

CHAPTER 8: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Transcript of Evidence

8.1 Aboriginal Affairs portfolio

The transcript for the hearing on this portfolio will be included in a future report of the Committee.

Transcript of Evidence

8.2 Community Development portfolio

The transcript for the hearing on this portfolio will be included in a future report of the Committee.

Transcript of Evidence

8.3 Local Government portfolio

The transcript for the hearing on this portfolio will be included in a future report of the Committee.

Transcript of Evidence

8.4 Planning portfolio

The transcript for the hearing on this portfolio will be included in a future report of the Committee.

Transcript of Evidence

8.5 Multicultural Affairs and Veterans portfolios

VERIFIED TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into budget estimates 2008–09

Melbourne — 12 May 2008

Members

Mr G. Barber	Mr G. Rich-Phillips
Mr R. Dalla-Riva	Mr R. Scott
Ms J. Munt	Mr B. Stensholt
Mr W. Noonan	Dr W. Sykes
Mr M. Pakula	Mr K. Wells

Chair: Mr B. Stensholt
Deputy Chair: Mr K. Wells

Staff

Executive Officer: Ms V. Cheong

Witnesses

Mr J. Brumby, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Veterans' Affairs,
Mr Y. Blacher, Secretary,
Mr S. Gregory, Chief Financial Officer;
Mr G. Lekakis, Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission;
Mr J. MacIsaac, Executive Director, People and Communities; and
Mr A Robinson, Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs.

The CHAIR — I welcome the Premier as Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Veterans Affairs; Mr Yehudi Blacher, Secretary of the Department of Planning and Community Development; Stephen Gregory, chief financial officer; George Lekakis, chairperson of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and James MacIsaac, executive director, and departmental officers. I call on the Premier to make a presentation of about 5 minutes.

Mr BRUMBY — With me I have the chair of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, George Lekakis, and the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Community Development, Yehudi Blacher. I will just quickly run through the slides. I am obviously aware we are running out of time. If there is anything that Mr Lekakis would like to add to what is in the slides on the VMC, I am sure he will.

The CHAIR — We will take both portfolios together — multicultural affairs and veterans affairs together.

Overheads shown.

Mr BRUMBY — I refer firstly to multicultural affairs. Obviously diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and I made the point in my Australia Day speech actually, that there are three defining elements of our character as a state; I thought multiculturalism and diversity was one of those. I have always believed that, and I think it is such an extraordinary strength for us. On Australia Day we launched the book *All Of Us* and that was, I think, a great way to tell that story about diversity.

We have consolidated Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs into the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and that has freed up, George, I think around \$1 million per annum through streamlining and operations?

Mr LEKAKIS — Yes.

Mr BRUMBY — This money has been returned to the community as additional grants. The VMC community grants program in 2007-08 — there was approximately 4.5 million. Again, I just stress that, if I might, in answer to a previous question from Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips, I am told that is a sixfold increase. Sorry, it might have been Richard's question on the budget. That is a sixfold increase. So, again, it is another example of where we are spending — —

Mr DALLA-RIVA — It is still not 90 per cent.

Mr BRUMBY — Well over 90 per cent; it is 500 per cent. By the way the figure on health I did get for you — —

The CHAIR — We are also interested in what is happening in the future, too.

Mr BRUMBY — The figure on health is 112 per cent. That has gone to something like 2500 grants to around 1600 community organisations. I know as a local member just how well these grants are received and how much they help build a stronger community.

There are also multifaith and multicultural harmony issues — 2.1 million over the four years, and in the 2007–08 budget we added \$2 million over two years to this commitment. These are important. Again, if you compare our state — I will not name any other states, but if you compare our state to some of the others in this area of multiculturalism, of migration, of diversity, I think we have a far more harmonious community than many others, particularly others around the world, and that is the case because we work on it to get it right, and there is a lot of goodwill and good faith right across communities, and these grants help in those regards.

In terms of other achievements, the refugee brokerage program has been very successful. It develops community capacity, leadership, youth activity, and there have been nine partnership projects in Melbourne and regional Victoria that we have funded across country Victoria and across metropolitan Melbourne. The language services strategy: in the 2006 budget we committed 3.1 million over four years to language services, and in the last year 11 new projects were targeted.

The cultural precincts enhancement fund: in the 2007-08 budget we committed 8 million over three years to enhance Melbourne's three key cultural precincts — as you know, Little Bourke, Lygon and Lonsdale streets. There is a huge amount of work which has been done to engage those three communities, and we are working

closely with the City of Melbourne, and funding announcements I think are anticipated in the not-too-distant future. I think it is true to say that our \$8 million investment there will leverage additional funding.

