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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers

Thursday, 26 February 2009

Anglesea: riverbank facilities

Raised with: Regional and Rural Development

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 12 March 2008

REPLY:

Thank you for your letter dated 14 March 2008 regarding the Anglesea Riverbank Development Project.

I also refer to the adjournment debate you raised in Parliament regarding this project on the 12 March 2008.

The approval of State Government funding to the Surf Coast Shire for the project was based on strong socio-economic benefits, including improving community and tourist infrastructure, providing greater capture for local businesses and increasing the liveability of a small coastal town.

As you would be aware, it is difficult to obtain full support from all members of the community for projects such as this. However, the Surf Coast Shire has demonstrated strong support for the project from both residents and a range of community and business organisations through a comprehensive consultation process.

The Anglesea Community Hub facility was highlighted as a core feature of the Anglesea Riverbank Master Plan. As part of the Master Plan process, a comprehensive consultation strategy was developed, which included stakeholder consultation/interviews with approximately 70 individuals and groups. It also involved a survey of property owners in Anglesea that elicited 840 responses, many actually highlighting the need for improved infrastructure and tourist facilities. Further consultation included meetings with the appointed project Steering Committee, a public information day, a stakeholder briefing evening and a four-week period of public exhibition and comment.

Council has communicated with residents throughout the development process and has provided many opportunities for input and feedback. Council has also sought to satisfy concerns through the re-scope of concept plans.

Thank you for highlighting the concerns of some members of the community relating to the project. Should you require further clarification I would encourage you to contact Mr Peter Bollen - CEO Surf Coast Shire.

Cavendish-Coleraine Road: upgrade

Raised with: Regional and Rural Development

Raised by: Ms Pulford

Raised on: 12 June 2008

REPLY:

The Government recognises that as the Australian freight output increases significantly in future years that B-double trucks will play an important role in handling the freight load in rural and regional Victoria.

To this end the Brumby Government is taking action to upgrade major freight routes for B-double truck access to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of agricultural and horticultural producers and related industries in regional and rural Victoria.

I refer to my announcement of 13 June 2008 of the provision of \$2.6 million of funding to 12 Councils over 20 individual projects in regional Victoria through the Brumby Government's \$5.05 million Local Roads to Market Program.

I am pleased to advise that included in this announcement was a \$197,400 grant to the Southern Grampians Shire Council to assist in the upgrade of the Cavendish-Coleraine Road to allow B-double access.

I am informed that the Southern Grampians Shire Council is due to complete these upgrade works during the first half of 2009.

The Victorian Transport Plan released in December 2008 will further support local industry with a \$5 million expansion of the Local Roads to Markets program.

Higher education: regional and rural Victoria

Raised with: Regional and Rural Development

Raised by: Ms Pulford

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

I refer to the matter raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 30 July 2008, regarding higher education in regional and rural Victoria.

There are significant issues in respect to access to and provision of higher education in regional and rural Victoria. The Brumby Government's submission to the Review of Australian Higher Education highlighted these issues and made a number of suggestions to further position Victoria as the best place to live, work and raise a family. In addition, Victoria sees regional provision in higher education as a significant factor in retaining young people in local regional areas, and provides essential services to all sectors of the community adding to the social and cultural well-being of local communities. The Brumby Government has strongly argued for additional funding for universities with dispersed networks and serving communities with little experience of higher education.

The Report of the Review of Australian Higher Education (the Bradley Report) was released by the Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard, on Wednesday, 17 December 2008. The Bradley Report includes a number of recommendations intended to improve access and provision in regional and rural areas.

The Brumby Government is considering the recommendations of the Report and will be responding to the Deputy Prime Minister shortly, emphasising in particular the higher education needs of regional and rural Victorians.

Intralot: agency costs

Raised with: Consumer Affairs

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 21 August 2008

REPLY:

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 21 August 2008 in which you call on me to intervene in the commercial agreements between Intralot Australia and lottery agents to reduce the level of fees charged by Intralot Australia. I apologise for the delay in my response.

