

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

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FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Tuesday, 27 May 2008

(Extract from book 7)

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers

Tuesday, 27 May 2008

Water safety: review

Raised with: Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 12 March 2008

REPLY:

The Victorian Government's Water Safety program (including the *Play it Safe by the Water* campaign) is reviewed every year in consultation with Life Saving Victoria, Aquatics and Recreation Victoria, Surfing Victoria, Swimming Victoria and Marine Safety Victoria. This program is managed by the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (OESC).

Issues relating to paid lifeguards and equipment and water safety education for multicultural communities are discussed as part of the annual review.

Since 2003 Life Saving Victoria (LSV) have received \$15.9M through programs delivered by OESC. LSV is uniquely placed to play a lead role in educating Victorians about water safety and receives government funding to carry this work out.

In addition to the \$2.5M Water Safety program per annum, over the 2003-2008 period OESC has contributed over \$2M to lifesaving clubs through the Community Safety Emergency Support Program (CSESP), and over \$1M to LSV from the Valuing Volunteers Program. In October 2006, LSV moved into a purpose built state of the art training and education headquarters partially funded by a \$3.25M grant from the Victorian Government.

Paid lifeguards/equipment

Volunteer lifesavers patrol on weekends and public holidays from the end of November to Easter. The majority of lifesaving clubs operate from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm however, some clubs have altered their patrol times in response to the patronage e.g. patrols on beaches frequented by families tend to start early, and beaches with patrons from particular multicultural communities tend to start and finish later.

In relation to the issue of the cost of equipment to clubs, since 2003/04 the Government through the CSESP has contributed over \$2M to lifesaving clubs for equipment.

Hazardous waste: management

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 13 March 2008

REPLY:

I take the quality of the environmental performance of landfill sites extremely seriously, and I have high expectations of the performance of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). As such I asked EPA to

investigate the matters you brought to my attention and I am advised that EPA has received a report from the community alleging asbestos waste not wrapped appropriately was deposited at the Hallam Road transfer station.

In response EPA inspected the site, and also met with the local RATWISE community group on 14 March to discuss their concerns. Their concerns centred on the acceptance of asbestos at the transfer station.

Asbestos should be double-wrapped in plastic prior to disposal, but operators of transfer stations have to be prepared for situations where this has not occurred. I am advised that the operators of the Hallam Road site have procedures in place to ensure asbestos is managed safely in such situations.

EPA licenses the operators of the Hallam Road landfill to accept putrescible and solid inert waste, which can include domestic asbestos and shredded tyres.

Skin cancer: services

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 13 March 2008

REPLY:

Australia has the highest rates of skin cancer in the world and Victoria has been leading the fight against skin cancer through the internationally acclaimed SunSmart program and regulation of the solarium Industry.

With twenty years of sustained investment, Victoria has a strong track record of promoting sun protection messages through the SunSmart program. In this time, the Victorian Government has invested more than \$13 million in the program, whose activity focuses on mass media, professional education, advocacy for policy development, research and evaluation.

Recently, there has been an extended focus to raise awareness of the increased risk of skin cancer associated with solarium use. On 23 August 2007, I announced that Victoria would regulate the use of solariums under the Radiation Act 2005. The new regulations came into effect on 1 February 2008. These require solarium operators to be licensed with the Department of Human Services, health warnings to be displayed on solarium premises, operators to ensure that no-one aged under 16 is allowed to use a sun-tanning unit, operators to ensure that 16 and 17 year olds can only use sun-tanning units with parental consent.

These regulations are the first of their kind in Australia. Victoria is also working closely with the other jurisdictions through the Australian Health Minister's Conference to develop a nationally consistent framework for solarium regulation to follow in other jurisdictions.

There are a range of specialist skin cancer clinics in Victoria, including a publicly funded dermatology clinic at St Vincent's Hospital. Skin cancer is one of the ten major tumour streams being developed through the Victorian Integrated Cancer Services, which are geographically based consortia of health services working together to improve the quality, accessibility and coordination of cancer services for patients.

