



# FINN IN THE HOUSE

**Speeches July 2009 to December 2009**



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## Police: western suburbs

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. It concerns a crisis in law and order in the western suburbs of Melbourne. This is a direct result of police shortages — in many cases a gross police shortage — in all the local government areas that I represent in the west of Melbourne: Hobsons Bay, Hume, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Moreland.

Perhaps the area that is most affected is the city of Wyndham, which has a long and not very distinguished history of begging for extra police. This has been going on for quite some time. I am sure that the champion of law and order in Werribee, Lori McLean, would give us chapter and verse on how long the people of Wyndham, and Werribee in particular, have been begging this government to provide them with adequate police to protect a vast and growing community.

Members should understand — and some, including the minister, may not be aware — that Wyndham is based on Werribee, and it is a growing community of some 140 000 people at the moment. It is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia.

Depending on what day it is it could in fact be the fastest growing municipality, but unfortunately over recent years we have not seen an increase in police numbers to keep up with the population growth in the area. We are seeing a vast and explosive increase in the population, but the law and order resources are just not there to protect the people who are moving into the area.

The government is very happy to take the stamp duty and provide developers with permission to build new estates, but it is not so happy to provide adequate police protection for people who are moving into Wyndham, quite often with great enthusiasm, I might say, because it is a great area in which to live; there is no doubt about that.

I am sure we will hear from the government that this is an operational matter and that it is a matter for the chief commissioner.

That is not so, and I ask the minister to intervene directly in this because the chief commissioner, in order to provide the extra manpower for Wyndham, will

need the assistance of the minister in providing extra police bodies to go into that area. I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to heed the long-held pleas of the people of the Wyndham community and provide the local law enforcement officers with adequate resources, including manpower, to properly protect the people who live in the otherwise magnificent Wyndham community.

COUNCIL  
29 July 2009

## Schools: Closures and Mergers

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — You have to say that when it comes to hypocrisy and humbug you just cannot beat the Labor Party. Its members are sensational at it; they are experts.

In the area of health, prior to the 1999 election when the Labor Party was elected we saw the then shadow health minister on the radio and television every day —

Mrs Peulich — Chasing ambulances.

Mr FINN — He was chasing ambulances; my very word he was. That was exactly what he was doing. Yet since the Labor Party got into power people have been dying in ambulances because they cannot get into hospitals. That is Labor's legacy in health.

Let us look at today's debate on education, because that is almost as bad. I am very proud that I was a member of the Kennett government, because it was a government that saved Victoria. If Mr Viney wants a history lesson, then I am happy to give him one.

He can take notes if he likes, or perhaps he can get somebody to take notes for him. In 1992 when we came to government the state of Victoria was close to bankruptcy as a result of 10 years of Labor government — the decade of darkness that I have referred to in this house from time to time. We had to do a range of things in order to bring Victoria back from the brink. Education was one area that we took a particular interest in because as a government we were keen to see students get an education that would provide them with the wherewithal to get through life, but without the waste and mismanagement that we had seen under the Kirner and Cain governments.

Mr Viney talks about the 9000 teachers that apparently were sacked

in this state under the Kennett government, but they were not sacked. Not a single teacher was sacked — not one. Every single teacher in this state who left under the Kennett government left voluntarily, and I might say usually with a fair whack of money in their back pocket. There was not one sacking.

The Kennett government sacked no teachers. When members of the Labor Party come into this place and start spouting their lies about teachers being sacked, I ask the house to remember that, for the record, no teachers were sacked under the Kennett government.

Most certainly there were a number of school closures, and I recall it being a pretty traumatic time —

Mr Elasmarr — How many?

Mr FINN — Mr Elasmarr might be interested to know how many, and he will probably have to take off his shoes and socks to get to 20, although I am not going to ask him to get to 21. A number of schools were closed.

Some of the schools were closed as a result of the fact that they were very small schools and they were not providing the educational opportunities that children needed and deserved. There were also a number of schools that had fallen into Labor's \$600 million maintenance black hole.

Mrs Peulich — It was \$680 million.

Mr FINN — Mrs Peulich tells me it was \$680 million; I will take her word for it. That is a fair whack now, but 18 years ago it was a huge sum of money, particularly in a state that was bankrupt as a result of 10 years of Labor government.

Mrs Peulich — Ten dark years.

Mr FINN — Ten dark years. A decade of darkness, and I might refer to that again from time to time. There were schools we had to close because they were literally falling down around us.

The only viable option for a number of the schools was to close them. It was regrettable, but that is the fact of the matter. What did we see? The Labor Party went berserk: it ran campaigns, it put advertisements in the paper and it went right off its trolley in a way that only Labor people can —

Mrs Peulich — Stephen Jolly and a barricade!

Mr FINN — Stephen Jolly barricaded down at Richmond, did he not? He is now on the council there, as I understand.

Members of the Labor Party in this state went right off their small and tidy

## Schools: Closures and Mergers ...

minds about what was happening to a number of schools. But what happened when Labor came to government? It did exactly the same thing. It continued the program. Here is a mob that was elected on a policy of stopping school closures.

As soon as it got into office, it was the one that had 'Closed' signs out the front of schools. The hypocrisy and the humbug of the Labor Party in this state knows no bounds.

I well remember that one of the first things I did when I was elected as the member for Tullamarine in the Assembly back in 1992 was to —

Mrs Peulich interjected.

Mr FINN — Thank you very much, Mrs Peulich. Back in 1992 I visited Gladstone Park Secondary College, which was one of those schools which was literally falling apart. It had not even had as much as a coat of paint for 20 years. One of the first things I was able to do was to go to Don Hayward, who was the then Minister for Education, and say, 'This school needs your help. Labor has done nothing for this school in the 10 dark years it has been in office.'

One of the first things we did as a government was to give Gladstone Park Secondary College \$600 000 for urgent refurbishment. It was very urgent, because I remember going there and putting my hands through the walls and my feet through the floor. It was not safe. In 1992 this was education after 10 years of Labor. Sadly, that is where it is returning. Some of the schools I have seen in the western suburbs are getting to a very similar condition. They are getting to a stage where some of them, I have to say, may not in the foreseeable future be safe for children to be educated in or for teachers to teach in.

Sadly, many of the teachers and principals who have expressed their concern to me are too scared to go any further, because they know the tactics of this government are to bully, to push, to heavy and to threaten. That is the way this government operates; that is what we have come to expect from the Labor Party in this state.

I could go on for quite some time. I was hoping to speak a little bit about Joan Kirner. We are talking about history today —

Mrs Peulich — She's still around.

Mr FINN — Oh, no! She is still around. She is still running the Labor Party in a fairly big way, as we have seen in the last 12 months or so. But Joan Kirner was the worst education minister in this state. Mr Lenders will

probably be disappointed to hear me say that he does not hold that title, but he does not come in within a bull's roar of Joan Kirner, because she was a shocker. This is a woman who saw education not as about teaching kids but as a battle of classes and as class warfare. She did not see education as being about learning or about teaching, but about politics. As a result we saw —

Mrs Peulich — Social engineering.

Mr FINN — We saw social engineering, but we also saw a lot of kids leave school unable to read and write and unprepared for the lives ahead of them. That is something that will condemn her forever as an education minister in this state.

I regret that my time is limited this afternoon, because there are many aspects of education in the western suburbs that I would like to address, as the educational needs of the western suburbs are important and have been neglected again. Who would neglect them? It is the Labor government — of course it would and of course it does. Perhaps at another time I could go into that in much greater depth.

I urge the house to support this motion today. I asked members of the house to put the history books straight and remind themselves about what has happened over the years with regard to education and remember it is the Liberal Party and The Nationals, in coalition, that have over the years given education a much better go than Labor ever has and Labor ever will.

## COUNCIL | Members Statements 29 July 2009

### Al Gore: visit

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Since the last sitting week of this Parliament, Victoria has had the misfortune to be visited by possibly the greatest charlatan in the world today, one Al Gore. The former vice-president of the United States has a carbon footprint that spreads nonsense wherever he goes. As we know, there is no global warming — but if there was, it would possibly be caused by Mr Gore's propensity to spout hot air wherever he travels in his jumbo jet.

We have to ask why Mr Gore would travel the world in those jumbo jets, spreading carbon footprints wherever he goes, to talk the sort of nonsense he does.

It might have something to do with the fact that since he produced his so-

called documentary, An Inconvenient Truth — the inconvenient truth, of course, was that it was proven in a court that the documentary had more holes in it than an old sock — his personal wealth has increased by some 5000 per cent. If I were faced with the prospect of making that sort of money, I think I would tell a few stories along the way as well.

Mr Gore has set up a company in the United States to benefit from President Obama's proposed cap and trade system. I feel most sorry for those who have fallen for the Gore line, and I can only say to them if they are looking for snake oil, has Al Gore got a deal for them!

## COUNCIL | Adjournment 30 July 2009

### City of Brimbank: Ombudsman's report

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Local Government. It concerns the veil of silence which has recently descended over the Brimbank City Council scandal. As I am sure the Deputy President would be aware, this has been quite a big issue in my electorate. For the benefit of Minister Pakula, Brimbank is in the western suburbs.

I have spoken on this subject to a number of residents, and that includes journalists who have tried, unsuccessfully at this time, to get answers out of the minister's office as to where we go from here. There is very deep concern among many people in Brimbank that the government wants this Ombudsman's report to just go away and that it will then forget this ever happened and move on to whatever it is talking about next.

But given the great suffering that locals have had inflicted on them over many years under the Brimbank City Council, I can understand the fear and, I suppose, loathing that many people in the Brimbank area feel about potentially being brushed out of the way. I have committed myself to ensuring that this issue will not be buried by this government.

On this day, when the main culprit in the Brimbank scandal is enjoying the company of Labor luminaries from around Australia at the ALP national conference in Sydney's Darling

## City of Brimbank: Ombudsman's report...

Harbour, I ask the minister to ensure that the people of Brimbank receive the justice they are due. In particular I ask the minister to provide in writing information surrounding the role of Bill Scales as monitor of the council and his progress reports on Brimbank council to this point.

I further ask the minister to provide in writing information surrounding the processes involving the inspector of municipal administration and his investigation of possible breaches of the Local Government Act at Brimbank City Council. That would include time frames on the investigation, who is being investigated and for what possible offences they are being investigated at this point.

This matter is most important. There are tens of thousands of people, if not more, in the Brimbank area who regard this as a vital matter and one that the government must pay adequate attention to. I ask the minister to provide in writing the information that I have requested, and I assure him that despite the best efforts of him, his colleagues in the cabinet and the government generally, this issue will not die.

### COUNCIL | Questions on Notice 11 August 2009

## Education: Keilor Park Primary School site

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — To ask the Treasurer (for the Minister for Education): In relation to the vacant land and buildings on the former site of the Keilor Park Primary School:

(1) Does the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development have any plans for the use of the site; if so, what are the plans.

(2) Has any other government department, council, organisation, business or private individual expressed an interest in purchasing or using the site; if so, for what purpose do they wish to purchase or use it.

(3) When will the tender and sale of the site be finalised.

(4) What criteria will the Department use in determining to whom the site will be sold.

(5) Are there any potential uses for the site which would preclude the

sale of the site to a bidder.

(6) Are there any zoning restrictions on the use of the site by a future purchaser.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

(1) The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Metropolitan Region has declared the site surplus to its requirements.

(2) The Department is unaware of any other Government Department, council, organisation, business or private individual expressing any interest in purchasing or using the site.

(3) Dates for sale of the site have not been finalised.

(4) The Department adheres to the Government Land Monitor's guidelines and instructions which are available from the Department of Sustainability and Environment's website.

(5) The Department adheres to the Government Land Monitor's guidelines and instructions.

(6) The site will be subject to the rezoning process outlined in the Government Land Monitor's guidelines and instructions.

### COUNCIL | Adjournment 11 August 2009

## Police: western suburbs

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Yesterday morning I was listening to Neil Mitchell's 3AW radio program and to a spokesman for a crowd called Liberty Victoria, which I understand is a left-leaning civil libertarian group in this state.

This particular individual slandered the police in the western suburbs of Melbourne. He claimed to have evidence that police have been targeting gangs of youths based on their race. The implication was very clear: that police in the western suburbs of Melbourne are racist. This is a foul slander. I was appalled to hear anybody say that; indeed I was outraged and immediately rang and spoke to Neil Mitchell to defend our local thin blue line for a few minutes just before the 9 o'clock news.

Police in the western suburbs of Melbourne are hard working, honest

and committed to a very difficult task. It has to be said that policing in the west of Melbourne can often be hard yakka.