It is important to remember that since lotteries commenced more than 50 years ago arrangements between lottery licence holders and its retail outlets have always been a matter for two parties. Unless there is a breach of the public lottery licence or associated agreements, these issues are ultimately commercial matters between lottery agents and the lottery licensee.

However, I do understand that there have been a series of transition problems with the roll out of Intralot's systems following commencement of its operations on 1 July. I have discussed these issues on numerous occasions with agent representatives and further meetings are planned. I have also raised them directly with Intralot on several occasions. While some improvement is evident, I continue to encourage the company to do more to meet its projected performance.

On some matters, I have sought assistance from the Small Business Commissioner and I would encourage agents to consider this if they believe that Intralot has not dealt with them fairly.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Wind energy: Stockyard Hill

Raised with: Planning

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 21 August 2008

REPLY:

The Stockyard Hill Wind Farm has been referred to me under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. I am currently considering whether an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is warranted for this project.

All documents relating to the referral of this project are publicly available on the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) website.

I note the concern of the Member for Southern Metropolitan about the potential risks to the Brolga, a bird species listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

The proponent has commissioned extensive investigations of Brolga activity on the wind farm site and within 20 km of the site. The field surveys have covered the breeding, flocking and migration seasons of the species. Details of these investigations are reported in one of the documents on the DPCD website (*Proposed Stockyard Hill Wind Farm – Targeted Brolga Investigations*, Brett Lane & Associates, May 2008).

I am pleased to note that the proponent has been conducting these investigations in close consultation with biodiversity experts in the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The information collected has enabled the proponent and DSE to reach agreement on buffer areas for breeding and flocking sites and on migration corridors through the wind farm site. As a result of these measures, the potential risks to the local Brolga population would be considerably reduced.

I intend to consider potentially significant environmental risks posed by the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm, including risks to Brolgas, and other matters raised by Pyrenees Shire Council, in deciding whether an EES is required for this project.

Tourism: Shepparton

Raised with: Tourism

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 11 September 2008

REPLY:

Dating back to 1993, Tourism Victoria's Jigsaw campaign is one of Australia's most respected and successful tourism marketing and advertising campaigns.

Much of Victoria's success has been due to the partnership approach between Tourism Victoria and regional destinations in marketing the State. In order to ensure significant scale to compete for visitors both within Australia and internationally, Victoria has eleven campaign regions, including Melbourne.

There is a challenge for destinations like Shepparton and other Goulburn region towns that border two or more regions to determine where they should best invest marketing resources.

This challenge is reflected in the new Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009-2012, which was released on Thursday 18 December 2008. Page 12 of the plan notes that "a number of destinations are concerned about their fit within current regional campaign boundaries. Whilst there are no plans to change the campaign boundaries, relevant destinations will be provided with assistance to review their status and future positioning."

The State Government through Tourism Victoria has allocated \$20,000 to the Shires of Shepparton, Strathbogie Murrindindi and Mitchell. This funding was matched by the Shires. Money will be used to conduct a study that will review their tourism product.

The study, which commenced in late January, will also consider the appropriate structures and alignments for the future. Tourism Alliance Victoria have been contracted to undertake the study and the project will be managed through the Greater Shepparton City Council.

I am sure that these commitments will result in a positive outcome that will enable Greater Shepparton and other Goulburn region towns to reach their full tourism potential.

Hume: governance

Raised with: Local Government

Raised by: Mr Guy

Raised on: 30 October 2008

REPLY:

I refer to the question by the Member for Northern Metropolitan relating to Hume City Council. The matters raised relate to planning processes, and as such fall within the portfolio of my colleague, the Hon. Justin Madden, Minister for Planning. The matters should be raised with him directly.

Gaming: licences

Raised with: Gaming

Raised by: Mr Vogels

Raised on: 11 November 2008

REPLY:

The government recognises the concerns of regional venues in relation to the post-2012 venue operator structure.