In line with current best practice, individuals who are concerned about skin cancer risk or skin changes are encouraged to seek advice from their general practitioner in the first instance. The Victorian Family Cancer Genetics Service offers services where appropriate, to people concerned about their risk of developing melanoma due to their family's history of cancer. Referrals to a Family Cancer Service are made through an individual's general practitioner.

The Cancer Council Australia and the Australasian College of Dermatologists recommend that the general public, particularly those aged 40 and over, should be encouraged to check all areas of their skin, including skin not normally exposed to the sun, and to seek advice from a general practitioner if they have concerns about their risk or changes in their skin.

The Cancer Council Australia, the Australasian College of Dermatologists and a position statement endorsed by the Australian Population Health Development Principal Committee do not recommend mass or population based screening for non-melanocytic skin cancer or melanoma. These position statements recommend that general practitioners develop surveillance programs for patients at high risk and assess patients who are concerned and develop appropriate management programs depending on their level of risk.

Children: Geelong health programs

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 13 March 2008

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the matter in relation to Geelong: children's health programs on 13 March 2008.

The Victorian Government is committed to addressing childhood obesity and has invested over \$25 million in a number of initiatives working with children's settings and the broader community to encourage healthy eating and physical activity. Kids – 'Go for your life' is a major component of the Victorian Government's approach and I can assure you that there has not been a reduction in funding nor commitment to this very important initiative.

The Kids – 'Go for your life' program is a state-wide initiative and by the year 2010 the target is to have 70% of all Victorian primary schools and early childhood services as members of the Award Program and 30% Awarded as Kids – 'Go for your life' services or schools. These targets demonstrate the Victorian Government's commitment to encouraging healthy eating and physical activity strategies in children's settings.

The initial phase of Kids - 'Go for your life' (2006-2008) provided intensive support and financial resources to ten local governments to pilot local strategies to inform Kids – 'Go for your life' planning and direction to meet annual and long term targets. The funded local governments have provided valuable learning's about what is required for local governments to support Kids – 'Go for your life' implementation.

The Department of Human Services in conjunction with the program managers of Kids – 'Go for your life' (The Cancer Council Victoria and Diabetes Australia - Victoria) are currently consulting with key stakeholders and are facilitating a series of workshops with the ten funded local governments to determine how the available funds can best support local governments across Victoria.

The Romp and Chomp program in Geelong was funded for a specific period (2004-08) to gather evidence on successful childhood obesity prevention strategies. The outcome of this program has been the development of an evidence based resource to complement the statewide rollout of the Kids – 'Go for your life' program.

VicHealth's Walking School Bus program evaluation identified the need to broaden the focus to increase children walking in all aspects of their community life. As a result, VicHealth has made the decision to invest \$1.2 million over 3 years (2008-11) in the 'Streets Ahead Program' which will determine a range of activities to increase active transport in the community.

Emergency services: telephone alert

Raised with: Police and Emergency Services

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 8 April 2008

REPLY:

It was the Labor Government's election policy to progress a national community warning system. I recently attended the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management where there was support for a national community alerting and warning system. There will now be a national working group to scope and develop options for the implementation of a nationally consistent emergency warning system. This work is to be completed by the next Council meeting in November 2008.

Issues pertaining to community information and communication during the severe weather event on 2 April 2008 will be considered by the Emergency Services Commissioner as part of the formal review Government has requested he undertake. The Commissioner will report to me and the Energy and Resources Minister by mid August 2008.

Eastern Palliative Care: funding

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Mr Atkinson

Raised on: 9 April 2008

REPLY:

As a result of this Government's new recurrent funding of \$4 million per annum for palliative care, the total state budget for palliative care increased to approximately \$72 million per annum in 2007/08.

Eastern Palliative Care received an additional \$389,000 pa in 2007/06 & 2007/08 as part of the \$2 million increase of recurrent funding to community palliative care services from the 2006/07 state budget.