Mrs Petrovich interjected.

Mr FINN — The police in the western suburbs are well challenged indeed, Mrs Petrovich, to say the very least. They are undermanned and underresourced, but they do a great job, and we are very proud of the work they do to protect us. On the basis of what we have heard and seen of police in the west, I ask the minister to publicly affirm his support for police in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

I further ask the minister to demand that Liberty Victoria produce the evidence it claims to have that police in the Western suburbs are racist and are persecuting certain ethnic groups. If that evidence is not produced, I further request the minister to demand a public apology from this disreputable organisation and again show that this government and this Parliament has full confidence in the men and women who serve us on the front lines in the Victoria Police force.

### COUNCIL | Members Statements 12 August 2009

## China: human rights

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I have watched over recent weeks with increasing disgust and anger the tactics of the Chinese government as it has attempted to intimidate and bully Australian citizens in Australia. We are well aware that the Chinese government is comprised of thugs, liars and murderers and has no compunction at all in suppressing and persecuting its own people. In fact it stays in power by such methods. Brutality is a way of life when it comes to the day-to-day operations of the Chinese government. This is a well-established fact.

I have a message for the old despots who run China: Australia is a country that cherishes freedom; we will not be stood over by corrupt thugs, and we will not be dictated to by bloodthirsty despots. That sort of thing might be okay in China — it clearly is okay in China — but we will not put up with it. It will not wash here in Australia. The Chinese government and its agents in Australia should keep their noses out of our business. I can only hope that democracy will one day very

## China: human rights...

soon come to our friends in China and replace those old fools who are in charge now.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
13 August 2009**

## Autism: schools funding

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. It follows a meeting I had last week with a number of parents of children from both the Northern School for Autism and the Western Autistic School. They have a number of concerns about the future of these schools and how they are currently being run. They asked me to raise with the minister the lack of an academic curriculum in autism-specific schools. They believe that both schools seem to treat autistic children as incapable of pursuing an academic curriculum. They told me that there are no publicly accessible figures on how many children have been integrated into mainstream schools from autism-specific schools, on the success rate or on how this is measured. They would also like to know how far children with autism progress through mainstream schools after leaving an autism-specific school. Another point they made is that the Western Autistic School must expand to accommodate children from early intervention to year 12 — a one-stop shop of education intervention as it were — rather than continue the current model where kids are forced to leave the school after just four years of education. They told me there is a mass campaign in the western suburbs for another autism-specific school. They believe their kids should not be ending up in local special schools, as is currently occurring in many situations.

I was told at the meeting that 20 children were denied places at the Western Autistic School in February despite fulfilling all the criteria for acceptance. The children were turned away because there were not enough places to accommodate them. The parents believe the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development needs to recognise that this is an increasing disorder, which it most certainly is, and to increase the funding for places to accommodate these children. The parents also pointed out that the Deer Park campus building was condemned a long time ago due to being made of asbestos and having a disintegrating structural

problem, particularly involving sewage problems. The house might recall I have raised this matter a couple of times before. Parents want an exact date for when their children will be moved out of this substandard building and into the new campus being built at Laverton. Nobody knows when this will happen, and they would really like to hear from the minister when this will occur.

Taking all these matters and a number of other matters that these parents have raised with me into consideration, I ask the minister, at her earliest convenience and as a matter of urgency, to sit down with these very concerned parents and discuss the problems they have raised. There are many problems with children with autism, and I believe a meeting with the minister would help enormously.

**COUNCIL | Statements on Reports  
13 August 2009**

## Victoria Police: report 2007-08

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — As this house would be aware, I am a very strong supporter of law and order in this state. The figures produced in the Victoria Police annual report for 2007-08 are deeply disturbing to anybody who shares my concerns. To put it in one word, the statistics, particularly those relating to my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region, are a 'shocker'.

I want to give the house a quick synopsis of what we are facing in the west at the moment, given the figures in this report. For example, in the city of Wyndham, based on Werribee and surrounds, the homicide rate is up 40 per cent; the rape rate is up 17.1 per cent; robbery, 62 per cent; assaults, 36.7 per cent; arson, 18.8 per cent; aggravated burglary, 23.7 per cent; deception, 89.4 per cent; handling stolen goods, 37.4 per cent; other thefts, 46.9 per cent; harassment, 20.5 per cent; and offensive behaviour in public, 32.3 per cent.

In anybody's language, they are very disturbing figures.

Moving down the road a little to the city of Maribyrnong, the incidence of non-rape sexual offences is up by some 35.6 per cent; assault, 20.7 per cent; abduction and kidnapping, 400 per cent; arson, 19 per cent; property damage, 13.6 per cent; handling stolen goods, 99.6 per cent; theft

— shoplifting, stealing, call it what you will — 49.6 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, 59.8 per cent; possession and use of drugs, 51 per cent; weapons and explosives offences, 43.8 per cent; harassment, 127.3 per cent increase; and other offensive behaviour in public, an extraordinary 145.7 per cent. As the house can see, these are figures of very real concern.

In the city of Melton the incidence of rape is up 22.2 per cent; robbery, 78.9 per cent; abduction and kidnapping, 20 per cent; arson, 50.9 per cent; burglary, 15.7 per cent; handling stolen goods, 21.2 per cent; weapons and explosives charges, 43 per cent — and on it goes. In Brimbank, where my office is located, the increase in abduction and kidnapping offences was 77.8 per cent; aggravated burglary, 43.2 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, 26.5 per cent; possession of drugs, 37.7 per cent; going equipped to steal, 39.1 per cent; regulated public order offences; 150 per cent; and offensive behaviour in public, 47.1 per cent.

As members can see, we have a severe problem with law and order and its breakdown in the western suburbs of Melbourne, yet this government is doing absolutely nothing to try to turn that around. The police tell me they are hard pressed. I have had discussions with many senior police in the western suburbs, and they have told me on a regular basis that it is nigh on impossible for them to cope with the degree of crime they are expected to control in the western suburbs of Melbourne. For example, the incidence of aggravated burglary in Hume is up by 39.1 per cent, harassment cases are up 209.3 per cent — and on it goes. The city of Moonee Valley is probably the greatest concern, because the homicide rate in that municipality is up by a staggering 700 per cent.

We have a real problem in the western suburbs. I ask the government to get off its tail, do something about it and give the community some relief.

## Werribee Secondary College: funding

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. It follows a meeting I had yesterday morning with members of the Werribee Secondary College school council. Members of the council invited me to the school to discuss some of the concerns they have about the future of many of the buildings at the school and to show me firsthand the problems they are aggrieved about.

I have to say that I was staggered and outraged at what I saw. I have seen many schools over a good many years, but I have never seen such substandard school buildings as I saw at Werribee Secondary College yesterday morning. It was proof to me that time and again the western suburbs are expected to put up with third-rate facilities. Quite frankly, as I say, I was outraged.

There was one particular building called the Bristol building which reminded me very much of the barracks from the television program Hogan's Heroes. That is not at all surprising, because this buildings dates back to World War II. How it is still in one piece is anybody's guess. Another building, the old canteen, is nothing more than an old shed.

Mrs Coote — With the emphasis on old.

**Mr FINN** — It is very old, Mrs Coote. It now contains classrooms, and obviously students are being taught in those classrooms. Werribee Secondary College has an excellent reputation, but the school council feels that the school is being duded; it feels the college has been taken for a ride.

That is hardly surprising, given that on 13 November 2006 in the lead-up to the last state election the then Minister for Education, Lynne Kosky, the former Prime Minister, Bob Hawke — for reasons that are quite unknown to me — and the then Labor candidate for Tarneit, Tim Pallas, visited the college and made a number of promises. They promised that there would be a continuous building program until the college was brought up to scratch. That just has not happened. The budget allocation was meant to cover the complement of the master plan but was disappointingly inadequate. The

shortfall necessitated a third stage to the rebuilding program.

I am asking the Minister for Education as a matter of urgency to make \$350 000 immediately available to the Werribee Secondary College to provide for a detailed plan so stage 3 can be initiated and completed in time for the 2010-11 state budget, when a further \$5 million will be required to finish the project. This is a very important project for this school.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The member's time has expired.

## Charles Francis

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — Since the last sitting week I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of a former member of the Victorian Parliament. Charles Francis, QC, was the member for Caulfield in the other place for only three years, between 1976 and 1979, but his influence continued to impact upon this Parliament almost to the time of his death.

The term 'great Australian' is tossed around far too easily at times, but Charles Francis was a truly great Australian — in fact, he was an outstanding Australian. Aside from his parliamentary service, he had a distinguished legal career. When it came to the law his mind was simply brilliant. Charles Francis was a man with a keen sense of social responsibility. It would be almost impossible to count the number of hours in his life spent working without pay for the betterment of his state and his nation.

His integrity and honour were unquestionable. A man of such importance might well have been entitled to take himself seriously, but not Charles — he always displayed a great warmth, friendliness and humour. Those who knew him will never forget that.

I offer my most sincere condolences to his wife, Babette, and the Francis family. Charles Francis fought the good fight. He was a champion, and this earth is so much the better place for his having been here.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (CONFLICTING DUTIES) BILL

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — As the house is aware, I have taken more than just a passing interest in the scandal involving the Brimbank council and more particularly involving the Labor Party in the Brimbank area. I suppose if there were a subtitle to the Ombudsman's inquiry into Brimbank council it would be 'Labor out of control.'

We have seen in Brimbank the introduction of publicly funded internal Labor Party brawls. We have seen a municipal council used for internal Labor Party purposes in a way that perhaps has never been done certainly anywhere else in Victoria and perhaps anywhere else in Australia.

**Mr Barber** — That is a bold claim.

**Mr FINN** — It is a big claim. There have been some councils about the place, particularly in the — —

**Mr Barber** interjected.

**Mr FINN** — The inner suburbs of Sydney, I agree, might give Brimbank a run for its money.

**Mr Barber** — Nobody murdered anybody in Brimbank.

**Mr FINN** — I would not go that far; I would not make that claim either, I have to say, but Brimbank is right up there. I will leave it at that. We have seen a conglomeration of personal interests, greed, petty jealousies and political chicanery, and that has all been placed ahead of what is right and fair for the people of Brimbank. As a representative of the people of Brimbank in this Parliament it has been my responsibility — and I have followed this with fervour — to expose what has been happening in Brimbank for many years.

What has happened in Brimbank is the Labor Party has brought local government in this state into disrepute. As a result of what the Labor Party has done in Brimbank the average person in the street feels less confident about local government than was the case before. We should always remember that this whole sad and sorry saga is the Labor Party at work. This is Labor, business as usual. If you go out to

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (CONFLICTING DUTIES) BILL (Second Reading)...

Brimbank, there will be no shortage of people who will back me up on that one.

As we have established, the Labor Party is entirely to blame for this shambles, this debacle, but I have to ask: who is most to blame within the Labor organisation? Is it the various components of the Suleyman empire? Is it Hakki Suleyman and his daughter, Natalie, who was the mayor? As we know, Hakki Suleyman was, for his efforts, rewarded with membership of the ALP national conference.

That is the way the ALP works: you get caught doing the dirty, you get caught up to your eyeballs in corruption and they kick you upstairs in the Labor Party. That is how Labor works in Victoria, and I have to say, not just in Victoria either.

Hakki Suleyman's daughter, the former mayor, has not been seen for a while — since her somewhat aborted attempt to become the member for Kororoit in another place. That was part of this whole process. If Natalie Suleyman had won the Kororoit preselection and become the member for Kororoit, there would have been a fair chance that we would never have heard publicly what was going on behind closed doors within the Brimbank council and the Brimbank branch of the Labor Party. It may be that the Suleyman empire, Hakki and Natalie Suleyman, had a fair bit to do with what we have seen in Brimbank.

Could it be that the man responsible for what we have seen in Brimbank is none other than the minister who is with us at the table here today, the Minister for Planning, Justin Madden? Mr Madden was the employer — and he may still be, I do not know; he could confirm it either way — of Hakki Suleyman. Mr Madden allowed his office to be used for the most outrageous corruption of the political process that we have seen for quite some time. That use of his office, that complicity of Mr Madden, led to a motion of no confidence in him being passed by this house. At this point not only is contempt for the Brimbank people evident but the fact that the minister is still here as a minister tells us that the contempt goes much wider than just for the people in my electorate, the people of Brimbank; it is for all the people of Victoria and indeed for this very Parliament. Yes, Minister Madden — Minister McMadden, as some out my way refer to him — must take his share of responsibility for this debacle.

Could the people responsible be the Theophanous clan?

