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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.
 Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.
 Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.
 The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

Tuesday, 7 August 2007

Water, environment and climate change: Melbourne water consumption

- 34. MR RICH-PHILLIPS** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): What was Melbourne’s total water consumption in —
- (a) 1999–2000;
 - (b) 2000–01;
 - (c) 2001–02;
 - (d) 2002–03;
 - (e) 2003–04;
 - (f) 2004–05; and
 - (g) 2005–06.

ANSWER:

I am informed that Melbourne Water’s bulk water sales, including sales to Western Water, were as follows:

	ML
(1) 1999-2000	501,640 ML
(2) 2000-2001	505,140 ML
(3) 2001-2002	465,571 ML
(4) 2002-2003	483,000 ML
(5) 2003-2004	438,800 ML
(6) 2004-2005	440,982 ML
(7) 2005-2006	444,365 ML

Volumes for 1999-2000 to 2004-2005 have been sourced from the Water Services Association of Australia’s WSAA *facts* 2005 and the 2005-2006 volume has been sourced from the *National Performance Report 2005–06–Major Urban Water Utilities* which was prepared by the National Water Commission and Water Services Association of Australia. This document replaces WSAA *facts*.

Police and emergency services: Doncaster Crown land

- 142. MR DALLA-RIVA** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for Police and Emergency Services): Can the Minister provide descriptions of, and where available the addresses of, all Crown owned land in the electorate of Doncaster relating to his portfolio and indicate whether the Government intends to sell any of this land or acquire any new land in the Doncaster electorate.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

In the electorate of Doncaster, within the City of Manningham, the Department of Justice has only one “owned” Crown land holding relating to the Minister for Police & Emergency Services’ portfolio:-

Doncaster Police Station
979 Doncaster Road
Doncaster East.

The Department does not propose to sell the property holding, nor to acquire any new land in the electorate.

Aged care: residential demand

248. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Aged Care): In relation to Residential Aged Care, when will the Government release a register of demand for Victorian Residential Aged Care places.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The issue raised falls within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Community Services.

Public transport: timber railway sleepers

306. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to the Mildura rail corridor freight upgrade project tender No. T13218, and Section 21 of that Tender which requires the Tenderer to comply with all applicable laws and legal requirements:

- (1) Will timber to supply this contract come from forests in NSW that are not subject to the Regional Forest Assessment conducted in the area and are not part of any Regional Forest Agreement.
- (2) In operations to harvest timber for the purposes of supplying this contract, has any assessment been undertaken or approval obtained by Forests NSW for these operations under the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.
- (3) Has the Minister awarded a complying tender at this time.

ANSWER:

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

(1-3) I am advised by Forests NSW that all timber harvesting operations within NSW State forests and other Crown Timber lands in NSW are rigorously controlled and directly supervised by Forests NSW in accordance with provisions in the NSW Forestry Act 1916, the Forestry Regulation Act 2004 and, where applicable, the NSW Forestry and National Park Estate Act 1998.

However, matters pertaining to the NSW timber industry do not fall within my area of ministerial responsibility. Questions relating to the harvesting of timber in NSW should be directed to the NSW Government.

Public transport: Wodonga rail bypass

313. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): Now that the rail buy-back negotiations have been completed, can the Minister provide time lines for the estimated dates of completion of works on the relocation of the Wodonga rail bypass.

ANSWER:

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

The Government has now completed the buy back of the regional rail freight network from Pacific National. This is a major milestone for the Wodonga rail bypass.

We are now involved in detailed discussions with the ARTC, the operators of the interstate rail line, to finalise the scope for the project.

Health: Aboriginal caesarean deliveries

323. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): How many indigenous women in Victoria had caesarean deliveries in each of the years 2000 to 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Year	Total number of indigenous women birthing by caesarean	Total number of indigenous women giving birth in Victoria
2000	71	330
2001	76	381
2002	84	409
2003	95	428
2004	85	417
2005	99	473
2006	133	530
Total	643	2968

Health: Aboriginal caesarean deliveries

324. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): How many indigenous women in Victoria chose to have caesarean deliveries in each of the years 2000 to 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Year	Number of indigenous women who had an Elective* caesarean birth	Total number of indigenous women birthing by caesarean
2000	41	71
2001	35	76
2002	31	84
2003	42	95
2004	36	85
2005	45	99

Year	Number of indigenous women who had an Elective* caesarean birth	Total number of indigenous women birthing by caesarean
2006	71	133
Total	301	643

* The clinical indication for the elective caesarean section is not shown.

Health: Aboriginal caesarean deliveries

325. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): How many indigenous women in Victoria experienced caesarean deliveries with their first birth and then natural deliveries with subsequent births in each of the years 2000 to 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Year	Number of indigenous women who have VBAC*	Total number of indigenous women giving birth in Victoria
2000	5	330
2001	15	381
2002	8	409
2003	9	428
2004	5	417
2005	10	473
2006	5	530
Total	57	2968

* VBAC: Vaginal Birth After Caesarean (does not specify if previous caesarean was first birth or not).

Health: Aboriginal caesarean deliveries

326. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): How many rural Victorian indigenous women had caesarean deliveries in each of the years 2000 to 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Year	Number of indigenous women from rural Victoria birthing by caesarean	Total* number of indigenous women birthing by caesarean
2000	43	71
2001	43	76
2002	51	84
2003	56	95
2004	40	85

Year	Number of indigenous women from rural Victoria birthing by caesarean	Total* number of indigenous women birthing by caesarean
2005	64	99
2006	76	133
Total	373	643

* The total includes indigenous women birthing in Victoria who are from rural Victoria, metropolitan Victoria and from outside Victoria.

Health: Aboriginal caesarean deliveries

327. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): How many urban Victorian indigenous women had caesarean deliveries in each of the years 2000 to 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Year	Number of indigenous women from metropolitan Victoria birthing by caesarean	Total* number of indigenous women birthing by caesarean
2000	19	71
2001	22	76
2002	26	84
2003	27	95
2004	20	85
2005	8	99
2006	16	133
Total	138	643

* The total includes indigenous women birthing in Victoria who are from rural Victoria, metropolitan Victoria and from outside Victoria.

Water, environment and climate change: Wombat State Forest

329. MR VOGELS — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): What are the details of all benefits associated with the Wombat Community Management Program, prior to the closure of the Wombat State Forest.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Key benefits associated with the trial of community forest management in the Wombat forest include:

- A significant reduction in levels of conflict within the community—in-forest protest action that was widespread prior to introduction of the trial has now largely ceased;

- Greater participation in forest management activities, for example community volunteers have participated in rubbish clean up days, weed mapping and biodiversity monitoring activities;
- Increased community understanding about forest management issues and programs, gained through participation in a wide range of events, management trials and seminars;
- Continued sustainable access to the forest for forest produce such as firewood, apiary and recreation;
- Cultural change among DSE staff leading to greater responsiveness to community issues;
- Re-alignment of DSE management services towards issues of concern in the regional community
- Considerable learnings in DSE and the community about the community forest management concept for application in similar circumstances elsewhere and as a basis for continued community engagement in management of the Wombat forest.

The Wombat Forest remains open for a range of uses by the local and wider community.

Agriculture: sawlog auction system

- 330. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): What is the breakdown to date of the VicForests new sawlog auction system in terms of —
- (a) costs;
 - (b) benefits; and
 - (c) profits.

ANSWER:

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

The Question on Notice is not directly relevant to my portfolio responsibilities and should be addressed to the Treasurer.

Agriculture: sawlog auction system

- 331. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): As a consequence of VicForests' new sawlog auction system, have you identified how many jobs have been lost throughout country Victoria and have you calculated the cost of this loss.

ANSWER:

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

It is not appropriate to attribute job losses in Victoria's native hardwood timber industry solely to VicForests' new online auction system. The native forest timber industry has been experiencing significant change (reduction and consolidation) for over 25 years. This change has been partly due to changing resource availability; changing market preferences and conditions; and government policy settings, both State and Commonwealth.

Agriculture: sawlog auction system

- 332. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to VicForests' new sawlog auction system, what are the projected profits to State Revenue.

ANSWER:

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

The Question on Notice is not directly relevant to my portfolio responsibilities and should be addressed to the Treasurer.

Agriculture: sawlog auction system

- 333. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to VicForests' new sawlog auction system, can you guarantee that there will be no further reduction of sawlog timber below 450,000m³.

ANSWER:

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

The Question on Notice is not directly relevant to my portfolio responsibilities and should be addressed to the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change.

Agriculture: VicForests probity service

- 334. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to a recent advertisement for a probity service for VicForests, is this service now operating and will you release the findings of the probity.

ANSWER:

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

The Question on Notice is not directly relevant to my portfolio responsibilities and should be addressed to the Treasurer

Agriculture: forest industry rationalisation

- 335. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to the Forest Industry, do you believe further rationalisation is necessary.

ANSWER:

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

Victoria's native forest sector has been undergoing significant change for at least twenty-five years. This change has been partly due to variations in resource availability, partly due to changing market preferences and conditions, and partly due to the policies of Federal and State Governments.