This funding was allocated to Eastern Palliative Care based on the Palliative Care Resource Allocation Model (PCRAM) which takes into account total population, population over 75 years, socioeconomic status and rurality for each geographic region/catchment. This funding model was developed with, and supported by, the community palliative care sector.

In addition, Eastern Palliative Care will receive \$14,500 as part of the after hours support funding. This funding will assist Eastern Palliative Care to purchase equipment that supports people with a life limiting illness and their families to remain at home as long as possible.

As a non-government organisation, Eastern Palliative Care is not bound by the new Nurse Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, and is therefore not required to meet similar rates of pay increases for its nursing staff.

Eastern Palliative Care may negotiate a new EBA through its peak industry body, the Service Industry Advisory Group, however the Victorian Government cannot guarantee any additional funding for EBA outcomes negotiated by employers.

Ambulance services: Bendigo

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 16 April 2008

REPLY:

As you may be aware, the computer aided dispatch (CAD) system became fully operational in the Bendigo Operations Centre last November and has since handled in excess of 21,000 cases. Rural Ambulance Victoria

(RAV) has encouraged their staff to provide feedback on the system and, as a result, improvements have been made.

I am informed that RAV has investigated claims that CAD has dispatched paramedics on 'bogus' call-outs and acknowledges that, during training activities, some messages were inadvertently sent to operational pagers. RAV has advised that this has been rectified.

Our Government is committed to providing our ambulance services with the resources they need to respond to the record number of callouts they are receiving and continue providing Victorians with the very best care.

The implementation of CAD moves RAV away from manual processes reliant on individual judgement to a computerised call taking and dispatch system in each of RAV's five operational centres. In addition to providing a structured call taking process, CAD geographically identifies the case through a digital map base and dispatches the ambulance based on the acuity of the case. The new CAD system brings RAV into line with all other Australian ambulance services.

Water: Hamilton–Grampians pipeline

Raised with: Water

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 16 April 2008

REPLY:

On 19 June 2007, the Victorian Government announced *Our Water Our Future: The Next Stage of the Government's Water Plan* to secure Victoria's water supplies for the long-term future. The plan includes a Victorian Government contribution of \$10 million for the Hamilton - Grampians Pipeline.

An important new link in Victoria's Water Grid, the 53 km pipeline will connect Hamilton's water supplies to Rocklands Reservoir and deliver up to 2,000 megalitres of water to Hamilton each year. Demand currently exceeds supply in Hamilton and the surrounding region. At present, this shortfall is managed through water restrictions and groundwater supplied from emergency drought relief bores.

Identification of Pipeline Route

I issued a media release on 21 April 2008 announcing the alignment of the pipeline (Attachment 1). In selecting the preferred route, various factors were considered including ease of construction and operation, environmental and cultural heritage values, and social economic aspects.

The pipeline will be located mainly in private property next to road reserves between Rocklands Reservoir and the existing pipeline on the Dunkeld-Cavendish Road, south-east of Cavendish, where it will connect to the Grampians Headworks pipeline. It will follow the existing Balmoral pipeline corridor out of the Claude Austin State Forest. Please find a map of the proposed route attached.

Construction Timelines/Project Milestones

Detailed survey and design for the pipeline is expected to be completed by late 2008. Construction will begin in April 2009, with completion scheduled for June 2010.

Cost of the Pipeline

The estimated capital cost is \$30 million. The Victorian Government is contributing \$10 million towards the project.

FROM THE MINISTER FOR WATER

DATE: Monday, April 21, 2008

HAMILTON-GRAMPIANS PIPELINE TAKING SHAPE

The detailed route for the \$30 million Hamilton-Grampians pipeline was released today by the Brumby Government and Wannon Water.

Water Minister Tim Holding said the new pipeline was a key part of the *Our Water Our Future: Next Stage of the Government's Water Plan*.

"The Brumby Government is taking action to secure water for Victorians. The Hamilton-Grampians Pipeline project will provide this to Cavendish, Hamilton, Tarrington and Dunkeld," Mr Holding said.

"The project is a key connection in Victoria's Water Grid which enables water to be moved around the State through a series of pipelines."

