

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

**23, 24 and 25 June 2009**

**(Extract from book 9)**

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			Vogels, Mr John Adrian	Western Victoria	LP

<sup>1</sup> Appointed 3 February 2009

<sup>2</sup> Resigned 9 January 2009



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**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Tuesday, 23 June 2009**

**Rail: Gippsland line**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr P. Davis**

**Raised on: 5 February 2008**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 5 February 2008 regarding V/Line train services on the Gippsland line.

Services on the Gippsland line returned to normal on 29 January 2008 and any delays after this date have been due to causes not related to the Connex signalling problem.

V/Line management travelled on the altered train/coach services during the disrupted period and spoke to many customers. Overall, the feedback they received about how the disruption was handled was positive, with V/Line staff being available at the key interchange point (Pakenham). V/Line provided printed information to passengers about the changes.

Connex worked closely with V/Line, Public Transport Safety Victoria, the Department of Infrastructure and the signal manufacturer to enable V/Line trains to return to the Pakenham line. While works on the Pakenham line will continue in the coming weeks and some minor disruptions may be required, V/Line customers will experience quicker journeys. Passengers will no longer need to switch trains at Pakenham, eliminating the added average 45 minute journey time.

It is acknowledged that this has been a major inconvenience to Gippsland passengers, but the measures put in place were for safety reasons.

V/Line has offered compensation in the form of a free return ticket for each of the months of December 2007 and January 2008 to periodical ticket-holders.

**Disability services: taxis**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mrs Kronberg**

**Raised on: 7 February 2008**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 7 February 2008 regarding wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs).

The Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) is committed to improving the service standards of the WAT industry and it is disappointing to hear that your constituent did not receive the required and expected level of service.

The VTD raised these service failures with 13Cabs, the taxi network service provider. As a result, 13Cabs contacted Joel to apologise and offered to cover the cost of his next two taxi trips.

Taxis are an essential link in the public transport system particularly for people dependent on them for personal mobility. In recognition of this, the Government has introduced taxi accreditation to facilitate the provision of safe, reliable and efficient taxi services that meet community expectations. Accreditation will require taxi licence holders, operators and taxi depots to demonstrate that they comply with a wide range of minimum business and service standards as well as probity and professionalism requirements.

The VTD has been working with a number of disability groups, people in wheelchairs and WAT industry representatives over the past 12 months to identify and develop actions to improve the current level of service provided. In particular, the Government is exploring options that will ensure the WAT fleet gives priority to people in wheelchairs. These options include:

- introduction of restrictions at Melbourne Airport to minimise WAT attendance, as the airport is a location where many drivers congregate;
- a register of WATs, so that taxi contact details can be dispersed through local council areas; and
- a structured compliance regime that educates the industry on its legal requirements regarding passengers with a disability and passengers in wheelchairs.

I am confident that the range of initiatives presently being considered or under way will significantly improve the WAT service to people in wheelchairs.

### **Rail: Wendouree station**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Vogels

**Raised on:** 13 March 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Assembly on 13 March 2008 regarding the construction of Wendouree Railway Station.

I am pleased to advise that a contract was awarded to Cut & Fill Pty Ltd in May 2008 for the construction of this project, with works expected to be completed by mid 2009.

This project is part of the Government's commitment to providing Ballarat residents with modern, comfortable, reliable and convenient transport services. The new station will provide modern facilities and good car parking, which will help to cater for the significant increase in the number of passengers using V/Line's Ballarat to Melbourne services.

The works include a new station building, platform, 200 space car park (with provision for up to 500 spaces in the long-term), bus and taxi bays, and bike racks and lockers.

### **Rail: Frankston line**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 10 April 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 10 April 2008 regarding Frankston line train services.

The continuing climate of high fuel prices combined with significant population growth in Melbourne has led to unprecedented and continued patronage growth across the entire metropolitan rail network. Melbourne's train system is now operating significantly more train kilometres and is carrying more passengers than ever before.

In 2007, punctuality and reliability was affected by brake defects identified on Siemens trains. Consequently, a number of trains were removed from service, which caused cancellations and impacted on train punctuality. Brake defects have since been rectified.

The Government, along with Connex, recently announced a three-stage plan to improve the train timetable by providing more services and better reliability. This is aimed at ensuring the train network performs at its peak prior to the arrival of 18 new trains (commencing in late-2009) and implementation of a significant infrastructure program to increase the capacity of the train network.

Stage one of the plan was implemented on 27 April 2008 and included 105 additional train services per week. This timetable focuses on those lines that need immediate relief from crowding. For the Frankston line, two afternoon peak weekday Mordialloc services have been extended to Frankston.

Stage two, to be delivered in November 2008, will include at least 95 additional weekly train services and significant changes in the way trains operate on the network.

Stage three, to be delivered by mid-2009, will provide further timetable improvements with a focus on improving off-peak frequency. For more information visit the Metlink website at <[www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au](http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au)>.

Other improvements to public transport services in the Bentleigh region have also been implemented. The hours of service for bus Routes 623, 767, 701, 822, 631 and 811 have been extended, and the new SmartBus Route 900 has been introduced, providing services between Rowville and Caulfield.

**Rail: station bicycle lockers**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 10 April 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter raised by you during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 10 April 2008 regarding bicycle lockers at railway stations.

Your support of the government's initiative to build new bicycle storage lockers at metropolitan railway stations is appreciated.

In addition to this initiative an audit of existing bicycle lockers in use across the Connex and V/Line networks is to be undertaken to determine usage rates and demand for bicycle storage.

Once the prototype bicycle cage installation and audit have been completed, the Department of Transport (DOT) will consider which metropolitan and regional locations will be allocated new bicycle storage facilities.

While bicycle lockers may be preferred by some cyclists, their benefit is limited by the fact that once hired to an individual they cannot be used at other times. Bicycle cages afford greater flexibility while still providing the level of secure storage required by cyclists.

If you require further information, please contact Laurie Ziros of DOT on telephone (03) 9655 6681.

### **Rail: Shepparton line**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 10 April 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 10 April 2008 requesting a review of the existing weekday timetable on the North East corridor.

The Department of Transport has advised me that the 6:33 p.m. train service from Melbourne to Shepparton operated 60 weekday trips between 1 January and 31 March 2008. Of the 60 trips, the service was delayed twice by locomotive mechanical faults. The most frequent cause of delays to the 6:33 p.m. service was the heat speed restrictions imposed for safety reasons and the late running of suburban and freight services which blocked the path of the V/Line train out of Melbourne. At no stage between 1 January and 31 March 2008, was a locomotive shortage recorded as the reason for the delayed departure of the 6.33 p.m. service to Shepparton.

On 27 March 2008 the locomotive allocated to the 6:33 p.m. Shepparton service was found to have a faulty data logger which required repairs prior to departure. Unfortunately these repairs resulted in a 66 minute delay in the departure of the service.

V/Line trains travelling to Seymour operate express to Broadmeadows and share suburban tracks with metropolitan Craigieburn services. Your constituent's suggestion that the 6:13 p.m. express should be followed with a 6:20 p.m. express would require the removal of suburban services in the busy evening peak in Melbourne.

V/Line reviews its timetables twice yearly in order to address operational issues and adjust services to better meet the needs of the community. The concerns raised will be forwarded to V/Line for consideration in the next timetable review scheduled for October 2008.

### **Rail: Oakleigh**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 15 April 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 15 April 2008 regarding train services on the Pakenham and Oakleigh lines.

The continuing climate of high fuel prices combined with significant population growth in Melbourne has led to unprecedented and continued patronage growth across the entire metropolitan rail network. Melbourne's train system is now operating significantly more train kilometres and is carrying more passengers than ever before.

The Government, along with Connex, recently announced a three-stage plan to improve the train timetable by providing more services and better reliability. These measures are aimed at ensuring that the train network performs at its peak prior to the arrival of 18 new trains (commencing in late-2009) and implementation of a significant infrastructure program to increase the capacity of the train network.

Stage one of the plan was implemented on 27 April 2008 and included 105 additional train services per week. For the Pakenham line, the timetable now includes the following extra train services: two morning, two afternoon shoulder peak, and one afternoon peak, each weekday. The train services for the Oakleigh area includes an additional morning peak train from Oakleigh Railway Station to Flinders Street Station, as well as three afternoon peak trains to Dandenong or Pakenham Stations. For more information visit the Metlink website at <[www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au](http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au)>.

The new timetable includes the provision of six-carriage trains on all lines during the weekday inter-peak periods. Additionally, Connex introduced six-carriage trains on weekends on all lines, except the Upfield line, to meet the increase in demand for public transport on weekends. For more information visit the Metlink website at <[www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au](http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au)>.

Stage two, to be delivered in November 2008, will include at least 95 additional weekly train services and significant changes on some lines in the way trains operate on the network. For the Pakenham train line, there will be an increase in evening service frequency from the current 60 minute service to 30 minute services, seven days per week.

Stage three, to be delivered by mid-2009, will provide further timetable improvements with a focus on improving off-peak frequency.

To ensure that trains operate under optimum conditions, it is necessary to remove them from service for maintenance to rectify any faults which may become a safety concern. This practice does result in some service cancellations; however it is required to ensure passenger safety.

As part of the Government's *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* program released in May 2006, the Department of Transport (DOT) is currently undertaking bus service reviews of the Melbourne bus network to deliver new and improved bus services. Improving service levels on bus routes in the Oakleigh area will be considered under the Manningham/Whitehorse/Monash review which has already commenced.

The Government has committed to build a third rail track between Caulfield and Dandenong which will allow additional train services to be provided to address growth in the medium, and long term. The 2007–08 State Budget allocated \$35.1 million for stage one of this project which will see the design and construction of new train stabling to house six trains and the upgrading of Cranbourne Railway Station.

Stage two of the project is the \$153 million Westall Rail Upgrade, which involves enabling 'short starter services' to start and finish their journeys at Westall Railway Station. This will ease crowding and reduce delays for the entire corridor as passengers will be more evenly distributed over services commencing from Cranbourne, Pakenham, Dandenong and Westall Railway Stations.

### **Rail: Brighton level crossing**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 17 April 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 17 April 2008, regarding the New Street Railway Crossing.

Due to an incident at the New Street railway crossing in Brighton on 10 September 2007, the rail operator decided that it would not be safe to continue operating the crossing in its current configuration.

Numerous incidents or near misses prior to this at the crossing could have had more serious implications. For example, on the occasions where trains have struck the gates, as occurred last September, the gates in turn could have struck vehicles or pedestrians had any been using the crossing at the time.

