the government opposes this motion, we can be pretty sure that Wyndham Vale is the site that it has chosen to dump its toxic soil. It is quite extraordinary. But last night was a very, very good turnout and a very, very angry turnout, it has to be said. They referred to their local member in terms that I could not use in this Parliament.

Mr Ondarchie: Who is he?

Mr FINN: They referred to him, in some of the nicer terms, as Toxic Tim—Tim Pallas, the member for Werribee. Mr Pallas apparently—and this absolutely astonishes me—volunteered his electorate to be a spot where the soil could be dumped. Now, as I said last night when I addressed the rally, if I had done that to my electorate, I would be too ashamed to show my face ever again. Can anybody possibly imagine what would possess a member of Parliament to volunteer their own electorate to have toxic soil dumped near homes, near schools and near a major waterway?

Mr Ondarchie: He mustn't live there.

Mr FINN: Well, it is interesting you say that, Mr Ondarchie. It is interesting you say that because of course Mr Pallas does not live in Werribee. He does not live in Werribee, he does not do a lot of work in Werribee and in fact he does not give a stuff about Werribee, as he has proved—

Mrs McArthur: Where does he live?

Mr FINN: He lives in Williamstown, a very nice spot down in Williamstown, and there may have been a few references made to that in the crowd last night. In fact I think I saw a couple of very large posters indicating that there were at least a couple of people

in the crowd who were of the view that the toxic soil should be dumped in Williamstown. Now, that is not something that I endorse. My view is that I do not want the toxic soil dumped anywhere in the west. It is very, very easy for governments when nasty things happen to just dump on the west, as they have done forever it seems.

Mrs McArthur: Outside the tram tracks.

Mr FINN: Well, you know, it is even beyond the tram tracks, Mrs McArthur. If we have got a mess, if we have got something nasty, give it to the western suburbs. You know Toxic Tim would have his hand up; he would say, 'Over here, over here!' He would say, 'Put it over here; we'll have it!' And let me tell you: he can have it all right, because after the debacle surrounding the youth detention centre three years ago of course, at the following election Werribee went from a safe Labor seat to a marginal Labor seat. Now, I was of the view until this morning that Mr Pallas may be giving it away. He might be pulling the pin at the next election. But I hear from journalists—

Mrs McArthur: Voluntarily?

Mr FINN: He is volunteering all sorts of things at the minute. But he apparently indicated to the press gang at the back door this morning that he is going to continue. I can only say that as a Liberal in the western suburbs that is the best news that I have had for very long time, because it is my view that with Mr Pallas as the Labor candidate, Mr Pallas as the Labor member for Werribee, the Liberal Party has an excellent chance of winning Werribee at the next election. Because the people of Werribee, let me tell you, have had a gutful of their local member, who does not care about them and shows them continual contempt, and their anger is palpable. It was on the streets of Werribee last night. There were many, many posters there that I can quote, but there were some that I most certainly cannot—

Mr Ondarchie: Were they chanting?

Mr FINN: Well, they were, Mr Ondarchie, chanting, 'Dump Pallas, not soil!' That was one of the chants that fired up. I thought that was quite a good one actually. There were people there last night who, as I say, were extremely angry and they wanted answers. And I tell you what: they are not alone, because I want answers too. I stand in this Parliament today representing those people, demanding that the Premier, that the Minister for Health and Silly Lily, the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, give answers to the questions that I have already asked. For the

past three sitting weeks I have given a raft of questions; I have asked a raft of questions of the Premier, of the Minister for Health and of the minister for the environment—and what have I got back from all three? Absolutely nothing. In fact the health minister stood in this chamber two weeks ago and publicly washed her hands. She said, 'Not my problem. Any health issues, you go and talk to Lily.' Well, if you are going to go and talk to Lily, you might as well go and talk to a tree. It is just a total waste of time. But the health minister was not interested in the health of the people of Werribee and not interested in the health of the people of Wyndham, and that is something that will not be forgotten, I can assure you, by the people in Werribee, Wyndham, Point Cook and so forth in the time ahead.

What we have seen over recent weeks is a huge slap in the face to local people. To people who live in Wyndham it is a huge slap in the face from a government that has clearly lost the plot, a government that is under so much pressure over the ridiculous West Gate Tunnel debacle that they have produced for themselves that they cannot actually think straight. They are prepared to dump soil, toxic soil, that is alleged to contain carcinogens and asbestos. They are prepared to do that 70 metres from residential housing—from homes, from schools, from playgrounds and of course from the Werribee River. That is something in particular I want to emphasise today, because the Werribee River has over recent years been cleaned up significantly.

I was down at the Werribee Open Range Zoo last week, speaking to the director there about the plans they have for their future. He gave me a tour, although it was not strictly necessary because my son would actually live at Werribee Open Range Zoo if they would let him. We do spend a lot of time at the Werribee Open Range Zoo, so I was very familiar with it. But he did point out as we went over the river that the platypus is back in the river and the river is going to be a major part of the ongoing development of the Werribee Open Range Zoo. Now what would the seeping of toxic soil, or toxins in that soil, do to the river? What would it do to the river? This is the question that I want answers to from the environment minister; but the environment minister, she does not want to know. She does not want to answer questions. As I say, on she goes, as always, with eyes closed, fingers in her ears. She does not want to see; she does not want to hear. That is what we have come to expect from her, which is very sad indeed.

The entire West Gate Tunnel Project has been exceedingly dodgy from day one. As chairman of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee in the last Parliament I oversaw inquiries into the West Gate Tunnel Project, and I can say to this house that we had senior members of the bureaucracy and certainly a senior leader of Transurban lie to our committee. If I had known at that time what I know now, I would have had them charged with contempt of Parliament, because they did in fact lie to the Parliament. Now, what we have seen as a result—and I do not want to go over the history of the West Gate Tunnel because it will take quite some considerable time—is a project where the government has been led by the nose by Transurban purely for the benefit of Transurban. Transurban think they have died and gone to heaven. They think that this is just the most marvellous thing that will keep the money rolling in for many decades to come. And indeed Victorians, my constituents, are already paying higher tolls to pay for a tunnel which is already off the tracks—

Ms Terpstra: Really?

Mr FINN: Yes, really. We have had Transurban already admit that this thing is going to be blown out. Clearly it will be blown out in cost. And the signs are still up, 'The tunnel is coming in 2022'. Well, not according to Transurban; it will not come in 2022 because they have made it very, very clear that there is very little chance indeed that it will be finished on time. I would highly suspect as a result of what is going on at the minute the budget will be blown out as well.

But of all the shysterism, of all the shonkiness surrounding this project, surely the worst aspect of it is what is happening to the people of Wyndham at the moment, because they do not know exactly what they are in store for—

Mr Ondarchie: Again.

Mr FINN: Again indeed, Mr Ondarchie.

It is not just, I have to say, the people of Werribee, the people of Wyndham; it is the people who live around the tip at Ravenhall, people in Caroline Springs, for example, people in Taylors Hill, people in Deer Park.

*Mrs McArthur interjected.*

Mr FINN: We could get to Bacchus Marsh a little bit later on. In fact I might leave that one for you, Mrs McArthur. People around the Ravenhall tip, they do not know if they are going to have millions of tonnes of toxic soil dumped on their back door any tick of the clock. People in Bulla—that is another area that has been mentioned as a possible dumping

ground for this soil—do not know whether they are going to wake up one morning and find out even more trucks are arriving with their toxic payload to dump on people's back doors.

It is just the most astonishing thing that I have seen for quite some time: a government which is totally out of control, a government that has totally lost perspective. It really should not have happened, because the government was warned back in 2017, three years ago. The government was warned three years ago that this soil was contaminated. Now, what have they done for three years? They have sat on their hands; they have done nothing. They are really good at that. They have sat there and all of a sudden this issue has blown up. Work on the tunnel stopped. We had a situation where one of the contractors wanted to rip up the contract. Could you imagine anybody wanting to rip up a contract in Victoria? I wonder where the precedent might have been set for that.

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Indeed, Mr Ondarchie—\$1.3 billion later, Daniel Andrews ripped up the east-west link contract, and now we have a situation where on the West Gate Tunnel the same thing is being attempted. The whole thing, the whole West Gate Tunnel Project, is a money-making exercise by Transurban, aided and abetted by the government. I was astounded just before Christmas when I found out—indeed, we all found out—that at the time, prior to the 2014 election, the then opposition leader, Mr Andrews, was out telling us that he had a western distributor project that was \$500 million or \$550 million worth. It was shovel-ready, he said.

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well, we know what was on the shovel, and we will get to that at another time. It was shovel-ready, but at the same time that he was telling the electorate that, he was in secret discussions with Transurban about what they are building now.

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Already, Mr Ondarchie. They are already blaming Transurban. Last night at the rally Joanne Ryan, the federal member for Lalor, got up and did exactly that: she blamed Transurban.

I have to say to you it was a great disappointment to me to be the only state MP at that rally last night. I mean, if members were serious about representing the best interests of their constituents, they would have been there.

*Ms Stitt interjected.*

Mr FINN: Ms Stitt and Mr Melhem and Ms Vaghela—they all should have been there. Dr Cumming should have been there. In fact if Dr Cumming had been there, the Parliament would have risen earlier—but the rally might still be going. That is something that is possibly not a good thing. Nonetheless, I have asked in previous contributions on this issue for a unity ticket from members of Parliament who represent the western suburbs. We should all band together on this to protect our constituents, to protect our people. I see Mr Melhem over there is laughing at the mere suggestion that we should protect our constituents, that we should protect the people who elected us. Mr Melhem, the number one ticketholder, the number one spot on the ALP ticket he holds—there he is laughing about protecting the people.

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Of course he will blame Transurban. The Labor Party can do no wrong, even though they are a mob of shysters—but that is just the way it goes. I invite those members, all of the members who represent the western suburbs, to join me in defending the people of the west, to join me in defending and trying to protect the health of women, of men and of children who are going to be threatened by this outrageous and appalling dump. Dan's dump, they are calling it, and it is not a cheery prospect at all.

*Ms Terpstra interjected.*

Mr FINN: I am not exactly sure what Ms Terpstra said there.

*Ms Terpstra interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well, it is easy from the east, isn't it? You can bet your bottom dollar that what is happening in Wyndham Vale right now, what is happening in Wyndham or what the government is proposing for Wyndham Vale or Ravenhall or Bulla or Bacchus Marsh would never happen in the eastern suburbs. Do you know why? That is where the marginals are, and that is all this government cares about. The only thing this government cares about is its re-election, and to hell with the people who have voted Labor for generations, all these people who have gone out religiously—and I do mean religiously in many cases—and voted Labor for decades and decades. These are the people who will suffer. Yes, they will—my word they will. These are the people who will suffer as a result of the government's actions, and they are saying to me, 'What have we done to deserve this?'. Well, they voted Labor. That is what they have done to deserve it. I have said to them, 'If you want to be treated with respect, the only way that you are going to get that, the only

way you are going to be treated as a human being by this government, is to make your seat marginal, because if Daniel Andrews can take you for granted, he will, and we can see that just at the minute.