I am talking specifically about Theo Theophanous, his brother Dr Andrew Theophanous and Dr Andrew Theophanous's wife, Kathryn Eriksson. We saw Mr Theophanous get up in this Parliament the other night and declare, hand on heart, that he had only ever spoken with his electorate officer about what had happened in Brimbank, and only barely. I said at the time, and I will repeat it now, that I find that very hard to believe. The people out in Brimbank and everybody in this house know the Theophanous brothers and Cr Eriksson, or former Cr Eriksson because she lost her seat at the last election, were involved in all sorts of interesting activities up to their eyeballs. Mr Theophanous came in here and said that he knew nothing, that he did not direct anybody to do anything and did not even speak to anybody. It defies belief that he would sit down with his sister-in-law, who was at the time the deputy mayor of Brimbank, and not even say, 'G'day Kathryn, how's it going down at the council?'. Can anybody believe that? He says that is the case. I do not think anybody is capable of believing that yarn.

Everybody in Brimbank knows, for example, that Dr Andrew Theophanous has been into all sorts of things.

Mrs Kronberg — He has been up to his armpits.

Mr FINN — Indeed, Mrs Kronberg.

Mrs Kronberg — In that cesspit.

Mr FINN — In that cesspit he has been more than up to his armpits, he has been doing the breaststroke.

Mr Leane — What about malfeasance?

Mr FINN — There is a fair bit of that as well. Mr Leane can talk to the bloke who is sitting next to him about that. The people out in Brimbank know Dr Andrew Theophanous and his wife and his brother have all been involved in this. When Mr Theophanous gets up and declares he had nothing to do with it I think we can pretty much take that with a grain of salt.

With blame being cast about, the Premier and the Deputy Premier of the state must carry their share of the responsibility. You have to remember that when the Premier, John Brumby, first came into this Parliament he represented the then province of Dousta Galla in this place.

That province was largely based on what is now the city of Brimbank, although formerly it was based on the cities of Keilor and Sunshine. I recall that when I was first elected to this house I asked a local, 'Is the Brimbank

council as bad as they say it is?'. The response was, 'They put Sunshine and Keilor together. What do you think?'. That answered all my questions. We had a situation where the now Premier came into this Parliament representing the former cities of Keilor and Sunshine — what we now know as Brimbank — and now he claims he knew nothing about the chicanery or the shysterism that involves the Brimbank council and the Brimbank branch of the Labor Party. I have to say I find that very hard to believe.

The Deputy Premier got up and harrumphed and said, 'Bloody disgraceful'. But of course he knew exactly what was going on. The Premier and the Deputy Premier must take their share of responsibility for what has been happening at Brimbank.

What about the Minister for Local Government, Richard Wynne? Do-nothing Dick lived up to his name: he sat on his hands and did nothing. All of this could have been avoided if Mr Wynne had done his job, but he did not. He failed the people of Brimbank, he failed the people of Victoria, and he should resign.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pulford) — Order! Mr Finn's earlier reference to the Minister for Local Government was not appropriate, and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr FINN — Which reference was that, Acting President?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pulford) — Order! I ask the member to withdraw his earlier remarks. I think he knows what he said.

Mr FINN — How far back do you want me to go?

Mr Drum interjected.

Mr FINN — Somebody does not know what is going on around here.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pulford) — Order! I ask Mr Finn to withdraw.

Mr FINN — If you want me to withdraw the reference to Do-nothing Dick, I will. Those who refer to him as Do-nothing Dick — perhaps I can put it in those terms — are, in my view, fully justified in doing so.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pulford) — Order! Mr Finn cannot say that.

Mr FINN — Under what standing order am I prevented from doing that?

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Ms Pulford) — Order!

Again I ask Mr Finn to withdraw the reference to the minister, which he has now made on a couple of occasions. He knows exactly what he said.

Mr FINN — It is a very good thing

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (CONFLICTING DUTIES) BILL (Second Reading)...

that we are in Victoria and that freedom of speech is a thing of the past. I will withdraw if you are desirous of my doing so, Acting President. I withdraw.

As I said, the Minister for Local Government lived up to his nickname, even though I am not allowed to say what it is. But he did live up to his —

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! May I just clarify that Mr Finn withdrew the remarks in respect of the Minister for Local Government?

Mr FINN — I think I have withdrawn three times now, Deputy President. You might care to check Hansard when this debate is over.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Thank you, no. I am happy to take Mr Finn's assurance.

Mr FINN — The Minister for Local Government sat on his hands. He lived up to his nickname, and he did nothing. He could have avoided all this if he had done his job.

Is the responsibility carried by people like Bill Shorten, the federal member for Maribyrnong, or by Stephen Conroy, a senator for Victoria, who are the factional heavyweights who were pulling the strings and who continue to pull the strings out in Brimbank? Of course they must carry their share of the responsibility.

Mr Barber — They are my favourites.

Mr FINN — I am sure they are, Mr Barber.

Mr Barber — I go straight to the top.

Mr FINN — They are in fact running the show; there are no two ways about it. As I said before, the bill is a direct result of Labor in Victoria being totally out of control. It is deeply regrettable that we have the bill before the house today. I have been approached, as I know Mr Koch and other members have been, by, for example, the Wyndham City Council, because it is about to lose a councillor, Marie Brittan, who I know to be a very conscientious councillor. She was elected just in November last year, but she is also an employee of the Minister for Roads and Ports. Obviously she will be facing a very difficult decision when the bill is passed today.

I have said to Cr Brittan, Cr Bourke and other councillors from the City of Wyndham who have come to see me that the responsibility for what is occurring today cannot lie anywhere but on the shoulders of the Victorian ALP; that is solely the place where the responsibility lies. We must blame the ALP, because this is entirely and absolutely its fault.

I deeply regret that I will not be opposing this bill, because in many ways it is greatly unjust. I take on board the comments from Mr Theophanous on Tuesday night. I wish in many ways that I was opposing the bill. In not doing so, I apologise to Cr Brittan and I apologise to the other councillors who are having an injustice done to them today. That injustice is a direct result of the shysterism and the chicanery that the ALP has brought to local government in this state.

### COUNCIL | Adjournment 15 September 2009

## Water: Tarneit supply

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Water, the Honourable Tim Holding, concerning a matter that was raised with me yesterday at an on-site meeting in Sayers Road, Tarneit. Despite an extraordinary explosion in development around that particular part of Werribee, there are still some 120 families who rely on a standpipe on Sayers Road for their household and farm water. Their water supply has recently been transferred from, or is in the process of being transferred from, the Wyndham City Council to City West Water.

At this meeting locals expressed to me great concern about plans to shift the standpipe to Hoppers Lane, Hoppers Crossing, which is on the other side of Werribee, some 15 to 20 kilometres away from where it is currently.

The local Country Fire Authority station at Truganina has offered its land for the transfer of the pipe. It is happy to have the pipe on its land and will allow those 120 families to fill up on that land, and of course it will also be a big plus for the CFA because it currently has no piped water; it relies on rainwater to serve a number of purposes. The CFA is very keen to ensure that, basically, it kills two birds with the one stone, as it were.

I ask Minister Holding to personally intervene to ensure that City West Water gives these 120 families who are reliant on the water pipe an assurance that their local supply will remain local and will remain in the general vicinity of where it is currently — in Sayers Road, Tarneit.

I also suggest to the minister that

he might like to solve two problems at once by assisting the Truganina CFA station with piped water, thereby solving both sets of problems.

I ask the minister to view this matter with great urgency, as I understand the standpipe is due to be shifted any day now.

### COUNCIL 16 September 2009

## STREET VIOLENCE: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Debate resumed from 2 September; motion of Mr DALLA-RIVA (Eastern Metropolitan):

That this house —

(1) expresses its concern at the Brumby government's inadequate response to the growing levels of violent crime in Victoria and calls on the Premier, in conjunction with the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, to accept responsibility for this situation and the violence on our streets; and

(2) notes that on 29 July 2009 this house referred these issues to the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee, which is to report by 30 August 2010.

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — If ever the people of Victoria wanted to know why the Brumby government is sailing close to the rocks, all they had to do was listen to the contribution the house heard from Mr Tee a few moments ago. Mr Tee got up in this house and said, 'This motion is shallow'. Obviously he has not had his house broken into recently, obviously he has not had his car stolen recently and obviously he has not been bashed recently. The many Victorians who have would not think this motion is shallow; they would think this motion is very important.

The house heard from Mr Tee the sort of arrogance that Victorians do not like. Clearly 10 years down the track the Labor Party has forgotten what arrogance can do to a government. Some 10 years down the track it has forgotten that arrogance can destroy a government, and I know that better than most. There are no two ways about that!

Mr Viney — Not as well as I do!

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr FINN — Mr Viney did a lot better out of it than I did, I can tell you!

## STREET VIOLENCE: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE...

Ms Huppert got up and said we were fearmongering and putting the fear of God into people. We do not have to do that; people are scared in their own homes in Melbourne and parts of Victoria. What sort of a government allows that to happen? The people of Victoria will tell you that the sort of government that allows that to happen is the sort of government that should be defeated at the next election, because a government that allows people to be scared in their own homes is the sort of government that has completely failed in its responsibilities to the people of Victoria.

It would be a truism to say that we desperately need more police on the streets of Melbourne and the many regional centres throughout Victoria. I am glad to say that I do not get out and about too often in the wee small hours these days, but on the occasions when I have been around the streets of Melbourne at 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock in the morning I have been quite horrified at what I have seen.

In years gone by I may have frequented the odd nightclub and may well have partaken of a refreshing ale on a warm night, but in those days there was none of the ludicrous out-of-control behaviour that we see on our streets today. It is quite extraordinary. I do not get out during those hours very often now, but I have been stunned when I have witnessed that sort of behaviour. What has stunned me even more is that you very rarely see a policeman, neither for love nor money. That is the problem.

I may have mentioned in this house a time when I visited Brisbane with my 11-year-old daughter for a wedding a few months ago. We were walking down one of the streets of Brisbane when she said, 'Dad, do you know the difference between here and Melbourne?' I said, 'It is warmer.' She said, 'Yes, it is, but the big difference is they have police on the streets here.' This was an 11-year-old taking note of the fact that police were on the streets of Brisbane, because she had never seen them on the streets of Melbourne. I think that is an indictment of this government and the way the Victorian police force has been handled over the past decade.

Nine years ago this government sold Victoria Police completely down the river.

The day the then Bracks government appointed Christine Nixon as Chief Commissioner of Police was the day that government sold every Victorian policeman and policewoman down the river completely. It was the day the

Labor Party publicly declared for all to hear and see that its members no longer cared about policing — indeed they no longer cared about law and order in this state.

During Christine Nixon's nine years as chief commissioner we saw nothing about policing, law and order, and protecting the community. It was all about a wild social experiment, and we are now seeing the results of that experiment — and we can judge very clearly that that experiment has failed very miserably indeed.

During that wild social experiment we saw hundreds of police — good, hardworking, committed police — walk out the door. Police threw their arms up in the air and said, 'We cannot handle this any more.'

These were police who had committed their lives to defending our community and protecting people in their homes, on the streets and in the community generally. They just gave up. They said, 'I cannot put up with this anymore.'

I remember being told that in one week alone last year more than 1000 years of policing experience walked out the door. Victoria Police lost more than 1000 years of experience in just one week because of then chief commissioner Nixon. This government can say what it likes about how it is committed to law and order and to police in this state, but its actions speak louder than words. I invite members opposite to go out and speak to policemen and policewomen on the streets — if they can find one on the streets. Better still, they could go to a police station; they might find one there. Members of the government should go out and speak to those men and women on the thin blue line; they should ask them how their morale is, how their stress levels are and how they are coping. They will find out very quickly that Victoria Police is in a total, unmitigated mess.

That is something of which none of us should be proud or happy about.

Members of the government should go out and speak to those men and women on the thin blue line; they should ask them how their morale is, how their stress levels are and how they are coping. They will find out very quickly that Victoria Police is in a total, unmitigated mess. That is something of which none of us should be proud or happy about.

We heard during the time of the former chief commissioner her point-blank refusal to even mention the word 'gang' at a time when gangs were — and they still are — roaming

the streets. I know that is the case in my area; from my own office I can see gangs roaming the streets of Sunshine. Last Friday night I was working in my office until about 11.00 p.m., and I could hear them outside. I have to say I was a little wary of leaving my office to go to my car — and this was in suburban Sunshine.

Yet the former commissioner would tell us, 'There are no gangs,' even though we now have video footage from a wide number of places of gangs kicking the living suitcases out of poor victims who had absolutely no hope of defending themselves.