Victoria's plantation forest sector is also experiencing significant market-induced economic pressure, primarily due to the current high value of the Australian dollar and the ready availability of similar products from offshore.

In summary, it would seem that the forest industry may pursue rationalisation as further market changes and competitive forces continue to shape both timber supply and the forest industries. These issues are not dissimilar to those that have faced other Victorian industries, and I am confident that a world class forest industry will continue to evolve in Victoria.

Public transport: signal and points failures

338. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to each of Connex’s 15 electrified lines within the area controlled by Metrol:

- (1) On a line by line basis, what is the number of signal failures and the number of points failures which occurred in November 2006, December 2006, January 2007, February 2007, March 2007 and April 2007 respectively, and for each occurrence what was the —
 - (a) date;
 - (b) time;
 - (c) cause of the failure;
 - (d) location to the nearest tenth of a kilometre;
 - (e) stations between which the failure occurred;
 - (f) number of trains delayed; and
 - (g) cumulative minutes of delay.

- (2) Will Metrol’s replacement train control centre and all associated software and hardware be fully operational on the date suggested by the Minister’s media release of 11 March 2007.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) See below.

Month	Signal Failures	Caused No Delay	Caused Delay
November	64	53	11
December	53	43	10
January	75	62	13
February	52	43	9
March	45	37	8
April	56	47	9

Month	Points Failures	Caused No Delay	Caused Delay
November	21	15	6
December	32	26	6
January	16	13	3
February	34	24	10
March	26	21	5
April	14	11	3

- (2) It is planned to have the new control and monitoring system commissioned by late 2010.

Public transport: rail track upgrades

340. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to current upgrade works on sections of metropolitan rail track:

- (1) When these upgrades are completed —

- (a) what sections of track leased to Connex and V/Line respectively, will be controlled by Metrol; and
 - (b) will Metrol's boundaries extend beyond Clifton Hill, North Melbourne, Caulfield and Burnley, and if so, to where.
- (2) What sections of rail track are not included in the upgrade.
- (3) On what dates will each section of track not included in the upgrade become part of the Metrol train control area.

ANSWER:

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

- (1)
- (a) All sections of metropolitan track between South Kensington, Clifton Hill, Burnley and Caulfield, through to Flinders Street.
 - (b) No, but provision for any future expansion will be provided for in the new system.
- (2) All metropolitan rail lines which are outside the boundary defined in the answer to question 1.
- (3) To be determined following the completion of the Metrol System Gaps project that was announced in *Meeting Our Transport Challenges*.

Public transport: train drivers

341. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to train drivers employed by Connex Melbourne and V/Line respectively, as at 30 June 2004, 30 June 2005, 30 June 2006 and 30 April 2007, how many were —

- (a) employed full time;
- (b) employed part time;
- (c) casual drivers;
- (d) in training;
- (e) on sick leave; and
- (f) on WorkCover.

ANSWER:

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

	Connex	V/Line
(a) Full time employment		
30 June 2004	584	225
30 June 2005	602	245
30 June 2006	615	286
30 April 2007	646	309
(b) Part time employment		
30 June 2004	10	Nil
30 June 2005	10	Nil
30 June 2006	10	Nil
30 April 2007	9	Nil

(c) Casual drivers

30 June 2004	Nil	Nil
30 June 2005	Nil	Nil
30 June 2006	Nil	Nil
30 April 2007	Nil	Nil

(d) In training

30 June 2004	48	Nil
30 June 2005	74	29
30 June 2006	85	52
30 April 2007	92	20

(e) Sick leave

30 June 2004	24	4
30 June 2005	29	8
30 June 2006	40	8
30 April 2007	27	9

(f) WorkCover

30 June 2004	5	3
30 June 2005	7	2
30 June 2006	4	3
30 April 2007	7	6

Public transport: V/Line inquiries

346. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to telephone calls made to V/Line’s 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. 13 61 96 enquiry line during March 2007 and April 2007 respectively, what was the total number of calls, the number of calls in relation to reservations and the median waiting time of callers for each of the following lines:

- (a) Albury;
- (b) Ararat;
- (c) Bairnsdale;
- (d) Echuca;
- (e) Shepparton;
- (f) Swan Hill; and
- (g) Warrnambool.

ANSWER:

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

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.

The median waiting time for callers in March 2007 was 48 seconds and 32 seconds in April 2007.

Public transport: infringement notices

349. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport):

- (1) What is the administration fee per transport infringement notice paid to —
 - (a) Connex;
 - (b) Yarra Trams;
 - (c) V/Line; and
 - (d) metropolitan bus operators.
- (2) What is the current scale of increments for transport infringement notices and when was it approved.
- (3) In relation to transport infringement notices issued by each of Victoria’s public and private train, tram and bus operators during the periods 2004–05, 2005–06 and 1 July 2006 to 30 April 2007 respectively —
 - (a) how much was paid in administration fees; and
 - (b) how many complaints were received by the Department of Infrastructure.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) The administration payment is based on transport infringements successfully collected. The administration payment per transport infringement is —
 - (a) Connex \$30;
 - (b) Yarra Trams \$30;
 - (c) V/Line \$0; and
 - (d) metropolitan bus operators \$0.
- (2) The initial administration payment was \$20 per penalty paid and was increased to \$30 on 1 December 2005.

(a) Administration payments to Connex and Yarra Trams are as follows:

2004-2005;	Connex	\$563,380
	Yarra	\$590,300
2005-2006;	Connex	\$688,320
	Yarra	\$930,740
July 2006 to 30 April 2007;	Connex	\$457,650
	Yarra	\$774,060

V/Line and metropolitan bus operators do not receive administration payments for infringement notices.

(b) Complaints received by the Department of Infrastructure regarding the issuing of infringement notices for:

2004-2005;	18
2005-2006;	27
1 July 2006 to 30 April 2007;	69

Further breakdown into individual companies is not available.

Public transport: complaints

350. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to complaints received by the Minister’s Office during December 2006, January 2007, February 2007, March 2007 and April 2007 respectively:

- (1) What was the number and format (email, letter, telephone or fax) of complaints from users of —
 - (a) Connex metropolitan trains;
 - (b) Yarra Trams;
 - (c) Ventura/National Bus Company (and subsidiaries) metropolitan bus routes;
 - (d) Grenda Corporation (and subsidiaries) metropolitan bus routes;
 - (e) Kefford Corporation (and subsidiaries) metropolitan bus routes;
 - (f) Dysons Bus metropolitan bus routes;
 - (g) Geelong Transit System provincial bus routes;
 - (h) Ballarat provincial bus routes;
 - (i) Bendigo provincial bus routes; and
 - (j) Latrobe Valley provincial bus routes including town services in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.

- (2) In each case, how many complaints related to —
 - (a) late services;
 - (b) cancelled services;
 - (c) fares and ticketing;
 - (d) customer service;
 - (e) frequency of services;
 - (f) span in hours and days of services; and
 - (g) other issues.

- (3) Of these complaints received for each month, how many of each type were still outstanding and how many were answered within —
 - (a) 7 days;
 - (b) 14 days;
 - (c) 21 days;
 - (d) 30 days;
 - (e) 60 days; and
 - (f) 90 days.

- (4) How many complaints for each month were forwarded to private operators for response.
- (5) How many complaints for each month were returned to the Member’s office of origin to be forwarded to a private operator for response.

ANSWER:

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

(1+2) The following table shows the items of Ministerial correspondence received by the Office of the Minister for Public Transport between December 2006 and April 2007, as recorded in the Department of Infrastructure’s correspondence database:

Month	Number of items
December 2006	127
January 2007	186
February 2007	255
March 2007	305
April 2007	213
Total	1086

Correspondence items are not categorised by format (email, letter, telephone or fax) or by complaint.

The nature and number of telephone calls received by the Minister's office are not recorded.

Of the 1086 items of correspondence received, 342 items were categorised under 'Service Delivery', which includes items relating to Availability/Adequacy, Service Cancellations, Compensation/Refunds, Late Running and Special Events. The remaining 744 correspondence items were recorded under a number of other categories.

- (3) Items of correspondence and telephone calls are responded to as soon as practicable. Once an item of correspondence has been responded to, it is then recorded as being completed in the correspondence archive database. The archive database does not report on the number of days in which completed items were answered. To review each of the 1086 items to ascertain the time it took to prepare a response would be highly resource intensive.
- (4) As the correspondence database does not distinguish between a referral letter to a private operator and a Ministerial response, it would be too resource intensive to review all of the responses to ascertain which items were referred.
- (5) None. It is not standard procedure to forward complaints back to Members of Parliament to redirect to private operators.

Public transport: internet sites

355. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to the internet sites for VicRoads, the Department of Infrastructure, V/Line, Connex Melbourne, Yarra Trams and Metlink Melbourne:

- (1) How many hits did each site receive per month from January 2006 to January 2007.
- (2) How many distinct users accessed each site per month from January 2006 to January 2007.
- (3) What was the median time users spent accessing each site per session.
- (4) How much was spent to maintain and upgrade each site during 2005–06 and from 1 July 2006 to the present.
- (5) What have been the ten most popular pages accessed on each site (excluding the home page) per month from January 2006 to January 2007 as determined by —
 - (a) the number of hits; and
 - (b) the number of page impressions.