I say to the house that this motion is an extremely important motion. To the people who attended last night, I say thank you. To the people who have contacted me over recent weeks, as late as just a minute or so before I rose to my feet, I thank you for taking a stand in support of your families and your communities. I say to the Premier, who is not big on this but is somebody who says he cares about people and says he cares about listening and consultation, transparency and all of those things that are part of the talking points that the Labor Party has: for God's sake, stop this! Please stop this. Stop dumping on the west. Enough is enough. We have had to put up with this for years. This has to stop. I urge the house to support this motion.

**COUNCIL | Questions without notice  
04 March 2020**

## Casey planning

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— My question is to the Minister for Roads. Damaging evidence at IBAC yesterday showed that Daniel Andrews and his Treasurer, Tim Pallas, had a special and potentially corrupt relationship with disgraced developer John Woodman. According to the testimony of Megan Schutz she, and I quote, 'met with Pulford; I can't remember her first name'. Minister, when did you meet with Megan Schutz, and what was discussed?

*Supplementary question*

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— Minister, have you met Megan Schutz at all in your capacity as roads minister?

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
04 March 2020**

## Laverton roadworks impact

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— My constituency question is to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. Minister, late last year I visited Adams Cafe on Dohertys Road in Laverton. During my visit of around

an hour's duration only one customer managed to find their way through the surrounding roadworks. As this was at lunchtime it amply illustrated the owner's complaint that the roadworks are killing her business. She explained to me that this was her new normal. I understand the owner of the cafe has corresponded with you on this matter but no solution has yet been found. Minister, what action will you take to ensure this previously healthy small business is not forced to close by these roadworks?

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
04 March 2020**

## Women's Health West

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Health, and it concerns a meeting I had with Dr Robyn Gregory, the CEO of Women's Health West, which is of course a very important health organisation in the western suburbs of Melbourne. We were, amongst other things, discussing the case of Hannah Clarke, the woman who was murdered so violently along with her three children in Brisbane some weeks ago. I am sure that everybody would have been as distressed by this particular instance as I was. I do not think that I can recall a thing that has affected me so deeply. I raised this with Dr Gregory because we were in fact discussing the issue of domestic violence and funding for domestic violence. Dr Gregory informed me that, whilst the incident with Hannah Clarke and her children in Brisbane was horrendous, quite often almost as many horrendous incidents occur here in Melbourne. She said we never hear about them, but you would be amazed at some of the dreadful things that happen to partners and those involved as victims of domestic violence. I readily accept that not all victims of domestic violence are women, but the overwhelming majority are.

I have to say—and I have said this often before—that I do not understand how anybody can indulge in this sort of disgraceful, despicable behaviour. Any man who hits a woman, as far as I am concerned, is not a man. It is as simple as that. But the fact of the matter is that there are men who do hit their wives, their girlfriends, their partners. They do hurt their children. It is just absolutely appalling.

What Dr Gregory was coming to see me about was to ensure that Women's

Health West had the finances, the sort of funding, that is necessary to ensure that they are able to serve the need in the west of Melbourne. There is a significant need for their services in the west of Melbourne. In fact they are flat chat just keeping up with the number of incidents that do occur. What I am doing this evening is asking the minister to ensure that Women's Health West is provided with increased funding for specialist family violence services. That is something that was recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence. It is something that is very, very important, and I ask the minister to take the appropriate action to provide that funding.

**COUNCIL | Questions without notice  
05 March 2020**

## Casey planning

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— My question is to the Minister for Roads. Minister, yesterday you admitted you had met with Megan Schutz, lawyer for disgraced developer John Woodman, and you admitted that this occurred when you were Minister for Agriculture. Minister, what matters were discussed, and did they involve rezoning of green wedge farmland?

*Supplementary question*

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— I can assure the minister I am not seeking a commentary; I am just wanting a straight answer to a question. In your dealings with Megan Schutz, Minister, was the rezoning of industrial land in Casey discussed at all?

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
05 March 2020**

## Beattys Road, Plumpton

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— My constituency question is again to the Minister for Roads. Minister, Beattys Road in Plumpton is a disgrace. It is a dirt road that is full of potholes and in many cases only fit for four-wheel drives; anything less than that risks major damage to vehicles. As suburbia moves rapidly towards this road it is time it was shown very necessary action. Minister, when will Beattys Road be brought up to the standard expected of a metropolitan road?

## Local Government Bill 2019

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— Very briefly, I want to congratulate obviously the newly elected leader of the crossbench, because let me tell you that Catherine Cumming over the last two days of debate on this bill has done more to promote single-member wards and to downplay proportional representation than anything that I could ever put up. So, to her, well done.

## Road Safety And Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak also on the Road Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Now, as has been outlined by a number of speakers here tonight—and particularly eloquently by Mrs McArthur and Mr Ondarchie—the impact of losing someone in road trauma never really goes away, the pain never really goes away. I have known in my life a number of people who have been touched by the tragedy of road trauma. Indeed, some 50 years ago this year I lost a little cousin who was three. She ran out—in Noorat, in fact, down in the Western District—on New Year's Day. She ran across the road in Noorat and was collected by a truck. I often think of that truck driver. It was not his fault, but the impact that it had on him I would suggest would be almost as bad as the impact on her parents and the rest of us in the family. That is something that perhaps is not given enough consideration—the impact on those who are involved, who may blame themselves, who may carry guilt for indeed the rest of their lives as a result of these incidents. So I can relate very well to those who are suffering the pain of having lost a child or a member of the family—or a close friend; that can be just as difficult. It is a dreadful thing, and we must do everything in this place to ensure

that the decisions that we make, the legislation that we pass, lessens the chances that more people will suffer in that way. That has to be at the forefront of our thought processes.

I know that for me, my daughters now are growing. Well, one of them has grown. She is now 21, with her 22nd birthday next week. She is going out. She is enjoying herself, she is having a good time and that is great. But I must admit I do not rest until she is home. I do not rest until I know that she is safely through the door, and quite often safely in bed. That is when I can rest. Now that I have two teenage daughters—the twins, the 14-year-olds—they too are going out and socialising and making their way in the world. They are getting lifts with people, they are getting around, they are playing sport and they are going to parties. They are doing all the things that 14-year-olds do. That I am very, very happy with, but again I do not rest until such time as they are safely through the door every day. Perhaps that is something that might be regarded as being a little overprotective, but certainly in my instance I just cannot help it. If you love your kids, that is what you do, I suppose. That is just the way it is.

The one thing that I have a particular loathing of is drink driving. I have known people and known of people who have been victims of drink drivers—people who have felt no problem with getting behind the wheel of a car having consumed God alone knows how much alcohol. I can honestly say that it is something that I have never done. I am not saying that if I wiggle my head furiously my halo will slip and strangle me—not at all—but I do say that that is something that I have never done, because I absolutely detest it.

I well remember the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), way back in probably the 1980s, began a campaign that changed the way people do things in this state. Back in the 1970s, people used to laugh—'I can't remember getting home last night; the car drove itself'. People would go to the pub, get legless and drive home. How most of them actually survived, I do not know. Some dreadful crashes occurred because the drivers were blind drunk. They literally could not see where they were going. How the hell they got home, I do not know. And this was regarded as a bit of a joke. It was regarded as something that you would tell your mates about and you would laugh about. Then along came the TAC, and they started a campaign, and at the time it was a bit of a shock. I am sure many of you, if not all of you,

will remember it only too well. It told the world that if you drink and drive you are a bloody idiot. Now, the fact of the matter is that that campaign began some, probably, 40 years ago and it is as true today as it was back then. But it had an impact on the way people thought, it had an impact on the way people lived and it had an impact on the culture.

It was very, very soon, I suppose, after that that we started to see a change in attitudes. We started to see people realising the stupidity of their ways and that to get behind the wheel of a car having had a dozen beers or two or three bottles of prosecco or something like that—although they would not have had prosecco back then, I would not have thought—but nonetheless, having—

Ms Patten: Passion Pop.

Mr FINN: Passion Pop—I will take your word for it, Ms Patten. Let us not go there. But having had a wide range of alcoholic beverages, they all of a sudden realised as a result of this campaign that that is not the thing to do, and those jokes that I mentioned earlier—they stopped. Anybody who actually owned up, anybody who admitted that they did that sort of thing, that they got behind the wheel of a car having had a skinful, would be excluded from normal social contact, almost, because they would be regarded as indeed bloody idiots, as the advertisements so correctly pointed out. So there we had an instance of a government body, yes, spending a huge sum of money to promote a campaign which was exceedingly effective.

I just wonder if the TAC might need a reboot, because they have not had, I do not think, the same sort of effective campaigns that we have seen previously. It may well be that the TAC does need a reboot to see them get back in the game again, as it were, because we have not just a drink-driving problem now; we also have something that possibly is worse, and that is a drug-driving problem. We talk about marijuana, and that can put people into a certain state, there is no doubt about that, but there are certain drugs that can impact people in a way that gives them hallucinations and has a wide variety of effects on their mental state. Now, for people to get behind the wheel of a car in that circumstance—to say that is dangerous would be the understatement of the year. That is just insanity; that is something that we have to crack down on completely. I know the police have done as much as they can and are continuing to do as much as they can, but I sincerely hope that the efforts are doubled, tripled,

quadrupled if possible to stamp out both drink and drug driving in Victoria in 2020.

Of course, the most effective way of improving safety on our roads is putting police cars out there—something as easy as that—because you will have noticed, and I am sure every member will relate to this, that if you are driving along and you see a police car, what is the first thing you do? Look at your speedo is what you do. You look at your speedo, and you see how fast you are going—and occasionally I have been known to go over the speed limit just a little—and you immediately go back to what you should be doing. That is the practical implication of having police cars on the roads—you behave yourself and you stick to the speed limit. If everybody were to do that all the time, the road trauma that we speak of largely would not exist, because there is so much human error involved in the—I do not know what you would call them—accidents or just crashes.