I suppose it is no surprise to any of us to learn that the police have been treated in this way. The Labor Party in Victoria and in other states has never had any time for the police. If you go back through the history of the Labor Party, you will find leaders of the Labor Party and other individuals very prominent in the party who hate the police, who hate authority and who hate law and order.

Mr Leane — That is a bit rough!

Mr FINN — I hear Mr Leane chortling away to himself over there — poor demented swine! — but I say to him: if he really wants to know the history of his own party, he should go back and have a look at people like Jim Cairns. I am sure, Acting President, you would remember from not all that long ago what Jim Cairns used to do to the police in the streets of Melbourne. I would invite Mr Leane and other Labor members to examine closely the history of their own party in regard to police and law and order.

Mr Scheffer — Wasn't Jim Cairns a policeman?

Mr FINN — He was a policeman to start with. My word he was, but when they turn rogue, they turn rogue! They do not muck around! If you want someone who really hates a Catholic, find an ex-Catholic. Jim Cairns was causing riots in the streets and soiling students and all sorts of assorted communists on the streets of Melbourne onto police. If you want to go back to those anti-Vietnam days, that was all inspired by Jim Cairns. The fact that he was a policeman before he moved in — —

Mr Dalla-Riva interjected.

Mr FINN — It is not where you start; it is where you finish — and that is where he finished. If you want to find out where the ALP gets its contempt for police and for law and order, just look at the history of the ALP and of the Labor movement in this state and in this country.

## STREET VIOLENCE: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE...

There are some on the other side — and we have heard them today — who will tell us that everything is hunky-dory, that there is no crime in this state, that we have it all under control, that on 18 September 1999 everything was turned around and that it has never looked back. Unfortunately the facts say otherwise. In my area and out in the western suburbs we are actually facing a crime wave. That is not something anybody in the ALP is interested in or aware of, because when you talk about the Labor Party you are talking about a group of individuals who do not care about the western suburbs — unless there is a job in it for them, in which case they do care.

The welfare of and what is good for the people of the western suburbs are not on Labor's radar at all and never have been. 'Keep them down, keep them poor and they will keep voting for us' is the attitude of the Labor Party in this state.

I have been very concerned for a significant time about some of the crime statistics in the western suburbs. I would like to go through the local government areas in my electorate of Western Metropolitan Region. You might be interested in this yourself, Acting President.

In the city of Hume the assault rate is up 13.8 per cent; aggravated burglary, up 39.1 per cent; deception, up 18.9 per cent; shop theft, up 17.8 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, up 21.8 per cent; justice procedures offences, up 14.9 per cent; and harassment, up an extraordinary 209.3 per cent.

If we move on to the infamous local government area of Brimbank, we see that non-rape sexual offences are up by 25.7 per cent; abduction and kidnapping, by 77.8 per cent; arson, by 8.9 per cent; aggravated burglary, by 43.2 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, by 26.5 per cent; the possession and use of drugs, by 37.7 per cent; going equipped to steal offences, by 39.1 per cent; regulated public order offences, by 150 per cent; weapons and explosives offences, by 35.5 per cent; behaviour-in-public offences, by 47.1 per cent; and other offences, by 66.1 per cent. The government says there is no crime problem here in Melbourne and no crime problem in Victoria.

We then go to Hobsons Bay, which is a great place. Williamstown, Altona and places down that way are very pleasant places indeed.

The homicide rate there is up 100 per cent; rape is up 38.5 per cent;

robbery is up 25.4 per cent; abduction and kidnapping are up 28.6 per cent; aggravated burglary is up 10 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs is up 45.6 per cent; going equipped to steal is up 66.7 per cent; justice procedures are up 30.9 per cent; weapons and explosives offences are up 38.5 per cent; and offences involving behaviour in public are up 69 per cent.

We then go to Maribyrnong, next door, where non-rape sexual charges are up 35.6 per cent and assault is up 20.7 per cent. Abduction and kidnapping in Maribyrnong are up an extraordinary 400 per cent — —

Mr Leane interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Leane might find all this very amusing, but he would not find it amusing if he lived in the western suburbs.

If he showed any interest in the people who live in the western suburbs, he would not find this even mildly amusing, because I can assure him it is not. Property damage in Maribyrnong has seen a 13.6 per cent increase; handling of stolen goods is up 99.6 per cent; shop stealing is up 49.6 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs is up 59.8 per cent; the possession or use of drugs is up 51 per cent; going equipped to steal is up 13.6 per cent; justice procedures are up 99.2 per cent; weapons and explosives offences are up 43.8 per cent; harassment is up 127.3 per cent; and behaviour-in-public offences are up 145.7 per cent.

Moving on to Melton, rape charges are up by 22.2 per cent; robbery is up 78.9 per cent; assault is up 8.8 per cent; and abduction and kidnapping are up 20 per cent. Arson has seen a 50.9 per cent increase; general burglary is up 15.7 per cent; deception is up 17.7 per cent; and handling stolen goods is up 21.2 per cent. Weapons and explosives charges are up 43 per cent; harassment is up 9.7 per cent; and behaviour-in-public offences are up 15 per cent.

Moving along to Wyndham, the homicide rate is up 40 per cent; the rape rate is up 17.1 per cent; robbery is up 62 per cent; assault is up 36.7 per cent; arson is up 18.8 per cent; property damage is up 9.5 per cent; aggravated burglary is up 23.7 per cent; deception is up 89.4 per cent; handling of stolen goods is up 37.4 per cent; shop stealing is up 10.7 per cent; other general theft is up 46.9 per cent; and in justice procedures there is an increase of 40.6 per cent. Harassment is up 20.5 per cent; and behaviour-in-public offences are up 32.3 per cent. I am sure you will agree, President, that these

are figures that none of us can be at all pleased with.

In Moreland homicides increased by 133.3 per cent; non-rape sexual charges were up 16.2 per cent; robbery was up 33.8 per cent; abduction and kidnapping were up 120 per cent; aggravated burglary was up 60.3 per cent; shop stealing was up 42.7 per cent; harassment was up 178.6 per cent; and behaviour-in-public offences were up 8.1 per cent — and even an 8.1 per cent increase is relatively mild in comparison with some of the increases we have seen.

Finally I move to Moonee Valley — and this is something I am sure the Minister for Planning will find particularly interesting now that he is starting to take some interest in what happens around the Moonee Valley area. The homicide rate there is up by a staggering 700 per cent. That is truly shocking, whatever way you want to use that word. The burglary rate has seen a 36.2 per cent increase; shop stealing is up 23.5 per cent; the cultivation, manufacture and trafficking of drugs is up 25.8 per cent; and behaviour-in-public offences are up 91.1 per cent. I am not joking when I say we have a crime wave in the western suburbs.

Mr Viney interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Viney might think I am joking. As he sits chortling Mr Viney might think it is amusing, but those of us who live in the western suburbs do not find it amusing at all. To tell the truth those of us who live in the western suburbs find it very alarming and straight-out scary. What do we have from the government as a response to those crime figures?

Mrs Peulich — Head in the sand?

Mr FINN — At best, Mrs Peulich, we have indifference, but usually it is total contempt. For example, over a long period down in Werribee we have seen a battle by locals, including local police officers, to get sufficient police numbers in the Wyndham area, which the last time I checked was the fastest growing municipality in Australia.

They have been battling for years to get sufficient numbers of police down there. They were promised another full-time police station, which they most certainly need. The trouble is there are not the police to man it, so it is not going to be full time; I understand it is only going to be open during the day. I assume that a lot of crime is committed after hours, so I suppose the crims will just have to take up a nine-to-five job.

We have seen police taken from Footscray and from Williamstown to

## STREET VIOLENCE: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE...

fill holes in other parts of the west. We in the western suburbs do not want all these recycled police; we want new police. We do not want to take police from our neighbours. We do not want to see police taken from Footscray and placed in Werribee or police taken from Williamstown and placed in Footscray. We do not want to see that. We need new police and more police.

The Sunshine police station would have to be one of the busiest police stations in the state. I do not know how it copes. My sympathy is with the police officers who work in and out of the Sunshine police station. They have a hell of a job. They have a dreadful job, and they are getting no support from this government. They are getting no support from a government that just does not care about law and order, particularly in the western suburbs. To make matters worse we have seen from this government police chiefs — people who used to be real police who knew what policing was about — replaced by spin doctors. We have seen them replaced by politicians in their own right. We have seen chief commissioners who get up and just parrot the government line. The government knows what it is doing when it appoints these senior police who will always do what the government tells them to do.

I could talk about the alcohol problem, which I think actually has more to do with the drug problem on our streets and in our nightclubs and so forth.

When I was a lad — and I can still remember it — a few of us had a sip from time to time, but we did not go on the rampage. We did not try to go and rip off somebody's head. We did not try to kick them to death. There was none of that sort of thing, but then again we did not take some of the drugs that are prevalent in our nightclubs now. Until such time as we embark on a campaign of deliberately cracking down — of zero tolerance — on the people who manufacture and sell these drugs to our young people the problem we have is not going to be solved and it will only get worse. I say to the government that as a society we need to get fair dinkum about this, to crack down on these drug dealers and to show them that we will not tolerate their behaviour here in Melbourne or in Victoria. It is just not on.

On Friday, as I said this morning, we commemorate here the 10th anniversary of the defeat of the Liberals. You would not imagine that because, according to the government, it is all Jeff Kennett's fault. Everything

is Jeff Kennett's fault. He has not been in office for 10 years, but it is all Jeff Kennett's fault. After 10 years Labor has left us one legacy, and I will be interested to see if Mr Viney or anybody else on the other side gets up and takes a bow as a result of this legacy. That legacy is that Victoria is a very dangerous and very scary place to live.

Earlier this year I walked out onto the front steps of Parliament House at about 11 o'clock one night after my wife had rung and requested money — not for the first time. I stood at the top of the stairs and looked down Bourke Street, debating in my mind whether I was game enough to walk one block to the auto teller, take out a few hundred dollars and walk back. I thought about it for a few minutes, and I went to my car, got in and drove down. That is Melbourne in 2009 after 10 years of Labor. That is the Labor legacy: people are too scared to walk the streets of Melbourne. In a lot of cases people are too scared to live in their own homes. Is Labor proud of this? Is Labor proud of what it has done to Victoria after 10 miserable, long years? That is Labor's legacy. That is Labor's shame.

**COUNCIL | Questions without Notice; 16 September 2009**

## City of Brimbank: government grants

**MR FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — My question without notice is directed to the Treasurer. I note that the 2007-08 annual report of the Brimbank City Council states that 16.5 per cent of its total revenue — some \$28 million — comes from government grants, including state government grants, and I ask: what steps has the Treasurer taken to protect the state government's financial contribution to Brimbank from the undue and inappropriate influence first identified in the Ombudsman's report and now identified in the damning report of the municipal inspector and from the corrupt behaviour of Labor Party officials?

**MR LENDERS** (Treasurer) — I thank Mr Finn for what I think is the first question he has asked me in his two and a half years in the chamber.

**Hon. M. P. Pakula** — They have let him off the leash.

**MR LENDERS** — He has been let off

the leash.

Mr Finn's question to me as Treasurer is about what actions I take in relation to state government grants that go to a particular municipality. As Mr Finn well knows —

**Hon. M. P. Pakula** — Or should know.

**MR LENDERS** — That is right, Mr Pakula, as he should know — every amount of revenue from the state of Victoria that this Parliament appropriates is accountable back to the Parliament. We have outputs across the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Those outputs are put in place and grants to local government — I think that is what Mr Finn is referring to — are probably the pass-through grants that the commonwealth government gives as a percentage of income tax that the state's grants commission then recommends to the Minister for Local Government and me, as Treasurer, be passed through to local government under a formula. I assume that is the money Mr Finn is referring to.

I can assure Mr Finn of this: firstly, the Auditor-General oversees state government grants that go through; and secondly, the Minister for Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission, whom I represent in this place, sets financial directions to the 600-odd Victorian instrumentalities that receive money from government or are government-owned, and they are reported back against.

The minister for finance tables in Parliament a response to all outstanding reports of the Auditor-General so that once a year the Parliament has a government response on what it has done with any reports from the Auditor-General.

They are the checks and balances that are in place. I might say, President, unlike the situation under the government of which Mr Finn was a member, which actually voted to nobble the Auditor-General — Mr Finn was one of the shameful 61 in the Legislative Assembly who voted to nobble the Auditor-General, and we pay heed to it — they are the accountability measures that I as Treasurer and as minister representing the minister for finance have applied.