This list of incidents was presented to Bayside City Council in a report by an independent consultant:

- 21 March 2007-Gate keeper near miss by vehicle-while closing the gates, the gate keeper was almost struck by a vehicle;
- 19 March 2007-Gate keeper near miss by vehicle-while closing the gates, the gate keeper was almost struck by a vehicle;
- 11 March 2007-Gate keeper near miss by vehicle-while closing the gates, the gate keeper was almost struck by a vehicle;
- 21 February 2006-Train strikes gates-vehicle near miss;
- 18 February 2004-Gate keeper personal injury-gate keeper assaulted by motorist;
- 16 October 2003-Train strikes gates;
- 29 September 1998-Train near strike with gates;
- 17 February 1996-Train near strike with gates; and
- 25 November 1994-Train strikes gates.

The *Rail Safety Act 2006* requires Connex, as the rail infrastructure manager, to eliminate risk or, if that cannot be achieved, reduce risk as far as is reasonably practicable. In addition, Connex is obliged under occupational health and safety legislation to provide a safe working environment for the gatekeepers and more broadly for the public.

Hand operated gates are more prone to human error and therefore increase the risk of an accident. Furthermore, hand operated gates as configured at Brighton do not comply with the national railway standard AS1742.7 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Connex is continuing to investigate a reliable interlocking of the gates with the signalling system. To date, no solution has been found. Connex is also responding directly to Council on the Report suggestion of a further investigation. Traffic management in the vicinity of the crossing is a matter for Bayside City Council to consider and address.

The issues at the crossing are both serious and complex. It is the Government's hope that Connex and the Council will be able to agree on a way forward that ensures the safest possible outcome.

### **Rail: Seymour line**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mrs Petrovich**

**Raised on: 17 April 2008**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 17 April 2008 regarding train services to Seymour.

On 30 May 2008, the Government announced a historic agreement with Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) for the upgrade of the existing track from broad gauge to standard gauge in the north east corridor between

Seymour and Albury. This historic agreement will see an investment of over \$500 million in the corridor which will benefit both passenger and freight services in the corridor. This upgrade will greatly improve train reliability and address the majority of issues that have been raised by passengers in the north east.

V/Line has investigated the incidents you raised and is unable to verify any signal failure at Craigieburn or any broken down train between Broadmeadows and Craigieburn on 25 February 2008. You also mentioned that the 4:32 p.m. train from Southern Cross Station was delayed 15 minutes as a result of a defective locomotive. V/Line has advised that this service ran one minute late as a result of yard congestion.

Connex was also requested to investigate whether any power failure occurred at Broadmeadows on 3 March 2008. Both Connex and V/Line advise that there was no such incidence reported on this date.

### **Rail: V/Line coach services**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 7 May 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 7 May 2008 and your subsequent letter of 8 May 2008 regarding V/Line coach service booking issues at Strathmerton on Sunday 27 April 2008.

The V/Line coach service operating through Strathmerton, which originates from Griffith and connects with the train at Shepparton, is a non reserved service. On long weekends such as the Anzac weekend, the service is usually highly patronised and V/Line has processes in place to provide additional service capacity as required. Unfortunately, on Sunday 27 April, when V/Line became aware that an additional coach was required between Cobram and Shepparton, there were no appropriate coaches available in the area. As an alternative taxis were arranged from Cobram.

An additional coach was also arranged to operate from Shepparton to Melbourne departing Shepparton at 6:15 p.m. for those passengers delayed in their train connection at Shepparton. I am advised by V/Line, that the Griffith to Shepparton service continued to Shepparton and made the timetabled train connection to Melbourne.

Unfortunately in this instance it appears that the taxis did not pick up all passengers between Cobram and Shepparton.

The Department of Transport recently met with V/Line to discuss options to ensure that in future this situation does not occur again. One option being investigated includes the conversion of this service to a reserved or "booked" service and for "back up" coaches to be arranged in advance, particularly on long weekends.

V/Line has experienced unprecedented patronage growth of 31.7 per cent during 2006/07 since the introduction of additional services in September 2006. This trend has continued during 2008 with March, April and May recording passenger numbers of around one million passengers per month (a 60 year high).

Under the Government's *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* program, an additional investment of \$350 million has been committed to introduce newer and more modern trains into V/Line's train fleet. As part of this commitment, the Government has already taken delivery of two new VLocity train sets (delivered in late 2007) and entered into a contract for the delivery of 22 intermediate carriages. The 22 intermediate carriages will provide an additional 1,672 seats for regional passengers. The first of these carriages is scheduled to enter revenue service by the end of July 2008 and will provide V/Line with the ability to support the heavily patronised services.

**Buses: Yarra Ranges**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 8 May 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter that you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 8 May 2008 regarding improvements to bus services in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

The Government's vision for meeting the transport needs of all Victorians—*Meeting Our Transport Challenges*—was released in May 2006. It outlines an action blueprint for shaping Victoria's transport system into the future. The blueprint is supported by a \$10.5 billion funding package, the largest single transport investment program in Victoria's history. Two-thirds of the funding is directed towards public transport initiatives aimed at delivering more services, better safety and improved reliability. It includes a commitment of \$1.4 billion for new and upgraded bus services.

The Department of Transport (DOT) is undertaking area reviews of the Melbourne bus network over the next few years to deliver these new and improved services. The provision of improved bus services in the Shire of Yarra Ranges will be considered when the bus service review for this area is undertaken later this year.

**Rail: Frankston line**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 27 May 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 27 May 2008 regarding railway level crossings on the Frankston line.

The Government has been very active in the area of level crossing safety and has utilised public education programs and engineering treatments, like road alignments and rail crossing control upgrades, to address accident risk factors.

All public railway road and pedestrian crossings in the State have been subjected to an Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM) risk assessment field survey. ALCAM was endorsed for national adoption by the Australian Transport Council in 2003. Victorian ALCAM field surveys concluded in December 2007.

The road crossings along the Nepean Highway to which you refer are part of the 180 crossings on the Connex electrified network, and with the exception of one (New Street level crossing at Brighton), have the optimum level of railway safety controls—flashing lights, bells and half boom barriers. All of these crossings have been assessed under ALCAM, along with every other road and pedestrian public at-grade railway crossing in the State.

The *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* program has provided a \$208.7 million boost for railway crossing safety with the Government accelerating the Level Crossing Upgrade Program. This is in addition to the existing ongoing capital works funding for the State railway crossing upgrade program.

The Victorian Railway Crossing Safety Steering Committee (VRCSSC) is currently analysing, evaluating, and quantifying the results of the ALCAM field surveys, for inclusion into the draft 'Strategy to Improve Railway Crossing Safety in Victoria' plan.

On 15 February 2008 every road and rail authority in Victoria was notified of the results of the ALCAM field surveys, together with any issues or non-compliance with Australian Standard requirements for road and rail warning signs and road markings, identified by the field surveys.

The *Rail Safety Act 2006* (as amended), requires those road and rail authorities responsible for road/rail safety interfaces to liaise on determining the most appropriate risk mitigation treatment to ensure that all such interface risks at every road/rail interface are either eliminated or, where that is not possible, reduced as far as is reasonably practicable.

The *Transport Legislation Amendment Act 2007* passed by Parliament late last year requires these agencies to develop Safety Interface Agreements for every such interface. This requirement becomes law on 1 July 2010, pursuant to the requirements of the 'National (Model) Rail Safety Bill 2006', which makes the above consistent throughout Australia as of that date.

The following provides you with some other initiatives the Government has taken to reduce rail crossing accident risks.

During the last two financial years the Rail Level Crossing Upgrade Program has upgraded in excess of 150 level crossings to active protection. This is more than at any other time in Victoria's history. Other crossings have been grade separated.

In June 2007, the Government announced the investment of an additional \$33.2 million to improve safety at level crossings. This Level Crossing Safety Package includes:

- installation of rumble strips at 200 level crossings in regional Victoria;
- 53 automated advanced warning signs to be installed at 26 level crossings on highways and a further 27 high road traffic volume sites across the State; and
- the *Don't Risk It* public education program with a key message to remind Victorians to obey railway crossing signals at all times via the tag line '*Don't Risk It*'.

As part of the Level Crossing Safety Package the Government has toughened penalties for level crossing infringements. The new penalties for drivers who disobey railway level crossing signals have risen from a \$177 fine and three demerit points to \$430 and four demerit points. In addition, new offences have been introduced for speeding to beat a train, crossing tracks when lights and bells are operating, or weaving in between boom gates that are already down. These offences carry a fine of \$3,304, four demerit points and an automatic three months licence suspension.

### **Rail: Berwick station**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 29 May 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 29 May 2008, regarding car parking at Berwick Railway Station.

The Government's strategy for meeting the transport needs of all Victorians, *Meeting Our Transport Challenges*, includes a commitment of \$90 million to provide 5000 additional car parking spaces on the metropolitan and regional rail networks by 2016.

Residents of south-east Melbourne are amongst the major beneficiaries of the Park and Ride Program, with more than 400 additional car parking spaces delivered at Beaconsfield, Cranbourne, Drouin, Garfield and Pakenham in

the last year. The 2007/08 and 2008/09 State Budgets allocated further funding to car parks in this region, with a further 400 parking spaces to be provided at Hallam and Berwick Railway Stations.

In total, the 2008/09 State Budget committed \$29.2 million to deliver 1,700 sealed car parking spaces at ten metropolitan stations. Delivery of these car park upgrades will occur progressively over the next four years. The actual timing for construction of these projects has not yet been determined.

The Government also recognises the importance of Clyde Road in the context of an overall strategic plan to reduce traffic congestion in Berwick, particularly in the vicinity of the railway level crossing, Monash University and Chisholm TAFE. Improvements to this section of Clyde Road, including improved pedestrian crossings, will be considered against other priorities for upgrading outer metropolitan arterial roads.

### **Rail: Frankston line**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr Rich-Phillips**

**Raised on: 29 May 2008**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 29 May 2008 regarding train services on the Frankston train line.

The Government takes the performance of the public transport operators seriously and has systems in place to ensure that train service cancellations are avoided.

Connex, which operates Melbourne's metropolitan train network, has punctuality targets based on the proportion of services which arrive at destinations not more than 59 seconds before, or not later than five minutes and 59 seconds after, the scheduled time in the timetable. These are internationally accepted standards of performance measurement in relation to trains arriving within the scheduled time.

Connex is obligated to meet the above targets. Under the Franchise Agreements with the Government, train and tram operators incur penalties for poor service delivery. The Operational Performance Regime (OPR) is used to monitor performance against targets and in calculating bonus or payment penalties.