The other thing of course is the state of our roads. The condition of our roads leaves a lot to be desired in the outer suburbs in places like Sunbury and in places like Werribee and Mickleham Road, as Mr Ondarchie said. I represented that area until relatively recently and know it pretty well. There are places like Sunbury Road, for example, and Plumpton Road and Derrimut Road. These are major arterials now that are nothing much more than goat tracks. Speaking of goat tracks, K Road in Werribee is an absolute disgrace. This is an area where tens of thousands of people come to go to Werribee Park, to Werribee Mansion, to the open-range zoo, to the rose garden, to the equestrian centre and to the golf club—a whole range of activities there. I remember going with Mr Rich-Phillips last year to K Road, and we went there for the specific purpose of inspecting the surface. It was abysmal; it was shocking. It is just staggering that such a road can be in such appalling condition. I well recall in years gone by that you would know when you had crossed the border into New South Wales, because the roads deteriorate immediately. You would not have to look at the sign saying 'Welcome to New South Wales'. You would know because of the roads. Now it is the other way around. When you are coming from New South Wales into Victoria, you know when you cross the border because the roads immediately deteriorate in quality. That is a fact.

The other big issue is fatigue. We are constantly told that people driving whilst they are tired are far more likely to crash, they are far more likely to be

killed and they are far more likely to cause carnage. It has been compared to drink driving—to be driving when you are particularly tired. How ironic is it that this Parliament is sitting here after 11.30 pm tonight debating this bill knowing in a few hours time, or in a couple of hours time or in a half an hour's time we are all going to get in our cars, having worked 16 hours today, or whatever it might have been. We are all going to get in our cars dog tired, and we are going to drive home. Where is the irony there? More to the point, where is the common sense there?

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Yes, common sense is not very common, especially around here sometimes. So it is a bit sad. We are discussing this bill, and we are going to do exactly the opposite to what we should be doing in this regard very, very soon. I support Mr O'Donohue's amendments. The hooners need to be cracked down on. There are no two ways about that at all, and I certainly look forward to that happening very soon and look forward to further speakers on this bill as the evening and possibly the morning progress.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
05 March 2020**

## Werribee Open Range Zoo

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this morning for the attention of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. Let me tell you that it takes something pretty special to get me to my feet in this house at 5 past 2 in the morning, but this is a particularly special place that I am speaking about that morning, and that is the Werribee Open Range Zoo, which I have visited on many occasions. I visited it again last week and met with the director, Glen Holland, who is a man of considerable experience and even more considerable vision, I would suggest, given what he told me last week when I visited. He laid out the future of the Werribee Open Range Zoo for me in very, very graphic terms and, I have to say, very, very exciting terms. He sold me on what the future of the Werribee Open Range Zoo will be very, very quickly. As Big Kev would say, I was excited. It was something very, very special—from cafes and bigger exhibitions to a whole range of great things that he has in mind. The problem, of course, is that it will cost money. Given that the state is in, well,

a parlous situation financially at the minute—

*Mr Davis interjected.*

Mr FINN: Cutting \$4 billion, I understand. But I think this could not be seen as expenditure; I think this would be seen as an investment in the future of the state. It would be seen as an investment in tourism and particularly in the western suburbs.

*Mr Davis interjected.*

Mr FINN: Yes, in education too. That is going to be a very big part, Mr Davis, of the future plans of the Werribee Open Range Zoo. They will be involved in bringing lots of schoolchildren in, showing them a whole range and size of things that they would not have otherwise realised about animal husbandry and that sort of thing. So I ask the minister to give favourable consideration, particularly with the budget coming up, to Mr Holland's request for some millions to expand, to extend and to improve the Werribee Open Range Zoo and make it an even more special place, particularly for those of us in the west but indeed for all Melburnians and I think indeed for all Victorians.

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
17 March 2020**

## Toxic soil dumping locations

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. Minister, I am hoping you will be able to assist me on this matter. A number of your colleagues cannot or will not answer my questions. Some have pointed the finger at you as the one responsible for answering the questions that I have asked. Many in the western suburbs have expressed their very real concern about the dumping of toxic soil from the West Gate Tunnel Project that has already taken place at Ravenhall and Bulla. This is on top of the obvious outrage of Wyndham residents about what may well happen there. Minister, where exactly has any toxic soil from the West Gate Tunnel Project been dumped in Melbourne's west?

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — President, may I wish a very happy St Patrick's Day to you, all the members and staff. We in Melbourne's west may well need the luck of the Irish if we are to survive the Andrews government dumping toxic soil near our homes and schools and in our communities. Since the first sitting day of this year I have attempted to find out exactly what the government has in mind with regard to the dumping of toxic soil for the West Gate Tunnel Project in the western suburbs. To this point I have received absolutely nothing that goes anywhere near an answer. Every day I hear of more reports from my constituents alleging the dumping of toxic soil from Wyndham to Ravenhall to Bulla. As if we do not have enough to worry about with the coronavirus, the Andrews government is planning to dump carcinogens and asbestos on us. Why won't this government answer questions? What has this government got to hide? The people of the west demand answers. They demand the Andrews government comes clean. Premier, tell us the truth. I assure the house I will not give up until the Premier and his government tell us what we need to know. Melbourne's west deserves answers and we deserve those answers now.

## National Electricity (Victoria) Amendment Bill 2020

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — It is hard to believe that it is only five years ago that Victoria had the cheapest, most reliable power in Australia. What has happened? I will tell you what has happened: the Andrews government happened. That is what happened. Victoria is now, of course, the blackout capital of Australia, and that is in itself something that we have all suffered from to varying degrees over recent years. Interestingly enough, when the blackouts hit, they invariably hit first

the western suburbs. Now, I do not know whether that is just coincidence. I do not know whether that is by design or what it might be. But it just seems to me to be a little odd that when the decision is made to cut the power, the western suburbs are the ones who cop it in the neck yet again.

Of course, this unreliability and skyrocketing of prices has been caused by a campaign of religious zealotry based on climate change against coal—the evil coal, the thing that has kept us warm, kept us cool and kept our lights on for many a long year. Well, all of a sudden it is evil, and of course that is nonsense, because we know that coal is one of the most reliable forms of power imaginable, particularly here in Victoria, where it can keep us going, if we are desirous of doing so, for about another 300 years. I probably will not be here then, but that is something that I think everybody should take into consideration.

We heard Dr Kieu talk about what climate change is doing to our weather. I do not know where he was last month—I do not know where he was in February—but I tell you what, a bloke would have been flat out getting into a pair of shorts in this February just gone, because it was one of the coldest and one of the wettest Februaries that I can ever remember. Unfortunately that weather had started by about the middle of January. Certainly we had some warm days—very warm days in fact—before Christmas, but once Christmas hit, that was about it. So all this talk about unprecedented heat is just absolute nonsense—absolute nonsense. There was nothing unprecedented about the summer that we have just had except the rain and the cold in February. That is the only precedent that was set there. For people to suggest otherwise means that they were actually on holiday somewhere else and not in Victoria over the last couple of months, and that is again a little bit sad.

It leads one to ask the question: what did Victorians use before candles? And of course the answer is electricity, which is again a sad reflection on a government which has let things go to hell in a handcart. It is little wonder that our economy is shifting towards recession at a rapid rate and little wonder that businesses and industry are feeling the pain of electricity prices that are just outrageous and that are just through the roof. It is little wonder that jobs are being lost. It is little wonder that businesses are travelling interstate and overseas now to get away from the Andrews government's treatment of them via our power

supply or indeed lack of it quite often, particularly in the summer months.

We have, I would suggest, a particularly cold winter coming up, although cold winters are nothing new to Melbourne. I think we have got used to them over the last few years. But we must remember that it is not just business that feels the pain of these electricity prices; it is also those who can least afford to heat their homes—the unemployed, and particularly pensioners, many of whom, as I have mentioned in this house before, go to bed at lunchtime because it is the only way that they can keep warm. They cannot afford to turn the heater on. They certainly cannot afford to buy wood for a fire. They spend most of their lives over the winter months in bed just to keep warm—just to keep alive. Now, if the Andrews government are proud of that, well, they will be proud of anything. I find that an appalling reflection on us as a civilised society. I think that it is appalling that we treat those vulnerable members of our community in this way, that we allow them to be treated like second-class citizens—that is tragic.

Poor people are suffering as a result of these power policies, and I thought that the Labor Party cared about the people who are not at, as Daniel Andrews always talks about, the big end of town—or was that Bill Shorten? It might have been Bill Shorten; it might have been the other way around. But whoever talks about the big end of town, I thought that was horrendous, that was appalling. But it seems that not only are this government appalled by the big end of town; they are also appalled by the bottom end of town as well, because both ends of town, in fact, are suffering as a result of these power policies.

It is pure ideology, as Mr Rich-Phillips said—it is pure ideology. There is no sense in what the government is doing. They rabbit on about renewables, but if we were entirely reliant on renewables in this state, we would never have any electricity. Can I suggest to members, particularly members opposite but members on this side as well, that they might like to tune in to watch Paul Murray Live on Sky News, because he quite often tells us—

Mr Ondarchie: Are you on that?

Mr FINN: Well, I am not on that, but it may be coming soon. I will keep you informed. Mr Murray, the host, often refers to the percentage of electricity supplied by coal in Victoria and other states, and generally speaking the percentage of electricity provided by coal in Victoria is around about the mid to high 80s. So we have got

a situation where if we relied on renewables we would barely have any electricity at all, and that is the simple fact of the matter. These people opposite can beat their ideological drum and push their ideological views on these sorts of things, but the reality is the reality, and the reality is that their policies are hurting people. Their policies are hurting people now, and they are hurting the people who can least afford to be hurt.

That is, I think, a dreadful reflection on a government and a Labor Party which was once very proud of looking after the workers, very proud of looking after those who could least afford to look after themselves, but now does not give a stuff. They have thrown themselves in with the ideological left, and they have completely forsaken what they once stood for, and that was a party who actually cared. Now it is all about ideology and all about promoting themselves as some sort of world leaders on the ideological left. That again is very sad for Victorians and, as I said, particularly for those pensioners who will suffer again in a very big way and in a very significant way. They will suffer. It does not matter whether they are in the eastern suburbs in Toorak, whether they are in Broadmeadows, whether they are in Gippsland, whether they are in western Victoria or whether they are in northern Victoria. These people will suffer because they cannot afford to pay their electricity bill and they cannot afford to pay their gas bill. That is a sad reality of life in Victoria in 2020 and has been over the last few years.

I will just finish by making an observation, and that is if the Premier of this state, Daniel Andrews, was serious about providing a good, reliable and cheap electricity supply to the people of this state he would not have Lily D'Ambrosio as the minister, because Silly Lily has not got a clue. She has no idea. I do not think I have ever seen a minister who is as clueless as Lily D'Ambrosio, and it does not matter what portfolio—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten): Mr Finn, could you please refer to the minister by her proper title.

Mr FINN: I am sorry. Did I refer to her as—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Patten): I would ask you to refer to Minister D'Ambrosio as Minister D'Ambrosio.

Mr FINN: I will endeavour not to refer to the minister as 'Silly Lily' again, because that would be outrageous.