ANSWER:

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

I can provide web statistical information for the DOI departmental site, www.doi.vic.gov.au site and V/line, www.vline.com.au. Information is not provided for Connex, Yarra Trams and Metlink as these are operational

matters of private companies and not matters of government administration. Information is not provided for VicRoads, as this is a matter for the Minister for Roads and Ports.

- (1) Please refer to the DOI and V/Line Web Statistical Information Jan 06–07 excel spreadsheet.

Please note that as per the Victorian Government Web Analytics Toolkit, DOI and V/Line record ‘page impressions’ and not ‘hits’ as page impressions provide a more accurate representation of usage.

- (2) Please refer to the DOI and V/Line Web Statistical Information Jan 06–07 excel spreadsheet.

Please note that DOI have provided unique visitors however V/Line is unable to identify unique users at this time. V/Line hope to be able to provide this information in the future however for this report Visitors, not Unique Visitors has been used.

- (3) Please refer to the DOI and V/Line Web Statistical Information Jan 06–07 excel spreadsheet.

Please note that V/Line, using their web reporting tool, cannot provide an accurate median time, as a result they have listed average time per user per month. V/line has manually calculated the median figure as the median of the daily averages.

- (4) The DOI websites are supported by 2 FTEs who manage site maintenance and updates. A distributed authoring system is employed and a number of content authors maintain and update web content as part of their broader communication roles.

The V/Line website content was maintained by 1 FTE Jan 05–Jan 07. Site development project management and user acceptance testing is also managed by this FTE. Content is created by a number of content authors, mainly within the V/Line communications team.

- (5) Please refer to the ‘Popular Pages’ provided in the DOI and V/line Web Statistical Information Jan 06–07 excel spreadsheet as per above.

Please note that as per Q1 above, DOI and V/Line do not record ‘hits’ as ‘page impressions’ provides a more accurate representation of usage.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

DOI Website www.doi.vic.gov.au		Web Statistical Information											
	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07
Page Impressions *	257,638	248,307	277,880	219,449	309,176	233,992	194,832	204,205	173,451	214,601	202,630	209,589	216,467
Unique Users	40,705	39,926	44,452	41,089	47,802	41,088	36,488	36,949	34,010	39,398	38,888	31,875	36,981
Average Session Time	6m17s	6m17s	6m32s	6m37s	6m13s	5m31s	5m35s	6m20s	6m30s	5m30s	5m25s	5m22s	5m36s
Median Session Time	2m04s	1m59s	2m01s	2m01s	2m08s	2m06s	2m24s	2m15s	2m10s	2m16s	2m13s	2m09s	2m34s

V/Line Website www.vline.com.au		Web Statistical Information											
	Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06	Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07
Page Impressions *	1,617,265	1,116,234	1,718,153	1,573,440	1,499,137	1,710,890	1,648,206	1,932,909	2,438,858	1,779,150	1,766,850	2,172,035	2,258,353
Visitors	105,633	87,753	118,294	103,450	104,019	111,728	100,252	121,472	152,859	126,140	130,739	167,337	179,415
Average Session Time (mm:ss)	07:23	07:08	06:43	06:42	06:31	06:03	06:13	06:48	06:20	06:02	05:48	05:23	05:16
Median Session Time (mm:ss)	07:18	07:16	06:38	06:41	06:34	06:05	06:13	06:51	06:25	06:02	05:50	05:29	05:17

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

V/Line Website www.vline.com.au Most Popular Pages		Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06
1	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey
2	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Fare information	Fare information
3	Network Maps	Network Maps	Commonwealth Games information	Fare information	Fare information	Fare information	Timetables	Timetables
4	Fare Calculator	Fare Calculator	Network Maps	News article	News article	News article	Network Maps	Plan Your Journey - Help pages
5	Ticket information page	Commonwealth Games information	Ticket information page	Network Maps	Network Maps	Network Maps	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Network Maps
6	Commonwealth Games information	Ticket information page	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Ticket information page	Ticket information page	Ticket information page	Peak/Off-Peak information
7	Stations & Stops information	Bendigo Line closure news article	Commonwealth Games specific timetables	News article	Where to buy tickets information	Where to buy tickets information	Concession fares information	Ticket information page
8	Reservations information	Contact Us	Reservations information	Ticket information page	Vacancies	Vacancies	Where to buy tickets information	Concession fares information
9	Where to buy tickets information	Where to buy tickets information	Where to buy tickets information	Reservations information	Reservations information	Reservations information	Reservations information	Vacancies
10	Frequently Asked Questions homepage	Frequently Asked Questions homepage	Frequently Asked Questions homepage	Where to buy tickets information	Where to buy tickets information	Contact Us	Vacancies	Contact Us

V/Line Website www.vline.com.au Most Popular Pages		Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07
1	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey	Plan Your Journey
2	Fare information	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables	Timetables
3	Timetables	Fare information	Fare information	Fare information	Fare information	Fare information	Fare information
4	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	News article	News article	News article	News article	News article
5	Peak/Off-Peak information	Peak/Off-Peak information	Network Maps	Network Maps	Network Maps	Peak/Off-Peak information	Network Maps
6	Network Maps	Network Maps	Peak/Off-Peak information	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Network Maps	Network Maps	Peak/Off-Peak information
7	Timetable changes	Royal Show information	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	PDF help page	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Plan Your Journey - Help pages	Plan Your Journey - Help pages
8	Ticket information page	News article	PDF help page	Stations & Stops information	Christmas Timetable information	Ticket information page	Ticket information page
9	Rail replacement coach article	PDF help page	Contact Us	Contact Us	Contact Us	Stations & Stops information	Stations & Stops information
10	Concession fares information	Contact Us	Stations & Stops information	Frequently Asked Questions homepage	Stations & Stops information	Where to buy tickets information	Where to buy tickets information

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

DOI Website www.doi.vic.gov.au Most Popular Pages						
Jan-06	Feb-06	Mar-06	Apr-06	May-06	Jun-06	Jul-06
Public Transport Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	City Loop History	Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page
City Loop History	City Loop History	City Loop History	Public Transport Entry Page	Meeting our Transport Challenges Documents	Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page	Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page
Southern Cross Station Project	Southern Cross Station Project	Flinders Street Station	Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	City Loop History	City Loop History
Regional Fast Rail	Contact Us	Southern Cross Station Project	Flinders Street Station	Meeting our Transport Challenges What it means to you	Contact Us	Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page
Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page	Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page	Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page	Contact Us	City Loop History	Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page	Flinders Street Station
Taxi & Hire Cars	Regional Fast Rail	Contact Us	Southern Cross Station Project	Meeting our Transport Challenges Actions	Southern Cross Station Project	Contact Us
Contact Us	Flinders Street Station	Trams	Taxi & Hire Cars	Transport Planning & Projects Entry Page	Taxi & Hire Cars	Southern Cross Station Project
Trains	Taxi & Hire Cars	Taxi & Hire Cars	About DOI	Southern Cross Station Project	About DOI	About DOI
Flinders Street Station	Trains	About DOI	Employment at DOI	Contact Us	Employment at DOI	Taxi & Hire Cars
Employment at DOI	Employment at DOI	Employment at DOI	Regional Fast Rail	Flinders Street Station	Flinders Street Station	Regulators & Licences Entry Page
DOI Website www.doi.vic.gov.au Most Popular Pages						
Aug-06	Sep-06	Oct-06	Nov-06	Dec-06	Jan-07	
Public Transport Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	Public Transport Entry Page	Public transport	Public Transport Entry Page	
Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page	Southern Cross Station Project	City Loop History	City Loop History	City Loop history	City Loop History	
City Loop History	City Loop History	Southern Cross Station Project	Strategies & Plans	Multi Purpose Taxi Program	Southern Cross Station Project	
Southern Cross Station Project	Employment at DOI	Strategies & Plans	Taxi & Hire Cars	Southern Cross Station project	Strategies & Plans	
Employment at DOI	About DOI	Flinders Street Station	Employment at DOI	Contact us	Taxi & Hire Cars	
About DOI	News & Media Releases	Contact Us	Trains	About DOI	Employment at DOI	
Flinders Street Station	Strategies & Plans	Employment at DOI	Flinders Street Station	Flinders Street Station	Trains	
Regional Fast Rail	Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page	About DOI	About DOI	Trains	About DOI	
Taxi & Hire Cars	New Ticketing System - myki	News & Media Releases	Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page	Southern Cross Station customer services and facilities	Meeting our Transport Challenges Entry Page	
Meeting our Transport Challenges Documents	Flinders Street Station	Public Transport Safety Victoria Entry Page	Trams	Public transport fins	Flinders Street Station	

Housing: waiting lists

364. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Housing): What is the current average waiting time for each of the four categories of the segmented waiting list for public housing for each region and housing office.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the Office of Housing monitors average waiting times as part of its internal reporting processes.

