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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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**FIRST SESSION**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**21 and 22 August 2007**

**(Extract from book 12)**

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**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

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The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

**Tuesday, 21 August 2007**

**Police and emergency services: Moorabbin Children's Traffic School**

- 132.** Mr THOMPSON (*Sandringham*) to ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services with reference to the closure after 40 years of the Moorabbin Children's Traffic School which was used by many preschool and primary students across Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston —
- (1) Are there any plans to reinstate the traffic school.
  - (2) What plans are proposed to compensate the community for the loss of this facility.
  - (3) Which authority was responsible for the closure of the traffic school.
  - (4) Was the decision to close the traffic school a financial one.
  - (5) What was the total cost including income and expenditure to operate the traffic school during 2006–07.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

Victoria Police has provided the following information:

- 1) Victoria Police has made a decision on the basis of assessed operational need with a view to maintaining optimum policing effectiveness in the Moorabbin police service area and does not envisage that the decision will be overturned. I am informed that following the intervention of various persons including the Member for Bentleigh, Mr Robert Hudson MP, the Glen Eira Council is making alternative arrangements for the future operation of the school.
- 2) The Victoria Police decision to reassign the resource is based on an identified need for more flexibility in policing local communities and enables police to decide the best way to support programs for young people.
- 3) The recent decision by Victoria Police to withdraw its full time police member from the Moorabbin Traffic School follows a review of public attendance at the school indicating a significant decline in demand for the school. The review's findings confirmed that more than 50 per cent of the days available for road safety education had no attendance, and only 14 per cent of the police member's time was devoted to delivering the required service.
- 4) Contemporary research conducted overseas and in Australia confirms that off-road training facilities such as traffic schools, are ineffective and may be detrimental to traffic safety education. In addition, modern education methodology indicates the greater value of guidance and reinforced road safety behaviour by a parent or carer from the time the child can sit up in a car seat.
- 5) Victoria Police provided a Senior Constable to the school who is paid at the senior constable level in excess of \$65,000 per annum. Victoria Police also paid nominal amounts for utility costs associated with running the school. Victoria Police did not charge any individuals or groups for attending the school.

**Education: Sandringham electorate class sizes**

**163.** **Mr THOMPSON** (*Sandringham*) to ask the Minister for Skills, Education Services and Employment for the Minister for Education with reference to the 1999 ALP election promise that no Victorian primary school class between prep and grade two would have more than 21 pupils — in the 2007 school year in the Sandringham electorate —

- (1) How many primary school classes have student numbers in excess of 21.
- (2) Which primary schools have classes with student numbers in excess of 21.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

A Government target was set to reduce the early years (Prep–2) class size to a statewide average of 21.0 by 2003. Funding for additional teachers and new classrooms was provided to support this initiative in the early years during which the foundations for literacy and numeracy are established. The Prep–2 average class size target was achieved in 2003.

The target of a statewide average of 21.0 for Prep–2 classes has been maintained in 2007. The average size of Prep–2 classes in 2007 is 20.7 compared to 24.3 in 1999, a decrease of 3.6 students.

The size of each primary class is collected from each government school as part of the School Census conducted in February. Schools indicating that they have larger class sizes generally provide additional teaching support within these classes. This additional support is not reflected in the average class size statistics.

Primary schools can adopt varying class structures during the school week, at times adopting smaller groupings for the teaching of particular areas, including literacy and numeracy.

Schools operate with large classes for various reasons. For example, a school may have a large number of students in a particular year level, but the local community may not support composite classes or it may not be feasible to establish composite classes because of the uneven distribution of students across the year levels.

Schools may be forced to operate with larger classes due to the absorption of late enrolments. For example, a class that was planned to accommodate a certain number of students may need to absorb additional students after the start of the school year.