I will just finish by saying that, really, apart from a factional link that the Premier has with Minister D'Ambrosio, I cannot think of another reason

why he would even have her in the ministry, much less have her in this very, very important portfolio. So if Daniel Andrews wants to do Victoria a huge favour, he will ditch her.

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: I am not even sure the lights are on, Mr Ondarchie, sometimes with her. But if the Premier wants to do us all a great favour, he will appoint a new minister for energy, because the current one has got nothing going for her at all.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
17 March 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. Having raised this matter with the Premier, with the Minister for Health and with the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, it is apparent that I should have raised this with the Minister for Transport Infrastructure—although I have to say, it is very, very difficult to know exactly what she is responsible for and what she is not responsible for. Whether that is just a coincidence or whether it is very deliberate, I am not sure, but I have discovered, having tracked down a number of her colleagues, that she appears to be responsible for the issue that I am raising again tonight. That of course concerns the dumping of toxic soil in the western suburbs.

I have been deeply disturbed over recent weeks by the number of calls that I have had from people who have claimed that toxic soil has been dumped at Ravenhall. I have been told that toxic soil has been dumped in Bulla, and I am told that toxic soil is being prepared to be dumped, if it has not already been dumped, in Wyndham. It is just quite an extraordinary situation. Now, I do not know why the government has taken this long to do something about this. They were warned about the toxic soil three years ago. But here we are in 2020 and we are playing a guessing game as to what the government is going to do and where the government will dump this toxic soil.

What I am asking the minister to do tonight is to tell me and indeed tell the community if any toxic soil has been dumped in the western suburbs of Melbourne, and if so where. That is what I am after. I would be greatly appreciative if the minister could inform me of that, but I am sure there will be thousands and thousands

of people throughout the west of Melbourne who would be even more grateful than me.

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
18 March 2020**

## Werribee freeway noise

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is directed to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. I previously addressed this question to the Minister for Roads, but I was informed I was barking up the wrong tree. I am hoping I am barking up the right one now. Recently I visited Alesia Court in Werribee after a constituent complained to me about noise levels from the nearby freeway. Houses in that court and surrounding streets are very close to the freeway, and I can now believe the horrendous noise suffered by residents. The noise will worsen when the Duncans Road interchange is completed. My constituent explained to me that he sleeps with earplugs and that his partner takes sleeping tablets in an attempt to sleep at night. They keep the television on at dinner time to drown out the traffic noise. Needless to say, leaving windows or doors open to allow a cool breeze in is strictly a no-no. This is an appalling situation that needs urgent attention and action. As a part of the Duncans Road works a sound barrier should be constructed between the freeway and the houses. Will the minister commit to providing this desperately needed infrastructure?

**COUNCIL | Motions  
18 March 2020**

## Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to speak on the motion moved so eloquently by Mr Quilty earlier today, and I cannot help but be struck constantly by the public perception of those of us in public office in this country. I think that is probably not just an Australian thing; I think it is probably around the world, where good folk—good, hardworking taxpayers—are out there with the view that we are all thieves and crooks.

That is a very sad state of affairs, but that is their view and they cannot be dissuaded from that. They think that we are all on the take. They think we are all shaking somebody down—unless they think we are all shaking everybody down in fact. I have to say that a quick look at my bank account would reassure them that I am not doing that very quickly.

But unfortunately it has to be said that the record of this government over the last five and a bit years backs that up. It just feeds that perception, because the Andrews government is a corrupt government. There is no other way of putting it: the Andrews government is a corrupt government. That is simply stating a fact. We do not have to go very far to establish why it is a corrupt government. We do not have to establish too much at all to prove that this government has done things which are shady to say the very least—and that is understating things enormously.

We remember of course the red shirts rorts scandal of 2014. Even before it was elected this government was up to dirty tricks. This government was ripping off the Victorian taxpayer to get itself elected. We remember that, and we know that was set up by the Labor Party in opposition—a deliberate ploy to take money out of the pockets of Victorians and to fund their campaign. It was, I have to say, breathtaking in its audacity, and it was only a matter of time before they were found out. And of course they were found out by the Ombudsman.

They were not happy that they were found out by the Ombudsman, so they took it to the High Court. First they took it to the Supreme Court here in Victoria, and then they took it to the High Court. Taking things to the Supreme Court and then to the High Court—that is not a cheap exercise. That would have cost the Victorian taxpayer millions and millions of dollars even if they had got a cheap deal from some of their Labor lawyer mates—and we will discuss that perhaps tomorrow. Even if they had got a cheap deal from Slater and Gordon or Maurice Blackburn, even then they would have been putting up a fair whack of Victorians' money to take this matter to court so they would not have to be exposed as the crooks that they are.

That is the bottom line, and that is the simple fact of the matter. That is a matter of public record: this government went to the highest court in this land as part of the cover-up to stop the people of Victoria finding out what it had done prior to the 2014 election. It is as simple as that—there

is nobody that can dispute that. That is simply a fact. That is what they did, and they fought it every inch of the way.

Even when the police got involved, when Victoria Police got involved, they refused to cooperate with Victoria Police. They refused to cooperate with the investigators who had been given the responsibility of uncovering this shysterism of the Victorian Labor Party. They refused to have anything to do with the police. They refused to speak to the police. They refused to involve themselves in providing justice in this particular instance. I mean, if you are not prepared to speak to the police, I would suggest to you very strongly that you have probably got something to hide. And the Labor Party in this state has got plenty to hide. It ripped off the taxpayers to get elected. It then spent millions and millions and millions of dollars going to the Supreme Court and then to the High Court in Canberra to cover that up and to protect itself from the glare of the public gaze, and that is an indisputable fact.

Is it any wonder that people think we are all crooks? Is it any wonder when they see the government of Victoria, the Labor government of Victoria, involved in this sort of shysterism, that people's perception is built to the extent that it has been? It gives me absolutely no joy, I have to say, to hear people speak of the Premier in the way they do, because there has been a fair bit of water go under the bridge since November 2018, and the perception of the Premier by the great majority of people, I have to say, has changed significantly since November 2018. What they are calling him now, well, I certainly could not say in this house, and I have no intention of doing so, Deputy President, I am sure you will be pleased to hear—

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Even with Mr Ondarchie offering his fulsome support, I still will not do that. But the fact of the matter is that this government is regarded by the great majority of Victorians as crooked, as corrupt—

Mr Ondarchie: Dodgy.

Mr FINN: Well, 'dodgy' is very mild compared to what people are calling the Andrews government as we speak. If Mick Gatto or if Tony Mokbel—I will not say Gatto; I will say Tony Mokbel—had treated the police with the contempt with which the Victorian government has treated Victoria Police, that would be fully and totally expected, but we are talking about the Premier and the government of Victoria, and that is disgraceful. That is a permanent stain on the Andrews government and a permanent stain

on the Australian Labor Party. It is something that Victorians have looked at, have watched from afar and have been absolutely stunned by, I have to say, and I am not at all surprised that they have been. It is a pretty crook—literally—set-up when we have that sort of thing going on.

We then move to a couple of blokes who were charged with the responsibility of—

Ms Symes: On a point of order, Deputy President, as much as I am trying to block out Mr Finn's words, he is not remotely referring to the motion that Mr Quilty has put before the house. It is actually disrespectful to Mr Quilty, frankly. Can he please be brought back to the motion?

Mr FINN: On the point of order, Deputy President, the fact of the matter is that the motion clearly refers to perceptions of corruption. The corruption perceptions index (CPI) talks about a score of 85 in 2012, down to 77 in 2019, so that is exactly what I am talking about. If anybody had been listening to my contribution to this point, they would be well aware that is exactly what I have said. I used those words—'corruption perception.' That is exactly what I have spoken about, Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Whilst we are enjoying a broad-ranging debate on this particular motion, I would draw Mr Finn back to the actual substance of the motion.

Mr FINN: I can fully understand why Ms Symes is very, very tetchy about the facts being raised in this house. I can fully understand that; I would be too. If I was a member of a corrupt government, I would be tetchy too. I would not want these sorts of things raised in the Parliament. I would not want them raised. I am not the Ombudsman—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order! Mr Finn!

Mr FINN: I am not the Ombudsman. She does not have to take me to the High Court.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr Finn! I just ask you to not be deliberately provocative, please.

Mr FINN: Deputy President, I am wounded. I am offended that you would think that I would be deliberately provocative in any way. But I have just been stating the facts with regard to this motion. The corruption perceptions index is a reflection of what people think of us and those who hold public office, and I am just pointing out why people think the way they do.

We had another couple of blokes who were charged with the

responsibility of leading one house of this Parliament: a bloke called Telmo Languiller, who was the Speaker of the other place, and another chap called Donnie Nardella, who was the Deputy Speaker of the other place. Those two individuals—

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Look, I think there was a caravan involved. There was a caravan involved, as I recall. I am not sure it was a Jayco—that is down in your electorate, I believe, Mrs McArthur. I think actually Telmo was down in your electorate as well, one of your constituents at one stage. But you know, people saw that—

*Mrs McArthur interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well, he did get around a bit, yes, but the money followed. Wherever he went the money followed. The people saw that, and they said, 'If this is what the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Victoria are capable of, what are the rest of them doing?' And that just fed the perception that we are all crooks. That fed it further. It is not rocket science to understand.

*Mr Ondarchie interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well, it could be dogs in cars—we might get to that in a minute. But it is not at all surprising that this corruption perceptions index has gone through the roof when people see the parliamentary leaders—the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, leading members of the ALP—behaving in such an appalling and corrupt manner. It is not at all surprising that people would be appalled and of the view that corruption is rife among elected officials.

Speaking of the corruption perceptions index, there is another issue that I think very recently has fed that perception index, and that is this government's handling of the West Gate Tunnel. Way back in 2014, at the same time as the ALP was ripping off the taxpayer to fund its campaign with the red shorts—red shirts rorts affair—

Ms Terpstra: Red shorts?

Mr FINN: Well, you might have been wearing red shorts. I tell you what: if Ms Terpstra was in red shorts, I am glad I was somewhere else.

I just remember, back in 2014, that at the same time as the government was involved in the red shirts fiasco the Premier, Mr Andrews, was telling everybody about this great plan he had for a western distributor. It was about \$500 million, and he said it was shovel ready. This was before 2014. He said this to the electorate in the lead-up to the election. At the same time as he was saying that to the electorate,

he was discussing with Transurban the project that they have got now. So here he was saying one thing to the electorate, and at the same time he was behind closed doors doing deals with Transurban. Oh, hang on—

Ms Terpstra: On a point of order, Deputy President, Mr Finn discussing all of those wideranging construction projects does not seem to be relevant to the motion.

