

## QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AND FURTHER INFORMATION AGREED TO BE SUPPLIED AT THE HEARINGS

Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

### ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE PORTFOLIO

#### Question 1.

**Please indicate whether the Department has examined the status of Victoria's marine emblem, the common or weedy sea dragon.**

***(Page 11 of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change portfolio transcript)***

Victoria's marine emblem, the common or weedy sea dragon, is endemic to Australian temperate marine waters. It occurs in waters from the central New South Wales coast around the south coast of Australia to south-western Western Australia.

A number of Victoria's Marine Sanctuaries and Marine National Parks, such as the Point Addis Marine National Park, have resident populations of the species.

The weedy sea dragon is not considered a threatened species in Victoria under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* as it is widely distributed across Victoria and broadly across southern Australia.

However, all species of the family Syngnathidae (seahorses, sea dragons and pipefish) are declared Protected Aquatic Biota (PAB) under the *Fisheries Act 1995*, and declared as a protected marine species under s. 248 of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The provisions of these Acts provide protection from various activities that may impact on the species.

While there are no departmental or Parks Victoria monitoring programs designed specifically to assess the population status of this species, a large number of subtidal reef kelp habitat locations are monitored that assess the condition of its typical habitat.

In addition, the Andrews Labor Government recently invested almost \$300,000 in reef fish monitoring in Port Phillip Bay to extend and expand the Victorian National Parks Association's ReefWatch program. This will provide an opportunity to survey the weedy sea dragon as part of a holistic reef fish community monitoring program.

The government is also acting to improve the condition of the marine waters where the weedy sea dragon is found. The new Port Phillip Bay Environmental Management Plan will provide a framework to ensure that government and other organisations work together with the community to address key challenges to the health and management of the Bay.

**Question 2.**

**Please indicate the cost of the ministerial trip to Germany in 2017.**

***(Pages 19-21 of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change portfolio transcript)***

\$38,227

**Question 3.**

**Please provide further information on how processing facilities are being supported to adapt to increasing volumes and new types of e-waste through this budget.**

***(Page 23 of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change portfolio transcript)***

The e-waste landfill ban will complement the existing collection network established under the Commonwealth's National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme, which currently captures only televisions, computers and computer peripherals.

The main costs of introducing an e-waste landfill ban are associated with building appropriate e-waste storage receptacles or areas and collecting and transporting e-waste to e waste processors.

The 2017-18 budget includes \$15 million funding to support local councils to improve the existing collection network, such as upgrading transfer stations so they can safely collect and store e-waste. This builds on the allocation of \$1.5 million from the 2016-17 budget that will be used for an education campaign to help councils as they implement the ban.

E-waste processors are expected to benefit from the e-waste ban because the value of the materials they recover is likely to offset their processing costs.

Our research, including consultation with processing facilities, indicates recovery options exist in Victoria and Australia for all e-waste types, and processors have capacity to manage the expected increase in volumes of incoming e-waste, at least in the first few years of the ban.

A further \$7.6 million for resource recovery infrastructure was allocated in the 2017-18 Budget. Some of these funds could be used to improve e-waste processing infrastructure to adapt to emerging e-waste streams, should future assessment prove this is needed.

**Question 4.**

**Please provide further information on the output initiative 'Unlocking the benefits of parks for all Victorians (*Budget Paper No.3: 2017-18 Service Delivery*, pp.65, 70) (*Page 23 of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change portfolio transcript*)**

The Victorian Government has delivered \$31.8 million in the 2017-18 State Budget to ensure safe and equitable access to parks and the benefits they provide.

This initiative will deliver:

- up to 60 new full time equivalent staff;
- a new asset management system; and
- redevelopment of the Parks Victoria website.

This will ensure that Parks Victoria's workforce grows in line with increased demand from domestic visitation and international tourism, and to deliver conservation programs as our parks estate experiences impacts from climate change and invasive species.

New ranger staff will also be key to on ground delivery of invasive plant and animal control programs as part of the *Biodiversity 2036* strategy.

Parks Victoria's built assets are critical to providing great experiences for tourists and visitors, who in turn support the economic health of Victoria's regional communities.

Ensuring these assets are well managed and safe is a key responsibility of Parks Victoria and the Victorian Government is investing to make sure this capability grows in line with expected visitor growth from overseas markets - this is directly linked to the Government's *Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy* and China strategy, *Partnerships for Prosperity*.

As is investment in a redeveloped website which will enable Parks Victoria to engage with visitors directly, ensuring they have the best information available to have a safe and enjoyable visit in our parks.

**Question 5.**

**Please provide a copy of the report into the use of credit cards prepared by McGrathNicol. (*Pages 27-28 of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change portfolio transcript*)**

I am considering the recommendations of the report into the use of credit cards at Parks Victoria. As such, it is not appropriate to release the report at this stage.

Parks Victoria corporate credit cards are issued to staff pursuant to the Financial Management Act 1994, which recognises that purchasing cards are an efficient procurement method and can lead to reduced administrative costs.

Parks Victoria manages large areas of public land which requires significant and regular travel between locations, often over large distances and several days. Staff often incur work-related travel costs for food, equipment and accommodation and the provision of a corporate credit card is considered appropriate and efficient.

In anticipation of receiving the final report, Parks Victoria has commenced the implementation of some improved processes and procedures.

Parks Victoria has undertaken an internal review of the number of corporate credit cards in circulation with the intent of reducing the number of active cards by over 50 per cent.

New travel and accommodation arrangements have been implemented, and state-wide contracts for building and hardware supplies replacing the need to use credit cards for these services.

Parks Victoria is continuing to work closely with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning to review current systems, policies and procedures, ahead of the formal release of the report to Parks Victoria for its consideration, to ensure full and ongoing compliance with government requirements and best practice.

**Question 6.**

**Please provide a copy (electronic format) of the latest Parks Victoria's asset report to the Committee.**

***(Page 34 of the Energy, Environment and Climate Change portfolio transcript)***

The attached report details the listed assets stored within the ParkView Asset System as at 23 May, 2017 listed from best to worst as requested. These assets are entered into the system when the asset is first built or acquired.

The assets Parks Victoria manage range from bollards and signage through to Visitor Centres, large piers and jetties. The 33,000 assets are state-wide and are located at visitor nodes, scenic attractions and across the parks estate. There are three types of management overlay for listed assets:

1. Parks Victoria's responsibility due to the asset being within the boundary of a designated park
2. Parks Victoria being the nominated agency in a Committee of Management arrangement and;
3. Parks Victoria in the capacity as owner/manager of the asset which is located outside of the boundary of a designated park.

Asset repair and maintenance funding is prioritised and often aligns with visitor numbers, compliance with legislation and risk profile.

A subjective assessment by an Asset Officer or other Parks Victoria employee is typically undertaken to determine the current condition of the asset. The asset is rated on a scale.

Parks Victoria also engages with experts in the field of asset management to assist the organisation in assessing those assets that are high risk, require safety or legislative compliance and these assessments assist Parks Victoria to prioritise asset maintenance.