

Member	Roma Britnell	Electorate	South West Coast
Period	1July 2025 to 30 September 2025		

Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance			
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance			\$13,140.71
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance			\$3,051.50

Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance			
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance			\$0.00
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter			No

Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance			
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance			\$6,483.21
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located			Oakleigh South

Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
31-Aug-25	01-Sep-25	Portland/Heywood Listening Posts for Electorate business	\$356.00	Portland	\$319.33

Total number of nights for travel allowance claims 1
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance \$356.00

Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport

Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims 0
Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance \$0.00

Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims			
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid
19/06/2025	25/07/2025	Visit to Europe, including Austria, Croatia, Greece and Turkey to review and develop policy in portfolios pf Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight and Child Protection and also issues affecting the South West Coast	\$7,446.73

Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims 36
Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance \$7,446.73

PARLIAMENTARY TRAVEL REPORT

Europe

**Report of the review of ports, child protection,
Gallipoli and issues affecting South West Coast**

June 19th - July 24th 2025

ATTENDEES:

Ms Roma Britnell MP
Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight and Child Protection
Member for South West Coast

1. Purpose

This report is to provide details of the trip undertaken in June/July 2025 to review the following.

- 1) Research and develop of policy in portfolio of Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight and review of the infrastructure of ports in Europe.
- 2) Research into Child Protection policy in Europe in portfolio of Shadow Minister for Child Protection.
- 3) Self-education of Australian military involvement in Turkey during World War 2, specifically at Gallipoli and Cape Helles.
- 4) Review of transport between capital cities, specifically trains and Fast Rail as Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight.
- 5) The review was undertaken by myself and I was also accompanied by a volunteer who acted as my assistant by attending meetings and assisting with research.
- 6) Self-education of Australian military involvement on the Gallipoli Peninsula during World War 1.

2. Summary

The trip was invaluable to gain understanding of the following:

- 1) Future proofing the Port of Melbourne and policy development, challenges of ship rationalisation on a world scale and how this will impact Melbourne.
- 2) Policy development for Station pier in Port Melbourne, specifically for cruise ships in my shadow portfolio of Ports and Freight.
- 3) Policy development in my Shadow Portfolio of Child Protection. Understanding of challenges with foster parenting, residential care and children's perceived sense of abandonment leading to psychological issues.
- 4) Policy development of legislation around mooring of vessels in my shadow port portfolio of Ports and Freight, specifically in relation to proposed legislation.
- 5) The majority of cities in UK and Europe are serviced by fast rail with the trains capable of travelling at speeds up to 300km/hr. This is comparison to the current rail network connecting Warrnambool and the South West Coast to the Melbourne CBD where the trains are speed restricted due to track and train reliability and maintenance.
- 6) All services seen in Europe had food and drink services, even with limited travel times. Was also of importance to investigate ticketing systems given the delayed roll out of updated myki system and delayed access to new ticket system on Warrnambool line.
- 7) Greater understanding of how other countries have coped with a poor economy and viewing relevant examples relating to how Victoria will need to innovate and optimise opportunities with business, the economy and tourism to improve the financial outlook of the state.
- 8) Visiting Gallipoli and Cape Helles in person was the only way I could have achieved a full understanding of the horrors that these young Australian's experienced and was extremely important in allowing myself to have an understanding of Australia's role in WW1 and the immense loss of lives.

3. Travel and Accommodation

This trip included the following expenses as part of the annual overseas travel allowance.

- a) Flights from Melbourne to Vienna and return Istanbul to Melbourne. \$3203.00
- b) Flight from Zagreb Croatia to Split Croatia. \$175.00
- c) Flight from Dubrovnik Croatia to Athens Greece. \$410.00
- d) Accommodation in Vienna 3 nights \$1090.00.
- e) Accommodation in Zagreb 3 nights \$818.00.
- f) Accommodation in Split 2 night \$830.00.
- g) Accommodation in Dubrovnik 1 night \$520.00.
- h) Accommodation in Athens 3 nights \$702.00.
- i) Accommodation in Istanbul 4 night \$960.00.