Mr FINN: On the point of order, Deputy President, if Ms Terpstra would be kind enough to give me just a couple more minutes, I will be happy to explain how that fits into corruption in Victoria, the CPI and the increased perception of corruption as a result of this government.

Ms Terpstra: On the point of order, Deputy President, looking at the motion, it is particularly about government agencies and organisations and complaints that have been received as opposed to construction projects where there is nothing on the public record in terms of complaints about those construction projects.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The motion is about government agencies and police corruption. Could you just very quickly make your point, if it is relevant to it, and then return to the motion, please.

Mr FINN: I draw your attention to (1) (c) of the motion, which refers to:

research by Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand states that Australian governments—

Australian governments—  
display widespread complacency about corruption ...

That goes to the very heart of what I am talking about, and that of course is that the Premier was saying one thing in public and in the back room he was dealing with his mates from Transurban. And that has been going on ever since. I was chairman of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee in the last Parliament, and we were lied to by Transurban and we were lied to by officers of this government with regard to this project. When you have vast sums of money changing hands, when you have contracts being signed, when you have deals being done and when you have lies being told to a parliamentary committee, if that is not corruption, I do not know what is. That is a clear case of corruption, and I have no doubt—there is no doubt in my mind—that at some stage this project and the role that the government and Transurban played in this project will be investigated by IBAC. I have no doubt about that at all. It will happen; at some stage this project will be

investigated by IBAC. I tell you what: some of your mates over there just might end up in the big house. Make a note. You might chortle, but you might be laughing on the other side of the bars by the time we are finished.

Of course the other aspect of the West Gate Tunnel and the rather dodgy involvement of the government in all this is the role that the Treasurer of this state played. Of course he sat around the cabinet table as the government agreed to this project. They agreed to give Transurban the contract. There was Tim Pallas, the Treasurer, sitting at the cabinet table with the Premier. There he was. He did not actually mention that he had Transurban shares. He actually owned shares in Transurban. If you have a Treasurer of this state contributing to making decisions on one of the biggest infrastructure projects in the state's history and he has got shares in the company that they are giving it to—if that is not corruption, I am not exactly sure what is.

Is it any wonder that people have the view and have the perception that they do that we are all crooks? That is, I know, far from the truth, because the majority of elected members of this Parliament, indeed of any parliament, are good, hardworking people who enter the Parliament for the right reasons—the overwhelming majority. It is a few bad apples who give us all a very, very bad name indeed. Again, that is very sad and something that I personally would love to see changed. I have had hopes over the years as governments have come and governments have gone that a real effort would be made to change that public perception. Unfortunately I am still waiting, but I have not given up yet; I am still very hopeful.

I commend Mr Quilty for bringing this motion to the house. I think it is an important motion. I think this is a matter that needs to be discussed publicly, because if you get this sort of thing and you tuck it in the corner and you turn off the lights, it will grow. Corruption grows in the darkness. Where people cannot see, that is where you will find corruption, and we really need to ensure that the sort of thing that I have discussed here today is exposed. I think if this motion by Mr Quilty goes some way to doing that, then that will be a very, very good thing.

Mr Quilty talked about Victoria Police's potential for corruption, and I think it is safe to say that police command in Victoria over the last 20 years has left a fair bit to be desired. There was a time when we were all exceedingly proud of—

A member: Mick Miller.

Mr FINN: Mick Miller, indeed.

A member: Kel Glare.

Mr FINN: Kel Glare, absolutely, and Neil Comrie—some of the great chief commissioners who we could actually say were on top of their jobs and were leading from the front. They were good coppers, and they were great chief commissioners. And then along came the politicisation of the police force, and we have seen some very, very strange things happen from that point on. That in itself is a corruption of the force. Do not start me on Christine Nixon or indeed Simon Overland, because we will be here all night. It will be later than 3 o'clock, I can assure you.

*A member interjected.*

Mr FINN: He's gone! Take that man out and give him a hanky.

I urge the house to support this motion of Mr Quilty. I will leave it there, but I really believe that we must expose corruption. I can understand why Minister Symes is very pleased—I would suggest relieved—that I am coming to an end, because she is very happy for her government's record to go unnoticed, to not have the light shine upon it. She is very, very happy for that to occur. She wants people to forget the corruption that her government has been involved in over the past five years, so I can understand why she is relieved that I am going to come to a conclusion in my contribution in just a minute. But I can assure Minister Symes, as I can assure this house and as I can assure you, Deputy President, that the people of Victoria are the ultimate judges. They will not forget, and come the first opportunity they will slap down this corrupt, filthy government.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
18 March 2020**

## Wyndham City Council

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Local Government. It comes as a result of a meeting that I had in my office recently with a constituent, a very emotional meeting and one that I have to say I was very distressed as a result of. It was with a young woman who had started working at Wyndham City Council in 2010–11. She has requested that I not use her name in the house and I am very happy to accede to that request. Her situation involves maternity leave. She was due to return to work.

She negotiated a flexible working arrangement in December 2018 and was due to start in February 2019. But when she was due to start, the council began to pursue her for termination for inappropriate use of council emails, stating 151 personal emails over a two-year period was too much and a breach of policy. She was then sacked in May 2019. Now, I have to say that 151 personal emails over two years I do not find excessive, nor do I find it reasonable that she be sacked for those. In fact I think I smell a set-up. It was further explained to me that at the Wyndham council there is a culture of bullying and sexual harassment of staff. Now, this is something that obviously is deeply, deeply concerning and something that must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

So what I am asking the Minister for Local Government to do is to institute a ministerial inquiry into the culture of Wyndham council. We are on the Ws. I am very keen that the minister ascertain for himself the difficulties that some staff, and indeed some councillors I understand, have had over the journey of recent years. I ask the minister to establish that as a matter of urgency. I do not think that anybody should be forced to put up with this particular form of harassment, and I do not think that anybody should be sacked, particularly coming back from maternity leave, for having sent allegedly 151 personal emails over a two-year period. The whole thing stinks to high heaven, and I ask the minister to investigate.

**COUNCIL | Business of the house  
19 March 2020**

## Adjournment

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I rise to support the amendment moved by Mr Davis. I am deeply concerned. As members would know, I have been in this Parliament for a long time, and I have never seen what we have seen over the last 24 hours in this Parliament. I understand there have been some extraordinary scenes and extraordinary moves in the other place this morning, and that is something that deeply concerns me.

My concern is that the Premier may well be feeling that he can do without the Parliament—that he is in a far better position than any of us to run the show. That concerns me enormously. The fact that we are in a state of emergency, to my way of thinking, means the role of the Parliament is more important now than it has ever been, because we have

a whole range of powers that have been presented to the executive and that are being used by the executive as we speak. Without the scrutiny of the Parliament, well, then anything is possible. That really is a deeply concerning matter to me, and I think it is a concerning matter to anybody who stops and thinks about it for any period of time at all. I believe that we need to come back at a set time.

I have to say to you: I do not trust the government. It is as simple as that. I trust you, President, most certainly, but I do not trust the government; I certainly do not trust the Premier. I urge the house to support Mr Davis's amendment to return at the set date in May.

**COUNCIL | Committee  
19 March 2020**

## Local Government (Whittlesea City Council) Bill 2020

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Minister, from reading the monitor's report and listening to Mr Ondarchie's contribution to the second-reading debate it seems to me that a major contributing factor to the dismissal of this council is extreme dysfunction as a result of internal political party faction fighting. That may well involve people who are not on that council. It may well involve members of this Parliament. It may well involve ministers of the Crown. As somebody who comes from an area that is—well, let me say it is not exactly unknown for Labor Party faction fighting to occur in western suburbs councils. I am really keen to know, taking it all into consideration, what we have heard and what we have read over the last couple of days—and it really has only been a couple of days—I am very keen for you to tell me, to tell the house and to tell Victoria that dysfunction due to faction fighting is now a precedent for the dismissal of a council.

## Local Government (Whittlesea City Council) Bill 2020

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Minister, I must ask, given everything that we have heard and everything that we have read and given the dysfunction of the factions, groupings, gangs—call them what you will—the interaction inevitably seems to come back to one political party. Does this bill set a precedent for the dismissal of future councils? Does this bill set the precedent of factional dysfunction as a reason for the dismissal of councils in future?

## Bulla tip stench

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and I ask this question on behalf of the people of Bulla and those thousands of motorists who use Sunbury Road near Bulla daily. Recent activity at the Bulla tip has seen a growing mountain of rubbish overlooking the surrounding area. At the same time as this trash mountain has grown, a stench has emanated from the tip that can be smelt kilometres away. The stench is quite overwhelming and has made those in the area feel physically ill. Given the history of the tip, locals are deeply concerned about what the new trash mountain and dreadful stench might mean. Minister, what is going on at the Bulla tip?

## Riddell Road, Sunbury, pedestrian crossing

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads this evening. It concerns perhaps not as expensive an item as some have requested this evening but a very important one nonetheless. That is Riddell Road in Sunbury, which is a very busy road—an extremely busy road in fact—and what we are requiring is a pedestrian crossing outside Clarke Oval.

For those who know that area, Clarke Oval is the home of the Sunbury football club and the cricket club as well as the bowling club. It is a very large social centre in Sunbury where many thousands of people in fact over a period of time will gather—perhaps not at the minute, but over a period of time will gather—to have convivial beverages, to celebrate birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and that manner of things as well as, of course, to go to the footy. We have had some severe near misses—I am talking about really near misses—when people have tried to get across the road. Particularly they may have spent the afternoon at the football and may not be seeing as straight as they might otherwise, and they have been very close to coming to grief.

What I am asking the minister to do is to provide the resources, the funds, necessary to put in a pedestrian crossing with lights for that particular area. It would save lives. I have absolutely no doubt with the way things stand at the moment somebody will be killed before too long if this change is not made. Sunbury is very much a growing area, and it is about to grow substantially more—over the next 10 years we anticipate that Sunbury will double in size, so we are looking at somewhere around 60 000 to 70 000 people. It will be a major population centre, and obviously the bowling club, the football club, the Clarke Oval and the cricket club will be the centre of much activity for many people who will be moving to Sunbury over the next few years, as well as those who have already been there for quite some time. So obviously the pedestrian crossing with lights would be very helpful and would be very important to ensuring that people using that

precinct were able to get across that busy Riddell Road without being knocked senseless, or worse. So I ask the minister to provide those resources for that crossing with lights. I am sure the community in Sunbury would be forever grateful and delighted. They may in fact invite the minister down for a feed and a beer.

## Toxic soil dumping

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. During the course of this current crisis a number of communities in Melbourne's west have grown increasingly concerned that the Andrews government is dumping dangerous toxic soil from the West Gate Tunnel project in their areas while we are all being locked down. Many in the vicinity of the Ravenhall stinking hole in the ground that I have often referred to in the past have been worried about this dumping for some time. Now I have been approached by constituents in Bulla who are convinced that this material is being dumped there. Minister, has dangerous toxic soil from the West Gate Tunnel project been dumped in Ravenhall, Bulla or anywhere else in Melbourne's west?

