

18:30:00

Medicinal cannabis

Ms SPRINGLE (South Eastern Metropolitan) (18:30) — My adjournment matter is for the Attorney-General. During debate on Victoria's Access to Medicinal Cannabis Bill 2015 in 2016, there was minimal discussion of how drug-driving laws would apply to users of medicinal cannabis. At the time the Minister for Agriculture made it very clear that the government was taking a precautionary approach to the issue and that, based on consultation with Victoria Police, drug-driving laws would not be amended to provide a defence for medicinal cannabis use.

This provision unfairly discriminates against users of medicinal cannabis. I am aware that people whose condition would be helped by medicinal cannabis are very nervous about accessing this treatment for this reason. The problem is that current testing for drugs does not test for impairment; it tests for trace levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in cannabis. THC can be detected in saliva for days after cannabis has been consumed, even though any impairment to driving is only present for several hours after consumption. This means that users of medicinal cannabis are unable to drive for days after treatment, even where their driving is not impaired at all by use of the treatment. Clearly this can have a huge impact on their ability to go about their daily lives.

Since this issue was debated in the Victorian Parliament, there have been significant developments in relation to research, evidence and debate on the issue. In South Australia a bill has been introduced to provide a valid defence to drug-driving offences for medicinal cannabis users. But there is no indication that Victoria is keeping pace with this debate. I note that the final report of the Victorian inquiry into drug law reform recommended that the proposed Advisory Council on Drugs Policy investigate and explore likely changes to drug-driving laws resulting from medicinal cannabis use in Victoria. But this work is long overdue, and the risks inherent for patients should be urgently addressed.

The action I seek for the minister is to review relevant emerging evidence, debate and legislative reform in other jurisdictions and to consider introducing a medicinal cannabis defence in Victoria.

Waste management

Mr FINN (Western Metropolitan) (18:32) — I wish to raise a matter this evening for the attention of the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change. What a pity that she might not be as close now as she was just a few minutes ago.

I have expressed concerns here on a number of occasions about the impact the Ravenhall tip is having on local residents and will have on local residents if that tip is expanded to four or five, maybe six times its current size, as has been approved by the Minister for Planning. I am also deeply concerned by reports coming out of Werribee as to the size of the Werribee tip and the fact that it is perhaps no longer a tip but more a 'waste mountain', as it is being described by some.

I want to make it very clear that I am absolutely sick to death of the western suburbs being treated as the dumping ground of Melbourne. I have had a gutful of it, and I know that most people in the western suburbs have as well. We want to find a way to dispose of rubbish without us being on the end of it on every occasion. We know that there are a number of ways of disposing of rubbish, whether it be high temperature burning in an inferno, an incinerator or similar methods. Whatever it may be, we know that there are alternatives. We in the western suburbs are very keen to ensure that Victoria is at the forefront of any new technology to dispose of garbage, because we know that if we are not, then that landfill will inevitably land in our backyard if not indeed in our front yard. That is just not good enough.

I am asking that the environment minister establish a review of methods of disposing of rubbish with a view to establishing an effective alternative to landfill, because the landfill does pose a significant social problem to many sections of the western suburbs. Indeed it is a health problem to many. I have spoken to a number of people and have relayed stories from a number of people to this house about the impact that the Ravenhall tip has had on their health — people in Caroline Springs, Deer Park and those sorts of areas. I fear that Werribee may be going down the same path now. I ask the minister to establish that review and to provide some sort of alternative to what we are currently suffering in many parts of Melbourne's west.

Bus contracts

Mr DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (18:35) — My matter for the adjournment tonight is for the attention of the Minister for Public Transport in the other place. It concerns a letter that has come into my possession from just a few days ago from Gillian Miles, the head of Transport for Victoria. It is a very threatening letter, I should say, to a particular bus company — it is a single bus company that has sent me this letter. Obviously bus contracts are being renegotiated at this point, and they are being renegotiated with a series of private bus companies around Melbourne. This is very important

for the future of our transport system in Melbourne and potentially as a pacesetter point for country Victoria as well. The government has pushed into a particular mode of attack in its approach here, but this letter goes a notch further than they have gone previously. It says:

The state is aware of (and is considering its position regarding) public statements that were recently made by the Bus Association of Victoria Inc ... relating to contract negotiations presently underway with metropolitan bus operators.