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria core funding has been increased from \$180 000 to \$250 000 per annum for four years. It provides a range of advocacy advice and services to government in areas such as multicultural aged care, equal opportunity policy, housing and employment discrimination. In Geelong: I think we have mentioned the DW Hope Centre — \$1 million has been committed to that, and the commonwealth has also committed 1.5 million.

Finally, if I can, just go to the third slide — interpreting and translating. Last week's budget committed 2 million over two years towards further improvements and 800 000 to enhance the skills of the interpreter workforce, 200 000 for technology improvements in interpreting services, and a further 1 million for government agencies to increase their purchase of interpreting and translating services.

Finally, if I can just say, we have a whole-of-government focus, a strong focus on CALD populations access to government services. If you look in the health area for example — justice, education and health — there is 17.7 million which will benefit emerging refugee communities. That will pay for additional nurses for the refugee health nurse program, liaison officers for refugee communities to navigate the justice system and specialised tutoring and additional support for refugee school children. It shows our commitment in this area. Victoria is playing its role in the world, I think, but it is also making sure that we get the best settlement arrangements possible in our state and build strong communities off the back of a very diverse populations.

The CHAIR — Okay. If you could refer quickly to veterans affairs.

Mr BRUMBY — Yes, quickly on veterans affairs. The minister, Tony Robinson, is of course here as well. I am honoured to be both the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs. We have got a few slides on veterans.

One point I will make is, as we get closer to the centenary of Anzac Day in 2015, that I wrote to the former Prime Minister about this issue, that it would be great to have obviously major national celebrations leading up to Anzac Day in 2015, and that Victoria could play a special role in this regard. I suggested we might be the location for the first meeting of a new centenary of Anzac national committee.

Mr BARBER — You said celebration; did you mean commemoration?

Mr BRUMBY — No, I think both actually, because you commemorate Anzac Day but you celebrate the values that Anzac Day epitomises. They are the traditional values of mateship, comradeship, sacrifice, bravery and courage. So I think it is correct to say both. I think that is what veterans would say as well. So we are moving towards that. During that period, of course, the national government was here in Melbourne. So the federal Parliament was located here in Melbourne, so I think we can play a special role to mark that centenary in 2015.

Just in terms of some of the challenges going forward — and the graph behind you there — the key issue is obviously the ageing of our veterans population. There is significant demographic change. From a state government point of view, it is about how we maintain the services, how we support groups like the RSL and others. The average age of World War II veterans is currently 85.7 years. My father is one of those; Dad is 83. As you saw in the media, I walked with him this year on Anzac Day. He was on the *Quiberon*. There is only eight of them now that walk on Anzac Day.

So maintaining services and support for the veterans community is going to be important. At the same time, too, maintaining the services going forward on Anzac Day will also be important. I think you are going to see this continuing growth in the number of people who attend the dawn service. This year we saw something like 35 000 people attend the dawn service. We have certainly seen that resurgence in community interest.

Just very quickly, in terms of the commemoration in education, the spirit of Anzac prize; this is a fantastic program. The 2008 study tour this year went through Singapore and Greece I think. That is right. There is ongoing support to the shrine. I also visited Tidal River earlier this year for the unveiling of the commando memorial there.

On key priorities, as I said, encouraging early planning for the centenary of Anzac in 2015; responding to the recommendations from the Victorian Veterans Council's Victorian veterans sector study; the new budget measures;

we are helping with digitising military unit histories; and working with the Australian Centre for the Moving Image to develop a series of oral histories — that has been obviously well received.

The repat hospital — the 15.5 million there — is a major investment. There is 14.5 million there for the centre for trauma-related mental health to support veteran and non-veterans mental health and wellbeing needs. Of course there is the continuing activity, the study tour and the restoring community war memorials grants program. From my movements around the state, I know that is a very popular program. I have been to little country towns where I have seen two or three members of the same family up there on the honour roll who lost their lives in the First World War. So to restore those memorials is a very positive thing for the local community so that we remember, for all time, the extraordinary contribution that those towns and communities made.

The CHAIR — Are there questions on either of those portfolios?

Mr SCOTT — I noted in your presentation you touched upon the trauma-related mental health services. Can you outline in more detail the initiatives that are in the current budget to address the mental health of veterans? I know it is a particular issue for a number of veterans in the community.

Mr BRUMBY — In terms of veterans mental health, I am advised that 59 per cent of Victorians veterans are aged between 80 and 90 years, and as I indicated a moment ago, the average age is now 85.7. Because of their ages and their service histories, their community has specific needs relating to health and wellbeing. I think that is reflected in the commitment that we made to the Heidelberg repat hospital.