4. Review observations.

21st June Vienna

During a visit to the Austrian Parliament, I gained valuable insight into the workings of Austria's democratic system, including the roles of both the National Assembly and the Federal Assembly. Key topics on the parliamentary agenda included government subsidies for diesel, the implementation of rent caps, and the proposed abolition of the carbon tax.

I also explored Austria's approach to urban mobility, with a particular focus on bike lane regulations and infrastructure. Vienna boasts an impressive 1,600 kilometres of bike lanes, which was especially relevant given Melbourne's growing ambition to become a bike-friendly city with reduced reliance on motor vehicles.

22nd June Vienna

I attended a meeting with Concordia, organised by Martina Raytchinova, their International Program Director. Concordia has developed a program focused on supporting Indigenous children from Moldova and neighbouring countries like Romania—many of whom have been left behind as their parents migrate to Western Europe for work.

One of the most thought-provoking outcomes of our discussion was the perspective shared by child protection organisations regarding foster care. They raised concerns about whether traditional foster arrangements offer the same level of emotional support and integration as Victoria's home-based residential care model. In particular, they noted that children placed in foster families often feel like outsiders—treated as second-class compared to the biological children in the household.

In contrast, the residential care model used in Victoria, which houses up to four children in a supervised, family-style setting, appears to foster a stronger sense of belonging. These homes provide consistent, caring oversight and allow children to live among peers who share similar experiences of abandonment and displacement. This environment not only offers emotional stability but also helps build a supportive community where children feel understood and valued.

23rd June Vienna

I travelled from Austria to Zagreb via a high-speed train, which included a transfer to a local service. The journey was impressively efficient, with trains running punctually and reaching speeds of up to 160 km/h. Onboard amenities included reserved seating and either a food buffet or a trolley service—features that stood out in contrast to the new Velocity trains operating between Melbourne and Warrnambool, which currently lack these conveniences.

24th June Zagreb

I participated in a meeting with young people from across Europe to explore the education system, with a particular focus on pathways to accessing high-level tertiary education.

The Netherlands emerged as a central point of discussion, especially regarding university entry requirements. Much of the conversation revolved around the heavy emphasis on academic scores, often at the expense of recognising broader life skills.

One striking quote from the meeting highlighted this concern: “Many doctors, for example, are autistic and lack empathy. That’s why more professions in the Netherlands are beginning to realise that admission to study medicine shouldn’t be based solely on entrance scores, but also on the personal skill set a student brings—particularly those relevant to patient care.”

25th June Zagreb

I visited the Nazaorova Children’s Home in Zagreb to learn about Croatia’s child care system, focusing on the 0–7 age group. The facility, a multi-storey building, serves as the country’s primary refuge for children affected by poverty, abuse, and neglect—often linked to substance misuse. Though designed to house 60 children, it typically accommodates 80–90, as was the case during my visit.

I spoke with psychologist Maria (name withheld for privacy), who works in the infant care unit. The institution’s core mission is to provide immediate care, with placement assessments conducted by social workers. Services include psychological evaluations, speech therapy, and medical assessments. Many children have disabilities, ranging from speech impediments to Down syndrome.

While the official policy limits stays to six months to prevent behavioural issues, legal delays often extend this to up to three years. Some children are adopted within three months, but fostering remains rare despite financial incentives. Adoption is more common, though children of non-Croatian heritage face greater challenges in placement.

Funding primarily comes from UNICEF and the Croatian government.

26th June Split

During my visit to Split, Croatia, I had the opportunity to observe the country's largest passenger port in full operation. As Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight, it was particularly valuable to witness one of the Mediterranean’s busiest harbours, which serves as a key hub for domestic and international ferry lines, cruise ships, and cargo traffic. The insights gained from this visit will directly inform future policy development in my portfolio.

