

Responses to Questions on Notice or further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

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Question: Have you provided Infrastructure Australia updated costs and details in the value capture mechanism?

Transcript extract

Richard WELCH: Have you provided Infrastructure Australia updated costs and details in the value capture mechanism?

Jacinta ALLAN: In terms of the actual detail and the exchange of information, that is being handled as appropriate by our officials, so I will have to suggest that might be something we can come back to, particularly the Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop. But I do want to be really clear, in terms of providing Infrastructure Australia with information that we need to provide, it comes in the context that Infrastructure Australia itself, as I just indicated to you, thinks that this is a project of great importance to your community and to the state of Victoria, and it is in that context that we are working with our partner in the federal Labor government to deliver this project. It is just so vitally important. Depending on whether you are focused on productivity, getting cars off roads, connecting a train line to Monash University, making sure workers can get to where they need to go or making sure we can build more homes near train stations exactly where they should be, this is a project that stacks up, and we are getting on and delivering. We will work, as we have for other projects –

Can I be clear: this is working with Infrastructure Australia. It is great. I must say, I was not always able to work with a federal government on our projects, the Metro Tunnel being a case in point where money was taken off the Metro Tunnel by the former federal Liberal government. We have got a government that we are working with. I know this is hard to appreciate for some, but we are really delighted to be working with them.

Answer

The Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop was asked this question and provided an answer at her PAEC hearing.

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Premier Jacinta Allan
Jade Benham
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Question: Are you able to provide the emergency services funding breakdown by agency, on notice?

Transcript extract

Jade BENHAM: Thank you, Premier. Are you able to provide the emergency services funding breakdown by agency, on notice?

Jacinta ALLAN: On notice? Yes, we can look. I think you might also have the minister later today as well. I am sure we can provide that information. We can take that on notice. But if I can, in answering that, point to something that I personally find quite interesting, as I think would any of us who have experienced the frequency of the flood, fire and storm disasters that we have seen in recent times. I have said before that we have taken an existing levy and expanded it in recognition that more is being asked of all of our emergency services. One of the other recommendations out of the 2009–10 royal commission was to move to a ‘one emergency, one agency’ response where all of our emergency services work together, which saw the introduction of an emergency management commissioner, who heads up the State Control Centre.

In the last year, my advice is that the State Control Centre has been activated for 203 days. That is a significant number. And it is not nine to five, it is 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and there are 85 full-time staff that work in there. If I can give you an example of what the people in there do, all the different uniforms and all the different agencies come together in one place. I have been in there on a number of occasions, particularly when there have been fires in the western part of the state, and because of the technology that they have and the way the agencies work together, they can use the technology to predict where the fire will go, send out the emergency alerts and literally save lives. That is the work that is funded. That is the work that is central to saving lives in this state. More and more is being asked of our emergency services – not just our fire services, which were previously covered by the fire services levy. More and more is being asked. More and more lives are being saved as a result of the work that goes on by our State Control Centre teams, the investment in technology and the way the agencies work together, and I think every dollar is worth it. Every dollar is worth it because of the way it is saving lives and saving communities.

Answer

The Minister for Emergency Services was asked this question and has provided an answer.

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Secretary Jeremi Moule
Nick McGowan
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Question: Provide a number for actual headcount for each ministerial office, including the Premier's office?

Transcript extract

Nick McGOWAN: Secretary, can you provide a number for actual headcount for each ministerial office, including the Premier's office?

Jeremi MOULE: I only have the data in front of me expressed as an FTE figure, Mr McGowan.

Nick McGOWAN: Okay. Can you undertake to provide that to us later?

Jeremi MOULE: I can if our data allows us to do that, yes.

Answer

	Data Report for March 2025
Office	Headcount
Premier's Private Office	88
Other Ministerial Offices	202
Opposition Office	19
Total	309

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Secretary Jeremi Moule
Nick McGowan
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Question: Provide a breakdown of how many DLOs there are in each ministerial office and/or the Premier's office?

Transcript extract

Nick McGOWAN: Thank you. I would appreciate that. Also, whether that includes or is separate from DLOs?

Jeremi MOULE: The figures that I have given you exclude DLOs, who are department employees.

Nick McGOWAN: Okay. And can we get a breakdown of how many DLOs there are in each ministerial office and/or the Premier's office?

Jeremi MOULE: I can certainly provide that to you for DPC and the ministers, including the Premier, who are part of our portfolio. I would need to see whether we have visibility of those numbers across government.

Answer

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has the following number of Departmental Liaison Officers for portfolio ministers:

- Premier – 3
- Multicultural Affairs – 1
- Treaty and First Peoples – 1

The Department does not have information on the number of Departmental Liaison Officers in other departments.

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Premier Jacinta Allan
Nick McGowan
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Question: How much of the planning money in the 2025–26 Budget is for the Maroondah Hospital?

Transcript extract

Nick McGOWAN: I must do a few things here, Premier – it grieves me. There is a press release your predecessor put out – and it does relate to this budget, so I will come to that – that talks about the new Queen Elizabeth hospital. Nobody likes that name, so we will try and change that. It talks here about a hospital in Maroondah, and it says construction is expected to start in 2025. I am terribly excited, as you would appreciate – I am trying to contain my enthusiasm today. I was just going to check which month we can expect the Maroondah Hospital to be commenced in this year.

Jacinta ALLAN: As you are aware, as the local member for this community, planning is continuing to be underway. It does look like that construction ambition is not going to be met. However, the planning continues to be underway, consistent with the planning that was provided in the 2023–24 budget.

Nick McGOWAN: I suppose what concerns me – and you know that I jest, but nonetheless – is that there is planning money in this budget. It is not clear how much of that planning money is for Maroondah, and I guess the more concerning element is there is no money for construction.