The overall and overarching issue is that the Ombudsman made a report on Brimbank City Council, and the government acted and carried out every recommendation.

Now the inspector has made a report on Brimbank, and the Minister for Local Government has gone to the

## City of Brimbank: government grants...

executive council and suspended the Brimbank council.

The government takes these issues seriously. It has responded, as it will continue to do. The government believes in good governance. It is not afraid of watchdogs. It carries out the recommendations put to it, unlike the government Mr Finn was a member of, which closed down Parliament, gagged the Auditor-General, gutted his powers and, as the ultimate irony, appointed a member of the executive to chair the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. The former government's idea of accountability was probably where it was having its next lunch.

### Supplementary question

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — Given that the municipal inspector concluded:

... it appears the St Albans branch — of the ALP —

has attempted to bind particular councillors to the organisation's position rather than have them assess the particular matter on its merits, as required under the Local Government Act —

will the Treasurer now investigate the influence of this malignant Labor branch on Brimbank council's decisions where they involve state government moneys, of which he is custodian?

Mr Viney — On a point of order, President, I am not sure how it could be in the administrative functions of the Treasurer to investigate any political party branch of either the Liberal Party, The Nationals, the Greens or the Labor Party. I do not believe that question is relevant.

Mr D. Davis — On the point of order, Mr Finn's question refers to the Treasurer's custodianship role with state money, and it is clear that money goes from the state government to that council. It is also clear that there is a malignant collateral influence. The Treasurer ought to assure the house. He should answer the question — I know it is a sensitive matter for the Labor Party but he is the custodian of the state's finances.

Mrs Peulich — On the point of order, President, the Local Government Act requires that councillors act impartially and that resources are dealt with in a responsible and accountable fashion.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The member is debating the point.

Mrs Peulich — No, I am not.

The PRESIDENT — Mrs Peulich should get to the point of order.

Mrs Peulich — President, the Local Government Act requires a certain

form of conduct. The Labor Party rules require a different form of conduct and the accounting rules and reporting and accountability to this Parliament require another sort of conduct. All of this falls within the purview of the Treasurer, and he should answer the question.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask Mr Finn to ask his supplementary question again so that I am crystal clear on what he is asking.

Mr FINN — Given that the municipal inspector concluded:

... it appears the St Albans branch — of the ALP —

has attempted to bind particular councillors to the organisation's position rather than have them assess the particular matter on its merits, as required under the Local Government Act —

will the Treasurer now investigate the influence of this malignant Labor branch on Brimbank council's decisions where they involve state government moneys, of which he is custodian?

The PRESIDENT — Order!

This is a very arguable supplementary question, and I will rely on the judgement of the Treasurer as to whether he believes it is within his portfolio

Mr LENDERS (Treasurer) — I stand by my substantive answer.

Ordered that answer be considered next day on motion of Mr D. DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan Region).

## COUNCIL | Members Statements 16 September 2009

### Government: performance

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — This Friday we will commemorate 10 years of Labor government in Victoria. I say 'commemorate' and not 'celebrate' because we in the west of Melbourne will not be celebrating 10 miserable, dark years of Labor government. Labor promised much to the west when it was elected 10 years ago, but it has delivered very little — one only has to look at the freeways and the West Gate Bridge, every day in gridlock, with the bridge groaning under increasing traffic, and the government doing nothing about it. Public transport is a farce. It is unreliable, with commuters being crammed onto trains like cattle. The only thing missing is the fat Japanese

bloke pushing them on at the stations.

In many cases health services in the west are third class and would not be tolerated in the eastern or southern suburbs.

The Labor Party is still using and abusing local government. The Brimbank scandal is just the tip of the iceberg, and it still took 10 years — a decade! — to do something about it. Some 10 years on Labor still regards the people in the west as idiots who will vote ALP come what may. I can assure this house that we in the west will no longer put up with the duds dumped on us from the other side of Melbourne. The people in the west are waking up to what the ALP is doing to them, and we will not put up with it any more.

## COUNCIL | Adjournment 17 September 2009

### Civic Compliance Victoria: infringement notice

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. It concerns a constituent, Diane Plim from Essendon, who contacted me deeply concerned about her recent interaction with Civic Compliance Victoria.

Mrs Plim told me that on 20 January her vehicle was photographed on the Princes Freeway at Hoppers Crossing travelling at 106 kilometres per hour in a 100-kilometre-an-hour zone. The initial penalty was \$142. She phoned the fines office and was advised to write regarding this issue. Consequently she submitted to Civic Compliance Victoria an appeal for consideration, explaining that a young overseas visitor had used her vehicle to go job hunting in the market gardens area in Werribee. In the meantime, without her requesting an extension of time, this was issued to her in the mail.

She had not received a direct answer to her appeal but was sent a final reminder notice dated 24 July indicating that she needed to pay the fine by 31 July.

She phoned Civic Compliance Victoria and spoke to a chap called Fernando. She explained that she was confused regarding the lack of an answer to her appeal and had instead

## Civic Compliance Victoria: infringement notice...

received a final reminder notice in the mail. An extension of time to 4 September 2009 was promptly offered to her, and she was advised to again write to civic compliance outlining her attempts to communicate with the long-departed overseas visitor and stating the outcome of those attempts. On 28 July 2009 she spoke once again to someone at civic compliance who confirmed the information she had previously received.

Accordingly, on 4 September this year, at around the middle of the day, she sent a faxed appeal regarding this issue to civic compliance indicating that she had posted the original documents in the mail that day.

She also indicated that she was extremely busy as a full-time schoolteacher and a community volunteer and worker. She felt her fax would have reached the correct destination in time as the fax machine clearly showed it had been sent and received correctly as it registered 'result okay'. However, she was most disturbed to receive in the post on 10 September an enforcement notice dated 8 September 2009 indicating the matter was in the hands of the court. The costs she is now required to pay are \$232.

I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to investigate this case and come up with some solution to Mrs Plim's problem, as this is something that clearly affects her and I believe sets a precedent that would be dangerous for most people who use our roads on a daily basis.

**COUNCIL | Statements on Reports  
17 September 2009**

## Inspector of municipal administration: City of Brimbank

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — After 10 years of Labor government in this state, all that is corruption, all that is misbehaviour, all that is shysterism and all that is shonkiness can best be summed up in just one word: Brimbank. Perhaps if that needed to be expanded on a bit further, we could talk about Labor in Brimbank because if it is was not for Labor in Brimbank, none of those words would apply.

The report of the inspector of

municipal administration on Brimbank City Council is an interesting document. There is no doubt that clearly it has been written for a particular purpose. What is in this report that was not in the Ombudsman's report into Brimbank City Council of earlier this year? Firstly, there are no names in this report, which I found very interesting.

Somebody obviously got into somebody's ear and got the message through that they did not like being named in parliamentary reports anymore, so that was dropped.

Whilst the report clearly condemns the behaviour of many in the Brimbank council, it is very mild compared with what we saw in the Ombudsman's report in May. Why sack the council now? The government has acted on this report from the municipal administrator and has dismissed or, as they say, 'suspended' — a rather interesting word; no longer are they 'sacked' — the Brimbank City Council for three years.

What the inspector has found in his report, as I say, is nothing, it is chickenfeed, compared with what the Ombudsman found earlier this year. That in turn is chickenfeed, nothing, compared with what we all know to have gone on at Brimbank for many, many years. So why is the council being sacked now? Why was it not sacked back in May?

What game is the Minister for Local Government playing? What game is the Premier playing? What is going on here? Why is this council — which is clearly corrupt, and is clearly an appalling example of local government by any standards — being sacked now? Why was it not sacked earlier this year?

The point is that what we read in the Ombudsman's report and what we read in the inspector's report has been open knowledge right around Victoria for years. The Premier knew what has been going on at Brimbank for the past decade, the Deputy Premier knew what has been going on at Brimbank for the past decade, the Minister for Planning knew what has been going on at Brimbank for 10 years and the Minister for Local Government knew what has been going on at Brimbank since Labor has been in government. So why is the government acting now on the report of the inspector, which, as I say, is mild compared with so many of the allegations we have heard about and seen?

I will tell you why: it has nothing to do with good governance in Brimbank and it has nothing to do with providing justice for the people of the Brimbank

municipality, but it has everything to do with preventing embarrassment to John Brumby and the Labor government in the lead-up to an election next year.

I had a phone call at my office on Tuesday morning from a gentleman who told me that a Brimbank councillor had just spoken to him and said, 'We're going to be sacked this afternoon because Brumby can't take the heat'. He said, 'He wants us off the radar; he wants Brimbank off the radar'. I have got news for the Premier: Brimbank will not be off the radar, because this is an example of how the Labor Party treats its own. This is a classic example of the Labor Party's contempt for those who for so long have shown loyalty to it. It is a disgrace, it is an indictment of this government and it is an indictment of the Labor Party generally.

As we know — and Mr Theophanous will back me up; it is a pity he is not in the chamber — if you embarrass the Premier, you will get shafted! That is what has happened with Brimbank. What will happen in three years when the council returns? I would say it is going to be a repeat performance. What we desperately need in the meantime is a fair go and justice for the people of Brimbank.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The member's time has expired!

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
13 October 2009**

## Police: numbers

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. As I am sure the house is aware, last Saturday was the first anniversary of the passing of the Abortion Law Reform Act in this state. To commemorate that particular date, the first March for the Babies rally was held through the city, culminating on the steps of Parliament House. I am the chairman of the organising committee of the march. At the beginning of last week, preparations were coming along very nicely. Permits had been issued, marshals were ready to go and so many other aspects were under control until last Monday, when we received a call from Victoria Police, requesting a meeting as soon as was humanly possible.

I, along with a couple of other members of the committee, went to a meeting with Victoria Police at

## Police: numbers...

headquarters in Flinders Street.

The police told me of their plight and asked for our consideration. They informed me that they would not have enough police officers to control our march on last Saturday morning. They said they could find only 10 police to manage intersections. They were aware that we posed no threat of violence, damage or anything else, but they could not find enough police to control the intersections along the route that we had previously been given permission to march along, and asked that we truncate the march, which we readily did.

It made me think: if the Victorian police force has enough trouble getting police to perform normal duties on a Saturday morning, what hope does it have of getting police to where it really matters on a Saturday evening, to some of the trouble spots in the city and some of the inner city areas?

Mrs Coote — Prahran.

Mr FINN — Such as Prahran, as Mrs Coote says. I ask the minister to take into consideration my experience of the last week and to convene a meeting with the Chief Commissioner of Police. I would be very happy to attend that meeting to relate firsthand my experiences. I ask the minister also to inform the chief commissioner of the parlous state of the police force in this state, particularly in the central business district. I ask both the minister and the chief commissioner to devise a plan to do something about the problems that our police are facing on a daily and, perhaps more importantly, nightly basis.

**COUNCIL | Second Reading  
13 October 2009**

# POLICE REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — As the weeks have gone by and as the weeks have turned into months — —

Mrs Peulich — Like sands through the hourglass.

Mr FINN — Like sands through the hourglass — indeed, Mrs Peulich! I have sat in my office and have wondered whether I would live long enough to see this bill come on for

debate. I have to say it is somewhat of a surprise to come here on 13 October 2009 to debate a bill that first saw the light of day in this chamber over one year ago. As members may recall, at the introduction of this bill over one year ago the government told the chamber how urgent this bill was; it said then that the future of the police force was dependent on this bill and it had to be passed — and it had to be passed now — —

Mrs Peulich — Otherwise it was going to implode.

Mr FINN — We might all implode at this rate. Over one year ago the house was told by the government that the future of law and order in this state was on the line and that this bill had to be passed as soon as possible. For over 12 months this bill has sat on the notice paper, during which time the government has come up with various stories as to why it would not proceed with it.

I have been enthusiastic about wanting to debate this bill, because I think it contains some important points. I am keen to point out to rank-and-file members of the Victorian police force — and I still call it ‘the Victorian police force’ — what their government has in store for them if it is allowed.

As I have pointed out to this house before, there is no question about this government hating police. It proves that time and time again — and this bill proves it yet again.

Ms Mikakos — Rubbish!

Mr FINN — The genesis of this bill — and Ms Mikakos can get ready for this; she has been looking forward to this for quite some time; she is really getting excited about the whole thing — goes to a distant past when an individual called Christine Nixon was chief commissioner of the Victorian police force.

Ms Mikakos — I have heard it all before.