In particular the government's policy Respecting Victoria's Veterans committed to developing a new mental health facility that incorporates the veterans psychiatry unit at the Heidelberg repat hospital. As I mentioned in the slide presentation, this is called the centre for trauma-related mental health. That facility will also support other trauma survivors, and it includes a 20-bed unit for inpatient treatment; 1.5 million was allocated in the 2007–08 budget for design and site preparation; and 15.5 million was allocated in the 2008–09 budget. I think that is very positive, and those projects are being coordinated by the Department of Human Services.

Mr BARBER — Premier, totally or permanently incapacitated veterans are likely to have a lot of medical appointments, obviously, but some of those same disabilities make it very difficult for them to access public transport. Is there anything in the forward estimates to provide state concessions on CityLink e-tags and/or has that been considered by the state government?

Mr BRUMBY — To my knowledge it has not been considered. It is unlikely, although obviously not impossible, if a veteran is not physically able to use public transport then they probably do not have a drivers licence either, if their physical condition is such that they cannot use public transport. I am not aware that that matter has been raised. There are, obviously, a range of programs through the taxi service, I understand — I do not have the details of those; I am happy to get them to you — where, particularly for medical appointments and others, support is provided.

The CHAIR — We can ask the Minister for Roads and Ports.

Mr BRUMBY — I will get that information.

The CHAIR — The DVA provides a lot of support, too.

Mr NOONAN — Can I go to the multicultural affairs area? You talked briefly about a refugee support strategy. I wonder if you could elaborate on that and also advise how the initiatives announced in the 08–09 budget will strengthen the government's reputation as a leader in the area of multicultural affairs?

Mr BRUMBY — As I mentioned before, on the refugee brokerage program, we have committed 3.1 million for this over the four-year period — that is, 2005–06 through to 08–09. That is to support local communities and particularly partnership-based approaches, to improve the use of existing services by refugee communities. In 2007–08, the program fully met its budget output measure. It funded nine partnership projects. They were in Warrnambool, Colac, Shepparton, Hume, Brimbank, Greater Dandenong, Casey, Maribyrnong, Hobsons Bay, Melbourne, Moreland, Yarra, Moonee Valley, Darebin, Banyule, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Melton. Some of those, of course, were grouped geographically. In this financial year the program has worked with in excess of 40 refugee communities across 16 locations. One example of a strategic program outcome was the initial

stages of developing a small number of community enterprises — businesses, for example, that provide refugee women with the opportunity to learn how to run a business.

We think these programs are extremely important. I repeat what I said before: in this area I think we have the right programs in place to support these communities. As you know, many of these families come from areas where they have been exposed to civil war, poverty and death for years and years. They come here, and it is a big adjustment. They need support. They get some of that support from the federal government, but it is not always enough. We are providing additional support, and I believe it is making a difference. Certainly the partnership approach is the key to its success, I think.

Dr SYKES — I would like to ask a question in relation to the Spirit of Anzac schools competition, which is in budget paper 3, page 193, but before I do I would like to preface my question by saying that I certainly share the view of the Premier about the growing importance of Anzac Day and also taking the opportunity to publicly put on the record my gratitude to the minister responsible, Mr Tony Robinson, and David Roberts for involving me in the commemorative services in France, where I participated in the commemorative services at Villers-Bretonneux and nearby communities.

We agree that it is important to continue to grow the spirit of Anzac and, as has been indicated, the veterans ages are increasing, and therefore there is a need to recruit young people to take over the reins. I note in relation to the spirit of Anzac schools competition that the number of participants has decreased — they were at 241 in 06–07 and they have dropped to 183 in 07–08. I am wondering, is there is an explanation for that? Is it related to funding? Is it related to toughening of the criteria? If so, what is being done to address that issue and get the numbers back up so that we can have more and more young people involved?

Mr BRUMBY — We certainly want to see more young people involved. Thank you, too, for your comments thanking the minister assisting the Minister for Veterans' Affairs — I am the minister, as you know — and thank you for your comments supporting the minister assisting in terms of your travel. I should say in terms of the Western Front and Villers-Bretonneux, as I indicated in my speech at the Anzac Day lunch this year, my great-uncle, Ernest Brumby, lost his life at Pozieres. Like many of them there, he lasted two days. If you read the history of that area — and you are lucky, you have seen it firsthand; I have not seen it, I have only read the history of that area — you realise the extraordinary and unbelievable loss of life. In terms of the Spirit of Anzac competition numbers, I will get advice on that. The funding has not changed, so I guess it is just the numbers who are applying?