On 11 December 2008, the government released an Explanatory Statement outlining its considered position for gaming machine arrangements in the *Gambling Regulation Further Amendment (Licensing) Bill Exposure Draft*, and invited comment in relation to the gaming machine arrangements outlined in the *Exposure Draft Bill*. The submission process closed on 13 January 2009.

The feedback in the submissions received during 2008 from stakeholders and the community was reviewed and considered in development of legislation for the post 2012 gaming environment that is currently before Parliament.

The government has committed to continuing the even split of 27,500 gaming machines between clubs and hotels with at least 20 per cent in country Victoria. This will help to ensure that clubs and hotels in regional Victoria will continue to be able to access gaming machines beyond 2012.

Gaming: licences

Raised with: Gaming

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 12 November 2008

REPLY:

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Youth: homelessness

Raised with: Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs

Raised by: Mr Finn

Raised on: 2 December 2008

REPLY:

Thank you for your question regarding youth homelessness in Melbourne's western suburbs.

The Victorian Government is dedicated to reducing homelessness in Victoria.

Creating Connections is the recently announced Youth Homelessness Action Plan Stage 2 (YHAP2). Creating Connections contains a range of innovative practice approaches and new service models based on increased understandings of the diversity of young people's circumstances and their needs. Services will improve responses to

stabilise young people's lives through connection to family, significant others and their community, allowing young people to learn new skills and take up new opportunities, whilst providing a range of different housing and support options. From January 2007 to June 2008 *Creating Connections* funding has been used to assist in excess of 2,300 young people.

Youth Futures, a new program within the broader *Creating Connections* initiative, was designed to provide intensive support to 200 young people, including life skills and competencies to establish and maintain housing. Funding will link a further 350 young people with the private rental market to access housing, reconnect with employment and education and training so that they are able to make the transition to independent living.

You have raised specific concerns about the capacity of the homelessness service system to support young people in the western suburbs and have proposed allocation of funding to a new crisis service for young people in the Western suburbs. Currently twelve services are funded across the western suburbs to provide responses specifically to young people who are homeless. Generalist homelessness and family violence services in the catchment also provide responses to young people who are homeless.

A new project is currently under way in Melton where a call for submissions has been advertised for funded agencies to provide an ongoing model of accommodation and support that provides housing and education, employment & training for people under 25 years of age.

This program is targeted at young people who are assessed as being able to benefit from moving from crisis housing or intensive support services to more independent housing that provides additional levels of support, life skills training and a focus on participation in education, employment and training.

The model will consist of 12 individual units on the one site, with a number of common areas for food preparation and training purposes. This model will assist young people to achieve greater stability in their lives before moving onto more permanent accommodation arrangements.

Thank you for your inquiry.

Churchill Park Golf Club: future

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 2 December 2008

REPLY:

The rent proposed by Parks Victoria, is a market-based rent that has been significantly discounted due to the club's community-use. The club's original lease and 'original Act' (being the *Narree Worrان Land Act 1969* ["*NWLA 1969*"]) both clearly provide for the club to develop the land for a golf course and that all improvements made to the golf course revert to and belong to the Committee of Management (now Parks Victoria) at the expiry of the original lease term.

The policy regarding reversion of improvements to the Crown following expiry of Crown leases is long established in law and is a recognised cost of leasing and constructing upon crown land.

In late 2005 Parks Victoria obtained an independent market valuation for the golf course through the Valuer General's office. In recognition of the fact that the golf course is open to the general public upon the payment of green fees and that the club has a recognised youth program which promotes and encourages participation in the game of golf by young people, Parks Victoria proposed that the community-use valuation rental of \$60,000 per annum plus GST apply. This compares to a commercial rental valuation of \$180,000 per annum.