I would like to take this opportunity —

and a finger comes out to wag —

to remind you of your confidentiality obligations under the *Metropolitan Bus Procurement Project: Process Deed* — *BAV Negotiation* (process deed) between you and the Public Transport Development Authority and the Department Of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources ...

Under your process deed you are required to ensure that you (and your associates ...) keep confidential all confidential information. This includes ensuring that neither you or associates make any public announcement ...

18:37:30 Let me just be clear here: this is a gag order. It is an attempt to gag individual bus operators from speaking publicly to their communities. It is atrocious. This is a nasty attempt by the minister, via Gillian Miles, the head of Transport for Victoria, which is a new body that is becoming incredibly overweening in its approach to negotiations in this area.

The government has got a responsibility to get good tax outcomes for taxpayers — that is, good outcomes in terms of costs and results for communities. It has a responsibility to make sure that we actually get good results in terms of new routes and the quality and reliability of services. There is a decent and civilised way to go about these obligations rather than the threatening and bullying that is going on. This is a government that is prone to bullying, as we know. It begins from the top and goes all the way down. What I ask here is that the minister rein in these bureaucrats, act to rein them in, and ensure that this is conducted in a civil way, and that the bullying and threatening cease.

Responses

Mr DALIDAKIS (Minister for Trade and Investment) (18:38) — We have had adjournment matters this evening from Ms Lovell to the Minister for Police in relation to ensuring that no possessions are removed from Shepparton police station; from Dr Ratnam to the Minister for Police asking her to release the guidelines for the new firearms at Victoria Police's disposal; from Mr Ramsay to the Minister for Regional Development asking the minister to continue

to support regional development projects regardless of whether a city deal has been finalised; from Ms Truong to the Premier asking that the Premier state his support for the state of Oromia within Ethiopia; from Ms Bath to the Minister for Education asking him to come down and visit Traralgon school to see that there are school buildings that need to be upgraded; from Ms Dunn to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change asking her to provide the commonwealth with peer-reviewed data in relation to the Leadbeater's possum; from Ms Crozier to the Minister for Families and Children asking for her to provide urgent funding to Zoe Support Australia; from Ms Springle to the Attorney-General asking that he review evidence in other jurisdictions about the medicinal cannabis defence; from Mr Finn to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change asking that the minister review alternatives to the Ravenhall tip; and from Mr Davis to the Minister for Public Transport asking that she speak to the chief executive of the —

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr DALIDAKIS — This is where I seek your guidance, President, because there were two organisations that Mr Davis referenced. I am not trying to be obtuse, but he mentioned Public Transport Victoria and also Transport for Victoria. I just seek clarification on which one he wants it directed to for the minister.

Mr Davis — I asked that she rein in her bureaucrats, including both varieties.

Mr DALIDAKIS — Well, in that case, let me dispatch that issue at the table, as I have done once before. We have what I believe to be the best —

Mr O'Sullivan — It is not your portfolio.

Mr DALIDAKIS — It does not matter whether it is my portfolio or not, Mr O'Sullivan. I believe we have the best public servants in Australia, and I think having that characterisation of and that smear on our public service does a disservice to all members of the house, and I am dispensing with that adjournment matter right now.

Further to that I have written responses to adjournment debate matters raised by Mr Morris, Ms Shing and Mr Gepp.

Mr Davis — On a point of order, President, newer members of this chamber may not remember the lengthy discussion that occurred around 2008, when Labor sought to dispatch every adjournment matter by giving a trite and quip-type response on the evening.