There are four “segments” of the waiting list for public housing. The first three segments are (1) recurring homelessness, (2) supported housing, and (3) special medical needs. Together these comprise the “early housing” waiting list for priority allocations. The fourth segment is the wait turn waiting list.

The Office of Housing monitors statewide average waiting time for the first three “early housing segments” as described in table 1 below:

Table 1. Average waiting time by segment, based on allocations July 2006–May 2007.

	Segment 1	Segment 2	Segment 3	Total Segment 1-3
Victoria	4.8 months	7.5 months	4.9 months	6.1 months

At a regional level, the Office of Housing reports all “early housing segments” as a single figure as described in table 2 below:

Table 2. Average waiting by region, based on allocations July 2006–May 2007.

	Eastern	North and West	Southern	Barwon South West	Gippsland	Grampians	Hume	Loddon Mallee
Total Segment 1-3	8.5	6.9	9.0	3.6	4.7	3.8	4.3	3.2

The Office of Housing does not calculate average waiting times for wait turn allocations. The Office of Housing operates a segmented waiting list to ensure that applicants in most need are given priority access to public housing. In 2006–07 to date, 68 per cent of all allocations are applicants approved for early housing. Non-early housing (segment 4) applicants are placed behind all early housing applicants, including those early housing applicants that join the public housing waiting list after them.

Community services: Manningham community transport

373. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services: Can the Minister outline the recipient organisations and the amount of funding made available to Manningham community organisations to provide community transport in 2005–06 and 2006–07.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Volunteer Coordination is an activity funded through the Home and Community Care (HACC) program that enables service providers to meet a range of needs for their clients and local communities, such as assisting clients to attend social support and leisure activities, as well as some allied health and medical appointments.

The Volunteer Coordination activity could include client transport with volunteers utilising their own vehicles and being reimbursed some costs associated with the service. If engaged in client transport the primary expectation is

that this will enable members of the HACC eligible target group to leave and return to their home for purposes within the scope of the HACC program. It is also possible that, when not engaged in their primary purpose, volunteers will use their vehicles for broader community type activities.

Within the municipality of the City of Manningham, two providers are funded for HACC Volunteer Coordination, namely, Manningham Community Health Service (Manningham CHS) and Doncaster Community Care and Counselling Incorporated (Doncare). There is a local level arrangement of partnership between these two organisations.

The following funding was provided to Manningham CHS and Doncare during the period 2005–06 to 2006–07 for Volunteer Coordination:

2005–06

Manningham CHS	\$106,142
Doncare	\$103,292

2006–07

Manningham CHS	\$108,387
Doncare	\$105,475

Public transport: Doncaster bus services

374. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport):

- (1) Has the Ventura Bus Company applied to increase bus services in the Doncaster area.
- (2) If so, on what date and when will the Government respond to the application.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) Ventura Bus Lines (National Bus Company) has recently proposed to change bus Route 283 (which operates on a local loop from Doncaster Shoppingtown to Bulleen and back to Shoppingtown), to provide a more direct service from Shoppingtown to Bulleen/Heidelberg Railway Station.
- (2) Manningham Council, Ventura Bus Lines and the Department of Infrastructure are considering the service proposal and will advise you of the decision at the appropriate time.

Health: health professionals drug use

378. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health) In relation to measures within Victoria’s public health system to tackle illicit substance use by doctors, nurses and allied health professionals:

- (1) Are these employees in Victoria’s public health system subject to a drug policy.
- (2) What does this policy entail for each group respectively.
- (3) What measures are taken when an employee is caught in possession of an illicit substance.
- (4) What measures are taken when an employee is suspected of being under the influence of an illicit substance.
- (5) What measures are taken when an employee is proven to be under the influence of an illicit substance.
- (6) Is drug testing ever used by the Department of Health in the public health system; if so, when.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) Doctors, nurses and allied health professionals within Victoria's public health system are subject to drug policies.
- (2) Local health service policies complement the requirements of the relevant registration boards responsible for doctors, nurses and allied health professionals.
- (3) Health service employees found to have illegal drugs in their possession on health service premises will be subject to disciplinary procedures by the health service and/or criminal investigation.
- (4) Supervisors that suspect an on duty employee is under the influence of an illicit substance are expected to interview the employee to assess the cause of the employee's behaviour and their symptoms.
- (5) If an objective assessment such as a clinical visit shows that in all probability the on duty employee is under the influence of drugs, local policies are followed to determine the response.
- (6) There is no universal drug testing regime in Victoria's public health system.

Aged care: Seniors Festival

387. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Aged Care): In relation to the Victorian Seniors' Festival:

- (1) How many seniors participated in the Senior's Festival week in each of the years 2001 to 2006.
- (2) How many participants are expected during 2007.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Information relating to attendance at the Victorian Seniors Festival is available in the Department for Victorian Communities and Department of Human Services' Annual Reports for the relevant years.

We expect attendance at the Festival in 2007 to be similar to previous years.

Public transport: train drivers

393. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): How many hours and minutes is a single shift made up of for train drivers for both Connex Melbourne and V/Line Passenger.

ANSWER:

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

Connex:

Connex informs me that shifts range from 8 hours to 8 hours and 29 minutes.

V/Line:

V/Line informs me that shifts range from 8 hours to 11 hours.

Consumer affairs: junior football club liquor licences

397. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): Since the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force, how many junior football clubs have been granted a licence to sell liquor.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Since 8 December 2004 when the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force to 5 June 2007, 13 permanent licences and 40 temporary licences have been granted to junior football clubs.

Consumer affairs: junior football club liquor licences

398. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): Since the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force, how many junior football clubs have been refused a licence to sell liquor.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Since 8 December 2004 when the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force to 5 June 2007, five applications from junior football clubs for a permanent licence have been refused and two have been ‘struck out’.

In relation to applications for temporary licences, no applications have been refused but eight have been ‘struck out’, usually because the applicant decided not to proceed with the application.

Consumer affairs: school and kindergarten liquor licences

401. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): Since the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force, how many schools and kindergartens have been granted a licence to sell liquor.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Since 8 December 2004 when the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force to 5 June 2007, 1866 temporary licences have been granted to schools and kindergartens. Temporary licences granted to schools are for functions held by school or community groups outside of school hours.

Consumer affairs: school and kindergarten liquor licences

402. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): Since the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force, how many schools and kindergartens have been refused a licence to sell liquor.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Since 8 December 2004 when the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force to 5 June 2007, one application by a school for a temporary licence has been refused.

Three applications for a permanent licence and 34 applications for a temporary licence have been ‘struck out’. This may have been because an applicant decided not to proceed with an application or because an on-line application for a temporary licence was incorrectly submitted.

Consumer affairs: junior football club, school and kindergarten liquor licences

403. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): Since the *Liquor Control Reform (Underage Drinking and Enhanced Enforcement) Act 2004* came into force, what is the most common reason junior football clubs, schools, and kindergartens have been refused liquor licences?

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Applications for a permanent licence were refused on the ground that the premises could not be licensed under s.22(1)(ca) of the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* and the temporary licence was refused because the application did not meet the criteria for a temporary licence.

In addition, a number of licence applications by these groups have been withdrawn or struck out (details are provided in the attachment to this response). Some applicants elected not to proceed with their application when the implications of s.22(1)(ca) were explained to them. In these cases, the application was struck out and the application fee refunded.

Applications are also ‘struck out’ for other reasons, for example, people lodging applications on-line for temporary licences sometimes submit multiple applications in error or apply for a liquor licence when no licence is required.

Consumer affairs: reviews

404. MS LOVELL — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): What is the expected cost of the following reviews listed on Consumer Affairs Victoria’s website —

- (a) Associations Incorporation Act Review;
- (b) Body Corporate Review;
- (c) Consumer Credit Review;
- (d) Conveyancing Review;
- (e) Domestic Building Contracts Review;
- (f) Estate Agents Council Licence System Review;
- (g) Estate Agents (Fees) Regulations Consultation;
- (h) Fair Trading Act Consultation;
- (i) Fundraising Appeals Act Review;
- (j) Harmonisation of Telemarketing Laws Review;
- (k) Motor Car Traders Consultation;
- (l) Packaged Liquor Review;
- (m) Patriotic Funds Regulation Review;
- (n) Retirement Villages Act Review;
- (o) Retirement Villages Regulations Consultation;
- (p) Rural Tenancies Discussion Paper;
- (q) Solicitor lending, instalment contracts and the Consumer Credit Code Consultation;

- (r) Standards for Financial Counselling;
- (s) Trade Measurement Regulations;
- (t) Uniform Trade Measurement Legislation Review; and
- (u) Utility Metering Regulations Consultation.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Consumer Affairs Victoria does not record expenditure against each individual review listed on the CAV website. The reviews are funded either through trust funds, such as the Victorian Property Fund, or through general appropriations.

Consumer affairs: reviews

- 405.** **MS LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): When will the Government respond to the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 Review* listed on Consumer Affairs Victoria's website.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

The Government is currently finalising its response to the review. The response must be coordinated with the review of the not for profit sector currently being undertaken by the State Services Authority. The final response will not therefore be released until the State Services Authority review has been progressed.