When it goes to Gallipoli, the numbers go up. Can I just say more generally, that since 2004–05 more than 750 Victorian students from across the state have participated and as a result, ~39 year-9 students have been selected to participate in the 2005–06–07 and 2008 tours. So the participation is very strong indeed; 10 students were involved in the 2008 tour and 7 adults accompanied them on that trip. Perhaps the minister assisting me —

The CHAIR — Yes, we welcome the Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs, Tony Robinson, to join the hearing.

Mr BRUMBY — Do you have any comments to add?

Mr ROBINSON — Thanks, Premier. Just two comments to Dr Sykes. Firstly, the numbers do tend to ebb and flow a little depending on whether the trip goes to Gallipoli. I think we have done four trips and one has included Gallipoli. This year it was Greece and Crete so we have experienced a little bit of a fall-off but we do appreciate the fact. I think next year we may go back to Gallipoli so we expect that there will be a pick up there.

Secondly, whilst overseas — and you have alluded to the recent visit — I spoke to the Western Australian school group; their competition, unlike ours, runs for all secondary students from year 7 through to year 11 and ours only runs for year 9 students. I think proportionately they get far fewer applications than you would think compared to us. They have five times as many applicants but I think they have less than twice the number of submissions.

The other point is the number of submissions does not always reflect the interest. Sometimes schools just do not get to the deadline in time. These numbers will go up and down a little bit year to year.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Premier and Minister. We always welcome ministers to appear before us; we actually like and encourage it.

Mr PAKULA — Premier, my question is on the multicultural affairs portfolio. I note on page 279 of budget paper 3 there is an amount over the forward estimates period of \$8 million — —

Mr BRUMBY — Sorry, what page?

Mr PAKULA — Page 279 of budget paper 3. There is an amount of 8 million set aside over the forward estimates for the development of the cultural precincts or the ethnic precincts, and my query is about the community consultation that will go along with it. What arrangements have been put in place to consult with those communities about the development of those precincts over that period?

Mr BRUMBY — My understanding is that there has been a very large amount of consultation which has taken place. The initiative is administered by the Victorian Multicultural Commission in partnership with the City of Melbourne and the Italian, Greek and Chinese communities. The consultation is being led through the commission and by the Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, James Merlino. There has been a huge amount of interest in these cultural precincts and the enhancement fund. As I said before, it is anticipated that the first projects to be funded will be announced in the not-too-distant future.

It is anticipated that the total expenditure in these three precincts will significantly exceed the \$8 million, and that is because there will be third party leveraging, there will be other groups that want to contribute, and I think this will be a great initiative in terms of ensuring that we have the enhancements in these areas, that we want to recognise the extraordinary contribution of these communities and the role of these precincts.

I might ask whether the VMC chairman also wants to say a couple of words about the consultation process?

Mr LEKAKIS — Yes. In June–July we commenced a major information strategy to inform all stakeholders in the precincts. We then hosted specific stakeholder meetings of each precinct with nominated people from the local chambers of commerce, community representatives and a whole host of other interested parties. All three precinct stakeholder meetings have met. They have agreed on some of the key priorities for the physical and other community enhancements in the three precincts. We have thus received all applications regarding those improvements, and we are on the verge of negotiating with the City of Melbourne.

When you are dealing with footpaths, extensions and enhancements, glass screens, lighting, gateway markers, arches and a myriad of other issues that communities and local businesses want in those precincts, we have to have extensive negotiations with the City of Melbourne to realise those. The budget is there from the state government point of view, and we are looking at what the community can add to the individual projects and of course what the City of Melbourne will add as well.

It has earmarked specific initiatives within its budget cycle over the next three years for major project improvements in those precincts, and we are currently negotiating the details of where they will spend their dollars and where the state government can make improvements as well.

But let me assure you that the stakeholders have met, they have prioritised and everybody is clear within those communities exactly what improvements they seek from those precincts and the money that we are going to invest.

Mr DALLA-RIVA — Premier, I refer you to budget paper 3 on page 193 in respect of multicultural affairs, and I note that the total output costs running into the 08–09 year is going from about 10.4 million to 14.1 million. In that component I gather that the Victorian Multicultural Commission receives an amount for the publication it sends out to various stakeholders. You are probably aware of the publication — I can't think of it offhand.

Mr LEKAKIS — *Multicultural Victoria*.

Mr DALLA-RIVA — It knew it was something like that — *Multicultural Victoria*. Are you aware of the recent one that I must say had quite a substantial number of ministers, ministers assisting the Premier, lots of Labor MPs peppered throughout the document, and do you think that is a fair representation when you are meant to be in a portfolio that really should be non-partisan?