**Education: Hastings electorate class sizes**

**164.** **Mr BURGESS** to ask the Minister for Skills, Education Services and Employment for the Minister for Education with reference to the 1999 ALP election promise that no Victorian primary school class between prep and grade two would have more than 21 pupils — in the 2007 school year in the Hastings electorate —

- (1) How many primary school classes have student numbers in excess of 21.
- (2) Which primary schools have classes with student numbers in excess of 21.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

A Government target was set to reduce the early years (Prep–2) class size to a statewide average of 21.0 by 2003. Funding for additional teachers and new classrooms was provided to support this initiative in the early years during which the foundations for literacy and numeracy are established. The Prep–2 average class size target was achieved in 2003.

The target of a statewide average of 21.0 for Prep–2 classes has been maintained in 2007. The average size of Prep–2 classes in 2007 is 20.7 compared to 24.3 in 1999, a decrease of 3.6 students.

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Schools may be forced to operate with larger classes due to the absorption of late enrolments. For example, a class that was planned to accommodate a certain number of students may need to absorb additional students after the start of the school year.

### Information and communication technology: Shannons Way Pty Ltd

**249(n).** Mr THOMPSON (*Sandringham*) to ask the Minister for Information and Communication Technology with reference to contracts entered into by the Minister’s department with Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd since 1 January 2000 —

- (1) What contracts have been entered into.
- (2) What was the cost of each contract.
- (3) What was the cost of any contract extensions, variations or renewals.
- (4) Which contracts were offered for public tender.
- (5) What are the reasons given for any contracts not offered for public tender.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development has not entered into any contracts with Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd since 1 January 2000

### Industrial relations: Growth Solutions Group

**250(o).** Mr THOMPSON (*Sandringham*) to ask the Minister for Industrial Relations with reference to contracts entered into by the Minister’s department with Growth Solutions Group since 1 January 2000 —

- (1) What contracts have been entered into.
- (2) What was the cost of each contract.
- (3) What was the cost of any contract extensions, variations or renewals.
- (4) Which contracts were offered for public tender.
- (5) What are the reasons given for any contracts not offered for public tender.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

That there were no contracts entered into with the Growth Solutions Group since 1 January 2000 under my ministerial portfolio within the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.



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**Wednesday, 22 August 2007**

**Public transport: V/Line long-distance reservations**

- 121. Mr MULDER** to ask the Minister for Public Transport with reference to the Albury, Ararat, Bairnsdale, Echuca, Shepparton, Swan Hill and Warrnambool train lines —
- (1) How many passengers made any journey in each direction on each line on a V/Line long distance train in —
    - (a) February 2007;
    - (b) March 2007;
    - (c) April 2007.
  - (2) How many passengers made reservations for any journey in each direction on each line on a V/Line long distance train for —
    - (a) February 2007;
    - (b) March 2007;
    - (c) April 2007.
  - (3) How many phone calls in relation to reservations on each line did V/Line’s 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. telephone enquiry call centre line 13 61 96 receive during —
    - (a) March 2007;
    - (b) April 2007.

**ANSWER:**

As at the date the question was raised, the answer is:

- (1) Passengers journeys on V/Line long distance trains during February, March and April 2007:

	<b>Feb-07</b>		<b>Mar-07</b>		<b>Apr-07</b>	
<b>Service</b>	<b>Down</b>	<b>Up</b>	<b>Down</b>	<b>Up</b>	<b>Down</b>	<b>Up</b>
Albury	9,184	7,967	11,595	11,065	13,101	12,475
Ararat	8,566	8,592	12,310	10,959	12,193	10,553
Bairnsdale	10,107	10,934	12,681	12,852	14,752	15,176
Echuca	3,906	2,132	11,916	9,393	10,593	9,453
Shepparton	6,644	7,346	9,807	9,238	9,792	9,515
Swan Hill	8,356	9,188	11,710	12,774	12,397	13,031
Warrnambool*	5,923	5,153	19,312	19,116	19,448	18,387
	<b>52,686</b>	<b>51,312</b>	<b>89,331</b>	<b>85,397</b>	<b>92,276</b>	<b>88,590</b>

Notes:

\* Coaches replaced some Warrnambool train services in February 2007.