Consumer affairs: motor car traders

- 407.** **MS LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): When will the Government publish its Business Impact Assessment arising from Mr Noel Pullen's Report on the Motor Car Traders Act Consultations.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Implementation of the Government's response to the Pullen Report, including the Business Impact Assessment, is under active consideration.

Consumer affairs: rural tenancies

- 408.** **MS LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): When will the Government respond to the Rural Tenancies Discussion Paper to which submissions closed in 2005.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

As part of the policy commitments outlined in the *Addressing Disadvantage—Investing in a Fairer Victoria* policy, Consumer Affairs Victoria in consultation with the Office of Housing is developing a Residential Accommodation Strategy which aims, amongst other things, to 'improve the regulation of rooming houses, including strengthening and standardising legislation; improving coordination and compliance activities under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*; and the *Health Act 1958*; developing targeted information for residents regarding their rights and avenues

for assistance' and 'to ensure that residents of mobile homes and caravan parks are protected by appropriate residential tenancy issues'.

The submissions from the Rural Tenancies Discussion paper will be considered within the broad policy framework stated in *Addressing Disadvantage—Investing in a Fairer Victoria*. Future issues papers will consider those issues not covered within this approach.

Our commitment to tenancy issues is reflected in the programs and projects targeting rural tenancy issues undertaken by our rural and regional offices such as the Landlord Training program and the New Tenancy program.

Consumer affairs: financial counselling

409. **MS LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): When will the Government respond to the stakeholder feedback received in response to its document released as part of its review of Standards for Financial Counselling.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

The project to develop financial counselling standards is still continuing. The draft standards have been reviewed by Consumer Affairs Victoria and the final document is currently being prepared.

Consumer affairs: utility metering

410. **MS LOVELL** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): When will the Government respond to the submissions received during its Utility Metering Regulations Consultation.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

The Council of Australian Governments recently agreed to the transfer of responsibility for trade measurement law from the States and Territories to the Australian Government.

Consumer Affairs Victoria will shortly meet with representatives of the Federal Government to discuss the scope of the decision including its possible implications for the making of regulations under the Utility Meters (Metrological Controls) Act 2002.

Water, environment and climate change: treated water

411. **MRS PETROVICH** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the Essential Services Commission Guidelines have all the State's water authorities been given permission to release treated water to farmers.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The Essential Services Commission does not give permission to water authorities to release treated water to farmers. Rather, the Essential Services Commission set the tariff which water businesses are allowed to charge non-residential customers (including farms) for the treated water they receive from the water business.

Water, environment and climate change: treated water

- 412. MRS PETROVICH** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): When was Westernport Water given permission under the Essential Services Commission Guidelines to release treated water to farmers.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The Essential Services Commission does not give permission to Westernport Water to release treated water to farmers. Rather, the Essential Services Commission set the tariff which Westernport Water is allowed to charge its non-residential customers (including farms) for the treated water they receive from the business.

Water, environment and climate change: water — farmers

- 413. MRS PETROVICH** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): Why do the pricing guidelines issued by the Essential Services Commission preclude water from being used for primary production by farmers.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The role of the Essential Services Commission encompasses regulation of prices as well as monitoring of service standards and market conduct. It does not preclude water use by certain users.

Current water and sewerage charges were approved by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and consistent with the Water Industry Regulatory Order, following an 18-month public review process which set prices for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2008. This includes the tariffs that non-residential customers (including farms) pay for the water they receive from the water authority.

The ESC will undertake a public price review to set prices that will take effect from 1 July 2008. Water authorities are preparing draft water plans that will be released for public comment later this year before being finalised and submitted to the ESC for review. The ESC will then consult with customers on any proposed changes and impacts.

Further information on the role of the ESC can be obtained from the ESC website www.esc.vic.gov.au.

Water, environment and climate change: water pricing

- 414. MRS PETROVICH** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): Given the present urgency of the water shortage in Victoria will the Essential Services Commission suspend application of the pricing guidelines.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Essential Services Commission's role includes ensuring that prices provide incentives for the sustainable use of Victoria's water resources by providing appropriate signals to water users.

Current water and sewerage charges were approved by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and consistent with the Water Industry Regulatory Order, following an 18-month public review process which set prices for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2008.

The ESC will undertake a public price review to set prices that will take effect from 1 July 2008. Water authorities are preparing draft water plans that will be released for public comment later this year before being finalised and submitted to the ESC for review. The ESC will then consult with customers on any proposed changes and impacts.

Further information on the role of the ESC can be obtained from the ESC website www.esc.vic.gov.au.

Water, environment and climate change: water pricing

415. MRS PETROVICH — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): Given the present urgency of the water shortage in Victoria will there be a review of the Essential Services Commission pricing guidelines before June 2008.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Current water and sewerage charges were approved by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and consistent with the Water Industry Regulatory Order, following an 18-month public review process which set prices for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2008.

The ESC will undertake a public price review to set prices that will take effect from 1 July 2008. Water authorities are preparing draft water plans that will be released for public comment later this year before being finalised and submitted to the ESC for review. The ESC will then consult with customers on any proposed changes and impacts.

Further information on the role of the ESC can be obtained from the ESC website www.esc.vic.gov.au.

Community services: complex medical care facilities

418. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services: In relation to facilities for young people with complex medical needs:

- (1) Excluding the facility in Alphington, are there any plans to build additional facilities specifically for young people with complex medical needs.
- (2) Where will these facilities be located.
- (3) When will the construction of these facilities be completed.
- (4) How many beds will these facilities provide.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) Through the *my future my choice* initiative, additional facilities will be developed for young people with high and complex support needs to help reduce the number of younger people living in Residential Aged Care (RAC) services.
- (2) Apart from the Alphington service, the initiative is currently identifying suitable service providers for new services in Southern Metropolitan Region (SMR) and Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). Further service developments will be scheduled pending the outcome of the individual planning process currently underway for younger people living in RAC.
- (3) The SMR and EMR services will be constructed and operational by mid-late 2008.
- (4) Each of the three developments in Alphington, SMR and EMR will provide 10 beds each. The number of places to be included in later developments will be informed by the individual planning process.

Community services: falls prevention programs

428. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services:

- (1) Since 2002–03 has the Government extended the Aged Care Falls Prevention programs.
- (2) If so, which services were extended and how many more people did the service extend to.
- (3) What is the location of each service that was extended.
- (4) How much funding was allocated to these service extensions in 2004–2005, 2005–06 and 2006–07 respectively.
- (5) Do you anticipate further service extension in 2008.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

1. In 2002–03, five Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) were funded for three years to implement a falls prevention project in their catchment area. In addition 12 residential aged care services were funded for one year to implement a falls prevention project. By 2006–07, 29 PCPs and 21 residential aged care services had received funding to implement falls prevention projects and extend reach. The project model enables agencies to extend reach, incorporate falls prevention practice into standard models of care and promote partnership opportunities.
2. In addition to the Aged Care program, Metropolitan Health and Aged Care Services funds falls and mobility clinics for people at high risk of experiencing multiple falls; and centre- and home-based rehabilitation services to treat and manage people who have had a fall. In 2001 there were 9 falls prevention clinics in Victoria. By 2007 the number of clinics in Victoria had increased to 24, 14 funded by the Victorian Government and 10 clinics via the private sector.

The outcomes from Aged Care pilot projects have encouraged acute hospitals and residential aged care services (public and private) to monitor and address patient falls by incorporating preventive strategies into practice. The falls prevention guidelines developed in 2004 by the Victorian Quality Council, and later endorsed by the State Coroner are used to prevent falls and injuries in all hospitals and residential aged care services.

3. Since 2002–03, falls prevention initiatives have been extended from five to 29 of the 31 PCPs catchment areas. The remaining two PCPs were funded prior to 2002–03. As at 2006–07, all PCPs across Victoria have been funded to implement a falls prevention project.
4. In 2004–05, \$1.256 million was allocated from the Aged Care budget, in 2005–2006 \$1.27 million was allocated and in 2006–2007 \$1.305 million was allocated to the Falls Prevention Program.
5. In 2007–08, the Program will utilise the budget of \$1.25 million to extend falls prevention activities to at risk HACC clients and fund existing projects in progress.

Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission: catastrophic injury coverage

429. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Education (for the Minister for Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission): In relation to the expansion of the Transport Accident Commission scheme to include people with a catastrophic injury outside motor vehicle accidents:

- (1) What work has been undertaken on the expanded TAC scheme.
- (2) How will the scheme be expanded.
- (3) When will the expansion of this scheme be introduced.
- (4) Who will be included in the scheme.
- (5) What will be the cost of the expansion of the scheme.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

In cases of catastrophic injury not covered by workers' compensation, the transport accident scheme or the laws of negligence; support mechanisms in place include the public health system, victims of crime legislation and, in some cases, private insurance products.

No state or territory in Australia currently has a universal no-fault catastrophic injury compensation scheme and, in the absence of the Commonwealth taking a leadership role, Victoria is examining the available options.

That work is ongoing.

Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission: work-related stress

432. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Education (for the Minister for WorkCover and TAC): In relation to the code of practice for stress in the public sector introduced by WorkSafe; Given the serious health problems posed at work by stress, when does the Government intend to introduce a workforce-wide code of practice to address this hazard.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

In response to a concern that work-related stress was becoming an increasing problem in the Victorian public sector, WorkSafe produced '*Stresswise — Preventing Work-Related Stress.*'

The publication is not a code of practice, but rather provides practical tools and an occupational health and safety risk prevention framework to help public sector employers meet their obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

While the publication has been developed for the public sector, all employers can utilise and adapt it to their own organisations to respond to the universal and growing problem of stress in the workplace.

Further information is available from WorkSafe's website at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Finance, WorkCover and the Transport Accident Commission: occupational disease

433. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Education (for the Minister for WorkCover and TAC): What measures does WorkSafe intend to introduce to address the rising issue of occupational disease.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To address the problem of occupational disease, WorkSafe is undertaking a range of initiatives, including:

- Projects to address specific occupational diseases, including musculoskeletal disorders, work-related stress, asbestos-related diseases and skin cancer;
- Research into the causes of ill-health and disease in the chemicals industry, focusing in particular on occupational asthma, contact dermatitis and cancers;
- Campaigns to raise public awareness of occupational disease;
- Developing improved guidance material for employers;
- Research into ways to more quickly identify exposures that affect health;
- Improving data collection in relation to work-related disease exposures;

- Driving the development of a national disease exposure survey to better understand the levels of exposure to occupational disease.

Police and emergency services: tasers

434. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to Tasers:

- (1) Given the demonstrated misuse and fatal consequences of Tasers in the United States, what steps will the Government take to limit the use of Tasers in the Victorian Police force, and to have proper investigations when they are used.
- (2) How much money is allocated for —
 - (a) research into their dangers, and ways to mitigate those dangers;
 - (b) proper recording as to the use and threatened use of these weapons; and
 - (c) auditing of the use of these weapons, including independent investigation of any such use.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Tasers were first trialled by the Special Operations Group (SOG) of Victoria Police in January 2004 for 12 months before being extended to the Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRT) within the Force Response Unit in February 2005. Tasers have been issued to these officers for use during critical incidents and high-risk situations such as sieges. The Chief Commissioner has the discretion to allow other Victoria Police members access to Tasers.

Victoria Police makes decisions on the engagement of all operational police equipment and it is not appropriate for the Government to intervene in this process. Victoria Police advise me that to date, there has been no misuse of Tasers, nor have there been any fatal consequences because of Taser use in Victoria. The Government has no plan to limit the use of Tasers by Victoria Police.

An expert analysis of the X-26 Taser model currently in use by Victoria Police, was conducted by the Alfred Hospital in 2004 following on from an earlier analysis of the M-26 Taser model conducted in 2003. The extensive literature research undertaken by Victoria Police prior to the 2004 trial conducted by the SOG, indicated no convincing evidence showing that the Taser has been directly responsible for deaths in any but a very small group of cases, all of which arise from accidental misuse of the weapon. In fact, one study concluded that medical risks of electronic weaponry compare favourably with those of more conventional methods of controlling non-compliant and violent subjects.

Victoria Police constantly monitor and record all use of Tasers under existing police processes such as the submission of Use of Force Forms. Tasers also have tamper proof in-built data management functionality that records details whenever the Tasers are discharged.

In the instance where SOG or CIRT are required to use Tasers, the incidents are subject to rigorous debriefs overseen by the managers of the respective units. Further, the Ethical Standards Department (ESD) and Office of Police Integrity (OPI) have the authority to conduct independent investigations into allegations of misuse or incidents that result in death or serious injury sustained by persons in the presence of police or in custody of police.

I am satisfied that Victoria Police has suitable measures in place to ensure that Tasers are used responsibly.

Agriculture: animal cruelty

437. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture):

- (1) When will legislation be introduced to prohibit animal cruelty in the agricultural industry.

- (2) What enforcement tools will the legislation give to those charged with intervening to protect neglected stock, for example, cases reported in the media concerning grossly neglected horses.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* currently exists to prohibit animal cruelty wherever it may occur in Victoria, including the agricultural industry.
- (2) There are adequate powers in the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* to permit inspectors to resolve all welfare cases. The powers provided permit the immediate relief of animal suffering (for example, feeding, watering, veterinary care, seizure to care, disposal, destruction) and/or a longer process for legal seizure and disposal of the animals, followed by prosecution.

Agriculture: crayfish quotas

438. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture):

- (1) Does the Government have any plans to further reduce crayfish quotas.
- (2) What compliance measures has the Minister taken to enforce the 50 pot per boat limit of crayfish in the fishing ground known as “the Paddock”; the stretch of water between Apollo Bay and Port Campbell.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) The Victorian rock lobster fishery is managed under an agreed Management Plan to ensure the fishery is managed on an ecologically sustainable basis. The Plan specifies performance measures and targets for the fishery, and an open process for annually reviewing the performance of the fishery and setting catch quotas with all stakeholder groups. Crayfish quotas can be raised or reduced based on the outcome of the annual reviews and in consultation with stakeholders.
- (2) Department of Primary Industries Fisheries Officers monitor fishing activities at sea including adherence to pot limits in the rock lobster fishery. There have been a number of successful prosecutions for exceeding the pot limit in the fifty pot zone known as “the Paddock”.

Agriculture: genetically modified canola

439. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to the Government’s review of the moratorium on GM canola:

- (1) What steps will the Department of Agriculture take to consult —
- (a) the community at large;
 - (b) interested NGOs and community groups;
 - (c) the farming community;
 - (d) grain harvesters and transporters;
 - (e) the dairy industry;
 - (f) the marketers of commodities, in Australia and abroad; and
 - (g) food processors and marketers.
- (2) What budget, time and departmental resources will be allocated to reviewing the GM moratorium.

- (3) Who will conduct the review.
- (4) What steps will the Minister take to ensure that those who conduct the review process are strictly independent of any interest group or commercial organisation that may benefit from the review's recommendations.
- (5) Does the Department have any contracts with GM companies.
- (6) If so, please provide the names of the contractors and the purpose of those contracts.
- (7) What steps is the Department taking to rule out GM crops as a cause of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which is decimating bee populations in several other parts of the world.
- (8) If it is found that GM crops are implicated in CCD, will the Minister and the government take that into account when deciding whether or not to lift the moratorium.
- (9) What will the Minister and the Department mandate to ensure that GM herbicide tolerant crops do not lead to more infestations of herbicide tolerant weeds, especially wild radish, wild turnip, charlock and related brassica weeds.
- (10) What resources will be used to gather evidence about the costs and impacts on local and overseas markets of lifting the GM canola moratorium.
- (11) What is the estimated cost of technologies, systems and processes to segregate and identify preserve GM and GM-free canola if the GM canola moratorium is ended.
- (12) Who will be responsible for mandating and monitoring the use and effectiveness of such technologies, systems and processes, if the moratorium is lifted.
- (13) As part of the review, will the Minister and the Government consider all the impacts and consequences if the GM canola moratorium is lifted but other states resolve to maintain their moratoria until some later time in the future.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) What steps will the Department of Agriculture take to consult —**
- (a) the community at large;**
 - (b) interested NGOs and community groups;**
 - (c) the farming community;**
 - (d) grain harvesters and transporters;**
 - (e) the dairy industry;**
 - (f) the marketers of commodities, in Australia and abroad; and**
 - (g) food processors and marketers.**

The Department of Primary Industries itself will not conduct the review; rather it will be conducted by an independent review panel which will consult with a wide range of stakeholder groups, including those described in the question. The submission process will be public and any organisation or individual may make a submission.

- (2) What budget, time and departmental resources will be allocated to reviewing the GM moratorium.**

The Department is providing a Secretariat to support the review. The Secretariat will consist of three DPI policy staff who will devote at least 75 per cent of their time over the latter half of 2007 to supporting the work of the review panel.

- (3) Who will conduct the review.**

The Government has appointed an independent panel to conduct the review. The panel members are Sir Gustav Nossal (Chair), Mrs Merna Curnow and Mrs Christine Forster. In addition, the panel has requested that a person with relevant expertise in economics contribute as a co-opted member of the panel.

- (4) What steps will the Minister take to ensure that those who conduct the review process are strictly independent of any interest group or commercial organisation that may benefit from the review's recommendations.**

The members of the panel have each declared that they will conduct the review in a manner that is independent of any interest group or commercial organisation that may benefit from the review's recommendations.

- (5) Does the Department have any contracts with GM companies.**

No.

- (6) If so, please provide the names of the contractors and the purpose of those contracts.**

Not applicable.

- (7) What steps is the Department taking to rule out GM crops as a cause of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which is decimating bee populations in several other parts of the world.**

- (8) If it is found that GM crops are implicated in CCD, will the Minister and the government take that into account when deciding whether or not to lift the moratorium.**

(7 & 8) The Department of Primary Industries monitors international events, including CCD, that may impact agriculture in Victoria. CCD is a poorly understood phenomenon in which worker bees abruptly disappear from the hive. There is no strong evidence that GM crops cause acute toxicity to honey bees. The US states of Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, which have large areas of insect resistant GM crops, have not reported problems with CCD.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) conducts a thorough risk assessment on any proposed GM crops, including insect tolerant crops, prior to issuing a licence for commercial or general release into the environment.