Under the OPR, any delay of one minute or more results in a reduced payment to the operator. If Connex's monthly performance falls below its agreed threshold for service reliability or on-time performance, the OPR is also used to trigger specific contractual remedies and to determine when periodic ticket-holders are entitled to compensation for poor service delivery.

The continuing climate of high fuel prices combined with significant population growth in Melbourne has led to unprecedented and continued patronage growth across the entire metropolitan rail network. Melbourne's train system is now operating significantly more train kilometres and is carrying more passengers than ever before.

The availability of rolling stock had been influenced by maintenance and refurbishment issues which affected train services on the Frankston line. Connex has addressed these issues resulting in better on-time performance and availability.

The franchises held by Connex and Yarra Trams are due to expire in November 2009. The Government recently called for expressions of interest from potential franchisees and soon will embark on the process of inviting tenders. It is expected that the re-franchising process will be completed in mid-2009 and competition among a number of bidders will draw out the latest technologies and experiences, ultimately benefiting all Victorian public transport users.

**Rail: Maryborough service**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Vogels

**Raised on:** 10 June 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 10 June 2008 regarding rail services to Maryborough.

The Kennett Government's decision to close the Mildura line has had a significant negative impact on many regional communities, including Maryborough.

On 16 April 2007, the Government bought back the regional rail network from Pacific National for \$133.8 million which will enable the Government to better manage and invest in the network to ensure the viability of regional rail freight services. It will also enable the Government to undertake a full operational review and safety assessment of the network.

The first project to occur following the buy-back is to upgrade the Mildura rail line to an 80 km/h rail freight standard. An allocation of \$73 million has been made for this project. This upgrade will improve the quality of rail freight services on the line, one of the busiest freight corridors in Victoria.

In addition to upgrading the Mildura rail corridor, the Government has provided \$25 million to improve the rail freight network and will continue to provide ongoing funding for the passenger rail network.

Work on the \$73 million upgrade of the Mildura rail freight corridor is progressing well and moving north towards Maryborough with thousands of new sleepers already laid.

The coach services via Castlemaine and Ballarat Railway Stations are co-ordinated with rail services to either Melbourne or Bendigo. Generally, ten minutes is allowed for transfers. Connections between modes are reviewed as part of each V/Line timetable adjustment.

**Public transport: early bird fares**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Atkinson

**Raised on:** 12 June 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 12 June 2008 regarding Early Bird tickets on bus services.

The Early Bird tickets were introduced to encourage travel on metropolitan (electrified) train services at times when spare capacity is available during off-peak times, that is, before 7.00 a.m. on weekdays.

This initiative is relatively new and the implications of it being extended to buses will be considered when more data is available.

**Rail: travel passes**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by: Mr Leane**

**Raised on: 12 June 2008**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 12 June 2008 regarding the eligibility of Mr Angelos Papagelis for a public transport travel pass.

It is most regrettable that Mr Papagelis was so seriously injured during the course of his work.

I wrote to Mr Papagelis's daughter last year about this matter following her representations to me. An offer was made to Ms Malligeorgos to provide her father with a Metcard for one year, but I understand it was not taken up.

Since then the Department of Transport has again considered the matter and I am pleased to advise that a decision has been made to grant Mr Papagelis a life time entitlement to free travel.

Steve Vosti on telephone (03) 9619 4805 at the Central Pass Office would be pleased to make arrangements with Ms Malligeorgos to enable Mr Papagelis to receive the pass.

**Public transport: concession cards**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Ms Lovell**

**Raised on: 12 June 2008**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 12 June 2008 regarding public transport for concession card holders.

Victoria has the most generous concession initiatives in Australia. On 1 January 2005, the Victorian Government extended transport concessions to all holders of Victorian Health Care Cards. This initiative was costed at \$78 million over four years.

Victoria and Western Australia are the only Australian states to accept health care cards for concession travel on public transport.

Access to concession travel on V/Line using health care cards, including families who qualify for the Federal Government's exceptional circumstances drought assistance, is provided only to the card holder, the first name listed on the card. Other people listed on the card are not entitled to concession travel unless they qualify in their own right, for example, seniors or students under 15 years of age.

The Government does not plan to change the current policy in relation to travel concessions.

**Public transport: Prahran electorate**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mrs Coote**

**Raised on: 25 June 2008**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 25 June 2008 regarding public transport services in Prahran.

The continuing climate of high fuel prices combined with significant population growth in Melbourne has led to unprecedented and continued patronage growth across the entire metropolitan rail network. Melbourne's train system is now operating significantly more train kilometres and is carrying more passengers than ever before.

The Government, in partnership with Connex, has been working to improve the overall performance of the rail network. Since the introduction of the new timetable in April 2008, much progress has been made to improve Melbourne's train services. In particular, cancellations on the train network have been reduced in recent months with service delivery now consistently above 99 per cent, which reduces the frequency of crowding due to cancellations.

The Government takes the performance of the public transport operators seriously and has systems in place to ensure that train service cancellations are avoided. Connex, which operates Melbourne's metropolitan train network, has punctuality targets based on the proportion of services which arrive at destinations not more than 59 seconds before, or not later than five minutes and 59 seconds after, the scheduled time in the timetable. These are internationally accepted standards of performance measurement in relation to trains arriving within the scheduled time.

Connex is obligated to meet these targets. Under the Franchise Agreements with the Government, train and tram operators incur penalties for poor service delivery. The Operational Performance Regime (OPR) is used to monitor performance against targets and for calculating bonus or payment penalties.

If a particular advertised train service is cancelled more than three times in a week (and is not replaced by a bus service), all eligible weekly and periodical ticket-holders who validated their ticket within half an hour of these services on each of the relevant days will receive a free daily ticket for the zone/s specified on their ticket.

All compensation claims must be made in writing to: The Customer Compensation Department, Connex Melbourne Pty Ltd, GPO Box 5092BB, Melbourne, 3001. Compensation claim forms can be obtained from any Premium Station (Customer Service staff at station from first to last train, seven days a week).

Connex displays performance data for each monthly period at all stations and on its website at <[www.connexmelbourne.com.au](http://www.connexmelbourne.com.au)> and also makes the information available on the Metlink website at <[www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au](http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au)> within 10 days of the end of each month.

While it would be desirable to provide additional services on the Sandringham line, it has been necessary to allocate additional resources to those rail corridors which are currently experiencing higher levels of crowding.

In November 2008, a new timetable will be introduced that will include additional weekly train services and will incorporate a significant change to the way trains operate on some lines on the network. A number of initiatives will also be implemented over the coming six months aimed at supporting the timetable and improving the reliability of the network and addressing passenger congestion. These projects will further assist in reducing the number of cancellations, service delays and resultant passenger crowding being experienced across the network.

In addition, the Government is to implement other significant initiatives. These include the introduction of 18 new trains, due to commence operation in late 2009, the continued rollout of a significant infrastructure program to increase the capacity of the train network, and on-going improvements to the timetable including a focus on off-peak frequency.

These programs and projects are aimed at creating a safe, reliable, accessible train network which will benefit the economy, the environment and deliver a fairer Victoria.

No seats have been removed from trains operating to Geelong, nor are there plans to do so. On 31 July 2008, the Premier announced the purchase of nine new three-carriage VLocity train sets and additional carriages for the current fleet to increase space on trains travelling on the State's busiest regional routes. The new carriages will add

more than 2000 extra seats across the regional rail network and will be progressively delivered from August 2008 to mid-2012. This order is in addition to the 22 carriages already under construction and brings the Government's total commitment to 50 carriages and nearly 3800 seats.

### **Rail: Lindenow South level crossing**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr P. Davis

**Raised on:** 9 September 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 9 September 2008 regarding the Lindenow South level crossing.

The East Gippsland Shire Council is responsible for the provision of a pedestrian crossing or pedestrian infrastructure leading to or from the Lindenow South railway crossing. Council will be required to fund the works and submit its pedestrian crossing proposal to VicTrack.

The Department of Transport would be happy to provide advice to both the school and the Council concerning railway crossing safety and the new crossing proposal.

The crossing at Lindenow Road, Lindenow South has been assessed utilising the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM). The crossing will be upgraded in accordance with the priority list developed from the ALCAM assessment.

### **Rail: Geelong car parks**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr Koch

**Raised on:** 11 September 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 11 September 2008 regarding car parking at railway stations in Geelong.

The *Victorian Transport Plan* includes funding of \$30 million to upgrade railway stations across the State, with expanded car parking capacity, improved customer amenities, walkways, drop-off areas, taxi zones and improved bus-to-train connections. Security cameras, improved toilets and enclosed waiting areas, better signage and lighting and improved facilities for passengers with disabilities will make taking public transport more comfortable, safer and simpler. Upgrades will begin next year at locations including Marshall, South Geelong and Bairnsdale, followed by Clarkefield and Riddells Creek.

The Lara Parkway (park and ride facility) was completed in 2007, and a complementary \$700,000 upgrade of Lara Railway Station to provide structural and aesthetic improvements is currently under way.

Since construction of the Lara Parkway, regional rail patronage has grown substantially, with patronage along the Geelong Corridor alone growing by an unprecedented 52 per cent in the past two years. This growth has resulted in significant pressure for car parking across the network.

The Department of Transport (DOT) is working closely with V/Line to review facilities at all stations, particularly Geelong, South Geelong and Marshall Railway Stations, to determine land availability, and the level and type of works needed to accommodate the increased demand.

### **Buses: Buchan**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr P. Davis

**Raised on:** 15 October 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 15 October 2008 regarding the Buchan Bus service.

The Government recognises the importance of providing public transport services in regional areas and provides a subsidy that enables the operator of the Buchan Bus Service, Buchan Bus 'n' Freight (BBNF), to operate a two day a week service from Gelantipy to Bairnsdale.

The Buchan bus service operated three days a week during a long trial and establishment period. The review of the trial by the Department of Transport (DOT) and BBNF identified Monday as being the least popular day of operation, with fewer than three passengers travelling, on average, per trip. DOT consulted with the operator, users of the service and local stakeholders before altering the service to two days a week.

DOT will continue to provide subsidy support for the two day a week service, however BBNF is free to make its own commercial decision and provide a service on Monday if it so decides.

It is difficult to offer high frequency public transport services in remote areas as low patronage means they are difficult to sustain. Nevertheless, the Government recognises that BBNF helps to address social isolation in the area by providing access to local centres and bringing freight and supplies into the region. The Government has committed to providing this twice weekly service until 2010.

### **Rail: seniors travel**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr P. Davis

**Raised on:** 28 October 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the Adjournment Debate of 28 October 2008 and your question to the Minister for Senior Victorians regarding free public transport during the Victorian Seniors Festival 2008. I am replying as the responsible Minister.