Down = Services from Melbourne  
 Up = Services to Melbourne

(2) Reservations on V/Line long distance trains during February, March and April 2007:

	<b>Feb-07</b>	<b>Mar-07</b>	<b>Apr-07</b>
<b>Service</b>	<b>Reservations</b>	<b>Reservations</b>	<b>Reservations</b>
Albury	8,765	15,795	14,057
Ararat	705	3,558	3,531
Bairnsdale	6,277	10,757	10,612
Echuca	546	2,967	2,839
Shepparton	1,287	8,786	7,763
Swan Hill	5,279	9,048	9,242
Warrnambool*	776	18,445	16,473
	<b>23,635</b>	<b>69,356</b>	<b>64,517</b>

Information relating to reservations made in each direction of travel is not readily available and would require an unreasonable diversion of resources to provide.

Note:

\* Coaches replaced certain train services in February 2007.

(3) V/Line has advised that the full details of the reason for each call are not recorded.

The total number of reservations made in March 2007 was 13,983 and 13,053 in April 2007.

**Public transport: train driver numbers**

**173. Mr MULDER** to ask the Minister for Public Transport with reference to Connex Melbourne and V/Line train drivers —

- (1) How many fully qualified train drivers did each company have as at —
  - (a) 1 May 2007;
  - (b) 31 May 2007.
- (2) How many trainee train drivers did each company have as at —
  - (a) 1 May 2007;
  - (b) 31 May 2007.
- (3) How many train drivers does each company require to fill all shifts available to operate its scheduled timetable on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis.
- (4) How many train drivers were attached to each depot, outstation or location that has a complement of train drivers and what was the name of each depot, outstation or location as at —
  - (a) 1 May 2007;
  - (b) 31 May 2007.
- (5) On each of a typical weekday, a typical Saturday and a typical Sunday how many drivers from each company are expected to be —
  - (a) on annual leave;
  - (b) in training;
  - (c) on sick leave;

- (d) on long service leave;
  - (e) on stress leave;
  - (f) on leave other than annual, sick, long service or stress leave;
  - (g) rostered off.
- (6) On each of 1 May 2007 and 31 May 2007 how many drivers from each company were —
- (a) on annual leave;
  - (b) in training;
  - (c) on sick leave;
  - (d) on long service leave;
  - (e) on stress leave;
  - (f) on leave other than annual, sick, long service or stress leave;
  - (g) rostered off.

**ANSWER:**

As at the date the question was raised, the answer is:

- (1) (a) & (b)

	<i>1 May 2007</i>	<i>31 May 2007</i>
<i>Connex Melbourne — fully qualified train drivers</i>	646	649
<i>V/Line — fully qualified train drivers</i>	285	285

- (2) (a) & (b)

	<i>1 May 2007</i>	<i>31 May 2007</i>
<i>Connex Melbourne — trainee drivers</i>	92	84
<i>V/Line — trainee drivers</i>	24	24

- (3) Connex 694  
V/Line 287

- (4) (a) 1 May 2007

Connex: Total = 646

<i>Flinders Street 272</i>	<i>Belgrave 9</i>	<i>Broadmeadows 18</i>	<i>Carrum 13</i>
<i>Dandenong 27</i>	<i>Eltham 13</i>	<i>Epping 35</i>	<i>Frankston 18</i>
<i>Glen Waverly 18</i>	<i>Hurstbridge 18</i>	<i>Lilydale 18</i>	<i>Macleod 9</i>
<i>Mordialloc 9</i>	<i>Pakenham 18</i>	<i>Ringwood 35</i>	<i>Sandringham 18</i>
<i>Sydenham 22</i>	<i>Upfield 18</i>	<i>Westall 18</i>	<i>Werribee 22</i>
<i>Upper Ferntree Gully 18</i>			