Mr FINN — You have not heard this, Ms Mikakos, let me tell you! We all know that Christine Nixon was something of a control freak, just to understate it. She set out at the beginning of her tenure as chief commissioner to destroy the Victorian police force as we knew it, and I have to say she succeeded admirably. A lot of people around the place think she was a disaster as chief commissioner, but I have to congratulate Christine Nixon — she achieved what she set out to do. Brick by brick she destroyed the Victorian police force as we knew it.

She ripped the morale of the

Victorian police force to its lowest ebb ever. She ripped up the culture of the Victorian police force to the point where the majority of Victorians now have no confidence in Victoria Police. That is a tragedy for our state. It may have been great for the feminist movement, but it was a disaster for law and order in Victoria.

It has to be said that Christine Nixon caused more damage to policing in Victoria than Ned Kelly, Squizzy Taylor and Alphonse Gangitano combined.

For over eight years the Victorian police force bled as a result of the alleged leadership of Christine Nixon. Despite all of that, she is the reason this bill is before the house. I could go into her role in deposing a former Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Andre Haermeyer, but let us leave that aside for a moment and just remember that she was in reality the minister.

We all know that the present Minister for Police and Emergency Services, in name only, Bob Cameron, has not got a clue. We all know he has been made the minister for that very reason — he does not have a clue. He makes the Minister for Water, Tim Holding, the previous minister, look like a genius in comparison. He does not have any idea of his portfolio or what he should be doing. He allowed Christine Nixon to do whatever she wanted.

She was the real police minister of this government. She was a Labor apparatchik appointed to the position of chief commissioner. She was the police minister of the state. It has to be said her successor has followed in her footsteps. I will get to him in just a moment.

The tragedy with this bill and with the former chief commissioner’s role in supporting this bill and its genesis, as I mentioned, is that Christine Nixon regarded the rank and file of Victoria Police as the enemy. That was the bottom line. She regarded the men and women on the thin blue line as her enemies. She came down here from New South Wales and made it very clear she believed the Victorian police force was corrupt. I think she said that at her first press conference as chief commissioner.

She said that the Victorian police force is no more or no less corrupt than the police in New South Wales. That is just nonsense.

It was nonsense then and it is nonsense now, because we all know just how corrupt the police force has been over many years in New South Wales. That sort of thing just does not go on in Victoria because over a long

## POLICE REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL...

period we have had within Victoria Police the ability to root out those who are corrupt. We have the ability to find out who they are and to get rid of them, and that is something that we as Victorians have been proud of.

It is interesting to note that when I talk about our police force members of the government are over there chuckling away. They think it is highly amusing that we are debating measures against members of the police force that are unreasonable, to say the very least. It has to be said that whilst the former Chief Commissioner of Police was conducting a war of attrition against her own members — the members of Victoria Police — the criminal elements in Victoria were running amok. Over recent weeks I have mentioned the crime statistics, particularly in the western suburbs, in great detail here.

Minister Madden will be interested to hear that in Moonee Valley the homicide rate was up 700 per cent last year.

This sort of increase has happened right across Victoria. As the former chief commissioner has taken on her own membership, as she has pursued members of the Victorian police force for crimes, perceived or real, the real criminals have been getting away with muggings, bashings, robbery, rape, murder and many other crimes because the police force has been preoccupied with this internal war between Christine Nixon and the members of the police force.

It was interesting to note the attitude of members of this government — members of the Australian Labor Party — when that chief commissioner pursued a war against the Police Association. The government was put there by the trade union movement, but then it allowed its chief commissioner — as I have said, a Labor apparatchik, a politician in her own right — to pursue the Police Association in a way that was most unbecoming and most detrimental to law and order in this state.

As we know, earlier this year the former chief commissioner, Christine Nixon, retired from the position — to much jubilation, it has to be said. From one end of the state to the other I doubt there was a police station in Victoria that did not throw a party when Christine Nixon hung up her hat for the last time.

But the bill remained, and the tragedy for the police force and those police members who were celebrating the departure of Christine was that the new chief commissioner was, if

anything, worse than the one who was leaving. I think it is safe to say that the current chief commissioner, who supports this bill, has never been on the beat one day in his life. He is what is known around the traps as an academic copper.

He has never been on the van, never been on the beat; he does not know what real police go through on a day-to-day basis. Yet he pursues the same agenda that the former chief commissioner pursued. It is little wonder that he is known from one end of the state to the other as the son of Christine, because that is what he has shaped up to be.

He is continuing the policies of the past as he sits in his office looking at reports from Amnesty International and telling us how we should be treating criminals in Victoria, but he might like to consider that Amnesty International's principles and recommendations also apply to police. Police also have rights in this state, as they should have.

Under this bill they will have very few. In fact if this bill is passed, criminals in this state — murderers and rapists — will have greater rights than police. That is a blight on the state, and members of the government should hang their heads in shame at daring to bring such a preposterous piece of legislation into this house. It is a disgrace.

Is it any wonder that morale in the Victoria Police is as low as it is? I have absolute respect and support for the men and women of the Victorian police force.

To protect us those men and women go out on the van, often after dark, into places they are not sure of and into places that you and I certainly would never go into.

We talk about military heroes who protect us, perhaps overseas, perhaps in a war zone; but we have within our community men and women of the Victoria Police who are true heroes, who put their lives on the line day in and day out so that we can live a peaceful, happy and harmonious existence. They go out there and put in extraordinary hours. They put up with amazing stress, they put up with dangers that you and I would not tolerate. And what do they get? This nonsense, this rubbish from a government that holds our police in total contempt. That is what they get. It is a despicable way for a government that does not care about our police force and cares even less about law and order to act.

At this point I am tempted to talk

about the role of the Attorney-General and his efforts at stacking the judiciary. I have referred in the past to some members of this house and this Parliament who are particularly good at branch stacking, but the Attorney-General has excelled at bench stacking. He has put all his

mates — —

Ms Mikakos — On a point of order, Acting President, I draw to your attention the fact that Mr Finn is casting aspersions on members of Victoria's judiciary. I understand that is contrary to standing orders and I ask that he withdraw that last statement.

Mr FINN — On the point of order, Acting President, at no time did I mention any particular judge or member of the judiciary.

It is totally ludicrous for Ms Mikakos to suggest that I have cast any aspersions on any member of the judiciary. At no time have I mentioned any particular member of the judiciary, as tempting as it may have been.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Eideh) — Order! Mr Finn, to continue.

Mr FINN — Thank you, Acting President. As I was saying, these men and women who put themselves on the front line for us every day, every night, are true heroes. They deserve more than legislation like this, because this legislation is a total insult to every single copper in this state. Every single police officer in this state is insulted by the sort of legislation that has been put forward by this government.

Given that the bill has been in this place for over a year and given all this discussion and all this negotiation, surely this bill would have to be a ripsnorter, a bobby dazzler, the sort of legislation that will go down in the history books with the Magna Carta or perhaps the United States Bill of Rights. Perhaps not; perhaps it is a total unmitigated stuff-up by this government. This government that specialises in stuff-ups has outdone itself this time with this legislation.

I have here a series of amendments. I understand there are 53 of 67 that were under discussion as late as this afternoon. We were prepared, understandably as the opposition in this house, to discuss the amendments. You would have thought, given that we have been negotiating these amendments since March and it is now 13 October, that the government would be keen to put its negotiation skills to the test and put to the test in this house the agreements that it has come to with the opposition — with the Liberal Party, The Nationals and perhaps even the Greens.

## POLICE REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL...

Ms Pennicuik — We did not see them in March.

Mr FINN — You did not see them in March? That is very sad. But what happened here tonight? Ms Mikakos got up and pulled the whole lot. She pulled every single one of them. After all this negotiation, after all this time, after all this finetuning, Ms Mikakos got up and did the Ernie Sigley, 'Only joking.'

Mr Leane — Who?

Mr FINN — She did an Ernie Sigley! What is going on in this state? How serious is this government about the police force? How serious is this government about law and order when it can negotiate for month after month, but when we finally get to the stage of voting on the agreed amendments, it pulls them there and then on the spot? How fair dinkum are members opposite? The only conclusion that anybody can come to is that these members have not got a clue, nor do they care.

Mrs Peulich — No wonder things are out of control on the streets of Melbourne.

Mr FINN — It is little wonder, Mrs Peulich, that things are out of control on the streets of Melbourne, because the police do not know what is going on. The police 'leadership' — and I use that term in inverted commas — must be absolutely bamboozled by this, because this bill, as it is presented to the house tonight, with or without amendments, is an absolute and total dog's breakfast. As I mentioned earlier, it is an insult to every police officer in this state.

Mrs Peulich — And to every Victorian.

Mr FINN — As Mrs Peulich says, 'and to every Victorian,' because there are a number of victims who should be taken into consideration as well.

The Greens have moved a reasoned amendment, and I have considerable sympathy with that. Members should listen to this, because it will not be said too often: I have considerable sympathy for the position of the Greens as it has been put by way of this reasoned amendment. However, the opposition believes that this bill is so far gone that it does not matter how often you inquire into it. It does not matter how often you negotiate or look at it again, because it is a dead duck — it is floating face down. This bill is dead. The government should take it out and bury it. In the name of all that is good and decent, get rid of it.

I support the police. I support those

men and women who are on the streets of Melbourne and throughout Victoria, defending us as we speak in this Parliament tonight. I support those men and women, I support the thin blue line, and I vehemently oppose this bill.

### COUNCIL | Adjournment 14 October 2009

## Rail: Newport museum

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise this evening a matter for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport. Recently I had the joy of visiting the Australian Railway Historical Society museum just a stone's throw from the North Williamstown railway station. I must commend the volunteers of the society who have done a magnificent job over a good many years now — over some decades — in retaining and upgrading some of the great steam engines and more modern engines that have pulled our trains around Victoria.

Mr John Kirk was very generous with his time in showing me some of the finer details of the many train engines that were on display. I have to say to the house that I was exceedingly impressed. I do not mind a train trip myself, although I am less than impressed with some of the services that we might have, for example, out through Sunshine at the moment.

But certainly some of the other services are impressive, such as the Indian Pacific on which, many years ago, I took a ride to Perth; I was pretty much taken with that.

This museum has a good many trains that I am sure will bring back memories for members if they were to take the time to go out and have a look. It is a train lovers' delight — nothing surer than that.

The only problem is that these trains are outside. They are in the elements and because they are close to the bay, being in Williamstown, they are prone to rust. I saw some of the difficulties that the volunteers have been facing in protecting these magnificent transportation vehicles from the rust. The problem is that these treasures of Victoria are in many cases rusting away despite the best efforts of the volunteers.

An obvious solution which has been bandied about for some time is to shift the museum indoors to the Newport

workshops, which are just down the street.

This move would not just protect the unique and priceless exhibits but provide a tourist boost for the west of Melbourne. Railway tourism is huge internationally. People who are into that sort of tourism will travel a very long distance to see a good train. This would bring jobs, visitors and more wealth to the western suburbs of Melbourne.

I ask the Minister for Public Transport to meet representatives of the Australian Railway Historical Society as quickly as is humanly possible with a view to arranging the setting up of the new museum at Newport. It would be a major boost for the western suburbs of Melbourne.

### COUNCIL | Members Statements 15 October 2009

## Bridges: Yarra River

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — Those of us from the western suburbs who travel to and from the city will have noticed over the last week or so the spaghetti junction that VicRoads has constructed between the bottom of the West Gate Bridge and the Domain Tunnel, or both tunnels in fact. The problem with this particular spaghetti junction is that it does not really resolve the main issue that commuters from the western suburbs face every day. The main problem remains unaddressed.

What the people from the western suburbs need is another Yarra crossing, because this spaghetti junction does not address congestion on the West Gate Bridge, nor does it address congestion on the West Gate Freeway, which on many occasions stretches many kilometres back towards Geelong.

As we see continuing growth in the western suburbs, Wyndham being one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia for example, as well as Geelong and Ballarat, this problem is only going to get worse. After 10 years of Labor you would think that it would have a plan to solve the problems of the western suburbs and the traffic coming from the western suburbs, but we have not had a thing from this government. You would think after a decade of Labor it was now time to get the western suburbs moving again.

## Kindergartens: western suburbs

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. It was my very great pleasure recently to visit the North Sunshine Kindergarten, where I met with Carmen Gomez, who explained many of the problems she and her colleagues are facing at that preschool. Her concerns are primarily around the lack of adequate funding for kindergartens for families from disadvantaged backgrounds. As she explained to me, the North Sunshine Kindergarten is in a particularly socially disadvantaged area. Approximately 80 per cent of the families receive welfare benefits of some kind, over 95 per cent come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and approximately 45 per cent of the children have a disability.