## State Taxation Acts Amendment (Relief Measures) Bill 2020

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I was first elected to this Parliament in 1992, as the youngest member in fact of the Kennett government. I came into the other place and Victoria was financially stuffed. It was a basket case, it was a national joke. Over the years that followed we worked extremely hard. The members of the Kennett government, both the frontbench and the backbench, worked extremely hard to get Victoria back on its feet, and we did that. We were remarkably successful, in fact, in getting Victoria

back into solvency and getting Victoria back onto its feet.

I cannot believe that I am standing here tonight debating a piece of legislation that is going to send us back to where we were—worse than where we were—in 1992. The big difference of course is that John Cain and Joan Kirner did not mean to do that. They were just incompetent. They had no idea what they were doing. They stuffed up big time. This government is actually deliberately putting Victoria into enormous debt—debt that we will be paying off literally for generations to come. Can you believe that any government would do that? Well, this government does. The Andrews government is going to do that.

I heard the Treasurer on radio last week when he said that we need a more interventionist policy from government in the economy. So I thought to myself, 'Here we go.' We have known that the Premier of this state is a hardline socialist; we have known that for a very, very long time. But here is his Treasurer actually parroting what the Premier has been telling him all this time: 'Get the government to run the economy. Get the government to spend up big.'

Big spending, big taxing—that is what this government is and that is what this government will continue to be. That is not a good thing for Victoria. It is not a good thing for Victorians. When this pandemic is over, it will not be government that will return Victoria to a wealthy position. It will not be the government that returns Victoria to leading the way; it will be business, predominantly small business, and if the government ignores that fact, then we are all going to suffer as a result. It is business that creates jobs. It is business that creates wealth. It is business that will make Victoria great again, if I can use that term.

Any government that thinks it can do better than business, needs look no further than the Soviet Union. That did not work too well for them, and I can only suggest it will not work too well for us either. So when I hear the Treasurer talking about more interventionist economic policies, it is truly chilling, because that spells disaster for Victoria. Even before this pandemic hit we knew they had stuffed the budget. To put it bluntly, they had stuffed the budget. Now it is almost as if they are saying, 'Well, we've stuffed it anyway, we might as well do it properly.' Well, they are certainly doing it properly—\$24.5 billion properly. As I say, that will take generations to repay and will be a drag on my children, my grandchildren and probably my great-

grandchildren, and that is something that I am not pleased about at all.

One of the litmus tests, I suppose, of whether one has been a success in life is to have left this place better than one found it. You cannot tell me that putting Victoria into debt for \$24.5 billion is doing that. You cannot tell me that putting Victoria into the sort of debt that the government is talking about is making Victoria a better place and will indeed make Victoria a better place when we all leave it—when we all leave this Parliament or indeed all leave this life.

We have a situation which is truly diabolical. It appals me in every way imaginable. As I say, to have gone through it once is bad enough, but to be here at the beginning of when we are going through it again is truly horrifying. Let me tell you—let me tell members of the government—that generations to come will curse your names for what you are doing to them. They will curse you and they will curse your government for what you are doing to them, to their children and quite possibly even to their grandchildren.

I ask, I beg, the government to reconsider its policies. It must accept that the only way to true long-lasting recovery is through the private sector, through business. Without a strong business sector we do not have a strong state, we do not have strong employment. The only sustainable economic growth is through the private sector, through business. If the government cannot accept that, then the government has already set its path for total and absolute failure.

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
16 June 2020**

## Bulla tip asbestos inquiry

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and further to my previous question about the Bulla tip—a question which, by the way, has not as yet been answered—I now raise a matter that has locals totally bamboozled. It has long been known that the site of the Bulla tip in Sunbury Road is riddled with asbestos. It therefore came as quite a surprise when a recent report by the Environment Protection Authority Victoria found no presence of asbestos at all. Minister, will you conduct an inquiry into this report of the EPA and

confirm or otherwise the presence of asbestos at the Bulla tip site?

**COUNCIL | Members statements  
16 June 2020**

## Member conduct

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — On the night of the 2014 state election I made a prediction. Looking at the new Labor government I said, 'Give this mob long enough and they'll make the Cain-Kirner years look like the good old days.' Well, I am not one to say I told you so, but tell you so I certainly did. I thought the Andrews government spent the last year more than tripling the state debt, digging toxic holes it cannot pay for, dumping toxic soil in residential areas and mortgaging Victoria's future to communist China. But no, they were busy—very, very busy indeed. While small businesses hit the wall and 140 000 Victorians lost their jobs, the Andrews government was busy setting up a sting on the Premier's factional opponents. What followed was a hit that would do the Corleone family proud. The question asked by Victorians now is: if this is how the Labor Party treats its own, how can we expect to be treated? Even the federal ALP has declared Victorian Labor dysfunctional and totally unable to control its own affairs. Victorians indeed are entitled to ask: if Labor cannot govern itself, how can it govern the state? The Andrews government is incompetent. The Andrews government is corrupt. It is enough to drive Victorians onto the beers.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
16 June 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter this evening is addressed to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. It concerns a matter that is of grave concern to thousands of people across the western suburbs of Melbourne, in particular people living in and around Wyndham, people living around the Ravenhall tip and people in Bulla and in Sunbury. It concerns of course a matter that I have raised in this Parliament on a number of occasions before, and that is the issue of the dumping of toxic soil in the west from the West Gate Tunnel Project. I have to say to the minister that I have raised this with her and with other ministers on a number of occasions by way of constituency questions and so forth. I have yet to receive a sufficient

answer, and none of my constituents, as I understand it, have received—

*Ms Crozier interjected.*

Mr FINN: Well, they might be too busy stacking, Ms Crozier. They may well be. Maybe her day will come as well. Rarely does a day go by when my constituents do not contact me with more rumours, more stories of toxic soil being dumped around these three areas. People in Caroline Springs and Deer Park, for example, are very, very concerned and have been for a long time about what is going on at Ravenhall. They are terribly concerned now, dreadfully concerned now, about the fact that this toxic soil has been and probably is still being dumped just across the road from their homes. In Bulla I can tell the house about two experiences that I have had recently where I almost came to grief when a dirty great piece of sludge came off the back of a truck on its way to being dumped. I did not know whether it was toxic. I did not know what it was. In fact I barely saw it before getting out of the way to avoid hitting the thing. This was in the middle of Bulla hill. If anybody knows what Bulla hill is like, if you take the wrong turn there you are down the bottom of a ravine, and if you are down the bottom of a ravine the Tobins come and get you and it is all over.

Now, what I was also very concerned about on another occasion was the hail of gravel that came across my windscreen from a truck that I was following down Sunbury Road. Again this soil may well have been the toxic soil that we are talking about. Now, if this is all happening—

*A member interjected.*

Mr FINN: I was worried more about my lungs than the windscreen, I can tell you that now. But what I am really concerned about is to know what the hell is going on with this toxic soil. I understand the minister is the only one who can tell me, and I would really be pleased if she would.

**COUNCIL | Constituency questions  
17 June 2020**

## Sunbury Road toxic soil application

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Planning, and I refer the minister to the application of the Hi-Quality Group to expand the existing eco-hub on Sunbury Road between Bulla and Sunbury to accept

toxic soil from the West Gate Tunnel Project. This site is close to homes and schools and is on a road that is used by thousands of motorists every day. The impact on the health of people living in Sunbury and Bulla of the dumping of soil containing carcinogens is not being considered at all in this push to destroy the edge of what is a green wedge. This is not the place for millions of tonnes of poisonous, PFAS-infected soil. I am sure those building homes nearby—just down the road, in fact, in new housing estates—would readily agree. Minister, will you hold the health of locals as a priority and veto this or any other application to dump toxic soil in the Sunbury or Bulla areas?

**COUNCIL | Production of documents  
17 June 2020**

## West Gate Tunnel

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Well, I have to say that Dr Cumming's contribution was significantly more interesting than the one that preceded hers. That is a sad reflection indeed on the contribution of Ms Shing. Some have very unkindly suggested she is a sanctimonious windbag, but I would not do that. I would not do that, but I would suggest to her very, very strongly that the only reason that her political masters allow her to run loose in here is to fill in a hole when they need one, and they have just done it again. Now, one of the first comments that was made by Ms Shing—

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, I have considered what Mr Finn has said, and I thought about not pressing this point of order. Mr Finn has in fact referred to me in a way which, despite some clever verbiage and an attempt at trickery, is in fact seeking to cast unfair aspersions which are entirely unparliamentary and deeply offensive. I would seek that he withdraw that gratuity.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Thank you, Ms Shing. I uphold the point of order. Mr Finn, can you just withdraw the comment?

Mr FINN: I am happy to withdraw, Acting President. I am not sure whether Ms Shing is upset by being called a windbag or sanctimonious, but anyway we will move on. One of the things that Ms Shing began her contribution with this afternoon was referring—

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Finn was asked by you to withdraw his comment, and he did so before going on to qualify. I would ask for an unreserved withdrawal from Mr Finn.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): The point of order is upheld. Mr Finn, can you give an unreserved and uncommitted withdrawal?

Mr FINN: I will even go down on the knee if you like. I withdraw.

*Ms Shing interjected.*

Mr FINN: I withdraw because the last thing I would want to do is upset Ms Shing, because God knows she needs every bit of help she can get. But the contempt for the western suburbs that Ms Shing has shown is a bloody disgrace.

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, we have heard the word 'misogyny' bandied around in this chamber a little bit today, and for the third time Mr Finn has made a comment which is disparaging and offensive and carries on from the conduct of his earlier two remarks. I would seek that he refrain from any further remarks of this nature, which I find offensive and unparliamentary.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Thank you, Ms Shing. Mr Finn, can you just withdraw without any commentary, without any additions, without any anything.

Mr FINN: What is she upset about now? I did not say anything. What is she upset about? I mean, can you say anything? Making a reference to a member is offensive now, is it?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn, could you just withdraw.

Mr FINN: We might as well go out in the street and close the Parliament altogether. We might as well do that. What a joke! What this member has done—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn, I am on my feet. Mr Finn, I need you just to withdraw, and we can move on.

Mr FINN: I am happy to withdraw whatever you want me to withdraw. I have no idea what it is, but I am happy to do it. It is just the most ridiculous bloody thing I have heard in years. But anyway, that is the way this government operates. The contempt—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn, just back to the motion.