The CHAIR — Premier, we are really dealing with the estimates, but I am sure we can organise a few photos for Richard in the next one.

Mr DALLA-RIVA — Is that a reasonable expenditure of money in a portfolio — —

Mr BRUMBY — I have not seen the publication, but I do know about the multicultural dinner which I attended a month ago. It was the first I had attended as Premier, and it was a fantastic night. I know on that night there was every group there. The Leader of the Opposition and his wife sat on the main table with me and my wife that night. I spoke; the Leader of the Opposition spoke after me, and he had the same time. It was a completely even-handed event. I might say that it has not always been that way, when I think back to the 1990s.

I have not seen the publication. I can only assume the reason ministers are there is because we make a lot of announcements. I do not know if my photo is in there but I do know — —

Mr DALLA-RIVA — A few times.

Mr BRUMBY — I do know in terms of multicultural affairs — —

Mr DALLA-RIVA — Fair enough. That is not the issue. If you had seen the publication, Premier, you would see that in a portfolio that should be fairly balanced — it just appeared significantly one way.

Mr BRUMBY — I will certainly have a look at it. I know that in my area there are a huge number of events I have done in this area. Again I am just trying to think — there was the event we had at Parliament House with the Vietnamese welfare group. Ministers make a lot of grants, and presumably because they make grants, that is why they are in it.

Mr DALLA-RIVA — You give me some money to make a grant and I'm sure I will be in the publication.

Mr BRUMBY — You know how that works.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Premier. I note that Mr Barber has a couple of questions he wishes to put on notice, namely: is there any provision in the budget for the creation of the culturally linguistic and diverse older persons action plan, which is in the ALP 2006 election platform, and what is that provision; and will funding for the new workforce partnership program continue at least until any federal funding takes it place? He has put those on notice.

There are a number of others which are put on notice too, Premier. We would like you, if you can, to provide written responses to those within 30 days so we can end up doing our reports in a timely fashion.

That concludes the consideration of the budget estimates for the portfolios of Premier and Cabinet, Multicultural Affairs' and Veterans Affairs. I thank the Premier and the Minister assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs, Mr Robinson, Multicultural Affairs and Veterans' Affairs staff. It has been a very good session. Where questions were taken on notice, as I mentioned, the answers are to be provided, and the Hansard transcript will be distributed in the next day or two.

Committee adjourned.

Transcript of Evidence

8.6 Senior Victorian portfolio

The transcript for the hearing on this portfolio will be included in a future report of the Committee.

Transcript of Evidence

8.8 Sport, Recreation, and Youth Affairs portfolio

The transcript for the hearing on this portfolio will be included in a future report of the Committee.

Transcript of Evidence

8.9 Women's Affairs portfolio

VERIFIED TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into budget estimates 2008–09

Melbourne— 16 May 2008

Members

Mr G. Barber	Mr G. Rich-Phillips
Mr R. Dalla-Riva	Mr R. Scott
Ms J. Munt	Mr B. Stensholt
Mr W. Noonan	Dr W. Sykes
Mr M. Pakula	Mr K. Wells

Chair: Mr B. Stensholt
Deputy Chair: Mr K. Wells

Staff

Executive Officer: Ms V. Cheong

Witnesses

Ms M. Morand, Minister for Women's Affairs,

Mr T. Healy, Deputy Secretary,

Ms R. Cumberland, Director, Office of Women's Policy, and

Ms K. Kelly, Manager, Policy Development, Office of Women's Policy, Department of Planning and Community Development.

The CHAIR — On behalf of the committee I welcome Terry Healy, deputy secretary; Rhonda Cumberland, director, Office of Women's Affairs; and Kath Kelly, manager, policy development, Office of Women's Affairs. I call on the minister to give a brief presentation of no more than 5 minutes on the more complex financial and performance implications of the budget estimates for the women's affairs portfolio.

Ms MORAND — Thank you for the opportunity of presenting on my women's affairs portfolio, particularly in this very significant year of the centenary of women's suffrage.

The CHAIR — Absolutely.

Overheads shown.

Ms MORAND — It is the 100th anniversary of women being able to be in this place and participate in democracy. In terms of our achievements in the portfolio over the last 12 months we have launched the celebrations and are undertaking celebrations of the centenary of suffrage. We have met the target that we set ourselves for getting 40 per cent of women on government-appointed boards. We have continued the honour roll. I think you, Janice, were there at this year's lunch where we inducted another 30 women onto the honour roll.

Ms MUNT — Absolutely.