V/Line: Total = 275 (not including 10 Driver Training Supervisors who are not assigned to a depot).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

2998

ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 22 August 2007

<i>Melbourne 142</i>		<i>Geelong 38</i>	<i>Ballarat 24</i>
<i>Traralgon 17</i>	<i>Sale 2</i>	<i>Bairnsdale 3</i>	<i>Bendigo 24</i>
<i>Kyneton 3</i>	<i>Seymour 15</i>	<i>Wodonga 7</i>	

(4) (b) 31 May 2007

Connex: Flinders Street 275, all other outstations remain as per 4 (a).

V/Line: As per 4 (a).

(5) V/Line has advised that the provision of resources at this time to interrogate and export the data that is required to answer this question cannot be justified.

	<i>Connex</i>		
	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
<i>(a) Annual Leave</i>	64	64	64
<i>(b) In training</i>	7	0	0
<i>(c) Sick Leave</i>	25	12	6
<i>(d) Long Service Leave</i>	4	4	4
<i>(e) Stress Leave</i>	*	*	*
<i>(f) Leave other than annual, sick, long service or stress leave</i>	5	2	2
<i>(g) Rostered off</i>	100	255	312

\*Sick leave is not differentiated by the type of illness.

(6) V/Line has advised that the provision of resources at this time to interrogate and export the data that is required to answer this question cannot be justified.

	<i>Connex</i>	
	<i>1 May 2007</i>	<i>31 May 2007</i>
<i>(a) Annual Leave</i>	58	56
<i>(b) In training</i>	2	2
<i>(c) Sick Leave</i>	29	35
<i>(d) Long Service Leave</i>	5	4
<i>(e) Stress Leave</i>	*	*
<i>(f) Leave other than annual, sick, long service or stress leave</i>	13	6
<i>(g) Rostered off</i>	74	83

\*Sick leave is not differentiated by the type of illness.

**Public transport: train driver payroll fortnights**

**174. Mr MULDER** to ask the Minister for Public Transport with reference to payroll fortnights for Connex and V/Line train drivers within May 2007 —

- (1) On what dates did each payroll fortnight commence and conclude.
- (2) For each payroll fortnight how many train drivers worked —
  - (a) fewer than 10 shifts;
  - (b) 11 shifts;

- (c) 12 shifts;
  - (d) 14 shifts;
  - (e) 15 shifts;
  - (f) 16 shifts;
  - (g) 17 shifts.
- (3) For each payroll fortnight how many train drivers took sick leave for —
- (a) one day;
  - (b) two days;
  - (c) three days;
  - (d) four days;
  - (e) five or more days.
- (4) For each payroll fortnight how many train drivers took each of annual leave, long service leave and stress-related illness leave for —
- (a) less than one day;
  - (b) one day;
  - (c) two days;
  - (d) three days;
  - (e) four days;
  - (f) five or more days.

**ANSWER:**

As at the date the question was raised, the answer is:

(1–6)

V/Line:

V/Line has advised that the provision of resources at this time to interrogate and export the data that is required to answer these questions cannot be justified.

Connex:

(1)

<b>Fortnight</b>	<b>Commenced</b>	<b>Concluded</b>
1	29-Apr-07	12-May-07
2	13-May-07	26-May-07

(2)

<b>Shifts Worked</b>	<b>12/05/07</b>	<b>26/05/07</b>
(a) Fewer than 10	206	239
(b) 11	139	149
(c) 12	175	163
(d) 14	0	0
(e) 15	0	0
(f) 16	0	0
(g) 17	0	0

(3)

Sick Leave Days Taken	12/05/07	26/05/07
(a) 1	189	171
(b) 2	25	30
(c) 3	36	40
(d) 4	1	7
(e) 5 or more days	10	13

(4)

Days Taken	Annual Leave		Long Service Leave	
	12/05/07	26/05/07	12/05/07	26/05/07
Less than 1	0	0	0	0
1	4	12	0	0
2	1	3	1	0
3	4	5	0	1
4	8	9	0	1
5 or more days	88	94	6	9

Sick leave is not differentiated by the type of illness.