It has been a longstanding practice that free travel on V/Line services is not offered on a Monday or a Friday because of the high demand for services on those days. This information was provided in the Seniors Festival Program, circulated widely in the lead-up to the festival.

### **Rail: Bentleigh electorate**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 13 November 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 13 November 2008 regarding public transport fare increases.

On 1 January 2009, most public transport fares will increase in line with the Consumer Price Increase (CPI), which is five per cent. The annual changes to fares for tram, train and bus travel in Victoria are in line with increases to other goods and services.

Some fares will increase by less than CPI. For example, the 5xWeekend Daily has increased by just 10 cents per day, up from \$2.90 per day to \$3.00 per day for unlimited travel on Saturdays and Sundays in metropolitan Melbourne. This is excellent value for money.

The removal of some seats from train carriages will improve passenger flow and reduce dwell times at station platforms. Together with additional hand straps throughout the carriage, the open area provided will encourage passengers to move away from doorways. The hand straps will make the journey more comfortable for passengers standing in peak periods. Wheelchairs and bicycles will also be better accommodated within the carriages.

Public transport in Victoria is experiencing significant, sustained growth, with patronage increasing significantly. This growth is creating challenges for public transport and the Government acknowledges that there is more work to be done.

As a result, the Brumby Government is taking action so that Victorians can have the best transport network in Australia. *The Victorian Transport Plan*, announced by the Premier is unprecedented in scope and scale with more than \$38 billion in projects to meet growing demands and shape a more efficient and sustainable State.

### **Tourism: Gippsland**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Mr P. Davis

**Raised on:** 13 November 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter raised by you in the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 13 November 2008 in relation to V/Line's 'See Things Differently' campaign and Gippsland rail services.

The objective of the 'See Things Differently' campaign is to raise awareness of V/Line services among Melbourne audiences and encourage metropolitan residents to travel to regional areas on off-peak V/Line services. The campaign promotes the normal day-to-day V/Line travel by highlighting specific destinations where transport to local attractions is easily accessed from V/Line stations.

The destinations chosen were those where local partners could also provide 'value added' products and services when travellers showed their V/Line ticket. Work is already under way with local councils and regional tourism agencies to develop the next tier of destinations. V/Line regularly promotes Gippsland as part of its seasonal campaigns, including events such as Farm World and attractions such as Power Works.

V/Line is currently collaborating with Destination Gippsland to include this area of Victoria in this second round of advertising. This is dependent on tourism operators providing opportunities that link to existing V/Line services.

**V/Line: Kyabram ticketing**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 4 December 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised during the Adjournment Debate in the Legislative Council on 4 December 2008 regarding seniors and pensioners free travel vouchers.

Although a V/Line retail outlet does not exist in Kyabram, seniors and pensioners can exchange their free travel vouchers for tickets by telephone.

Customers may contact the V/Line call centre on telephone 136 196 to make a seat reservation and should indicate that they wish to exchange their valid free travel voucher for a V/Line ticket. Customers need to note both the reservation number and seat number, which will be given to them over the phone. The coach driver will have the customer's ticket ready for collection when they board the coach on the date of travel.

**Ballarat District Nursing and Healthcare: funding**

**Raised with:** Minister for Senior Victorians

**Raised by:** Mr Vogels

**Raised on:** 4 February 2009

**REPLY:**

The Home and Community Care program assists older people and younger people with a disability to maintain their independence. The Government's commitment to this program is demonstrated by the estimated \$251 million it will invest in this program in 2009-10, more than \$60 million more than required under the Commonwealth State agreement.

The Department of Human Services (the department) is working with the Committee of Management and executive staff of Ballarat District Nursing and Health Care (BDNH) to analyse and address issues impacting on the organisations viability.

The department, with BDNH is reviewing its administration and service model to improve the organisations financial management and sustainability into the future.

As an interim measure the department has allocated additional one-off funds to assist BDNH to meet its financial obligations in 2008-09. This allocation is in addition to \$2,936,000 recurrent funding BDNH received in 2008-09, an increase of more than 80 per cent since 1999.

The department also recognises the additional costs of providing an 'out-of hour' nursing service, which is a valuable service to the community. In 2008-09 an additional \$50,000 was targeted specifically to meet the cost of this service.

**Libraries: Colac**

**Raised with:** Minister for Education

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on: 4 February 2009**

**REPLY:**

I am informed as follows:

The decision to sign the joint use agreement was made following a recommendation from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The recommendation included advice that the Colac Otway Shire Council had agreed to the terms and conditions for the construction, management and use of the facility as outlined in the agreement with the Shire.

**Housing: Northern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with: Minister for Housing**

**Raised by: Ms Mikakos**

**Raised on: 5 February 2009**

**REPLY:**

The Nation Building and Jobs Plan will provide additional funding for social housing in Victoria. The Commonwealth will allocate \$6.4 billion for social housing designed to provide significant stimulus to the building and construction industry. Victoria will have access to approximately one quarter of the total funds. This is contingent upon the State identifying suitable construction and maintenance projects under set time frames and requirements. An additional \$100 million has been provided through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) agreement.

Allocation of social housing funding from the Social Housing National Partnership Agreement and the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan is primarily determined according to need / demand. Fifty per cent of the funding will deliver new public housing, and 50% will fund Housing Associations to deliver social housing. The locations of new social housing dwellings to be funded from these sources are also determined by the availability of appropriate housing construction projects that are close to jobs, schools, transport and services, and can be delivered within the time frames set by the Commonwealth. Projects already approved by the Commonwealth for new social housing construction and repairs and maintenance works, include a number of projects within the Northern Metropolitan Region.

**Government: public finance legislation**

**Raised with: Minister for Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission**

**Raised by: Mr Rich-Phillips**

**Raised on: 10 March 2009**

**REPLY:**

The member for South-Eastern Metropolitan raised an issue regarding new legislation that is currently being developed by the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF).

As noted by the member, the Government released a high-level discussion paper ("Public Finance in Victoria — Practices and Legislation") outlining the case for reform and a range of options for public comment in late October 2008. A number of submissions were received in response to the Government's discussion paper. Eighteen of these submissions have been published on DTF's website.

The 2009 Annual Statement of Government Intentions outlined the Government's commitment to continue to consult with key stakeholders in the development of the new Bill. The Government will continue to consult with all stakeholders and will publish relevant supporting materials at the time of introducing the legislation.

I note that the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of Parliament has tabled its final report, "Inquiry into Victoria's Public Finance Practices and Legislation", and the Government will consider its finding when finalising the legislation.

### **Rail: public safety**

**Raised with:** Minister for Public Transport

**Raised by:** Ms Hartland

**Raised on:** 1 April 2009

#### **REPLY:**

Connex advises that drivers must adhere to specific procedures prior to initiating the door closure mechanism of a departing train.

Drivers use the train's side rear-view mirror to observe customers boarding and disembarking. On curved platforms, station mirrors and screens are also used. When the driver is satisfied that all customers have boarded or disembarked, they then press the 'doors closed' button which flashes until all carriage doors are closed.

All train doors incorporate several safety devices, including a warning noise emanating prior to the doors closing. The train doors also detect obstacles during their closure which allows the doors to release automatically. In such a situation, depending on the type of train, the power to the train may be cut, preventing it from departing.

Once the doors are closed, the gauges on the front dashboard are checked, the whistle is sounded and the brakes released before applying power to commence the train's departure. Drivers do not have set time frames to adhere to when keeping doors open while stationary at the platform, as boarding/disembarking times can vary depending on the time of day and railway station.

Connex recommends that customers with special needs, consider travelling in the first carriage. This enables drivers to have maximum visibility of customers who may require additional time or assistance to board or disembark.

### **Wattle Park: lone pine**

**Raised with:** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

**Raised by:** Mr D. Davis

**Raised on:** 6 May 2009

#### **REPLY:**

I am pleased to inform you that the Wattle Park Heritage Committee and Parks Victoria have recently accepted a donation offer of a Lone Pine from the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance Committee. This pine was recently struck from the original specimen at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance and will replace the existing specimen at Wattle Park, which is nearing the end of its life.

The Shrine of Remembrance Committee is keeping the replacement specimen in their nursery, until required.

The Wattle Park-Heritage Group is now consulting with Parks Victoria on a suitable location and timing for planting; rest assured that an appropriate local ceremony will accompany the planting of the new pine, in recognition of its significance to many people.

### **Children: infant hearing screening program**

**Raised with: Minister for Health**

**Raised by: Mr Drum**

**Raised on: 6 May 2009**

#### **REPLY:**

The Brumby Government understands the importance of both early detection of hearing problems and early intervention strategies for these children and their families. The role of the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program (VIHSP) is to provide pre-discharge hearing screening to all infants born in Victorian hospitals.

In the 2007-08 budget-the first budget after the 2006 election-\$10 million was allocated over 4 years to implement infant hearing screening across the State.

The planned rollout of this program has been designed to capture the greatest proportion of babies in the initial phases. By December 2007, 30% of Victorian babies were screened and by December 2008 the program had expanded to cover 57% of Victorian babies born.

Infant hearing screening will be implemented in 49 rural and regional hospitals and health services between October 2009 and May 2010.

The VIHSP will be implemented at both Bendigo Hospital and St John of God Hospital in Bendigo in October 2009.

### **Buses: Doncaster**

**Raised with: Minister for Public Transport**

**Raised by: Mr Tee**

**Raised on: 6 May 2009**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 6 May 2009 regarding your request for the provision of a bicycle cage at Doncaster Park and Ride.

There are significant parking pressures on the Doncaster Park and Ride and surrounding streets as a result of the demand for the high-frequency public transport services that operate from the Park and Ride. The Doncaster Park and Ride has been selected, therefore, as a site for the deployment of one of ten bicycle cages to be built by the end of 2009.

The cage at Doncaster Park and Ride will be the first to be constructed at a non-rail location and recognises the important role Doncaster Park and Ride plays in Melbourne's public transport network.

### **Consumer affairs: Kleenmaid**

**Raised with: Minister for Consumer Affairs**

**Raised by:** Mr Atkinson

**Raised on:** 7 May 2009

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter raised by you during the debate of 7 May 2009, in which you requested details of how many complaints Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) received about Kleenmaid in the period after 1 January 2008, details of what action CAV has taken with respect to complaints received prior to Kleenmaid entering administration, and what action has been taken subsequently.

CAV created 311 new case files on Kleenmaid in the period between 1 January 2008 and 14 May 2009, representing 0.094 per cent of the 331,109 case files generated in that period. Of the 311 case files, 86 were created on or before 9 April 2009, the date Kleenmaid went into administration. All cases, except for one that was created on 9 April, had been acted on and closed prior to Kleenmaid being placed into administration.