However, the present funding arrangements for children with additional needs is extremely inadequate.

In fact this year alone the kindergarten has 20 children with additional needs but only two are eligible for funding, and that only covers them up to 7 hours each per week. Clearly that is inadequate, below expectations and below what can be considered to be reasonable.

Ms Gomez explained to me that during the 10 years she has been working at the centre she has had at least two children with autism each year, as well as children with Down syndrome and children with developmental delays, many of whom will go on to specialist schools because their needs cannot be met in mainstream schools. However, these kindergartens are expected to come up with the goods, and they clearly cannot be expected to do that for too much longer.

I ask the Minister for Education to conduct an immediate review of what is necessary to support these kindergartens, particularly the North Sunshine Kindergarten but also other kindergartens and particularly those in the western suburbs which have a high proportion of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. I ask the minister to give serious consideration to the matter and to put into practice a plan which will provide support for these families and kindergartens. What concerns me is that very good teachers

in many of these kindergartens throughout the western suburbs in particular are about to walk out the door. We are about to lose them because of the way they have been treated by this government over the past decade. I ask the minister to give this matter her urgent attention and, more importantly, to actually do something.

COUNCIL | Second Reading  
11 November 2009

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL) BILL

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan) — Here we are gathered at approaching 9.30 p.m. on 11 November for what is, I suppose, unofficially the funeral of the Brimbank City Council. The firing squad has done its job and the corpse of the Brimbank council has been laid in its coffin. The grave has been dug, the prayers have been said, the Minister for Local Government, Richard Wynne, is standing by the side of the grave with a shovel in his hand, and the government is hoping beyond all else that this will all just go away.

Mr Barber interjected.

Mr FINN — If the clown over here to my left would like to come over from Yarra occasionally, he might have some idea about what is going on in the western suburbs — and I withdraw calling him a clown.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Leane) — Order! I thank Mr Finn.

Mr FINN — The situation is that this is not going to make the corruption at Brimbank go away. There are far too many ghosts wandering the cemetery that is the ALP. There is a dreadful knocking noise coming from within the coffin as well. It is those councillors who just refuse to die, but I will talk about them in a little while.

The government thinks it has been very clever, but it has been too clever by half. Everything the government has done at Brimbank in recent months has been driven by pure panic.

Government members are terrified of what will happen to them at the next election as a result of what they have allowed their party to do in the western

suburbs of Melbourne.

As Ms Hartland pointed out, after years of complaints the Minister for Local Government, Minister Wynne, finally decided he had no option but to do something. The man who is often openly referred to in the western suburbs, and particularly in Brimbank, as Do Nothing Dick decided he would do something.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Leane) — Order! I ask Mr Finn to withdraw that reference to the minister.

Mr FINN — I did not actually refer to him as Do Nothing Dick; I was referring to him as he is referred to in the electorate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Mr Leane) — Order! I think we have been through this before with one of Mr Finn's contributions. Mr Finn withdrew then, so I do not think tonight should be any different.

Mr FINN — Life is changing all the time, but I am happy to withdraw. It does not change the fact that that is what people in Brimbank and in the western suburbs call him.

Mr Vogels — It should be Do Something Dick.

Mr FINN — Unfortunately the fact that he did something does not change the fact that he is referred to by the name I cannot refer to myself. This is a strange place sometimes.

The minister commissioned an Ombudsman's report.

Over a period of about seven or eight months the Ombudsman went through a number of complaints that had been lodged against the council over an extended time, and his final report was somewhat damning not just of the council but also of a number of people who were involved in influencing the council. That is something the ALP has to take total responsibility for, because I think, with only one exception, everybody named in the report as a culprit is a member of the Australian Labor Party. The Ombudsman's report is a damning indictment not just of the Brimbank council but of the Victorian ALP.

The Ombudsman's report was presented and the minister had to decide if he would do anything about it. As we know, at times he has some difficulty in deciding what action to take, and after another brief period an inspector was appointed. The inspector was put to work briefly and he presented a report to the government. This report was nowhere near as damning as the Ombudsman's report had been just a few months

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL) BILL...

before, but the government decided that the report had to be acted upon.

The finger pointing started and we saw a number of councillors of the new council being blamed for the sins of the old council. That is an extraordinary situation. We now have this legislation before the house, and very soon I assume we will have a situation where the City of Brimbank will be administered by three commissioners. Already in the City of Brimbank there is significant speculation as to who those commissioners will be. Interestingly enough, all the names that have been mentioned in despatches to this point are members of — you guessed it — the ALP. Surprise, surprise! What we are looking at just at the moment is removing elected corruption and replacing it with appointed corruption from within the ALP. That does not make a great deal of sense to me, but as was said earlier the community is certainly very supportive of the removal of the council at this time.

All I believe that is necessary now is for us as a Parliament and a community to get to the truth, because as I have pointed out on at least a couple of occasions in this house the Ombudsman's report did not get to the whole truth; it barely scratched the surface. What we need — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Theophanous may well agree, but he might not support my next suggestion. It is my very strong view that what we need to get to the very bottom of the corruption in Brimbank is a royal commission; and not just in Brimbank but in some of the surrounding areas as well given the government's opposition to and refusal to set up an anticorruption commission — and you cannot blame it because there is such a thing as self-incrimination I suppose.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Theophanous screws up his face, and I tell you what: if I was involved in some of the things that the Ombudsman suggests Mr Theophanous has been involved in I would screw up my face as well. But we need justice for the people of Brimbank, and the only way we are going to get to the bottom of all the corruption — the only way we will find out who has been up to some of the tricks and activities we would find appalling in every way — is through a royal commission, so in this house I call on the government to set up a royal commission into the Brimbank council.

If this government is fair dinkum about wanting to know the truth and

to clean Brimbank up it will appoint a royal commission. I do not for a moment think that will happen, because I know the government does not want to know the truth — or should I say it does not want the truth to get out. This is because there are a good many members of the government who know the truth.

There are a good many members of the government who have known the truth a very long time, and that is why they sat on this for as long as they did.

The corruption of Brimbank goes right to the top. This corruption goes right into the Premier's office. This corruption goes right into the federal cabinet room in Parliament House, Canberra. This corruption is not just about the Brimbank City Council; it is about corruption within the Australian Labor Party that has been there for many years. If we are going to give the people of Brimbank and surrounding areas justice we have to root this out. We have to stop it, and a royal commission would be a very good start. On behalf of the long-suffering ratepayers of Brimbank — and I remind the house that my electorate office is right in the middle of Brimbank, in Sunshine — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We know all about your electorate office.

Mr FINN — Do you? Well, you tell me about it a bit later; I will be very interested to hear.

My electorate office is in the middle of Brimbank, on Hampshire Road in Sunshine. I recall that when I was first elected to represent the Western Metropolitan Region I was inundated with complaints from locals and local community groups about the Brimbank council. I am hoping that those locals and groups will receive justice as a result of what we are doing here this evening. However, I do not see that this bill alone will allow them the sort of support and relief that they deserve, particularly those who have been fighting this kind of corruption for so very long.

If a royal commission is not on the cards we may have to turn to Hollywood for our answers.

As we know, the media has an enormous influence on the way people act, and the media over a very long period of time has had an enormous impact in terms of revelations of fact and truth in a whole range of areas. So perhaps we could have Brimbank — The Movie. That may be something we could turn our attention to. It could be a western, and instead of Dirty Harry we will have Dopey Harry, who indeed has no idea at all. We will

see Hakki Suleyman, his trusty aide, let loose on the people of Brimbank — he of the droopy moustache and sombrero, reaching for his guns in the shootout in the Keilor pub car park. This is the western, Brimbank — The Movie, something we can look forward to. Alternatively, Acting President, it could be a comedy.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Theophanous, just stick around for a minute, because I have not finished with you, as you might expect.

In this particular comedy we could have the Minister for Local Government, Richard Wynne, who is referred to as something else by my constituents out there in Brimbank. We could have Rob Hulls, the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General and John Brumby, the Premier of this state, who were both outraged — appalled! — when the Ombudsman revealed just a portion of what had been going on in Brimbank for so long.

Now, you have to remember that Dick Wynne, fair enough, had known for years what was going on in Brimbank, because people had been telling him about it for years. You have to remember that Rob Hulls knew for years what had been going on in Brimbank, because he represents part of Brimbank. It is his electoral base. You also have to remember that John Brumby, the Premier of the state, knew exactly what was going on in Brimbank, because when he got the call to come to state Parliament he got it through the province of Douuta Galla, and the numbers that were put together to allow the man who is now Premier of our state to enter the Victorian Parliament were put together in what is now Brimbank.

The very same people, therefore, that are involved in the sorts of shenanigans that we have seen over such a long period of time were involved in putting John Brumby into Parliament. He now tries to tell us he did not know anything. We don't — —

Mr Koch interjected.

Mr FINN — He is not a cleanskin, Mr Koch, I can tell you. In any movie we have to have some new stars, and that is where the Theophanous brothers come in. As the Ombudsman has pointed out, they have a role to play. Perhaps they could go in under the title of Theophanii Inc.. That could be how we could introduce them to the silver screen.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Mr FINN — And of course any movie worth its salt has to have its villains;

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL) BILL...

they are a very important part. Mr Theophanous should relax; I have not included him in this particular segment, because the real villains here have not been exposed. They should be exposed, and a royal commission would expose them. I am talking about people like Bill Shorten, Stephen Conroy and Brendan O'Connor.

These are the puppet masters behind the scenes.

Their activities would stump Batman and send Elliott Ness to a home for the permanently bewildered, such are the activities of these sorts of characters in the Brimbank area. They have not been exposed; they have not had to face justice as they should. As in a good many movies there is an element of tragedy. Perhaps the most tragically afflicted in Brimbank — The Movie could be the councillors who have been sacked. As I mentioned earlier, these councillors were sacked largely for the sins of the councillors who went before them. Councillors such as Margaret Giudice, who I regarded as an excellent mayor of Brimbank when she held the position, and Marion Martin, who was newly elected to the council. They were sacked, but they were without guilt. There is no justice when people are sacked for somebody else's crime. It does not make a lot of sense to me, and if that is the government's attitude, then there are probably a lot of people in a lot of strife. Justice in this regard has been a major casualty.

A major tragedy has been suffered for a good many years by the people of Brimbank — the people in sports clubs, in community groups and in a range of council-supported services — who have suffered over a long period because of the carry-on of this council. These are the people at the forefront of my mind whenever I have raised this matter in the past and as I stand and speak in the house tonight. I am hopeful we can work together to get the sort of justice for the people of Brimbank that they deserve. That is first and foremost in my mind.

That leaves only one question: will we have a happy ending to this episode? I have to say I very much doubt it. With respect to Ms Hartland, it will certainly take more than one year to sort out the mess that is Brimbank and the Labor Party in Brimbank.

Mrs Peulich — It is like Days of Our Lives.

Mr FINN — It is not a very pleasant life, I have to say. This sort of abuse and corruption will continue as long as the Labor Party continues to take the people in the west of Melbourne

for granted. This sort of corruption will continue as long as the Labor Party regards the people in the west of Melbourne with complete contempt. That is what we have seen. When we see what has happened in Brimbank it all comes back to one thing — the Labor Party taking the people of Brimbank and the people of the western suburbs for granted. It has got to stop. It does not matter how many councils are sacked, as Ms Hartland said, and it does not matter what we do: this sort of corruption and abuse will continue as long as the Labor Party has such total contempt for the people of the western suburbs. It must stop! It can no longer be tolerated.

The fact that Labor Party members — the government of the state — have chosen not to speak on this bill is a fair indication to me that that contempt is alive and well and going strong. At the very least one member, perhaps even a lowly backbencher — perhaps Mr Theophanous — might get up before the debate is over and apologise by saying, 'We are sorry for what we have done to you.' I say to the members of the Labor Party that if they have a conscience, they should apologise to the people of Brimbank for what they have done to the councillors who have no guilt and most importantly for what they have done to the ratepayers and residents of Brimbank, who do not deserve what this government has meted out to them over so many years.

There are many points to be made, more than I can possibly ever make tonight, but there is one thing that is overwhelmingly clear. As this debate continues — and I have to say it will not go away, because too many people have been hurt by the Labor Party in Brimbank for it to just disappear — there is one point that is clear and understood by everybody, wherever they may be and whoever they may be, and that point is that Labor stands condemned in this whole shameful episode. Hopefully it can get its act together, but I will not be holding my breath.