27th June Split

I met with a mooring company to discuss key issues surrounding safety protocols and the qualifications and training of linesmen. Observing mooring operations firsthand provided valuable insight, particularly in the context of the Roads and Ports Legislation Amendment (Road Safety and Other Matters) currently before Parliament.

The visit was directly relevant to my responsibilities as Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight and will help inform future policy considerations in this area.

28th June Split

Met with Zoran Kleepin who is the owner of vessels Nautilus, Fantasia and Spalato. Zoran is qualified as a master with 40 years' experience sailing vessels around Croatia.

Zoran gave me a tour his boat Spalato and invited me to the engine room and bridge.

We discussed the training he undertook 40 years ago and how training had to be increased to meet requirements for health and safety of international tourists.

29th June Vis

I met with Zvonko Cabrijan, Director of Catalina Cruises, to discuss the impact of changing government policies on training and operations within the tourism sector. With over a decade of leadership at Catalina Cruises, Zvonko has primarily catered to German and Austrian tourists, though recent advertising efforts have led to a noticeable rise in visitors from Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

Our conversation covered a range of topics, including port fees, government regulations, and the business relationships between tour operators, port authorities, and shipping owners. The insights shared offered a valuable perspective on how evolving political landscapes influence the tourism industry's operational framework.

5th July Dubrovnik

I met with Luca Kleepin, who is currently training to become a ship's master with the goal of captaining a vessel on the Adriatic Sea. Having completed all formal training, he now has one year of on-the-job experience remaining. Our conversation explored the differences between his journey and that of his father, who is also a ship's master—a role that has been passed down through generations in their family. This tradition is emblematic of many trades and professions in the region, where maritime expertise is deeply rooted in family heritage.

6th July Dubrovnik

During our visit to Croatia, we explored the impact of government overreach on industry and personal freedoms, drawing parallels with current governance in Victoria. One of the most insightful conversations was with Christian Sahaka, a veteran of the Croatian-Serbian war (1991–1995). He spoke candidly about reconciliation, sharing that he now has Serbian friends and that many have moved on—highlighting the resilience and pragmatism of the region.

A key theme throughout our discussions was the value Croats place on free-market principles and limited government intervention. Over the past 30 years, Croatia has made remarkable progress in recovering from a high-debt position following the war, transitioning from communism to a market-driven economy. This transformation offered compelling lessons for Victoria, underscoring the need to innovate and unlock opportunities across business, tourism, and economic development to strengthen the state's financial future.

7th July Athens

I visited the Port of Piraeus and met with Nikos Mansour from port operations. As the largest port in Greece and the busiest passenger port in the eastern Mediterranean, Piraeus plays a vital role in both national and regional transport.

While there, I observed dozens of ferries departing and several cruise ships docked—clear evidence of the port's significance to tourism. Our discussion focused on the port's critical contribution to local economies and its broader impact on Greece's thriving tourism industry.

8th July Athens

I had the pleasure of exploring the birthplace of democracy alongside local guide Vangelis Papanastasiou with a visit to the Greek Parliament. This experience offered a profound insight into the foundational principles of democratic governance, particularly the concept of *isonomia*—the idea that all citizens are equal before the law. This principle, which dates back to the 5th century BCE (not AD), was revolutionary for its time and remains a cornerstone of modern democratic societies.

Discussions with local officials and historians highlighted how democracy in ancient Athens was not just a political system but a societal commitment to fairness, civic participation, and accountability.

9th July Athens

While in Athens, I took the opportunity to explore the city's urban train system, drawing comparisons with Melbourne's metropolitan rail network and the ticketing system upgrade.

Athens has a seamless tap-on/tap-off experience using credit cards, and its stations are visually appealing and well-designed. However, a striking contrast was the widespread presence of graffiti throughout the network, which detracted from the otherwise modern infrastructure.

Another notable observation was the strong police presence across the city. Officers were frequently stationed in groups of three at major intersections and street corners. This level of visibility stood out in comparison to Melbourne, where street-level policing has become less prominent in recent years.