The 68 case files classified as 'electrical goods including whitegoods' represented 1.59 per cent of the 4274 case files created in that category between 1 January 2008 and 9 April 2009. This low percentage of cases did not suggest a systemic problem existed. Of the 86 case files created in that 15 month period:

- eleven case files related to non-delivery or slow delivery of goods. Staff from CAV assisted consumers in these circumstances by generally advising that they should write a letter of demand to Kleenmaid. In most cases, consumers were also advised about how to chargeback on their credit card and/or apply to VCAT for a refund, as well as how to lodge a formal complaint with CAV
- sixty-one case files related to warranty disputes, including whether goods should be repaired or replaced, or a refund given. In those cases, staff from CAV generally advised consumers to write a formal letter of complaint to Kleenmaid, and if they were unable to resolve the dispute, to lodge a formal dispute with CAV
- five case files related to products out of warranty. In these cases, customers were generally advised by staff from CAV to write a letter of complaint to Kleenmaid
- nine case files dealt with other matters, including incorrect jurisdiction, incorrect items being delivered, charges associated with installation, delays in refunds being processed, accidental charging on cancelled contracts and accidental overcharging.

With respect to cases created after 9 April, Consumer Affairs Victoria has been advising consumers to contact Kleenmaid's administrator, Deloitte.

Unfortunately, scope to take further action to assist consumers is limited. I understand that Kleenmaid only had about \$2.9 million worth of stock at the time of its collapse. However, the warehouse provider, Schenker, has taken a lien over this stock until it is paid the \$2.1 million it is owed for storage, as it is entitled to do under both Queensland and Victorian law. In addition, other creditors that have secured interests and employees have priority over the remaining assets of the company. Finally, it is unlikely that any of the goods in Schenker's warehouses have been identified as belonging to any particular customer's contract. This is required before any property in the goods can be transferred under sale of goods legislation such as Victoria's *Goods Act 1958*.

The Kleenmaid collapse has highlighted possible deficiencies in corporate insolvency law, including the order in which creditors are paid, and its interaction with sale of goods legislation. Corporate insolvency law is administered by the Commonwealth through Chapter 5 of the *Corporations Act 2001*.

For this reason, at the recent meeting of the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs, I moved that the Chair of MCCA should write to the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, proposing that he refer to the Australian Law Reform Commission a review of sale of goods legislation, with a focus on what protections should exist for consumers who have prepaid for goods in the event that the seller of those goods becomes insolvent. This measure was agreed to by MCCA.

**Wallan-Kilmore bypass: construction**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 7 May 2009

**REPLY:**

I am informed that, as at the date the question was raised:

The State Government announced in January 2009, that planning activities for the duplication of the Northern Highway between the Hume freeway to south of Kilmore would recommence immediately.

The Government's decision was based on the key findings of the Kilmore Wallan Bypass Options Examination, which was undertaken by VicRoads to determine whether a bypass would address the future traffic needs of the area.

The examination found that the majority of the current and future traffic, including trucks, will be generated by the growth in these two towns and that a large scale bypass would not significantly reduce truck traffic in Kilmore or Wallan or meet the future needs of these townships.

The examination was independently reviewed and the results were verified to be sound. The review, together with an outline of VicRoads bypass options examinations, can be viewed on VicRoads website [www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au). Copies are also available for viewing at the Mitchell Shire office in Broadford, Kilmore Library and the Wallan Post Office.

VicRoads has recommenced planning for the highway duplication. VicRoads will also work with the Shire of Mitchell to develop local and arterial road network improvements that have the potential to improve safety and reduce traffic and heavy truck movements in Kilmore and Wallan. These activities will provide an integrated approach to the traffic needs of both townships and allow more flexibility for traffic to move around the towns.

If you require further information, Mr Robin Miles, Acting Regional Director–Northern Victoria (Tel: 5434 5000), will be pleased to assist.

**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Wednesday, 24 June 2009**

**Bridges: Yarrawonga–Mulwala**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 5 February 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 5 February 2008 concerning the planning for a new bridge crossing the Murray River between Yarrawonga and Mulwala.

The Brumby Government is committed to investing in roads in regional Victoria. In fact, more than \$2.5 billion has been invested into country roads since Labor came to office. We have substantially increased capital roads investment in regional Victoria from \$100.7 million allocated by the previous Liberal-National Government in 1999/00 to \$231.7 million in the 2007/08 State Budget.

Your concerns in relation to the closure of the weir access road in 2020, the predicted growth in traffic and the urgency of undertaking a detailed planning study for a new bridge crossing are noted.

The Victorian and New South Wales Governments have an agreed strategy to maintaining and enhancing bridges across the Murray River. In recent years significant investments have been made into road infrastructure along the river. Planning activities are under way for river crossings at Echuca/Moama and Swan Hill and bridges have been built at Albury/Wodonga, Robinvale, Corowa/Wahgunyah and Cobram/Barooga.

Any proposals for major planning studies will be considered and evaluated on a region and state wide basis.

**Pound-Shrives roads, Narre Warren South: traffic control**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr Somyurek

**Raised on:** 7 February 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 7 February 2008, concerning safety and congestion at the intersection of Pound Road and Shrives Road, Hampton Park.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving Victoria's road network. Since 1999, approximately \$5.8 billion has been invested into building better, safer roads across the state. This investment includes more than \$1 billion for 44 significant road projects in outer metropolitan communities. In addition, the Government has committed to delivering a further 19 new outer metropolitan projects worth around \$410 million.

VicRoads has investigated the installation of traffic signals or a roundabout at this intersection. As you would appreciate, proposals for improvement projects must be considered and prioritised on a state wide basis and there

are currently proposals for traffic signals that, when evaluated, rank higher than the intersection of Pound Road and Shrives Road.

VicRoads will continue to monitor the safety and operation of this intersection to determine the need for any future improvements.

Should you have any further queries regarding this matter, Mr Steve Brown, VicRoads' Regional Director—Metropolitan South East (Tel: 9881 8800), would be pleased to assist.

### **Murray Valley Highway—Cullens Road, Yarrowonga: turning lane**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 28 February 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 28 February 2008 and your letter dated 13 March 2008, in relation to the Murray Valley Highway and Cullens Road intersection west of Yarrowonga.

The Brumby Government is taking action to improve the safety of our roads for Victorian communities. After recording the five lowest road tolls in the last five years, the Premier earlier this year released the Government's new *arrive alive* road safety strategy. The strategy aims to drive down our record-low toll by a further 30 per cent by 2017 and is complimented by a \$650 million commitment for road safety projects over 10 years.

At the time VicRoads wrote to the Moira Shire Council, in November 2007, the Greyspot program was fully committed.

As part of our new *arrive alive* strategy, the Brumby Government announced that a further \$16 million over two years would be invested into continuing the Greyspot program. VicRoads may consider safety improvements at the Cullens Road intersection under this program. However, as you would be aware, improvements such as this must be prioritised on a state wide and region wide basis. Any improvement works will be considered in this context.

In the meantime VicRoads has extended the 80 km/h speed zone to the west to include Cullens Road intersection.

### **Northern Highway, Kilmore: traffic control**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 28 February 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 28 February 2008, regarding heavy traffic travelling through the town of Kilmore.

The current road safety improvement project, to which you refer, was developed in response to concerns raised by Mitchell Shire Council and the Kilmore community.

A traffic study by traffic consultant John Piper Traffic Pty Ltd (JPT) was commissioned by VicRoads and completed in May 2005, to explore and identify opportunities to improve road and pedestrian safety through the Kilmore Township.

Following a resolution from the Mitchell Shire Council meeting in September 2005, VicRoads was advised by Council that it supported the proposed traffic management measures. The Government subsequently provided funding under the "Safer Roads Infrastructure Program" to carry out a range of safety improvement works, including a 1.6 metre wide painted central median along Sydney Street. Such treatments have been successfully employed along other urban and rural arterial roads, including in Benalla and Bright townships.

Mitchell Shire Council subsequently resolved to write to VicRoads to advise that it did not support the central line marking proposal as recommended in the JPT report.

VicRoads continued to discuss the benefits of the proposed package of safety improvements with Mitchell Shire officers and councillors throughout 2007. A public meeting and a Community Information Display were held last year.

I am advised that the feedback from the display highlighted keen interest and support among the community for a number of the safety improvements as recommended in the traffic report.

VicRoads sought further clarification from Mitchell Shire on what works identified in the JPT report could be considered for implementation and further briefed Council in November 2007. This led to Mitchell Shire Council resolving to support the installation of safety improvements, other than the painted median, at its meeting on 17 December 2007. This was communicated to VicRoads in January 2008.

There has been extensive study and consultation with the community and Mitchell Shire on the proposed safety improvements in Sydney Street.

The proposed pedestrian refuge is formalising a crossing point which was identified in a pedestrian survey undertaken in September 2007.

VicRoads is proceeding with the implementation of the agreed safety works and will continue to liaise with the Council.

The package of works is aimed at improving the safety for all road users in Sydney Street. The future transportation needs of Kilmore are being addressed in other studies. Future planning work will need to occur in the context of regional transport needs and priorities across the State.

Should you have any further inquiries, Mr Mal Kersting, VicRoads Regional Director – Northern Victoria (Tel: 5434 5000), will be pleased to assist.

### **Freeways: noise barriers**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports**

**Raised by: Mr O'Donohue**

**Raised on: 12 March 2008**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 12 March 2008, concerning noise attenuation on the Princes Freeway in Beaconsfield and Pakenham, and on the Pakenham Bypass.

As you would appreciate, proposals for the installation of noise barriers must be considered and prioritised on a state wide basis. Any noise attenuation on the Princes Freeway in this area will be considered in this context.

With regard to the Pakenham Bypass, VicRoads has implemented noise attenuation where practicable for residential developments with building approvals prior to the establishment in 1983 of the freeway reservation. This is consistent with the Pakenham Bypass Environment Effects Statement and VicRoads' Traffic Noise Reduction Policy.

**Transport: Bendigo study**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Ms Lovell

**Raised on:** 8 April 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 8 April 2008 and your letter dated 10 April 2008, regarding your request that the Bendigo Transportation Strategy be completed as a matter of urgency.

The Brumby Government is committed to building better, safer roads across the state for Victorian families. Around \$5.8 billion has been invested into our network since 1999, including \$2.5 billion for regional roads.

Duplication of the road network forming the Bendigo Inner Box is nearing completion with the last remaining section due for completion this year. The \$10 million project has been proudly supported and funded by the Brumby Government.