### COUNCIL | Members Statements 11 November 2009

## Remembrance Day

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — It is something of a truism to say that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Today we remember those who paid

a much higher price for our freedom than that vigilance. We remember those who gave their all so that we can live in freedom. We give thanks for the sacrifice that they made to allow us to live in freedom — the freedom to say what we want to say, to believe what we want to believe, to think what we want to think and indeed to sit in this very Parliament.

Australia has a proud history of defending freedom. On every occasion Australians have been called to arms it has been in defence of freedom. Every Australian should be proud that we have fought fascism, that we have fought communism and that we are currently fighting extreme Islam; totalitarianism of every kind has been our enemy.

Throughout our 108-year history we have defended freedom. We have joined other freedom-loving nations to support and defend freedom throughout the world. As the house sits on this Remembrance Day 2009, Australian troops are continuing the Aussie legacy in Afghanistan. May God bless those troops and keep them safe, and may we always be grateful for and never forget those who have gone before them.

### COUNCIL | Adjournment 12 November 2009

## Autism: schools funding

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. This matter follows a series of correspondence and discussions I have had with a constituent, Ms Wilma La Greca. She tells me she is a single parent of two special needs boys and she has been trying for almost six months to get help with funding for an autism teacher assistant and for personal computer software. She says she lives in Greenvale, and her 15-year-old son goes to Essendon East Keilor District College in Niddrie and her 11-year-old son goes to Broadmeadows Primary School. Both boys have Asperger's syndrome and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. Both have integration assistance — the 15-year-old has level 2 assistance and the 11-year-old has level 3.

Ms La Greca has informed me that of late she has become increasingly concerned because her teenager is very stressed out as things are

## Autism: schools funding...

becoming more and more difficult for him, and the 11-year-old is going pretty much the same way. She points out to me that she definitely needs autism teachers who would be able to explain to her sons exactly what is going on at school and to guide those around them as well.

My concern is not just for Ms La Greca, but also for an increasing number of parents with autistic children who find themselves in exactly the same situation. There has been an explosion of autism right across Australia, and in fact right across the world. We here in Victoria need to examine and review the services we provide for children with autism and for their parents, particularly, as I have pointed out in this house before, as children with autism are quite capable in many instances of leading very normal and productive lives if they are treated and given the right assistance at the right time.

I ask the Minister for Education to take into consideration the position Ms La Greca finds herself in and to review and examine the case of her children. I have a lot of correspondence that I would be very happy to pass on to the minister.

I ask her to examine this particular case and provide the support Ms La Greca needs for her two children and also to have a deep thought process about what is needed to help and support children with autism who are attempting to go to school in this state.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment**  
24 November 2009

## Western suburbs: gang violence

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan)

— The matter I raise is for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I first raised this matter on 22 May 2007, and it concerns gang violence, particularly in the western suburbs. At that time the then Chief Commissioner of Police not only declared that there was no gang violence in Melbourne, much less the western suburbs — —

Mrs Coote — Christine?

Mr FINN — I cannot remember her name, but she would not even use the word 'gang'. As I recall, she used to use the term the 'g-word'; a quite ludicrous position for somebody in her role. I am sad to say that the gang violence,

indeed the gang warfare, in the western suburbs has not improved since the time I first raised the matter.

In fact last Friday at the Robert Barrett Reserve in Maribyrnong, at around 8 o'clock, there was an attack involving a variety of weapons including machetes and knives. Then around 2 hours later there was a full-on attack, what I suppose you would call an open warfare attack at the Sunshine bus depot. I have visited the depot before and have seen the gang activity there. There were 60 to 70 youths involved from gangs including the Asian gang B4L and TT/20-30, which is the postcode for Sunshine.

On Saturday night, following an attack on a bouncer at a nightclub, there was gang-related violence at the Royal Melbourne Hospital emergency department. It is yet to be decided whether that was related to the earlier attack, but certainly there are reports, and I have received reports, that there was gang-related violence at that hospital.

We now have a situation where people are confronted with gang violence on public transport, on our streets, in schools and now in hospitals. It is clearly totally and absolutely out of control. This government can no longer sit back and do nothing about it, so I ask the minister as a matter of urgency to convene a task force involving police, youth workers, education department officials and representatives of local governments to sit down and decide what needs to be done to tackle this issue before we see more bloodshed. I have spoken to renowned youth worker Les Twentyman. He is very happy to sit on this task force. I ask the minister to act and to act now.

**COUNCIL | Members Statements**  
25 November 2009

## Matthew Richardson

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan)

— Melbourne very much prides itself on being the sports capital of the world, and with very good reason. Whether it be football, cricket, soccer, basketball or a number of other sports, Melbourne excels in all of those areas. We quite often elevate sportsmen and women to the position of heroes, and they are often role models for our children. We quite often hold them up as pillars of virtue, but unfortunately

from time to time they do let us down. How often do our newspapers feature on their front pages headlines such as 'Fallen sports hero'? It can leave a very nasty taste in the mouth. For that reason as much as any other, when we come across a true champion we should celebrate them, particularly when an illustrious career comes to an end.

Known Australia-wide simply as 'Richo', Matthew Richardson recently announced an end to his 17-year career with the Richmond Football Club.

Mr Koch interjected.

Mr FINN — Mr Koch barracks for Geelong, and he said, 'Thank goodness!' I am not surprised he said that.

Matthew Richardson did not quite get to 300 games, but he played every game with passion and good old-fashioned love of the jumper. The love that Richo showed for Richmond was reciprocated by hundreds of thousands of Tigers fans throughout the nation and shared most recently by millions of footy fans not of the black-and-yellow faith. Who could forget the palpable sense of disappointment when Richo just missed out on the Brownlow Medal last year? Richo is a champion of champions: a champion football player and a champion bloke.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment**  
26 November 2009

## Housing: Sunshine development

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan)

— I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Planning. It concerns a proposed social housing development for disadvantaged women in Sunshine. It has caused some consternation in the local community — perhaps even some outrage. I wish to refer to the letters page in one of the local newspapers to convey some of the community attitudes toward this particular development. One letter says:

... inadequate parking, shortage of space, no social and support services, traffic issues for immediate surrounding streets, noise levels from a licensed entertainment venue with live music two nights a week.

It is proposed that these units will be transitional housing for women in crisis. These women and children will need

## Housing: Sunshine development...

support to get back on their feet. They do not need to feel isolated and they certainly do not need the temptations of alcohol and gambling on their doorstep.

I should mention that this particular development is proposed to be attached to the Sunshine RSL Club, which of course is licensed both for the serving of alcohol and for gaming. Another letter says:

There are also major concerns about potentially huge car parking and traffic management issues not to mention a potential loss of, what has been acknowledged by Brimbank City Council and state government, very scarce and highly valued parkland/playground space in Sunshine.

There is enormous concern about this, and I have received, as I am sure the minister has, an enormous number of emails and an enormous number of phone calls and other types of contact from many members of the Sunshine community about it. There is genuine concern about the impact such a development will have on the women who would be living there. Many of them would be coming straight from jail into the housing, which would be a halfway house of sorts into the community. There is genuine concern about what this development would mean not just for local people but for the women themselves.

I therefore ask the Minister for Planning to give me a date that he will be available to come out to Sunshine for a public meeting. I will be happy to hire the hall. Maybe we could use the Brimbank council chamber; it is not being used for much else these days. If the minister would be kind enough to give me a date, I will be very happy to organise that meeting. Other members representing the area would also be very welcome.

Indeed those who are seeking to represent the area in the future would also be welcome to join us on this occasion. I ask the minister to take my request into consideration. This is a very important issue for the Sunshine community, and I ask him to come out and meet with us at his convenience.

**COUNCIL | Adjournment  
8 December 2009**

## Police: Altona Beach

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan)  
— I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and it concerns

a piece of correspondence I have received from the City of Hobsons Bay, based in Williamstown and Altona. The correspondence reads as follows:

At its meeting on Tuesday, 17 November 2009, Hobsons Bay City Council resolved to seek urgent support for an annual police kiosk at Altona Beach, including additional police resources.

This request is based on recent incidents in the area and community concerns regarding public safety.

The kiosk would ensure a permanent police presence over the warmer months, in the vicinity of Altona Beach and the Pier Street precinct and provide the police with the resources required to enforce the alcohol restrictions in Altona, discourage antisocial behaviour and hooning and protect shops and community assets.

This is a major issue right through the western suburbs, as I have pointed out from time to time. The lack of police from one end of the west to the other is in fact a total disgrace. It is something that is very much in need of urgent attention from the minister, as it seems the Chief Commissioner of Police is unable to solve the problems that we have out there.

In this particular instance the Hobsons Bay City Council has asked for our support in providing an extra police presence during the summer months to protect those many thousands of beachgoers and those who visit the Pier Street precinct — a very pleasant area, I might say, and one that I would hope the minister would see fit to use some influence to protect. That is what I am asking him to do: to use his influence with the chief commissioner, to take his responsibilities seriously for once in his short term — far too long term — as minister.

Mrs Peulich — Soon to be short.

Mr FINN — Soon to be shortened, one would hope. I ask the minister to use his influence to point out to the chief commissioner that the people in Altona, particularly around Altona Beach, will be in desperate need of more police in the months ahead.

The Hobsons Bay council has thought the matter so important that it has brought it to my attention. I point out to the minister of course that most members of the Hobsons Bay council are not of my political persuasion but have felt it necessary to bring this matter to my attention in the hope that we might be able to get some response, some very positive response, from the police minister and ultimately the chief commissioner in the not-too-distant future, certainly before the warmer summer months hit us through

January and February. I ask the police minister to use his position to bring some influence to bear upon the chief commissioner to convince him of the importance of this request.

**COUNCIL | Members Statements  
9 December 2009**

## Western suburbs: government performance

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan)  
— This being the last sitting week of 2009 I think it important at the end of this year to review the plight of people living in the western suburbs. Sadly, I have to report that there has

been no major change throughout 2009. Neglect by this government is still the order of the day. Whether it be public transport, whether it be health, whether it be schools falling to pieces or roads, Labor just does not care.

Throughout the course of this year we have seen some corruption in the Labor empire, which has been peeled away for us to have a bit of a peek at, and one cannot help but feel that the best is yet to come. Labor's contempt for the west is obvious, because not only is it not content with dumping duds from the other side of Melbourne on us but we now see the ALP importing hacks from interstate to dump on those of us who live in the western suburbs.

Let me assure members that anger towards this government, anger towards this Labor Party is building to explosive proportions in the west of Melbourne. As we have come to expect, even in terms of that anger, Labor does not care.

It does not matter what the issue is, it does not matter what the concerns of people living in the west of Melbourne are, members of the Labor Party just do not care. In November next year I have a feeling they just might.

## VicRoads: roadworks signage

**Mr FINN** (Western Metropolitan)

— I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Ports. The matter concerns one of the more mysterious organisations on the face of the earth — VicRoads. In particular I refer to the use by VicRoads of roadworks signage. It has been a matter of bewilderment to me for quite some time, and I seek some answers from the minister regarding it.

The matter concerns in particular the situation where there is roadworks signage but no roadworks. Just the other night on the Western Ring Road I was travelling near Calder Park Drive — which is near the airport, for those who may not be aware of it. I was driving along doing 100 kilometres per hour, as I always do with that speed limit. All of a sudden we were told to do 80 kilometres per hour, so I went down to 80, and then we were told to do 60 kilometres per hour, so I went down to 60, and then we were told to do 40, so I went down to 40.

Then there was a sign saying, 'End roadworks', but I had not seen any roadworks whilst we had been decreasing speed.

I have to say that this situation is not unusual. It is a mystery to me why this happens, but it happens all too often, and in my experience it happens a fair bit around the western suburbs — not that I would expect the minister to know that it happens in the western suburbs. He rarely gets there.

This situation is extremely confusing. It is annoying for motorists who obey the law. Of course there are motorists who do not care what signage is up. They drive straight through at 200 kilometres an hour anyway, but for those of us who obey the law it is confusing. It is extremely annoying and bewildering when motorists like me are trying to work out what is going on. Some cynics have suggested that this may be a plan by this government to raise a bit of money with speed cameras.

They confuse the punters and set up speed cameras and do a bit of revenue raising, which this government is particularly good at.

I ask the Minister for Roads and Ports to conduct a review of the use of roadworks signage by VicRoads. In

particular I ask the minister to impress upon VicRoads as a result of this review the need for that organisation to be on the ball when it comes to using correct signage on the side of the road so that this sort of annoyance will not occur in future.

President, I take this final opportunity to wish you and all members of the house and their families a very merry Christmas.





# FINN IN THE HOUSE

Speeches July 2009 to December 2009

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