

has relied on a small study with an unrepresentative sample to infer dingo populations. This is not a sufficient evidence base on which to end the wild dog control program.

On 6 August this year the Minister for Agriculture met with representatives from the North East Wild Dog Action Group, the member for Benambra and members of the Duduroa Dhargal Aboriginal Corporation, but the decision does not lie with the agriculture minister, it lies with the Minister for Environment, who has not met with farmers or stakeholders in the region. The extension ends on 1 October, only five weeks away, and as the deadline gets closer without any consultation or communication from the responsible minister there is growing angst and worry amongst my constituents.

The continuation of the program is crucial for the safety of native animals and livestock and for the people who live and work on land that borders on dogs' habitat. The traditional owners have written to the Minister for Environment in support of the wild dog control program continuing as it is currently run. I urge the minister to listen to these petitioners, to farmers and to the traditional owners.

Animal welfare

Georgie PURCELL (Northern Victoria) (18:16): (1093) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Agriculture, and the action I seek is for MD Foods in Echuca to have their licence removed following yet more evidence of extreme animal cruelty. Hidden camera footage from the Farm Transparency Project has for the third time caught workers at this abattoir abusing goats and sheep before they are finally slaughtered. Animals in the footage are shown being beaten, thrown and dragged across a kill room floor to endure multiple attempts at stunning before their throats are slit while still fully conscious. Even after this point, sheep can be seen blinking, lifting their heads and struggling on the shackle line while continuing to show signs of life. Other animals are pinned to the ground by gate machinery, where they become squashed and panicked in the cramped space.

The footage is difficult to watch, and yet it is not at all uncommon: the Farm Transparency Project have shown the public what the industry refuses to disclose at 18 different abattoirs in less than two years. Each time the story is the same, but animal cruelty at slaughterhouses is still always dismissed. Each time footage is captured the government repeats the same standard response about following the correct channels of reporting, but there is rarely, if ever at all, an outcome.

This slaughterhouse was reported first in 2013, again in 2016 and now again this year. It has been reported again to state and federal departments, the environmental protection agency and PrimeSafe for the exact same reasons. All that has happened following numerous complaints is a name change. In 2021 what was then known as Riverside Meats reopened as MD Foods, as we know it today. It is almost as though the operators know they can continue harming animals without any consequences at all.

The disturbing nature of these breaches calls for immediate suspension of MD Foods' operating licence while a comprehensive investigation takes place. I hope the minister can finally take action to end this cruelty.

Foster care

Ann-Marie HERMANS (South-Eastern Metropolitan) (18:18): (1094) My adjournment today is for the Minister for Children, and the action I seek is to end the crisis unfolding in Victoria's foster care system, with better financial incentives for functional families and relatives, and parents indeed as well, to support children in need and support for the parents who desperately want to help and keep their kids at home.

Victoria currently boasts the lowest foster carer allowance for children aged zero to seven in Australia. At this rate we are losing carers at an alarming rate and hundreds of households a year. It translates to some children under 12 being placed in impersonal group homes; in fact I have heard in my own electorate of children being placed in hotels. It includes astronomical costs, ranging from \$561,246 to

a staggering \$1.1 million per child. Now, these are children that are in need – they are vulnerable – and yet the government is focusing on wasting more money on more projects that it cannot afford.

A recent report funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing reveals the immense economic value of foster care in Victoria: a whopping \$533 million in 2021–22, far exceeding current government funding. The national inflation rate is 3.6, and yet Victorian foster care allowances have not been indexed since 2016. This means carers are effectively receiving a pay cut yearly, making it increasingly difficult to provide for the vulnerable children entrusted into their care and also at times meaning that very good foster carers cannot actually volunteer for the job. The system is in freefall. The figures show that our most in-need children are not experiencing the stability and love of a family environment. A 2011 figure of 37 per cent of children in out-of-home care being placed in foster carers' care plummeted to a mere 18 per cent in 2020. Children are missing out on a crucial element of their development.

Foster carers Victoria have repeatedly called on the government to help. They have even provided petitions to the Department of Treasury and Finance as well as the minister, but nothing has happened to fix the problem. The Victorian government must (1) index foster carer allowances to inflation to ensure they can afford to care for children properly, (2) invest in recruitment and retention programs to attract and keep dedicated carers and (3) prioritise foster care as a cost-effective and nurturing solution for vulnerable children. The government must act with urgency to ensure every child in Victoria has a safe and loving home environment. Our most vulnerable children are being impacted through the failure of the Allan Labor government's ability to manage our finances effectively.

Myki ticketing system

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL (Northern Victoria) (18:21): (1095) My adjournment matter today is for the Minister for Public and Active Transport in the other place. In May 2023 the then public transport minister announced changes to the Myki system which included introducing the system to regional stations such as Swan Hill, Echuca, Albury – noting that Albury is listed on our V/Line system – and Shepparton in my electorate of Northern Victoria. These were supposed to commence in 2024. Currently travellers on these lines must obtain a paper ticket from the ticket office at the station. This is inconvenient and can be frustrating if tickets are lost, misplaced or damaged. The action I seek from the minister is for northern Victorians to be updated on when these Myki changes will be implemented at regional stations.

Energy policy

David DAVIS (Southern Metropolitan) (18:22): (1096) My matter is for the Minister for Energy and Resources in the other place, and it concerns the recently released so-called *Cheaper, Cleaner, Renewable: Our Plan for Victoria's Electricity Future* document released just about a week or so ago. Of course the plan is nothing of the sort. The plan is a thin, vacuous document that cobbles together aspects from previous announcements, but there is no coherent plan here for the future. In fact there is no sense of urgency in it, given the state faces a really very challenging future, a future which may see our gas supplies run out and our gas supplies short as early as next year. The minister does not appear to have understood that she has got to get off her tail and get moving. We actually need exploration to bring forward gas to make sure that our industries are not clobbered. We need to make sure that choice remains a significant part of our system. Even the federal Labor government admits that choice should be a critical aspect of people's energy choices and businesses' energy choices as well, but none of this comes through in the document.

What I am seeking for the minister to do today is to revisit all of this, look at the federal government's documents and understand the urgency of the position the state is in. We have already seen businesses start to leave the state. The prices of gas have surged. The prices of electricity have surged. The government promised and the federal government also promised lower electricity prices, and yet we have got a government that has allowed these huge surges in price to occur. One of the reasons gas prices have gone up is because there has been no new supply. There has not been a single permit given