Mr FINN: The contempt Ms Shing showed for the western suburbs during her contribution today was despicable, was disgraceful. All we want from this motion, all my constituents want from this motion, is some answers. I have been asking questions of the Premier, of the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, of the Minister for Health, of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change—of

various ministers—for months and months and months. We want to know what is going on with this PFAS stuff. We want to know what is going on with this contaminated soil that they are committed to dumping in the west of Melbourne. This mob over here are giving the middle finger to the people of the west—

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, I have just seen Mr Finn make an obscene gesture in my direction when he referred to the comments he made. I would seek that you examine the video footage of this particular contribution and Mr Finn's gesture and that a ruling be made in this regard. This is absolutely inappropriate, particularly in light of the earlier discussions and the exchanges we have had with you, Acting President, about Mr Finn's course of conduct this afternoon following my contribution and the references he has made to and about me.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Thank you, Ms Shing. I am going to refer this to the President.

Mr FINN: Well, look, I am not sure why Ms Shing is in here, because she seems to take offence at anything and everything that anybody ever says. It is just extraordinary—

Mr Ondarchie: Except the Labor right.

Mr FINN: Indeed, Mr Ondarchie, except the Labor right and what they say. She seems to be happy to cop that. Perhaps 60 Minutes will give me an hour on Sunday night on the tribulations of Ms Shing. Well, God help us! The fact of the matter is that Ms Shing and her government have given the middle finger to the people of the western suburbs—and the finger, by the way, was pointed over there. Not everything is about you, Ms Shing. That will come as a huge surprise to you, but that is the truth.

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, again, there have been multiple rulings from the President in relation to pointing. Again, please stop pointing at me, Mr Finn, whether it is with your middle finger or with two raised index fingers. I am finding it really offensive, and I think that you can make a contribution without involving me personally in the things that you have got to say.

Mr FINN: I think you need a psychiatrist—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn!

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, Mr Finn has just suggested that I need a psychiatrist.

Mr FINN: I did not suggest it; I said it.

Ms Shing: Oh, sorry, Mr Finn has now just said on the record that I need a psychiatrist. I take extreme offence to the fact that you would seek to stigmatise that particular issue. I take extreme offence to this unparliamentary conduct and the fact that it has been a pattern from Mr Finn this afternoon. I would seek that action be taken to address Mr Finn's behaviour and conduct, because I find it utterly offensive and completely unparliamentary. I seek an absolute and unconditional withdrawal from Mr Finn in relation to the comment that he has just made on top of the withdrawals that you, Acting President, have sought and obtained in various qualified and later unqualified ways.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Thank you, Ms Shing, I do actually uphold it. Mr Finn, I need you to withdraw, without commentary or additions.

Mr FINN: I withdraw, I withdraw, I withdraw. And let me say—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): And please, let us—

Mr FINN: I will continue to fight for the people of the west despite what anybody here—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn!

Mr FINN: I am pointing that way, despite what anybody—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn, take your seat. Also, I need you to just get on with the motion and stop getting personal.

Mr FINN: Well, that was what I was trying to do, and I have been trying to do it now for about 8 minutes. And if what's-her-name over there lets me do it, I will. I did not mention her name, and that should be enough.

Ms Shing: On a point of order, Acting President, again, this is about the fifth or sixth time that I have gotten to my feet—

*Mr Finn interjected.*

Ms Shing: I beg your pardon, Mr Finn? This, Acting President, is now to the point where this pattern of behaviour is entirely unacceptable. Mr Finn has targeted me through repeated comments, personalisation, 'what's-her-name over there' and a flippant gesture, following on from a raised middle finger and repeated pointing. That is something that I think constitutes entirely inappropriate, vicious and personalised behaviour of a type which I think falls into the category of misogyny, and again I would like this addressed and escalated to the relevant formal levels for decision-making.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): All right. Mr Finn, I need you to start to just get on with the motion. I may not be able to throw people out—

Mr FINN: I am endeavouring to do that, Acting President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Bourman): Mr Finn, I am still talking. I may not be able to throw people out, but I know someone who can do that, so can we just move on with the motion itself. Speaking of that—

Mr FINN: G'day, Shaun. How are you? I am delighted to speak on this motion, because I am here to defend the people of the west. I know that there are many members of this house who do not give a stuff about the western suburbs. Members on the opposite side of this house have shown time and time and time again that, despite the fact that the people of the west vote for them at every election, they have total contempt for the western suburbs—the people in Wyndham, the people in Ravenhall, the people in Bulla. These are the ones who are suffering as a result of the policies of this government. All this motion is seeking to do is to get some information that these people want and these people need. That is all that it is asking for. You would think that we were trying to rewrite history. Certainly members opposite are trying to rewrite history. There are no two ways about that at all. But I am standing here saying that I have been trying for months and months and months to get answers. This motion will, hopefully, provide those answers.

Now, if the Labor Party want to continue to treat the people of the west with total contempt, that is up to them, and we will be pointing that out to the people of the west at the appropriate time. But as far as I am concerned, when you are talking about toxic soil that is 200 times more carcinogenic than is safe; when you are talking about that material being dumped in residential areas, near houses, near schools; when you are talking about the people of the west being put in physical danger by this material, then we need some answers. Members opposite can carry on like two-bob watches as much as they like, but the fact of the matter is that is not going to give us the answers that the people of the west demand. This motion will hopefully do that, and I urge the house to support it.

## Western Metropolitan Region police resources

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. In doing so, I express my very deep sadness at the passing of Solomone Taufeu lungaki, a 15-year-old, in Brimbank last night. It was a tragic case, and I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to his family, to his friends and to his immediate community. An incident like this is something that nobody ever wants to see. One would hope that something positive will come out of it, although at this point you would have to wonder what could. I would like to offer my condolences to his mum and his dad and to his nine siblings and extended family.

I do not wish to comment on the case itself because of course charges have been laid this afternoon and it would be something most improper if I were to comment on that—that is a matter for the courts—but what it does tell us is that gang violence is still alive and well in Melbourne's west. Now, I have been talking about this now for I think about six years—six, maybe seven years. I have seen some dreadful cases of gang violence, and I have seen some truly despicable acts as a result of this gang violence. I suspect that it may have fallen off the radar just a tad, and I think it is about time it went back on the radar. What I am asking the minister to do tonight is to ensure that the police, in the western suburbs in particular, are fully equipped—that they have the resources and the manpower and the ability to fight this scourge on our streets.

It is something that is a threat to every young person. I mean, I have got teenage daughters and I have got an older daughter as well and a teenage son, and I do not want to see them caught up in something like this. I do not want to see anybody caught up in anything like this. So I ask the minister as a matter of priority to provide the resources necessary for the local police in the west of Melbourne to ensure that these gangs are stopped in their tracks, to ensure that our young people—and indeed our older people—are safe on the streets again.

## Adjournment

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Listening to Neil Mitchell on the radio this morning reminded me of just how much the community holds us in contempt in this place and indeed in the other place. The fact that the government has put this motion forward after just a two-week sitting period, what they are doing is, at a time of an integrity crisis in the government—the government is in an integrity crisis—attempting to run away from this Parliament. They are attempting to run away from scrutiny. They are attempting to run away from responsibility for the appalling crisis that the government find themselves in. What in fact we will have, if the Parliament does not sit, is this state being run by eight people—eight people. That is it. That just flies in the face—

*Ms Crozier interjected.*

Mr FINN: No, she is not. That is true. I am glad Ms Crozier pointed that out. The Leader of the Government is not even included in the gang of eight, which must rankle her a bit. We know that Ms Shing will never be included in the gang of eight. That is a ridiculous suggestion.

The very real situation is that democracy in this state is being stomped upon by a government that has total contempt for the electorate. That is what is happening. We should be here, as members of Parliament, having our say, representing our constituents—and I will give you an example. When the Parliament is not sitting here, when the Parliament has not been sitting here for these months, the government has been preparing to dump toxic soil throughout the western suburbs, and I have not had a chance to come in here and speak for my constituents. I want that chance. That is my job, and this government is denying us, as members of Parliament, the opportunity to represent our constituents. Now, that to me stinks. That stinks every bit as much as the crisis that the government currently finds itself in, the scandal it currently finds itself in.

I can understand why members of the government do not want to come into the Parliament. I can understand why they do not want to come in here and answer questions in the Parliament. Indeed I can understand why members of the government just want to get away from everybody as much as possible. If I was in their

situation at the moment, I would pretty much want to do the same thing. But the fact of the matter is that we have a responsibility as members of Parliament at a time of crisis to be here in the Parliament. We have got a health crisis, we have got an economic crisis and the government has an integrity crisis.

So if we are not here in this Parliament representing our constituents, we are not doing our job. And for the government to be running away from the Parliament at a time like this is something that is intolerable and will continue the level of contempt that the electorate has for their elected members of Parliament and in particular for the Andrews government.

## Toxic soil health implications

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My constituency question is to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure. I am hoping the minister is aware that thousands of people across Melbourne's west are deeply concerned about the health implications of the Andrews government's plan to dump poisonous toxic soil in their area. Whether it be Wyndham, Ravenhall, Bulla or elsewhere, my constituents are worried about the dumping of millions of tonnes of soil heavily contaminated with carcinogenic PFAS from the West Gate Tunnel Project. I have previously asked the health minister about this, but she quickly handballed it to her ministerial colleague responsible for transport infrastructure—she did not want to know. I therefore ask the minister if she can guarantee my constituents that their concerns are unfounded and that there is no threat to their health, particularly from cancer, posed by her toxic soil.

## President

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — President, I rise to congratulate you upon your elevation to the presidency. We have known each other now for a long time, and I think it would be safe to say that we get on very well, and I am hopeful that that will remain the case now that you are in the chair. I

hope that you will follow the example of your predecessor, who I believe was a very good President. I hope that will not destroy his future career, me saying that, but indeed I thought that Mr Leane did a particularly good job as President. That has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that he never threw me out once! I congratulate you, Mr Leane, on the job that you did as President. You can be very, very proud of the contribution that you made while you were in the chair.

I have no doubt that whilst Mr Elasmarr has a very difficult job—there are no two ways about that; it will be very difficult in the months and, well, a couple of years ahead—he will also meet the levels that have been set, meet the standards that have been set and make a strong contribution as President to this place in the same way that he has served as chair of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee, and we had better get a new chair, Mr Gepp. I am sure Mr Elasmarr will make a strong contribution to this place as President in much the same way as he has over the last 14 years as a member of this place.

So to Mr Leane, to Mr Elasmarr, I congratulate you both. And I wish you, Mr Elasmarr, a great deal of good fortune—not so much Mr Leane, because I know where he is going. Certainly I know that we have not seen the last of Mr Leane, and I assure Mr Leane that he has not seen the last of me.