Other works currently under way for the benefit of the Bendigo community include new traffic signals at the Lucan Street / Nolan Street intersection and at the Midland Highway / Powells Avenue intersection.

In addition, a number of other infrastructure initiatives have been completed in recent times to provide smoother traffic flow within the city, including the widening of Weeroona Avenue bridge to 4 lanes, duplication of the Calder Highway in Kangaroo Flat and computerised linking of traffic signals. Emphasis is also being given to providing integrated facilities for all other road users including pedestrians, cyclists, buses and trams.

The completion of the current works along Barnard Street and Lucan Street will provide for 4 traffic lanes along Barnard Street and Weeroona Avenue, linking the Calder Highway at Don Street and the Midland Highway at White Hills.

Whilst these projects provide improved traffic flow in and around the city, it is recognised that we also need to continue to plan for the long-term.

VicRoads will continue to support and assist the City of Greater Bendigo on developing a new transportation study, including a review of the outcomes of the previous strategy, which will provide guidance for the future development of the major road network.

Should you have any further inquiries, Mr Mal Kersting, VicRoads Regional Director—Northern Victoria (Tel; 5434 5000), would be pleased to assist.

**Maroondah Highway: Black Spur speed limits**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Petrovich

**Raised on:** 9 April 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 9 April 2008, concerning speed limits on the Maroondah Highway through the Black Spur.

The Brumby Government has a strong commitment to improving the safety of our roads for all Victorian road users. We have seen Victoria record its five lowest road tolls over the past five years and the Government's new

*arrive alive* road safety strategy aims to drive down the road toll by a further 30 per cent by 2017. As part of this strategy, the Government will invest \$650 million over 10 years for road safety improvement projects.

Speed limits are set to provide a balance between safety and mobility. Consideration is given to the number of access points, the nature of the road environment and abutting land use. The Maroondah Highway, north of Healesville, is a narrow, two-way, winding road through mountainous terrain. In the five years to December 2006, there were 82 casualty crashes, 65 per cent of which occurred on a dry road surface and 43 per cent of which involved motorcyclists.

Reducing the speed limit from 100 km/h to 80 km/h is considered to be an appropriate treatment for improving motorcyclist safety. The reduced speed limit is part of an overall package of works, including shoulder sealing on some curves and the installation of guard rail. I note that consultation with the community found that 70 per cent of people in the area support this reduction in the speed limit.

I am advised that Victoria Police has been closely monitoring the Maroondah Highway through the Black Spur in recent months to prevent motorcycle racing. The Yarra Ranges Traffic Management Unit (Tel: 9736 1745) would be the appropriate organisation to contact in relation to this matter.

Your suggestion to install overtaking lanes on the Maroondah Highway through the Black Spur is noted. Proposals for improvement projects must be considered and prioritised on a state wide basis. The installation of any overtaking lanes at this location will be considered in this context.

In the meantime, the proposed improvement works on the highway through the Black Spur include sealing of some existing informal parking areas. Signs will be installed to encourage slow-moving vehicles to pull into these areas to allow for overtaking.

### **Great Alpine Road: upgrade**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr Hall

**Raised on:** 27 May 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter that you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 27 May 2008 regarding the Great Alpine Road.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving roads in country Victoria. Since coming into office in 1999, the State Government has invested more than \$5.8 billion into building better, safer roads across the state, including over \$2.5 billion for roads in regional areas.

Over the last five years, more than \$370 million has been invested in roads in Eastern Victoria.

Proposals for road improvement projects must be considered and prioritised on a state wide basis. Any road improvements for the Great Alpine Road will be considered in this context.

### **Henty Highway: upgrade**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr Koch

**Raised on:** 27 May 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 27 May 2008 and your letter dated 5 June 2008, concerning the capacity of the Henty Highway to accommodate heavy vehicles.

The State Government has undertaken substantial investment on roads in Victoria. Since coming to Government in 1999, the State Government has invested \$5.8 billion in roads. Of this, over \$2.5 billion has been spent on regional roads, on projects ranging from major infrastructure development to regular road maintenance programs.

The State Government recognises the importance of the Port of Portland to the regional, state and national economies and continues its commitment to South Western Victoria by providing road funding for a range of projects on the Henty Highway. Road funded projects include the construction of the \$15 million Cliff Street Bridge over the Henty Highway to separate port and local traffic in Portland, completed in 2006, and over \$2 million for various pavement maintenance and intersection improvement projects on the Henty Highway since 2005.

In addition, work is under way on an \$8.6 million project to improve safety and capacity on the section of the Henty Highway between Portland and Heywood. These improvements are scheduled to be completed in the coming weeks. Intersection improvements on the Henty Highway in Portland have also been funded and are scheduled to commence in mid 2008 for completion later this year.

In recognition of the freight demands facing the Region, I recently co-convened a summit with the Hon Pat Conlon, South Australian Minister for Transport, which amongst other measures, agreed on the development of a freight action plan for the region by December 2008. This plan will detail the actions necessary to enable the efficient movement of timber plantation products and other commodities in the Green Triangle Region of Victoria / South Australia.

Currently the State Government is working through the economic issues regarding the future of the regional rail network and freight rolling stock. The Government has indicated its preparedness to fund the improvement of existing strategic rail links as recommended in the Fischer Report. The State Government also continues to work closely with rail franchises and operators, including the ARTC, in relation to future investment in regional rail infrastructure highlighted by the Premier's recent announcement to extend the ARTC lease for the Portland to Maroona line for the next 45 years.

The Brumby Government is securing the long term viability of the Portland to Maroona line for south-west Victoria's manufacturing and exporting green triangle and this agreement will ensure the rail freight network is competitive in the long term.

**EastLink: guardrail posts**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr Dalla-Riva

**Raised on:** 10 June 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 10 June 2008, concerning the quality of steel guardrail posts along EastLink.

I am advised by VicRoads that the proof engineer and construction verifier for the EastLink project has reviewed the quality of the steel provided for guardrail components on EastLink and found that the steel complies with the relevant specifications.

VicRoads will review *Section 708–Steel Beam Guard Fence* to ensure it reflects current best practice for manufacturing and installation. VicRoads will also seek industry input into any proposed changes to *Section 708*.

**Belgrave: traffic congestion**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 10 June 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 10 June 2008, concerning Government funding for traffic management in Belgrave.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving Victoria's road network. Since 1999, around \$5.8 billion has been invested into building better, safer roads across the state. This investment includes more than \$1.5 billion for 52 significant road projects in metropolitan communities. The Government is also currently delivering, or planning to deliver, a further 21 significant projects in our suburbs worth more than \$1.8 billion.

I understand that the Shire is in the process of preparing a study of the Belgrave area to investigate and guide future directions in relation to traffic, pedestrian and cyclist mobility throughout the township. Once the study is complete, VicRoads will work closely with the Shire to consider any proposed improvements to the road network.

The Government recently announced funding of \$14.3 million for projects to improve the safety and efficiency of the local road network in Melbourne's outer east. A range of projects will be delivered to make our roads safer, help tackle congestion and aid development in communities across the state.

As part of this announcement, funding of \$2.6 million has been allocated for the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Wellington and Lysterfield Roads, Lysterfield. These signals are expected to encourage traffic away from the Belgrave area and assist in alleviating congestion through the township.

**Roads: South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 11 June 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 11 June 2008, concerning traffic management at the intersection of Pound Road and Vanessa Drive, Hampton Park, and the intersection of Springvale Road, Hutton Road and Governor Road, Waterways.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving the safety and efficiency of the road network in our suburbs. Since 1999, we have invested more than \$3 billion into our metropolitan roads, including \$1.5 billion for 52 significant road improvement projects. We are also currently delivering, or preparing to deliver, a further 18 significant road upgrades in our suburbs worth around \$1.9 billion.

In response to your concerns regarding delays for traffic turning right from Springvale Road into Hutton Road, I am advised that VicRoads has provided extra green time for this right-turn movement to improve traffic flow. VicRoads will continue to monitor the intersection to determine the need for any further improvements to the right-turn movement into Hutton Road now that EastLink is open to traffic, five months ahead of schedule.

As part of the 2008/09 State Budget, the Brumby Government is providing \$36.8 million for a range of road improvements in the vicinity of the South Gippsland Freeway intersection with Pound Road. This follows strong representations from local members Tim Holding MP and Judith Graley MP on behalf of the local community and councils.

These improvements include the widening of the bridge over the freeway, an upgrade of the freeway exit ramp and the installation of traffic signals at the Pound Road / South Gippsland Highway intersection to replace the existing roundabout. The works are expected to improve traffic flow on Pound Road and assist turning movements at the intersection with Vanessa Drive.

### **Roads: South Eastern Metropolitan Region**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 12 June 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matters you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 12 June 2008.

The Brumby Government is committed taking action now to build better, safer roads in our suburbs. Since 1999, around \$5.8 billion has been invested into the state's road network. This investment includes more than \$1.5 billion for 52 significant road projects in outer metropolitan communities. In addition, the Government has committed to delivering a further 18 new outer metropolitan projects worth around \$1.9 billion.

The Government remains committed to delivering on our election commitment to install traffic signals at the Lower Dandenong Road/Boundary Road intersection. Funding was provided in the State Budget for this project and it has been necessary to plan construction activities to commence after the Mordialloc Creek Bridge replacement is completed to prevent unnecessary delays to traffic in the area. I am advised that the Mordialloc Creek Bridge works are scheduled to be completed in late 2008 and that works at the intersection of Lower Dandenong Road and Boundary Road are expected to commence in 2009.

VicRoads has investigated your request to install a left-turn lane on the Nepean Highway at the Chelsea Road railway level crossing. Proposals for improvement projects, such as this left turn lane, must be considered and evaluated on a state wide basis. Any improvements at this intersection will be considered in this context.

I note that southbound traffic on the Nepean Highway wishing to access the Mornington Peninsula Freeway may do so via Edithvale Road. As you have stated, there is a dedicated left turn lane on the highway at this location to assist with this movement.

### **Clearways: Boroondara**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr D. Davis

**Raised on:** 12 June 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 12 June 2008, concerning an extension of clearway times in the City of Boroondara.

The Brumby Government's congestion plan *Keeping Melbourne Moving* is the result of consultation with community and industry leaders that took place at the Premier's Congestion Roundtable in early 2008. Funding of \$112.7 million over four years will be allocated to initiatives that focus on relieving peak period traffic congestion within a 10 km radius of Melbourne's central business district.