- (9) What will the Minister and the Department mandate to ensure that GM herbicide tolerant crops do not lead to more infestations of herbicide tolerant weeds, especially wild radish, wild turnip, charlock and related brassica weeds.**

The Government of Victoria acts within a national legislative and regulatory framework. Rulings on risks to human health and the environment posed by GM crops are made at the federal level by the OGTR.

In 2003, the OGTR approved two herbicide tolerant canola varieties for general release into the environment, finding that they posed no greater risk to human health or the environment (including weediness) than conventionally bred canola. The OGTR may impose as a licence condition that the licence holder collect data on issues such as an unintended change to the level of weediness of a genetically modified crop.

- (10) What resources will be used to gather evidence about the costs and impacts on local and overseas markets of lifting the GM canola moratorium.**

The independent review of the GM canola moratorium will be undertaken by a three-person panel with the support of Department of Primary Industries policy staff. The panel will consult widely with industry groups and the community.

- (11) What is the estimated cost of technologies, systems and processes to segregate and identity preserve GM and GM-free canola if the GM canola moratorium is ended.**

I refer you to the report released by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics in December 2006 entitled GM grains in Australia - identity preservation. This report addresses the costs of segregating GM and non-GM grains throughout the Australian grain supply chain. A copy of this report can be found at: http://www.abareconomics.com/publications_html/crops/crops_06/gm_grains.pdf.

(12) Who will be responsible for mandating and monitoring the use and effectiveness of such technologies, systems and processes, if the moratorium is lifted.

In the recent review of the federal Gene Technology Act 2000, it was recommended that the Commonwealth and States work together to develop a national framework for co-existence of non-GM and GM crops. The national Primary Industries Standing Committee is currently developing a framework for co-existence.

(13) As part of the review, will the Minister and the Government consider all the impacts and consequences if the GM canola moratorium is lifted but other states resolve to maintain their moratoria until some later time in the future.

The Government takes a careful and considered approach to the use of gene technology and the commercial planting of GM crops.

The review panel will consult widely with industry groups and the community and provide the Government with a report on the impacts of commercial cultivation of GM canola in Victoria on both domestic and export markets and trade. The Government will use the recommendations from the report to assist in making a decision on whether to lift the moratorium.

Planning: building surveyors

442. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning: Given the recent problems with the quality of building surveyors, is the Government considering either giving this function back to local councils or giving local councils more control over how building surveyors work and the resources they would require to exercise that control.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The **Building Act 1993** expanded the building approval function, previously only undertaken by building surveyors employed in local councils, to include the private sector. This introduced a competitive environment to the building surveying sector and overall has served the community and industry well. However, it should be noted that privatisation did not remove local councils from the process.

Privatisation has given the public the opportunity to decide which building surveyor to use for their building project. Relevant building surveyors have specific functions under the Act and can either be a municipal building surveyor or a private building surveyor. A municipal building surveyor is a person appointed by a council to carry out those functions on behalf of a council.

Checks and balances are provided for under the Act. A local council continues to have a role in the process even where a building permit is issued by a private building surveyor. A local council is responsible for the administration and enforcement of specific Parts of the Act and the building regulations in its municipal area, including the ability to take enforcement action.

Where a building surveyor, or for that matter any registered building practitioner is doing the wrong thing, a request for an inquiry can be made to the Building Practitioners Board. If an inquiry is held and the Board determines that a case is made, there are a number of actions available to the Board including fines and suspension or cancellation of registration. Where it is appropriate, the Building Commission will prosecute registered practitioners for offences set out in the Act.

Planning: building access

444. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning: In relation to the proposed DDA standard on Access to Premises:

- (1) Given the ABCB's Building Access Policy Committee's (BAPC) agreement to the draft standard and widespread agreement that it meets BAPC and DDA objectives, why has the Victorian Government not acted to implement the standard at state level.
- (2) Given the lack of public response by the Federal Government to the proposed standard and that there is no prospect of related accessibility amendments to the Building Code of Australia prior to May 2009, when will the Victorian Government move to incorporate the accessibility provisions in the proposed standard and associated amendments into Building Regulations and the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995*.

ANSWER:

I am informed that in relation to the proposed DDA Standard on Access to Premises:

- (1) The Victorian Government is waiting for the Federal Ministers to respond to the advice of the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) that was based on the Building Access Policy Committee's (BAPC) recommendations regarding the Premises Standard.

The Victorian Government supports the maintenance of nationally consistent building regulations and is disappointed that the Federal Ministers have not yet made a decision to support the Premises Standard.

(2)

As the Victorian Government supports the maintenance of nationally consistent regulations it does not intend to act unilaterally on the incorporation of accessibility provisions in State regulations. Instead, it is in communication with the Federal Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources and the Federal Attorney-General on progress towards a decision on the Premises Standard.

Planning: building access

445. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning: In relation to work undertaken to improve the accessibility of the public and commercial built environment —

- (1) What work has been undertaken since the Victorian Government took office in 1999 and what is the detailed budget expenditure for such work.
- (2) What work is planned for 2007–08 and what is the detailed budget expenditure for such work.
- (3) In relation to any works in (1) and (2) what are the respective number, types and locations of previously inaccessible or newly constructed buildings providing equal access (including wheelchair access) that would not have done so without such work being undertaken.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) In relation to questions 1 and 3, the provision of the information requested cannot be justified on the grounds that it would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources which are not available.
- (2) The 2007–08 Budget Papers outline expenditure proposals. Further details with specific reference to accessibility in the public and commercial built environment are unavailable.

Planning: building access

446. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning: Do any agreements or understandings exist between the Victorian Government and the following bodies or their affiliates, branches or officers which would prevent the government from implementing changes to policy to improve accessibility of public and commercial buildings, State planning policy or building regulation regarding public and commercial buildings —

- (a) Property Council of Australia;
- (b) Housing Industry Association;
- (c) Master Builders Association; or
- (d) any other bodies or individuals.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is committed to working with the peak industry bodies. We are in continuing conversation with industry representatives to seek optimum outcomes for the Victorian community.

I am not aware of any agreements or understandings that would impede our efforts to recognise and respond to the needs of all Victorians, including those with varying levels of disability.

Planning: building access

447. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning:

- (1) What advice has been provided to relevant Ministers or senior officers of Departments by the Building Commission, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Treasury and Finance and Department of Premier and Cabinet, respectively, in relation to —
 - (a) policy on and regulation of housing accessibility, since the Victorian Government took office in 1999; and
 - (b) local planning scheme amendments which included provisions enabling accessibility (including wheelchair access) of public and commercial premises, residential buildings and housing.
- (2) In relation to any such advice —
 - (a) to which Minister or Ministers was it provided;
 - (b) on what dates; and
 - (c) what did it specifically refer to.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The provisions of the information requested cannot be justified on the grounds that it would require an unreasonable diversion of time and resources which are not available.

Consumer affairs: rental bidding

454. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): In relation to rental bidding:

- (1) What is Consumer Affairs doing in terms of compliance monitoring and enforcement activities to protect tenants from Real Estate Agents who engage in the practise of rental bidding, which has been condemned by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria.
- (2) How many real estate agents have been fined for rental bidding.
- (3) How many have been de-registered.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

The Bracks Government has a proud record of standing up for the rights of Victoria's tenants. The Residential Tenancies Act sets out a strong framework for the rights and responsibilities of tenants.

While the practice of "bidding up" is not against the law, tenants are only required to pay the amount at which the property was advertised. Prospective tenants need to be aware that others may be making higher bids. However, if an agent has deliberately advertised a property at a price at which it was not intended to be let, that is considered misleading conduct, and is illegal under the Fair Trading Act.

Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) will be vigilant in ensuring estate agents are not engaging in conduct that is misleading or deceptive to consumers, and will continue to work closely with sector, including the Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) and the Tenants' Union of Victoria.

In February 2007 the REIV released guidelines discouraging its members from using rental auction techniques. It advised professional property managers to set a rental price that reflected current market value to ensure the system of matching good tenants to properties remains robust.

CAV is monitoring complaints from tenants in respect to rental bidding or auctions, and will act if agents engage in misleading and deceptive conduct. Notwithstanding this, on the issue of rental bidding, CAV has received a negligible number of complaints from tenants.