The 53 km pipeline will transfer up to two billion litres of water a year from Rocklands Reservoir to the Hamilton system.

The pipeline will be located largely on private property between Rocklands Reservoir and the existing pipeline on the Dunkeld-Cavendish Road, south-east of Cavendish, where it will connect to the existing Grampians Headworks pipeline. It will follow the existing Balmoral pipeline corridor out of the Claude Austin State Forest.

Mr Holding said Wannon Water chose the route after extensive research and analysis, including consultation with the community and landowners, extensive environmental assessments, and carefully considering route and design options.

"In selecting this route, Wannon Water considered environmental and cultural heritage values, social and economic aspects, ease of construction and operation," Mr Holding said.

"The selected route provides the right balance and minimises any environmental impacts and community disruption."

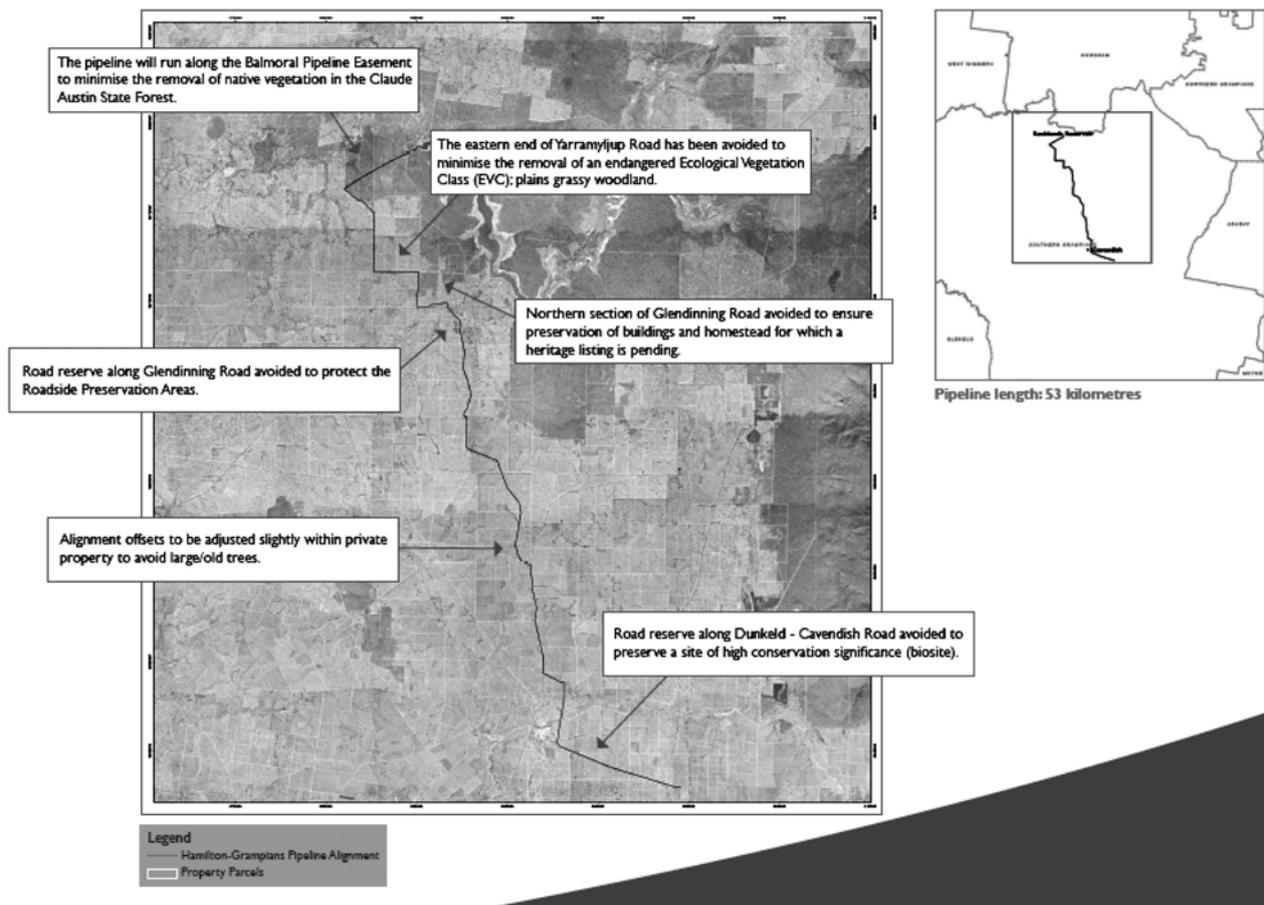
Mr Holding said Wannon Water would purchase two billion litres of water savings from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline project to supplement Hamilton's water supplies.