**COUNCIL | Second reading  
18 June 2020**

## Justice Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan)  
— I rise this afternoon to speak on the Justice Legislation Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019. I come from a view that tells us that, as we often hear, there are two places that one should keep out of: one is hospital, the other one is the courts, because once one gets into the courts, generally speaking it is likely to cost you an arm and a leg. There is a view in this country that the courts do not dispense justice; they just provide for those who can buy the best lawyers. Now, whether that

is so or not is probably debatable, but the fact is there is that perception in the community and something has to really be done about that.

I do not think this bill will do that at all. Certainly we have to find a way of improving the public perception of our justice system—or our legal system as we have in Victoria; very little justice but plenty of legality. As I said, there needs to be a way of improving the public perception of the court system, but this is not the way to do it. I am hoping that one day somebody will come up with a way to do it. I am hoping that the next Attorney-General of Victoria, who has just walked into the chamber—Mr O'Donohue—will be in a position to do that very soon. I look forward to him doing that, and I look forward to offering him some friendly advice on the subject from time to time, which I am sure he is really looking forward to. I can tell by the expression on his face just how thrilled he is at the prospect of receiving some friendly advice from me on this particular subject!

Now, as we have discussed earlier today, this place has copped a fair flogging this week in terms of public perception. MPs, politicians—call us what you want—are not held in high regard by the general public. We are held in much lower regard on Thursday of this week than we were on Thursday of last week. Now, without going into the details of what has caused that, the corruption within the government, the corruption within the ALP, we now have a bill—whether it is a timely bill or just a coincidence—which is going to pour millions and millions and millions of dollars into the pockets of some of the greatest donors to the government. Now, this is, as they say in the classics, as dodgy as all get-out. That is without doubt something that does not pass that well-known pub test. If you were to walk into any pub—perhaps next week when you can actually walk into a pub and have a beer—go up to the bar and ask people at that bar what they think of a government that is legislating to change the law to allow their mates in the Labor law firms to get richer, what you think people would say? I have got a fair idea, and I do not think it would be all that parliamentary. I think the reaction from the average person, whether they be at the bar or elsewhere—

Mr O'Donohue: Similar to Mr Byrne.

Mr FINN: Indeed it would be. I do not know whether Mr Byrne would be offering advice or taking notes—one or the other. But certainly the reaction to that sort of proposition I think would—

Mr O'Donohue: Elicit the same sort of language.

Mr FINN: Certainly it would be the same sort of language. From what I gather, it has to be said it is not just Mr Byrne who uses that sort of language. We have seen some very colourful exchanges over recent days from very high-profile members of the ALP, invariably speaking out about each other. What on God's earth they say about us I cannot even begin to imagine if that is what they say about each other. Nonetheless, that is something that would occur if we walked into the pub or a bar and tried that pub test. If you walked in and you told people that we have here in Victoria a government which is passing legislation to make their mates—their donors—richer so that they can make bigger donations next time—

Mr O'Donohue: Half a million is not enough. Half a million was not enough.

Mr FINN: Look, over there they might think that half a million is not enough. I tell you, I would not mind half a million, but over there, clearly they want more. They have not had the lecture about greed, but they want more, and that is what we have now.

If you were to take that further and you were to speak to those people—I will not say gentlemen, but people in the bar—and you were to say to them—

*Mr O'Donohue interjected.*

Mr FINN: Now, Mr Melhem has walked in. Here is a man that knows about lawyers; here is a man that knows about the court system.

*Members interjecting.*

Mr FINN: No, look, he can tell us. I am looking forward to his contribution to this particular bill, because if he was on contingency fees he would probably be a lot wealthier himself than he has been up to this point.

But as I was saying, if you spoke to those same people that you had just told that the government was legislating to make their mates richer and you said to them that the new chairman of one of the law firms that is going to be richer is a man who was just been appointed to run the ALP in Victoria—a former Labor Premier—what would they say? I suggest to you that the language would be even worse. They would be confounded that such a thing could be allowed to happen. I think it would be most stomach churning, I have to say to you. They would be appalled. But that is what we have before the house today. This Labor government legislating to make its mates—its major donors—richer. Hey, that is payback. We know that Labor like to pay their debts, and they are doing it big time today.

And unfortunately they are using this Parliament to do it.

A member: It is about the worker, Bernie.

Mr FINN: Oh, the worker. These blokes getting around in their Mercedes and their BMWs and living in their townhouses in South Yarra and Toorak, they are the workers all right, aren't they? They would not work in an iron lung, most of them. But that is what we are told by members of the government. With the fact that these people are going to be enriched, genuinely enriched, by this legislation and the fact that they owe their loyalty to the ALP—more than their loyalty; they contribute significantly to the ALP—I am sure they will tell us it has nothing at all to do with the fact that this legislation is being proposed and nothing at all to do with the fact that the government is allowing a piece of legislation to be put forward which will make them all much, much richer. There is nothing like a chardonnay socialist to tell the lie about the commitment to the workers, because quite frankly they do not care about the workers, they are just out for themselves. That is what it is about. It does not matter whether it is the Labor Party here, it does not matter whether it is the chardonnay socialists down in King Street or William Street and it does not matter who they are or where they are. Is it King Street? Where is the other place?

A member: Lonsdale Street. Some of them are in Lonsdale Street.

Mr FINN: Lonsdale Street. Yes, there are a few of them around. They are all going to do very, very nicely out of this legislation, and no doubt they will show their gratitude; they will show undying gratitude in folding stuff to their political masters.

Now, I am a great believer that without a strong justice system our society is in trouble. I have to say, I think society in Victoria at the moment is in a lot of trouble, because what we have in Victoria at the moment is almost an industry comprised of lawyers, judges and politicians. They are almost interchangeable, and they are all of the same attitude—they are all of the same view—and with the judges that is largely because for the last 17 of 21 years every judicial appointment in this state has been made by a Labor attorney-general. For 11 of those years it was Rob Hulls, which would explain why the judiciary in this state is not highly regarded. It is a fact that Mr Hulls used his time as Attorney-General to appoint people that, well, reflected his view of life—and his view of life, in my view, left a fair bit to be desired—and as a result

we now have a judiciary which has let the side down. This legislation is not going to do anything to fix that, and that is a great pity.

As has been mentioned a couple of times in this debate, the federal government is currently having a review of the very thing that we are talking about today. Now, you would imagine that if the federal government was having a review—they were taking all sides into consideration, taking all views and coming up with a consensus and doing all the things that the federal government does—the state government, the Andrews government, if it was fair dinkum about getting the best result possible, would actually wait for this review to report. They would actually wait to get the results and to see what the federal government was suggesting. They would wait to see what was happening around the other states of Australia. But no—oh no, no, no, no. The federal government's review might actually recommend the wrong things. They might actually recommend things that will improve justice but not make Labor mates rich. 'We can't have that, can we? We can't have that. You've got to look after your mates. When it comes to justice or mates, give me mates every time,' say the Labor Party. That is just the way they operate. I mean, mateship is a great thing, a great part of Australia, but I think the Labor Party has taken it to a degree that is a little bit beyond the pale.

I heard Mr Barton earlier. I listened very carefully to Mr Barton's contribution in this debate, and I have to say he was very sincere, and he had some very good points, I thought. There were a couple of times there he nearly had me. But the fact of the matter is that justice is not going to be served by making a few lawyers richer. It is just not going to work. It is not going to happen, and that is the simple fact of the matter. I want to see justice in this state for everybody. I do not want to see justice for rich, leftie lawyers who drive silver BMWs and live in townhouses in South Melbourne and South Yarra and Toorak and so forth. I want to see justice for everyone, not just the select few who will be enriched by this legislation today.

I think that is important—that we as legislators always put our desire for justice first. That is something that is to my way of thinking absolutely crucial. We have a responsibility here to every Victorian to provide the sort of justice that they need and, more importantly, that they deserve. This legislation is not doing that. This legislation is helping out a handful of people. It is making a handful of people very, very rich. It will

make a handful of people very, very rich—or richer, should I say, because most of them are already very, very rich—and it is doing nothing to help the workers. It is doing nothing to help those who need that help, who need that support more than anybody else.

I support the amendments that have been put forward, and obviously we will be going to the committee stage very soon with those. I support Mr O'Donohue's reasoned amendment, which I think is an exceptionally good reasoned amendment. I suggest to members of the crossbench that if they are keen to see justice in this state in its purest form, then they should support Mr O'Donohue's reasoned amendment, because that would provide the sort of result that would be not just good for a small group of rich, leftie lawyers but great for every Victorian.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
18 June 2020**

## Cardinal George Pell

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — My adjournment matter this evening is for the attention of the Attorney-General. It has been said that a justice system that does not enjoy the confidence of the community is not a justice system at all. And I refer tonight to a case where an innocent man was wrongly charged, was wrongly prosecuted, was wrongly convicted, was wrongly jailed and his appeal was wrongly dismissed. I am of course referring to the case of what I describe as the persecution of Cardinal George Pell. What we need is an independent inquiry into exactly what happened in this case. Now, in this inquiry we need to cover the areas of the role of the then Chief Commissioner of Police, the complicity of the ABC and most certainly the so-called journalists within that organisation, how we can avoid trial by media in future, how did the Court of Appeal get it so very wrong and how could an innocent man in this day and age in Victoria be jailed in the way that Cardinal Pell was.

My view and the view of a lot of people around Victoria and indeed around Australia is that the integrity of the justice system in this state is very much on trial. There are major questions that are desperately in need of answers. Given the major concerns expressed by so many people over recent months and particularly given the 7-nil decision of the High Court of Australia to overturn Cardinal Pell's

conviction, it is my view that we can only lay these questions to rest with an independent inquiry. When I say an independent inquiry—and I am not sure how we are going to do this in Victoria—I would like to see an inquiry that is at arm's length from Victoria Police, arm's length from the judiciary and arm's length from the government. We need to get this right. If we are going to lend credibility once again to our justice system and to our judiciary, we need to answer these questions. And an independent inquiry, I believe, will in many ways be able to answer some of the very big questions that are now unanswered. So I ask the minister to put in train this particular inquiry in the hope that we will never again in this state see the miscarriage of justice that we have seen in the situation with Cardinal Pell.

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*Finn In The House* readers, please note that the speeches here have been extracted from *Hansard*. Formatting here is slightly different however; for example, Constituency Questions in *Hansard* only have the electorate name for the speech heading, whereas here each contribution has a heading reflecting the topic of debate. Also at times, where multiple contributions are made (for example in the Committee Stage of a bill), they are aggregated under a single heading. Supplementary Questions are shown here directly after a Question Without Notice, as this book only contains Bernie's contributions (whereas in the House, the supplementary question is asked after the minister's first answer). Refer to *Hansard* for the official record of the Parliamentary debates.



# FINN IN THE HOUSE

Speeches February to June 2020



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