Ms MORAND — And we have decided to continue that important program of recognising women's achievements, particularly the achievements of those women who do not seek that sort of recognition. We have also developed material for the Women's Financial Literacy workshops, which was a budget initiative from last year. We held the annual Premier's women's summit. It was the eighth summit held, and the theme was 'Women into work'. It was a very successful summit. We are evaluating the women's safety strategy, and we have completed the annual report on Leading with Victoria's Women.

I am putting up this slide because I wanted to remind members that I am the lead minister for family violence but it really is the other ministers who have the spending programs, and it is a whole-of-government approach to tackling this difficult problem. As you can see, we have the housing minister, the Attorney-General, the police minister, the Minister for Community Services and myself. Family violence is one of the key areas in terms of the Minister for Women's Affairs portfolio and one of the key areas of reform for the government. I wanted to remind members that we have had some significant success in terms of responding to family violence since the new code of conduct came in in 2004. We have seen intervention orders sought by police increase by 169 per cent, and police charges have increased by 183 per cent; they are very successful numbers. We have developed a very successful partnership with over 70 providers across Victoria supporting women and children in family violence. We have also improved access and responses in terms of the court system. We have established a Family Court division in Ballarat and Heidelberg, and 200 men were directed in 2006–07 to attend a mandated behavioural change program through the Family Court violence division in Ballarat or through Heidelberg. We have also assisted 1300 women every year with outreach and intensive case management, and approximately 1200 men are accessing men's behavioural change programs each year. Something I may be able to report on at the next hearing is the benchmarking data that we are doing. We are doing a benchmark process over the next two years in terms of looking at the number of police call-outs, court information and family violence service providers, so we will have more information on that in the future.

In this budget we have announced a \$24.7 million additional investment to address family violence, and this adds on to the spending that we have already committed to family violence over the last few years. This time we are really focusing on prevention. As I say, I think we have had a good response in terms of how we are responding to family violence, but this is a new way of looking at family violence in terms of prevention, and we have tried to look at the critical system gaps and provide more intensive case management for women and children. We have used \$4.3 million to provide extended crisis response, to expand the intensive case management for women and children and to target those at highest risk. We have also allocated \$4.2 million to help connect agencies, such as family violence service counselling and refuges, with police and with courts to better support victims of family violence. In addition we have allocated another \$6.1 million over four years to increase the accountability of the perpetrators of family violence and to increase access to men's behavioural change programs, to increase intensive case management and also to expand the existing phone line for men who use violence.

Also in the budget there are funds to support a communication strategy, and that is very much underpinning the introduction of the new family violence act which will be introduced later this year. That strategy will be developed

by the department over the next few months in terms of what will be specifically used; whether it be radio ads, print media or TV is still to be determined, but we have a budget of \$1.5 million which we will develop and spend in the best way possible to promote people's understanding of the new act when it comes into effect. Also, we are increasing our focus on indigenous family violence, with \$8 million focused on specific investment for indigenous family violence, which really supports our 10-year plan on indigenous family violence. So the priorities for this year are to continue supporting the celebrations of the centenary and making sure as many as possible know what we are celebrating and involve people in that celebration. We will be rolling out the financial literacy program. In fact one of the first ones has already been held, and there is the development of a new policy framework and a new safety strategy will be developed over this year. I will leave it at that.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Minister. You mentioned Ms Munt in your presentation, so I will hand over to her.

Ms MUNT — I would like to say that I am very proud to be a woman MP asking the minister for women a question about the centenary of suffrage in the centenary year. I think they would have been very pleased to have been a fly on the wall in this room today. It is worthwhile reminding all young women how far we have come in the last 100 years.

The CHAIR — I think we need a photo of a woman in this room as well. It might be a good idea.

Ms MORAND — That is a very good point, Chair.

The CHAIR — Perhaps it should be recommended to the President and the Clerk of the upper house.

Ms MUNT — Absolutely! I have had a ride on the purple tram, which was very good. What else is happening to celebrate the centenary of suffrage so the whole community can be part of this very special year?

Ms MORAND — It is a special year, and I am very lucky to be the minister in this centenary year. I think you are right. There might be still a few ghosts around this place of people who did not support women being provided with the vote. There may even still be a few members in the current Parliament who are not completely supportive of women's rights in all aspects. It took 20 years and 17 bills for the Suffrage Bill to finally pass in November 1908. As I have been talking to a whole lot of different people across Victoria about celebrating the centenary, it is also worth considering how far we have come in that 100 years and then how far there still is to go. One statistic which always is of interest to members — I do not know if it will interest members here today; maybe they already know — is that Pauline Toner was made the first minister in 1982. When she was elected in 1979 there had only been five women in Parliament before Pauline Toner came into Parliament in 1979, so it is really only in the last 20 or 30 years that women have really had a critical mass in participation in Parliament.