"The Wimmera Mallee Pipeline will save more than 100 billion litres a year now being lost in channels and reduce the water drawn from Rocklands Reservoir by 10 billion litres," he said.

"Without the savings from the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline, Australia's largest water infrastructure project, the Hamilton-Grampians Pipeline could not have happened.

"This is a win-win: Hamilton's water supply will be secured, and the sale of some savings is lowering the cost of the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline for Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water."

The Brumby Government is contributing \$10 million towards the Hamilton-Grampians pipeline, with the balance funded by Wannon Water. Detailed survey and design work will begin by the end of the year. Construction will begin in April 2009 with water expected to flow down the pipeline by mid 2010.



Croajingolong National Park: Shipwreck Creek camping ground

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 17 April 2008

REPLY:

It is pleasing that you found the Shipwreck Creek campsite to be attractive and well-established. It is one of four camping grounds in the Croajingolong National Park being Shipwreck Creek, Wingan Inlet, Mueller River and Thurra River.

These locations offer a range of facilities including designated camp sites, pit toilets, information boards and other signs, access roads, car parking, fire places, picnic tables, water tanks, walking tracks and access stairs. The facilities are regularly maintained and serviced. Camping fees are charged at these locations in accordance with the Croajingolong National Park Management Plan 1996 and Parks Victoria policies.

Informal camping opportunities are also provided at three locations around Tamboon Inlet in the Croajingolong National Park where there is no infrastructure, and fees are not charged. There is also the campground at the Peachtree Creek Public Purposes and Camping Reserve, adjacent to the Croajingolong National Park.

The current Visitor Guide information was revised in July 2006, and includes an annotation that firewood is supplied at Shipwreck Creek, but that the supply is not guaranteed. Unfortunately a small number of campers choose to take wood home with them or use significant amounts during their stay.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

2002

COUNCIL

Tuesday, 27 May 2008

It is not illegal for campers to forage for firewood in the Croajingolong National Park for use in designated fireplaces. However in recognition of the potential impact of the Shipwreck Creek campground on its immediate surrounds, foraging for campfire wood is not allowed within 500 metres of the campsite through a formal set-aside provision. Parks Victoria apologises if this provision was not made clear when you enquired.

Parks Victoria seeks to encourage campers to minimise their impact on the park environment by reducing the size of their campfires, using portable stoves, using constructed fireplaces and collecting only dead fallen timber without using chainsaws.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers

Wednesday, 28 May 2008

Health: Western Victoria Region

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Ms Tierney

Raised on: 28 February 2008

REPLY:

The Victorian Government was pleased to commit \$40 million in the 2007/08 State Budget to replace medical equipment across the public health system including metropolitan, major regional and rural public hospitals. Hospitals across rural and regional Victoria were allocated \$9.1 million.

Funding has been allocated to the following hospitals in the Western Victoria Region: South West Healthcare Warrnambool (\$377,400) and Portland Hospital (\$117,600), to replace equipment.

The funding will enable Warrnambool Hospital to replace an anaesthetic machine and two sterilisers. Portland Hospital will be in a position to replace their laparoscopic system in the day procedure centre plus three defibrillators.

In addition \$10,000 was allocated to Otway Health and Community Services for 3 new patient trolleys and \$55,710 allocated to Terang and Mortlake Health Service for a new operating table. Colac Area Health received \$140,753 to purchase an operating table and 2 anaesthetic monitoring machines.