It was reminiscent of the more visible police presence during previous Liberal governments, raising questions about current approaches to public safety and urban policing.

11th July Montenegro

During my visit to Montenegro, I toured the Port of Bar and met with Captain Craig Street to discuss the region's industrial and maritime landscape. Notably, aluminium production in the town ceased in 2023 due to an unreliable electricity supply and rising manufacturing costs. These energy challenges have also led to frequent power outages and growing concerns about environmental impacts.

In response, the local industry has shifted toward value-adding in aluminium products—a strategic adaptation that resonates with me – as we have ongoing discussions in Portland, Victoria, where efforts continue to secure a cost-effective and reliable energy supply for the aluminium processing plant.

Montenegro's strong maritime identity also stood out, drawing clear parallels with my electorate in the South West Coast. Both regions share a deep connection to the sea and rely heavily on port infrastructure and coastal industries to drive economic growth.

19th July Istanbul

Over lunch, I met with Oktay Kaymakcalanto from Istanbul's port operations to discuss the groundbreaking development of 'Galataport'—the world's first underground cruise vessel terminal. Aside from the wharf itself, all supporting infrastructure, including customs, passport control, and retail spaces, has been ingeniously built beneath the city of Istanbul. This innovative design not only maximises urban space but also integrates seamlessly with the surrounding environment.

The meeting was particularly insightful when viewed in contrast to Station Pier in Melbourne, where limited facilities and constrained development opportunities—due to its proximity to residential areas in Port Melbourne—pose ongoing challenges. Galataport's model offers a compelling example of how strategic planning and architectural innovation can transform port infrastructure, even in densely populated urban settings.

I was scheduled to tour this area on 21st July.

21st July Istanbul

Fascinating tour of Galataport including the waterfront facilities and underground infrastructure.

Spanning over 1.2 km along the Bosphorus, Galataport is a vibrant cultural and commercial hub. The project includes retail spaces, restaurants, art galleries, museums, and office buildings, all designed to blend with the historic Karaköy district. The development has revitalized the area, turning it into a dynamic destination for both locals and tourists.

One of Galataport's standout features is its smart infrastructure. The underground terminal uses a "lift and shift" system that raises the dockside when ships arrive, creating a secure customs zone without disrupting pedestrian access. This allows the promenade to remain open and accessible year-round, a rarity in cruise port design.

Galataport sets a global benchmark for how ports can coexist with urban life, offering a model for cities like Melbourne, where space constraints and residential proximity challenge traditional port expansion. Its blend of innovation, functionality, and public engagement makes it a compelling case study in modern infrastructure planning.



22nd/23rd July Gallipoli.

I undertook a deeply moving two-day tour of Cape Helles and Gallipoli, focusing on the involvement of the First Australian Imperial Force during World War I. This historic battlefield offered a powerful lens through which to better understand Australia's role in the conflict and the loss of life that occurred. Standing on the ground where so many young Australians fought and fell brought a level of insight and emotional connection that no textbook or documentary could ever fully convey.

For the past decade, I've honoured their memory by laying a wreath each Anzac Day on the South West Coast, and I remain committed to continuing that tradition. However, visiting Gallipoli in person gave me a far deeper appreciation of the courage, sacrifice, and unimaginable hardship these soldiers endured. It was a sobering reminder of the cost of war and the enduring legacy of those who served.

This experience not only strengthened my understanding of our military history but also reinforced the importance of remembrance and reflection. Gallipoli is more than a chapter in Australia's story—it's a sacred place that continues to shape our national identity and values.

Roma Britnell MP

State Member of Parliament for South West Coast

Shadow Minister for Ports and Freight

Shadow Minister for Child Protection

94 Liebig Street, Warrnambool, Victoria, 3280

Phone (03) 5562 8230

Email: roma.britnell@parliament.vic.gov.au

website www.romabritnell.com.au