This plan includes \$12.6 million to extend and standardise clearway times on all arterial roads and key public transport routes with a 10 km radius of CBD. The purpose of major roads is to efficiently move people and goods

and it is necessary to ease the congestion on key routes during peak times to keep trams, buses, freight, cars and other vehicles flowing. The extension of clearway hours will benefit more than 300,000 tram and bus passengers in Melbourne every day, along with 250,000 motorists.

VicRoads conducted a public submission process from 16 June to 14 July 2008, around the standardisation and extension of clearways. I have established a Clearways Implementation Reference Group (CIRG) to review the outcomes of this process and provide recommendations to VicRoads.

The CIRG comprises representatives of small business, transport and local government peak bodies, as well as the Department of Transport and VicRoads. This group will continue to meet throughout the implementation of clearways. VicRoads will also continue to consult with local councils and trader associations to manage broad and locally-based issues.

On 17 June 2008, I convened a forum with representatives from the traders' association groups within 10 km of the CBD. The forum was organised to discuss the traders' concerns with the Government's area-wide scheme for the standardisation of existing clearway hours. I also convened a similar forum for all metropolitan councils on 11 August 2008.

### **Beach Park, Beaumaris: bicycle path**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports**

**Raised by: Ms Pennicuik**

**Raised on: 25 June 2008**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 25 June 2008, concerning the Bay Trail along Beach Road between Cromer Road and Charman Road, Beaumaris.

The Brumby Government is spending an extra \$72 million over the next 10 years to extend bicycle networks and create better pedestrian facilities, in addition to the \$4 million currently allocated each year.

I understand that VicRoads and Bayside City Council have been working closely on developing a proposal to construct the missing link of the Bay Trail within the City of Bayside.

The current proposal of a meandering shared path within the foreshore will avoid several significant trees and vegetation. The proposal includes net gain vegetation improvements as well as a considerable amount of boardwalk or other similar treatment which will protect and retain any sensitive vegetation and address erosion concerns.

Should you require any further information regarding this matter, Mr Charlie Broadhurst, VicRoads' Acting Regional Director—Metropolitan South East (Tel: 9881 8800), would be pleased to assist.

### **Eastern Freeway: safety**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports**

**Raised by: Mr Tee**

**Raised on: 30 July 2008**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 30 July 2008, concerning safety on the Eastern Freeway, between Bulleen Road and Doncaster Road, Balwyn North.

The Brumby Government is taking action to improve road safety across the state. We have seen Victoria record its five lowest road tolls over the past five years and the Government's new arrive alive road safety strategy aims to drive down the road toll by a further 30 per cent by 2017. As part of this strategy, the Government will invest \$650 million over ten years for road safety improvement projects.

VicRoads is currently investigating a proposal for road safety improvements along the Eastern Freeway from Hoddle Street to Springvale Road. The installation of wire rope safety barriers along the bend between Bulleen Road and Doncaster Road will be considered as part of a range of safety treatments.

As you would appreciate, proposals for improvement projects must be considered and evaluated on a state wide basis. Any improvements to the Eastern Freeway will be considered in this context.

Should you have any further queries regarding this matter, Mr Steve Brown, VicRoads' Regional Director—Metropolitan South East (Tel: 9881 8800), would be pleased to assist.

### **Frankston Freeway-Cranbourne Road, Frankston: upgrade**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports**

**Raised by: Mr Rich-Phillips**

**Raised on: 31 July 2008**

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 31 July 2008, concerning the intersection of the Moorooduc Highway and Cranbourne Road, Frankston.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving Victoria's road network. Since 1999, around \$5.8 billion has been invested into building better, safer roads across the state. This investment includes more than \$1.6 billion for 54 significant road projects in metropolitan communities. The Government is also currently delivering, or planning to deliver, a further 22 significant projects in our suburbs worth more than \$2.2 billion.

Aware of the traffic issues at the intersection the Government has announced that \$500 000 is being invested into investigating possible treatments for the intersection.

The Brumby Government is also providing \$5 million for a detailed Environmental Effects Statement to be undertaken for the Frankston Bypass, which was released publicly on 10 November 2008.

We are committed to the \$700 million Frankston Bypass in partnership with the Federal Government for the benefit of residents and visitors to the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula areas. The project has the capacity to improve traffic flows in Frankston and generate 1700 jobs in the construction phase alone.

We will continue to invest in Frankston's road network, as opposed to the Liberal Party, which at the last State election could only muster a half-baked, under-funded commitment to build the Frankston Bypass.

Should you have any further queries regarding these matters, Mr Steve Brown, VicRoads' Regional Director – Metropolitan South East (Tel: 9881 8800), would be pleased to assist.

### **Dingley bypass: future**

**Raised with: Minister for Roads and Ports**

**Raised by: Mrs Peulich**

**Raised on: 19 August 2008**

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 19 August 2008, concerning the construction of the Dingley Bypass and safety on Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving Victoria's road network. Since 1999, around \$5.8 billion has been invested into building better, safer roads across the state. This investment includes more than \$1.5 billion for 52 significant road projects in metropolitan communities. The Government is also currently delivering, or planning to deliver, a further 21 significant projects in our suburbs worth more than \$1.9 billion.

As you are aware, a reservation for the Dingley Bypass corridor exists between Warrigal Road and the South Gippsland Freeway. The South Road Extension constructed within this reservation, between Warrigal Road and Old Dandenong Road, was opened to traffic in September 2007 and the Dandenong Bypass, between Perry Road and the South Gippsland Highway, was opened to traffic in December 2007.

Proposals for further improvement projects must be considered and prioritised on a statewide basis and further works within this corridor will be considered in this context.

To improve safety and traffic flow on Old Dandenong Road, shoulder widening and sealing from the South Road Extension to Kingston Road, and improvements at the intersection with Clarinda Road and Kingston Road have been completed.

A new traffic signal sequence and a left turn slip lane will be provided for the Old Dandenong Road northern approach to improve traffic flow to and from Old Dandenong Road and Kingston Road. These works are expected to be completed by late 2008.

Speed limits are determined to provide an appropriate balance between safety and mobility, with consideration given to factors such as the number of access points and the nature of the road environment and abutting development. Your constituents' request for a 50 km/h speed limit on Old Dandenong Road, between Kingston and Boundary Roads, will be considered by VicRoads in consultation with the City of Kingston and Victoria Police.

**Princes Highway-Cardinia Road, Pakenham: signage**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 20 August 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 20 August 2008, and your letter dated 8 August 2008, making representations on behalf of your constituent, Mr Wayne Lording, concerning signage at the intersection of Cardinia Road and the Princes Highway, Pakenham.

The Brumby Government is taking action to improve road safety across the state. We have seen Victoria record its five lowest road tolls over the past five years and the Government's new *arrive alive* road safety strategy aims to drive down the road toll by a further 30 per cent by 2017. As part of this strategy, the Government will invest \$650 million over ten years for road safety improvement projects.

Following consultation with the Cardinia Shire Council and Victoria Police, VicRoads made a number of safety improvements at this intersection in February 2008 to increase motorists' awareness of the right-turn arrangements from Cardinia Road onto the Princes Highway. These improvements included the installation of advanced warning signs on Cardinia Road, indicating a divided carriageway ahead, as well as oversized *Wrong Way Go Back* and *No Entry* signs on the westbound carriageway of the highway.

In addition, VicRoads recently painted right-turn arrows on the median pavement at the intersection to assist traffic to turn right onto the highway. To further enhance safety, I am advised that additional *Wrong Way Go Back* and *One Way* signs will be installed on the Princes Highway at the intersection.

### **Sunraysia Highway, Avoca: signage**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr Vogels

**Raised on:** 20 August 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 20 August 2008, concerning signage for the Avoca Motel on the Sunraysia Highway.

The current *Tourist Signing Guidelines* (issued in 2001) were developed by VicRoads, in conjunction with Tourism Victoria and local government, to accommodate the needs of tourism businesses while still upholding the basic principles of traffic management and road safety.

VicRoads has recently conducted an audit of all tourism sign permits in Western Region, which identified that several of the permits had lapsed and not been renewed. The review was initiated due to concerns over the amount of signage clutter within the road reserve.

To ensure fairness for all tourist operators, it is important that the guidelines are applied in a consistent manner. The Parliamentary Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism, chaired by a member of the Liberal-National coalition, also emphasised the importance of consistent application of the Guidelines. In addition, the Parliamentary Inquiry into Driver Distraction noted the negative impacts for road safety on the over cluttering of signs in or near road reserves. It also recommended that guidelines be applied consistently across Victoria to minimise potential driver distraction.

A VicRoads officer contacted Pyrenees Shire Council on 28 August 2008 to clarify the eligibility criteria contained in the current *Tourist Signing Guidelines*. It has been confirmed that the application from Don and Carol Foster, owners of the Avoca Motel, does not meet the guidelines for signage in the road reserve. I have been advised that the Council officer currently responsible for signing matters agrees with this position.

### **Roads: maintenance**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 21 August 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 21 August 2008, concerning shoulder sealing along Wells Road, Old Dandenong Road and Centre Dandenong Road.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving Victoria's road network. Since 1999, around \$5.8 billion has been invested into building better, safer roads across the state. This investment includes more than \$1.6 billion for 54 significant road projects in metropolitan communities. The Government is also currently delivering, or planning to deliver, a further 22 significant projects in our suburbs worth more than \$2.2 billion and making an unprecedented investment into maintaining our state's arterial roads.

I am pleased to advise that funding has been announced to seal the shoulders along Wells Road, between Springvale Road and Thames Promenade.

To improve safety and traffic flow along Old Dandenong Road, shoulder widening and sealing from the South Road Extension to Kingston Road, and improvements at the intersection with Clarinda Road have been completed.

The Brumby Government will continue to invest in the safety and maintenance of our roads. As part of our *arrive alive* strategy we will invest \$650 million into road safety improvement projects over the next ten years.

### **Cardinia Primary School: speed zones**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 21 August 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 21 August 2008, concerning the speed limit on Cardinia Road, in the vicinity of the Cardinia Primary School, Cardinia.

The Brumby Government is taking action to improve the safety of our roads for all Victorian road users. We have seen Victoria record its five lowest road tolls over the past five years and the Government's new *arrive alive* road safety strategy aims to drive down the road toll by a further 30 per cent by 2017. As part of this strategy, the Government will invest \$650 million over ten years for road safety improvement projects.

As advised in previous correspondence to you on this matter, our initiative to reduce speed limits around our schools has had a substantial, positive road safety benefit. Since these zones were introduced, there has been a 23 per cent reduction in casualty crashes and a 24 per cent decrease in crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists near schools.

I am pleased to advise that the school speed zone on Cardinia Road has been reduced to 40 km/h within a short buffer zone of 60 km/h on the approach to the Ballarto Road intersection. These speed zone changes were implemented by the Cardinia Shire Council prior to the commencement of the current school term.