**Public transport: train driver base salaries**

**177.** Mr MULDER to ask the Minister for Public Transport with reference to Connex and V/Line train drivers — as at 1 July 2000, 1 July 2006 and 31 May 2007 what was the base salary or wage for —

- (1) A trainee train driver commencing classes —
  - (a) per fortnight;
  - (b) per annum.
- (2) A train driver with five years experience —
  - (a) per fortnight;
  - (b) per annum.

**ANSWER:**

As at the date the question was raised, the answer is:

- (1–2) The Certified Agreements between Connex, V/Line, and their respective employees and representatives are publicly available documents.

These, along with any applicable Awards, outline the information on wages and allowances.

**Attorney-General: Sandringham courthouse**

**252.** Mr THOMPSON (*Sandringham*) to ask the Attorney-General with reference to the removal of the coat of arms from the recently demolished Sandringham Court House —

- (1) Who currently possesses the coat of arms.
- (2) What plans have been made to incorporate the coat of arms in the new building structure.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

In January 1993, Victoria Police took possession of the Sandringham Court House building. The Sandringham Court house then closed as a result of the construction of the Frankston Court House, which was opened by the then Attorney-General, Mrs Jan Wade, on 1 September 1993. The construction of the Frankston complex also resulted in the closure of the court facilities at Mordialloc, Cheltenham and Davey Street, Frankston.

The Victorian Government has committed \$275 million over four years in the 2007–08 budget to enhance community safety. The package includes the construction of a new Sandringham police station. I understand that the original buildings on Abbott Street, Sandringham, have recently been demolished to make way for this new station.

I am advised that attempts were made to remove the coat of arms from the Sandringham Court House building prior to its demolition but that, unfortunately, it was significantly weathered and crumbled beyond repair. Accordingly, no person is now in possession of the coat of arms and it cannot be incorporated into the new building.

The coat of arms of the old Sandringham Court House was the Royal Coat of Arms, featuring the lion and the unicorn. More modern Magistrates' Courts, along with State Government buildings, appropriately display the Victorian Coat of Arms.

**Environment and climate change: Warrandyte State Park**

**261.** **Mr SMITH** (*Warrandyte*) to ask the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change with reference to controlled burning in Warrandyte State Park —

- (1) When was the last occasion on which the Park was burnt in a controlled environment, such as a fuel reduction burn.
- (2) Is there a mandated frequency as to how often the Park should be subject to a controlled burn; if so, how often.
- (3) When will the Park be subject to the next controlled burn.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) Since the 1991 Pound Bend wildfire which burnt approximately 48 hectares of park and private land, 25 separate fuel reduction burns have been conducted covering 165.8 hectares of Warrandyte State Park.
- (2) The frequency of fuel reduction burning is determined by the fuel management strategies defined in the East Port Phillip Fire Protection Plan (Nov 2003). This plan assigns fuel management zones based on the strategic importance of different areas, the appropriateness of burning to manage fuels, and the natural and developed values on or adjacent to the area. There are five zones: Zone 1 asset protection, Zone 2 strategic fuel-reduced corridors, Zone 3 broad-acre fuel-reduced mosaic, Zone 4 specific flora and fauna management and Zone 5 exclusion of prescribed burning. Each zone has triggers based on overall fuel hazard that determines when fuel reduction should be undertaken.

Of the 676 hectares that makes up the Warrandyte State Park, 1.2% is Zone 1, 97.7% is Zone 3 and 1.1% is Zone 5.

Overall fuel hazard is monitored and, in conjunction with community and stakeholder input, an area is scheduled for burning.

- (3) The current draft Fire Operations Plan for 07/08–09/10 identifies five separate fuel reduction burns to be conducted over the next two financial years, covering 36.6 hectares.