As you are aware the club is a reasonable sized operation, employing twenty staff and having annual revenues exceeding \$1 million. Parks Victoria's valuer had particular regard to the potential financial performance of the

facility in relation to financial viability in making its valuation. The discounted rental proposed is only 5% of the club's turnover.

Parks Victoria's recent final offer stands at \$60,000 pa plus GST, despite the considerable upward pressures on the rental market in recent years since the previous market valuation was obtained.

Parks Victoria now welcomes immediate discussions with the club regarding the proposed rent and other matters.

Gaming: licences

Raised with: Gaming

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 4 December 2008

REPLY:

The government recognises the concerns of regional venues in relation to the post-2012 venue operator structure.

On 11 December 2008, the government released an Explanatory Statement outlining its considered position for gaming machine arrangements in the *Gambling Regulation Further Amendment (Licensing) Bill Exposure Draft*, and invited comment in relation to the gaming machine arrangements outlined in the *Exposure Draft Bill*. The submission process closed on 13 January 2009.

The feedback in the submissions received during 2008 from stakeholders and the community was reviewed and considered in development of legislation for the post 2012 gaming environment that is currently before Parliament.

The government has committed to continuing the even split of 27,500 gaming machines between clubs and hotels with at least 20 per cent in country Victoria. This will help to ensure that clubs and hotels in regional Victoria will continue to be able to access gaming machines beyond 2012.

Tourism: Mitchell shire

Raised with: Tourism and Major Events

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 3 February 2009

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the matter of the Mitchell Shire and its place in the Government's *Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009-2012*.

The *Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009-2012* was developed after extensive consultation with the regional tourism industry, local government and other state government agencies. All Shires were invited to attend sessions and provide feedback during the development of the Plan.

The Plan addresses various cross-regional issues and identifies key priorities for each of Victoria's tourism regions. The priorities identified were industry led and were considered the most likely to stimulate tourism in the region. The Mitchell Shire is one of six councils that comprise the Daylesford Macedon Ranges region.

A key initiative for the Daylesford Macedon Ranges region is the establishment of a new Regional Tourism Board to set the overarching strategic vision for the region. The Regional Tourism Board will play a critical role in creating a platform for tourism growth and consolidating the strategic direction of the tourism industry.

I can also advise you that Mitchell Shire will also be eligible to access funding of \$31,000, which was provided to the Daylesford Macedon Ranges region to address skills shortages in the tourism industry through specialist training activities and tourism audits.

I also note that Tourism Victoria, together with the Mitchell Shire, is currently undertaking an independent tourism assessment of the area. Tourism Victoria committed \$20,000 to commission the assessment which was matched by a number of partners: Mitchell Shire, to the City of Greater Shepparton, Murrindindi Shire and Nillumbik Shire. The assessment commenced in late January 2009 and is examining the level of tourism product, its position within the region as well as ways to leverage Tourism Victoria and industry activities.

I am confident the *Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009-2012* will assist in strengthening the tourism position of Mitchell Shire and improve the opportunities for tourism operators across their municipality.

Finally, I can advise you that, as Tourism Minister, but also in other roles, I have travelled very extensively within Victoria and I will continue to do so into the future.

Lake Purrumbete: boat ramp

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Vogels

Raised on: 5 February 2009

REPLY:

Works to provide for temporary boat launching access to the waters of Lake Purrumbete have now commenced and are scheduled for completion by the end of February.

The Government fully understands the importance of Lake Purrumbete to individual anglers, to the community and to the local and regional economy.

The solution being implemented has been well received by the community. The boat launching access is less than 400 m to the north of the caravan park and is ideal for launching boats because of the presence of a natural rock platform that will continue to provide access even if water in the lake continues to recede. The location will also not compromise on natural or cultural values.

The Government stocked a total of 25,000 brown trout and 20,000 rainbow trout in 2008 and will be stocking a similar number in 2009.

Getting anglers back on to Lake Purrumbete has been a great example of local fishers and staff from government agencies working together to get a practical outcome for the community.