Jacinta ALLAN: Yes, I do – I absolutely understand every community’s desire to see their local hospital facilities upgraded. I recently opened the new hospital at Maryborough, which is amazing in terms of not just the infrastructure and the asset that it is for the community but what goes on inside it. In terms of an update on the planning and how that then segues into construction, I will have to either take that on board or suggest that it is asked when the relevant minister comes before the committee.

Nick McGOWAN: That would be most useful, because of course you will recall also that in 2018 the people of Maroondah were promised an emergency department for children, and that was never delivered. We are now some two elections down the line and very quickly approaching another election, as you and I know, and sadly, not a cent has gone into construction for a new hospital in Maroondah.

Jacinta ALLAN: I will take that as a statement.

Answer

The 2025–26 State Budget (Budget Paper No. 4) includes \$102.563 million in Total Estimated Investment (TEI) under the Hospital Infrastructure Delivery Fund (HIDF) for continued planning for several projects, including the new Queen Elizabeth II Hospital.

Planning for the new hospital is ongoing to ensure it meets the current and future needs of Melbourne’s east and Victoria’s health system. Once completed, this planning work will inform the overall funding requirements for this project.

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Premier Jacinta Allan
Nick McGowan
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Question: Why has Ringwood Secondary College been without a stadium and any site constraints?

Transcript extract

Nick McGOWAN: They do indeed. Ringwood Secondary College have now been without a stadium for many, many years. They have over 1700 kids and not a single court indoors. I do not know what I have to do. I am almost bursting, and you know it is not good for me to burst. But in all seriousness, we had the Ringwood Hawks refuse 600 kids from the basketball program last year, the domestic program, because they just do not have enough courts. This is a plague in the eastern suburbs. We do not have enough courts, not just for basketball but for netball, for volleyball, for badminton, shuttlecock, whatever you want to choose. Ringwood college are entitled to a stadium. They do not have one. The council are on board. Everyone else is on board. We just cannot get it to happen. It is a tragedy. It does not matter what I do, every year I am saying the same things again and again and I am not getting traction.

Jacinta ALLAN: I will have to take that on notice. I have visited Ringwood Secondary College, so I am aware of – is it right to describe it as having some constraints around its site as well? Let me take that one on notice, because your broader point around how these facilities are not just important for the school but also for the broader community is a really important one, and I know the Minister for Education, the Deputy Premier, is looking at this issue about access to school facilities and community use. In terms of the specifics around Ringwood, I will have to take that one on notice.

Answer

Since 2015–16, a total of \$25.235 million has been allocated to deliver several upgrade projects at Ringwood Secondary College, including a new junior school building, replacing modular buildings with permanent classrooms, refurbishing the library, reconfiguring the car park, a 2-storey senior learning centre, a new canteen, and a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) building.

I am advised that an extension of the current gym was considered during the college's most recent capital works project but was not included. All schools that receive capital funding participate in the Asset Management Planning process to confirm the scope and ensure their capital projects are consistent with their educational direction.

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Premier Jacinta Allan
Nick McGowan
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Question: Is the government going to invest in the buildings of Marlborough Primary School?

Transcript extract

Nick McGOWAN: Thank you, Premier. Also Marlborough Primary School – I have raised this with the secretary Jenny Atta. She has now moved on to the Department of Health, but I did it pointedly in front of the minister too. Again, it is a school that is struggling with low enrolments, and unless we are prepared to invest something in their buildings, parents drive there and they keep driving by and they go to other schools. With the tightening down of the enrolment procedures, we are either going to condemn the school to failure or we are going to invest in it. The school committee, the school council and the principal, who has been chosen by the department – everyone, it would appear – wants this to work, except no-one is prepared to put the money behind that. And unless money gets behind that, in the form of a few new classrooms and a reception block to make it look better and appealing to parents, it will die. So that is Marlborough Primary School.

Jacinta ALLAN: Again, your points are well made and your advocacy is well made. Again I am not aware of the specifics of this school. Even though we often talk about the \$18 billion that we have invested in school capital, clearly there continues to be more schools that need to come into that capital pipeline. This year's budget has \$1.5 billion in school capital that has been allocated. We are all local members, and we all have a keen understanding of, when schools miss out, how deeply frustrated they are. But on that one specifically, I will have to take that on notice as well. Again, the minister is here tomorrow, so he is getting good warning of what you are going to ask tomorrow.

Nick McGOWAN: He has good warning indeed. Likewise, the police minister – we are 15 uniformed police officers down in Box Hill. We have just about 10 too few police officers in Ringwood. Crime is an issue in some of our areas, and it is not one that I talk about lightly, because I am not one that wants to scare people.

Answer

The Victorian Government's ongoing responsibility is to balance and prioritise the needs of over 1,580 government schools, all with varying requirements. Since 2015, we have funded \$18.5 billion to build, upgrade and maintain school infrastructure across Victoria.

In 2019, \$200,000 was allocated under the fifth round of the Inclusive Schools Fund to deliver a sensory and passive play garden at Marlborough Primary School. These works were completed in the second quarter of 2021.

When allocating funding for school upgrades, the government uses all available information including condition assessments, enrolment projections and pre-existing project plans.

Alongside the school upgrades, all schools are also supported through annual maintenance funding to manage essential maintenance and compliance matters through the Student Resource Package.

The Department of Education monitors population and enrolment data and undertakes annual in-depth analyses to understand enrolment trends and forecast local demand in established areas.

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The needs of all schools, including Marlborough Primary School, will continue to be considered when determining future priorities for the capital works program. We will continue to use all available data when allocating funding in future state budgets.