Ms MUNT — Joan Kirner once told me a story that, when she was first elected, there was no women's toilet. They said, 'It is too hard to get a women's toilet', so she said, 'That is fine. I will just use the men's toilet until you find me one', and it took two weeks. So there was not even a women's toilet!

Ms MORAND — As you said, the launch happened in February, and I hope members have seen the colourful tram that is going around the city circle. We are very happy to get some support from Yarra Trams to support that. It has some of the original suffragists on the side of the tram, like Vida Goldstein. In addition we have launched a grants program. The grants program has been distributed. There are grants totalling \$354 000 to 51 community groups across metro Melbourne and also many groups in rural and regional Victoria as well. There is a range of different activities, a great diversity of activities and a great program, which I invite members to have a look at on the women's Victoria website.

We also want to encourage women to sign calico banners that are circulating Victoria in memory of the monster petition that was signed in 1891 by 30 000 people supporting women's right to gain the vote. That petition was tabled in Parliament in 1891, and it was 200 metres long — in fact I have seen the petition. This petition is not a replica, but it is in memory of the suffragists' petition, and we are circulating it as much as possible and hoping to get 30 000 signatures on it supporting ongoing support for women's equal rights.

As well, curriculum materials are going to be introduced for all upper primary and secondary students in Victorian schools, and we are going to schedule the launch in July to ensure that children at school know more about the history of the centennial of suffrage. Finally, the public sculpture will be unveiled in November. It depicts the

original monster petition, and that is going to be unveiled as part of the open day, which will coincide with the celebration of the centenary in November this year.

Ms MUNT — Thank you. Sounds good to me.

Mr WELLS — Minister, can I just clarify one point before I ask my question. Does the new family violence act include the interim intervention orders? Is that the main part behind it — the new interim intervention orders?

Ms MORAND — Yes. It reforms the system of family violence intervention orders.

Mr WELLS — Fine. Minister, I refer you to budget paper 3, page 191, and the measures on ‘Women’s Safety Strategy delivered against performance target’. Last year in PAEC Minister Allan said that one of her priorities for 07–08 would be the evaluation of the Women’s Safety Strategy which ran from 2002 to 2007. I am wondering if that evaluation has been carried out. If so, what are the results and are they going to be made public?

The CHAIR — That is probably more an outcomes question.

Mr WELLS — I am happy to put in on notice.

The CHAIR — Maybe put that one on notice, if you like. It is more an outcomes question.

Ms MORAND — Yes. It has been evaluated, but did you want more information on the evaluation?

Mr WELLS — Yes. We wanted to know what the results were and when the results are going to be made public.

Ms MORAND — It was completed in December of last year, and it is going to be published on the website in the next few months.

Mr NOONAN — Minister, I am interested in the intervention programs for men and men’s behavioural change — an allocation of 6.1 million. It might be worth, if you can, talking about what those programs involve and whether there are any measurables in terms of the value of those programs minister speaking? They are provided by a range of different service providers, and I will ask the head of the department to assist me with this, but we know that there is a lot of repeat offending in terms of family violence, so it is about trying to target men who repeatedly use violence in the home, and assist them in changing their behaviour. But in terms of outcomes I might ask Rhonda if she can assist me with that.

Ms CUMBERLAND — It is probably important to realise that there are two kinds of intervention — some are mandated and some are voluntary — and essentially most of the new investment is going into voluntary programs. The emphasis on a voluntary program is important because someone who volunteers to participate is always thought to be someone who will be a more successful candidate. At this stage the way these programs are evaluated is by virtue of completion of the project; but essentially part of Victoria’s response in this area is to talk to the partner of the person involved and take into account the qualitative information that she will provide to see if there have been any changes in the behaviour at all. So it is a quantitative and a qualitative evaluation strategy. It is new science, if you like, not just in Victoria but around the world, and they are essentially the key indicators and measures.

Mr NOONAN — So the modelling comes from where, for this new measure?

Ms CUMBERLAND — Most of the work on men’s behaviour change comes from America and Canada.

Mr BARBER — Minister, I was just wondering when you and your group of ministers might eventually get around to doing a review of the Prostitution Control Act as was promised so many years ago?

Ms MORAND — I am not able to answer that because it is not in my portfolio.

The CHAIR — I am not sure you can ask — —

Mr BARBER — I am coming at it from the angle of family violence and the women’s safety strategy.

Ms MORAND — I am happy to take it on notice in terms of timing and whether that review is under way.

The CHAIR — Maybe you can ask the Attorney-General when he comes.