The Brumby Government is committed to ensuring that hospitals have the appropriate equipment to provide the best possible care to patients.

Eastern Victoria Region: health services

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 13 March 2008

REPLY:

The Government provided significant additional funding over recent years to support Warley Hospital as it attempted to establish a sustainable service. Unfortunately, the Board of the hospital was not able to develop a model which would enable it to continue to operate.

Phillip Island will continue to have a seven day after hours medical clinic, following a joint funding arrangement between the Victorian and Commonwealth governments with Phillip Island Medical Group. The Victorian Government has also approved funding for the Bass Coast Community Health service to expand its community-based palliative care program on Phillip Island. In addition the Victorian Government has committed \$400,000 to Bass Coast Regional Health in Wonthaggi, to recruit salaried medical officers. Four new doctors have been recruited, whilst a further two are being recruited to enable 24-hour emergency department medical coverage for the Bass Coast community.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

2004

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 28 May 2008

The amalgamation of Peninsula Health and the Peninsula Community Health Service followed an extensive community consultation process. The decision to establish a new entity was not taken lightly; consideration was given to a range of information received, including the large number of submissions received by the Department of Human Services.

My announcement on 4 March 2008 stated clearly that all services run by Peninsula Health and the Peninsula Community Health Service will continue. The amalgamation will allow better integrated services by linking the planning and delivery of community based care with a broader range of health services throughout the Peninsula.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Responses have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers

Thursday, 29 May 2008

Land Victoria: electronic conveyancing

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr D. Davis

Raised on: 13 March 2008

REPLY:

Electronic Conveyancing (EC) is a world-leading initiative bringing the major functions of property conveyancing, and related mortgage activities, into the e-commerce world.

EC provides a more efficient and cost effective conveyancing process for solicitors, conveyancers and financial institutions. EC reduces the paper shuffle that occurs before settlement day, including the manual drawing and depositing of bank cheques into accounts and the need for people to meet to exchange documents and cheques.

It is estimated that EC will provide savings of up to \$395 per four party settlement and more than \$70 million of annual savings to Victorian industry and the community by 2012.

Victoria is committed to the development of a national electronic conveyancing system. I have been working with my state and territory and Federal Government Ministerial colleagues to help progress the development of a national electronic conveyancing system.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) met on the 26 March 2008 and agreed on an ambitious new reform agenda covering nine areas, including electronic conveyancing. COAG agreed to development of a national electronic conveyancing system, with advice on appropriate governance and system implementation processes to be considered by COAG by June 2008. The Standing Committee of Attorneys General (SCAG) noted the need for a national electronic conveyancing system.

At a recent meeting of all States, Territories, and the Federal Government there was unanimous agreement on governance arrangements for sharing Victoria's EC system, as a basis for moving towards a national system.

The banking industry is a key EC stakeholder and has been heavily involved in the development of Victoria's EC system through the Financial Institutions Operations Group. Industry will continue to be central to progressing a national system and Victoria will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders, including the Australian Bankers Association.

Mallacoota: firewood permits

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 8 May 2008

REPLY:

I am pleased to advise that the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) has systems in place to ensure that domestic firewood permits are easily accessible to members of the public.

In addition to the sale of domestic firewood permits from its offices, DSE has engaged the services of about 150 private businesses, located across Victoria, to sell firewood permits on the department's behalf. These agencies, which include service stations and supermarkets, mean that the public do not have to travel far to purchase a firewood permit and can purchase permits on weekends and at times when Government offices are not open to the public.

There are currently two such firewood agencies in Mallacoota:

- Mallacoota Food Works, at 48-50 Maurice Avenue, Mallacoota; and
- Rankins Supermarket at 49 Maurice Avenue, Mallacoota.

Both of these businesses are open seven days per week.

In addition, the Department is currently negotiating with a third business, which has extended trading hours, to become an agent servicing the Mallacoota community. This business is the Ampol Service Station trading as part of the Caltex South East Group.