### **Clearways: Stonnington**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Coote

**Raised on:** 9 September 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter that you raised in the Adjournment Debate of 9 September 2008, concerning the impact of extended clearway times on charities and not-for-profit organisations in the City of Stonnington.

Clearway times are being extended and standardised to improve traffic flow and provide greater priority and travel reliability for public transport, within 10km of the Melbourne CBD. This initiative is part of the \$112.7M *Keeping Melbourne Moving* congestion plan, which includes increased public transport priority, stronger enforcement of clearways, reducing the impact of road works and events on traffic, walking and cycling initiatives and more information for motorists.

Surveys of parking availability during the extended clearway times were undertaken for eight strip shopping centres in the Malvern and Prahran areas to determine any shortfalls in available parking.

The highest occupancy rate for shopping strips in Stonnington showed that on-street parking during the extended clearway times was 61 per cent—that is, 39 per cent of on-street spaces were vacant. If the vehicles at this location moved to off-street and side-street locations nearby due to the extended clearway times, then 53 per cent of off-street and side-street parking spaces would still be vacant. Overall, across eight strip shopping centres in Stonnington, it is estimated that 37 per cent of off-street and side-street parking spaces would be vacant during the extended clearway times.

These results indicate that alternative parking is generally available on the other side of the road to the peak direction clearway, or in side-streets or nearby car parks. VicRoads is continuing to discuss measures with councils that can be implemented to assist the use of available parking. Those attending charity and not-for-profit organisations, such as the University of the Third Age, should be able to find alternative parking near their destinations.

Thank you for raising this matter.

### **Monash Freeway: noise barriers**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr D. Davis

**Raised on:** 9 September 2008

#### **REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 9 September 2008, concerning noise barriers on the Monash Freeway.

The Monash-CityLink-West Gate (M1) Upgrade project includes, amongst other things, the construction of an additional traffic lane in each direction on the Monash Freeway. Where the construction of the additional lane requires the demolition of existing noise walls along the route, these noise walls will be reconstructed as part of the project.

VicRoads has undertaken noise monitoring and modelling along the freeway to help understand the impact of the widened facility and future growth of traffic on current and projected noise levels. The information gathered will also be used to determine the height of the replacement noise walls. These relocated noise walls will be designed so that traffic noise levels will not exceed to 68 decibels for more than 10 per cent of the time between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight, in accordance with VicRoads' Traffic Noise Reduction Policy 2005.

The project scope does not include upgrading existing noise walls that are not physically impacted by the works. This is the case with the noise walls along the section of the Monash Freeway in the City of Monash, east of Warrigal Road, where the road widening will occur within the existing median. VicRoads will continue to monitor noise levels along the freeway.

In relation to the CityLink noise attenuation levels being of a higher standard than VicRoads, CityLink operates under a concession deed which states that traffic noise levels must not exceed 63 decibels for 10 per cent of the time between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight, which is the same for new roads as per VicRoads Traffic Noise Reduction Policy 2005.

### **Princes Freeway, Beaconsfield-Old Princes Highway: traffic control**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 10 September 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 10 September 2008, concerning the intersection of the Old Princes Highway and the Princes Freeway, Beaconsfield.

The Brumby Government is committed to improving Victoria's road network. Since 1999, around \$5.8 billion has been invested into building better, safer roads across the state. This investment includes more than \$1.6 billion for 54 significant road projects in metropolitan communities. The Government is also currently delivering, or planning to deliver, a further 22 significant projects in our suburbs worth more than \$2.2 billion.

The \$242 million Pakenham Bypass is providing significant benefits for local residents and business by encouraging more efficient travel. There has been a substantial reduction of around 63 per cent in the number of vehicles using the Princes Highway since the opening of the Pakenham Bypass.

Any proposals for improvement projects to this intersection must be considered and evaluated on a statewide basis. Proposals to improve the operation of the intersection will be considered in this context.

**Eastern and Monash freeways: noise barriers**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Ms Pennicuik

**Raised on:** 11 September 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter that you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 11 September 2008, concerning noise barriers on the Eastern and Monash Freeways.

The main issue you raise concerns the difference in noise attenuation requirements between CityLink and the adjacent sections of the Monash Freeway. CityLink operates under a concession deed which states that traffic noise levels must not exceed 63 decibels for 10 per cent of the time between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight.

The CityLink project involved the tolling of a roadway which had previously been a public road. As part of the commercial arrangements to facilitate the project a higher standard of noise attenuation was negotiated, which could then be maintained by the toll revenue stream.

VicRoads' Traffic Noise Reduction Policy states that noise attenuation will be installed when the noise level exceeds 68 decibels for 10 per cent of the time between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight on existing roads.

The Monash and West Gate Freeways are existing roads and therefore are subject to the above section of the VicRoads Traffic Noise Reduction Policy.

**Eastern Freeway: noise barriers**

**Raised with:** Minister for Roads and Ports

**Raised by:** Mrs Kronberg

**Raised on:** 8 October 2008

**REPLY:**

I refer to the matter you raised in the Adjournment Debate on 8 October 2008, concerning traffic noise emanating from the Eastern Freeway between Doncaster Road and Bulleen Road, Balwyn North, following the opening of EastLink.

Residents' concerns regarding traffic noise emanating from the Eastern Freeway in this area are acknowledged. I can assure you that VicRoads continuously monitors noise levels along the freeway corridor to determine the need for noise attenuation.

In August 2008 and September 2008, following the opening of EastLink, VicRoads conducted noise testing at a number of residential properties abutting the Eastern Freeway in Carron Street, Wilburton Parade, Ventnor Street and Wandeen Street, Balwyn North, to determine whether this section of the freeway is eligible for consideration for noise attenuation under VicRoads' Traffic Noise Reduction Policy.

Proposals to retrofit noise barriers on existing freeways are developed when noise levels exceed the threshold of 68 decibels for 10 per cent of the time between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight. I am advised that the recorded noise levels at these locations were below this threshold and that the introduction of noise barriers at this location is not proposed at this time.

The CityLink project involved the tolling of a roadway which had previously been a public road. As part of the commercial arrangements to facilitate the project a higher standard of noise attenuation was negotiated which could be maintained by the toll revenue stream.

The VicRoads' Traffic Noise Reduction Policy states that noise attenuation will be installed when the noise level exceeds 68 decibels for 10 per cent of the time between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight on existing roads.

The Eastern Freeway is an existing road and therefore are subject to the above section of the VicRoads Traffic Noise Reduction Policy.

### **Planning: Eastern Victoria Region zoning**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 6 May 2009

#### **REPLY:**

The Green Wedge Zone was introduced in November 2003 to the Victorian Planning Provisions to provide an improved framework for managing land use and development in green wedges. In May 2004, rural zoned land was rezoned to the new Green Wedge Zone. The purpose of the zone is to protect and conserve green wedge land and to encourage sustainable land management practices, sustainable farming activities and to provide for a variety of productive agricultural uses. The amendments were a direct result of the *Melbourne 2030* initiatives for green wedge land.

The introduction of the Green Wedge Zone in 2004 did not remove any existing rights pertaining to a business which was operating lawfully at the time the zone was implemented. A business operating lawfully at this time can continue to operate under the current Planning Scheme provisions, despite rezoning of the land.

With regards to Mr Wales land at 110 Lowes Road, Yarra Junction where he operates a contractor's yard, I understand that the Shire of Yarra Ranges refusal to issue a permit to allow this use to continue is being challenged at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. I am informed that the site has a long history of non-compliance with the Planning Scheme provisions dating back to May 1987 and was not a lawfully operating use at the time the land was rezoned to Green Wedge Zone. It is not appropriate for me to comment on the merits of Mr Wales application as VCAT is the appropriate forum for review.

I understand that a planning permit was issued for the La Fontaine Estate Winery by Casey City Council in October 2007. This approval did not include the 150 seat restaurant which is currently operating at the site.

The restaurant use operating at La Fontaine Estate Winery commenced without a planning permit in late 2007 and was therefore not a legally operating use when the land was rezoned to Green Wedge Zone in 2004. I understand

that Council have attempted to work with the owner of the site to resolve this matter and are yet to take enforcement action.

### **Crib Point: bitumen plant**

**Raised with:** Minister for Planning

**Raised by:** Mr O'Donohue

**Raised on:** 3 June 2009

#### **REPLY:**

An application for planning permit (P07/0787) proposing the use and development of a bitumen storage facility including the construction of two 10,000 cubic metre storage tanks and two smaller day tanks together with a loading gantry and associated infrastructure on land at 97 The Esplanade, Crib Point was received by the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council on 24 April 2007.

On 26 October 2007, the applicant lodged an Application for Review (P2758/2007) with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) against Council's failure to determine the application within the prescribed time.

On 1 November 2007, the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council requested I call in the Application for Review.

On 8 April 2008, I determined to call in Application for Review P2758/2007 from VCAT following Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's request that I intervene.

I appointed an Advisory Committee to advise on the matters I referred to it. The Advisory Committee held a public hearing in early August 2008.

My Department is currently considering the recommendations of the Advisory Committee I appointed to assess the proposal before I make a recommendation to the Governor in Council.



**WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES**

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

**Thursday, 25 June 2009**

**Land tax: rates**

**Raised with:** Treasurer

**Raised by:** Mrs Peulich

**Raised on:** 26 February 2009

**REPLY:**

At the time that the tragic bushfires of 'Black Saturday' hit Victoria the 2009 land tax assessments were at the mailing house due to be issued the week after the fires.

In the days proceeding 'Black Saturday' the government made the decision that land tax assessments to properties affected by the bushfires were to be put on hold.

In this case more than 200,000 land tax assessments needed to be checked off to against information regarding bushfires the size and scope of which were at that point still unknown and that were still raging in some areas. This process could not be undertaken with 100% accuracy.

The member would be aware that land tax is exempted from a land-holder's Principle Place of Residence and that a landowner may own land in different parts of the state that may be liable for land tax.

In order to guard against any assessment being sent to a bushfire affected property at that time the Government made the decision to include a letter indicating that if a bushfire victim did receive an assessment contact with the SRO would ensure their situation would be met with compassionately.

So while the added piece of literature with the land tax assessment may have caused the member a slight inconvenience the Brumby Labor Government makes no apology for having taken this step.

It is also worth noting that the very fact that the cycle was able to go ahead with bushfire affected areas excised from the assessments means that the government had acted swiftly and compassionately to assist those affected by the bushfires and that the cost of including the additional letter was minimal.

Thank you for raising this matter to my attention.