Ms MORAND — I think it is also under the Minister for Consumer Affairs as well.

The CHAIR — If you are talking about brothels it tends to fall into about three different areas. Prostitution control is more the Attorney General's area.

Mr BARBER — I am asking from the point of view of a women's safety strategy of course, which you are the leader on.

Ms MORAND — It is a fair question, and I am happy to give you some feedback on that.

Mr SCOTT — I would like to refer you to budget paper 3, page 279, and the line item 'Financial literacy'. Can you explain how the financial literacy program will roll out, and who will benefit from the program?

Ms MORAND — Thankyou for that question. We know it is a real problem in terms of women planning for their financial security in the future, and that their superannuation savings are generally much less than men's and the obvious reasons for that are lower participation rates in the workforce and the greater number of women who are in casual or part-time work, or who have lower wages generally. So generally they are poorly providing for their future.

In terms of the \$1 million from last year, we will have a Financial Literacy Month in September, and we will develop train the trainer programs through face-to-face workshops across the state, and the programs will be developed for specific target groups, understanding that different age demographic groups will have different needs and different ways of thinking about their economic futures. So they will be very much targeted to those age-specific groups and also indigenous groups and ethnic-specific training work shops.

We are really pleased with the progress we have been making in terms of the development of the material. The Women's Information Referral Exchange has a grant to train the facilitators across Victoria on the workshop materials, and the Queen Victoria Women's Centre is also to receive funding to assist the delivery of the workshop program, and that will include the Queen Victoria Women's Centre undertaking registration process, marketing and promoting the workshop program. It fulfils an election promise to deliver this over the next year.

The CHAIR — Are other organisations able to be involved? Is it basically just through the Queen Victoria centre?

Ms MORAND — Yes, other providers are involved too.

Mr WELLS — Minister, I want to bring you to the issue of the family violence bill 2008. I am wondering when that will be brought into Parliament. My understanding is that the law reform commission made recommendations to the Auditor-General in December 2005, which is two-and-a-half years ago; then on 13 August last year the Auditor-General promised the bill would be introduced in 2007. I am just wondering where we are up to with it.

Ms MORAND — The final draft of the bill was circulated last month. You have probably seen the draft of the family violence bill?

Mr HEALY — There has been a consultation draft which has been circulated widely to stakeholder groups. There has been a very extensive process of consultation for quite some time. It is not for me to say when the government will introduce it, but I would have thought later this year is a safe bet.

Ms MORAND — My best estimation would be later this year.

The CHAIR — It is included in the forward program for the beginning of the year. There is a page on it there.

Ms MORAND — Yes.

The CHAIR — Minister, how is the Queen Victoria Women's Centre going? We have talked here about the occupancy rate. Can you give us a progress report? It says 85 per cent occupancy rate, or greater than 85 per cent. Has it got some vacancies?

Ms MORAND — It is fully tenanted now, so we are really happy with it. I was there yesterday, launching the new Shilling Wall in commemoration of the shilling fund that established the hospital at the turn of the previous century, and there is a new program to establish a shilling wall for people who want to put women of significance in their lives — loved ones or other people who want a memory of specific women on the Shilling Wall. The first two panels were unveiled by myself and some other key women yesterday. So it is going very well.

The CHAIR — Having been born at the Queen Vic, I can relate to this. Who else has gone into the Queen Vic recently?

Ms MORAND — The most recent tenants?

The CHAIR — Do you have the tenants who fill it up?

Ms MORAND — I can tell you who they are: Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service, BreaCan, Centre Against Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Victoria, Emily's List, Urcot, Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition, Vita Natural Health, WIRE and the YWCA.

Mr WELLS — I remember last year we asked for the rental costs for Emily's List. For some reason we were not able to get that from the previous minister. Will that change under your guidance?

Ms MORAND — Obviously the rental is not something that is negotiated with my office. It is done by the Queen Victoria trust with the various tenants.

The CHAIR — The trust is independent; it is not a state body, is it? What is the arrangement?

Ms MORAND — There is a committee and a chair of the committee. They are responsible — —

The CHAIR — Do they do an annual report to Parliament? Is that part of the — —

Ms MORAND — Yes.

Mr HEALY — It was established by statute.

The CHAIR — Theoretically the request can be passed on to them through your portfolio.

Ms MORAND — I think there is probably financial information in the annual report.

The CHAIR — If there are no other questions, I thank you, Minister, and officers for your presentation today. I thank you for your earlier presentation and for the one on women's affairs. There are a number of issues to be followed up, and requests for information will be provided in writing at a later date. We would appreciate it if they could be provided within 30 days.

Committee adjourned.