Consumer affairs: consumer credit

455. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Consumer Affairs): In relation to the Government's Response to the report of the extensive Consumer Credit Review carried out by James Merlino in 2006, supporting in principle the recommendation set out in the report that all fees and charges should be reviewable on the grounds of 'unreasonableness', with an action to be able to be brought by either the affected consumer or a government consumer agency:

- (1) What evidence does the Government have to satisfy itself that low income earners will have the capacity and knowledge to challenge the unreasonableness of unfair fees on fringe loans.
- (2) Will the funding for Consumer Affairs Victoria be sufficient to cover the increased amount of consumer credit case complaints they might get while waiting for these changes to go through the national process (given that this will take years).
- (3) How many consumer credit court cases has the Government taken in the last year with the resources they are given.
- (4) When the proposed 'unreasonableness' law comes into force, will the Government consider increasing the funding given to Consumer Affairs Victoria to take on these cases, by, for example, providing a litigation fund as the Federal Government has done with ASIC.
- (5) Has the Government increased funding for financial counsellors this year to take into account increased demand.
- (6) Has the Government budgeted to increase funding to the financial counselling program over the following years.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

In September 2006, the Bracks Government released its response to the comprehensive *Report of the Consumer Credit Review* (Review). The Review was a landmark piece of work which gave priority to concerns raised in the Government's April 2005 social policy statement, *A Fairer Victoria*. This statement committed the Government to improving the position of consumers who lack access to affordable credit and are therefore susceptible to predatory lending practices and the harm this causes.

Consumers of high cost, small amount lending products (also known as fringe loans) without complementary education and information campaigns are unlikely to challenge the unreasonableness of fees and charges. That's

why Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) will undertake a targeted education campaign for consumers of these products and for community agencies assisting low income and vulnerable consumers to raise awareness of their rights and how to exercise them.

The introduction of an unreasonableness test was proposed in the Review and is being considered by the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs. The concept of 'reasonableness' (and its opposite) is well known to the law, and courts and tribunals have proven more than capable of construing it in the particular context in which it is used. New Zealand recently adopted a test of 'unreasonableness' following a comprehensive review, and the United Kingdom's wholesale review of credit regulation resulted in the introduction in 2006 of a similar 'unfairness' test.

Submissions from advocates and regulators to the Review argued also that if Government Consumer Agencies (GCA), such as Consumer Affairs Victoria, should be empowered to challenge the unreasonableness of fees in their own right rather than leaving this solely up to consumers. To better protect consumers from unreasonable fees and charges the Government Response to the Report agreed with this proposal.

The Bracks Government, through CAV, will use research and consultation with industry to assist credit providers to identify and address areas of concern where the fees and charges appear excessive.

CAV already handles enquiries and complaints relating to high cost small amount lending and has the capacity to deal with a higher volume of enquiries and complaints by reprioritising within existing resources. In addition, the Consumer Action Law Centre, which receives funding from CAV, assists low income and vulnerable consumers with credit complaints, specifically focusing on assisting consumers with problems relating to high cost small amount loans.

No new consumer credit court action was undertaken in the last year but CAV is currently devoting considerable resources to three significant public interest cases on consumer credit, one of which has reached the High Court. In the last year, CAV has conducted twenty-seven consumer credit investigations, which have addressed the consumer's complaints.

CAV does not have access to a 'litigation fund' to finance consumer credit cases. However, the Director of CAV can make an application to the Consumer Credit Fund to run a test case. The Consumer Action Law Centre is also well placed to take advantage of any new unreasonableness provisions. The expectation is that only a small number of public interest test cases, challenging the unreasonableness of certain fees and charges, would be necessary to make strategic use of the unreasonableness test.

In relation to funding for financial counselling, \$5,227,286 (excluding GST) has been allocated for the generalist financial counselling program in 2007/08. This funding is for a period of twelve months and includes an indexation increase of 2.9 percent on the 2006/07 year.

An extension of \$2.2 million has been provided from appropriations as a one-off in 2007/08. This replaces the 40 percent of funding previously provided by the Community Support Fund. (In previous years, approximately 60 percent of funding was from State appropriations and 40 percent from the Community Support Fund.)

The Department of Justice will conduct a review of financial counselling services funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria and Office of Gaming and Racing that will be completed by September 2007.

Housing: low-income private renters

456. MR BARBER- To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Housing):

- (1) Why has the Government decreased the amount of bond loans.
- (2) Is it because low income private renters are being assisted elsewhere.
- (3) What is the Government doing to help private renters.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Office of Housing's Bond Loan Scheme is a responsive program, that is driven by demand from individuals seeking assistance. The decline in the number of bond loans issued reflects a decline in the demand for the program.
- (2) Please refer to the response provided above in question 1. There are likely to be a number of reasons for the decline in demand for the program, including low turnover in the private rental market, which is a product of the low vacancy rate.
- (3) The Office of Housing (OOH) primarily assists private renters through its Bond Loan Scheme. This program offers eligible private renters an interest free loan to meet the cost of their private rental bond.

The provision of ongoing assistance is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, through Commonwealth Rent Assistance. The Government has raised the issue of ongoing assistance to private renters with the Commonwealth as part of the Housing Minister's conference of 4 July 2007, and intends to press for changes as part of a new national housing agreement.

OOH is also operating two private rental brokerage programs, targeting victims of family violence and homeless or low income youth, to find, secure and maintain private rental. In addition to this, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless can access Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) assistance through SAAP funded agencies to secure or maintain a private tenancy.

Women's affairs: reproductive and sexual health

468. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Women's Affairs):

- (1) Is the Government planning to implement the recommendation made by Women's Health Victoria in the '10 Point Plan for Victorian Women's Health 2006-2010' to develop a state wide reproductive and sexual health program, including education programs, to ensure young women have the capacity to negotiate safe sex (safe from the possibility of STIs and possible pregnancy) and to give them the best information about reproductive and sexual health issues possible.
- (2) If so, when.
- (3) What funding does the Government estimate would be required for such a program.
- (4) When will the recommendations in the 2006 report written by Family Planning Victoria, the Royal Women's Hospital, and the Centre for Adolescent Health, 'The Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young Victorians', be implemented.
- (5) What is the Government doing, and what is the Government's overall plan, to address the increase in sexually transmitted infections, for example increases of Chlamydia notifications of nearly 550 per cent between 1994 and 2004, and the associated impacts of Sexually Transmitted Infections on women's reproductive health and fertility.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

These matters fall within the health portfolio and the question should be directed to Minister Pike, Minister for Health.

Water, environment and climate change: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

476. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): In standard human health risk assessment literature, an ‘unacceptable’ cancer risk is considered to be when one person in 100,000 develops cancer. However in the Channel Deepening Human Health Risk Assessment if one person were to develop cancer as a direct result of the project then this impact would be classified as “negligible”. Therefore:

- (1) Could the Minister explain why this project is considered to be so important that it requires that the community standard for human health risk assessment be cast aside, and a greater risk of cancer or death accepted.
- (2) What factors were considered in rejecting the community standard of ‘unacceptable’ cancer risk of one person per 100,000 in favour of a lower standard of ‘unacceptable’ cancer risk for this project.
- (3) What standard for ‘unacceptable’ cancer risk will apply to the Channel Deepening Project.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Channel Deepening Project is subject to an assessment pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The project proponent, the Port of Melbourne Corporation, has prepared a Supplementary Environment Effects Statement (SEES). It includes an evaluation of the environmental, including human health, risks that may arise from this Project and the means to manage these risks.

In accordance with this Act, the Minister for Planning has established an Inquiry to consider the SEES. The Inquiry’s report will inform the Minister’s assessment.

It is not appropriate to pre-judge the Inquiry findings or the Minister for Planning’s assessment, and therefore no further information can be provided at this time.

Water, environment and climate change: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

477. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): In relation to the Environmental Monitoring Program (EMP) for the Channel Deepening Proposal:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the EMP only covers activities while the proposed dredging is underway and only comprises three monitoring programs, that is, turbidity, airborne noise and underwater noise.
- (2) Can the Minister explain why only these three issues will be monitored during dredging operations.
- (3) How will other potential risk factors relevant to this proposal be monitored.
- (4) Why has the Port of Melbourne Corporation been able to put forward a project with acknowledged risks which even the Port of Melbourne Corporation admits might extend for two years after completion of dredging, without there being a range of agreed post-dredging monitoring programs.
- (5) What plans exist to continue monitoring any foreseen or unforeseen environmental risks following completion of operations.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Channel Deepening Project is subject to an assessment pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The project proponent, the Port of Melbourne Corporation, has prepared a Supplementary Environment Effects Statement (SEES). It includes an environmental monitoring program.

In accordance with this Act, the Minister for Planning has established an Inquiry to consider the SEES. The Inquiry's report will inform the Minister's assessment.

It is not appropriate to pre-judge the Inquiry findings or the Minister for Planning's assessment, and therefore no further information can be provided at this time.

Health: hospital early warning system

479. MR D. M. DAVIS — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): In relation to the Hospital Early Warning System (HEWS) implemented by Public Hospitals throughout Victoria to assist with emergency departments reaching capacity: Could the Minister provide a table indicating the instances that each of the major hospitals have had to implement HEWS over the periods 1 January to 30 June 2006, 1 July to 31 December 2006 and 1 January to 31 March 2007, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The Hospital Early Warning System (HEWS) was introduced in September 2002 as a tool to help hospitals manage their workloads.
- The main focus of HEWS is on internal hospital processes, enabling hospitals to facilitate discharges, free up resources and relieve pressure on the emergency department.
- It is estimated that approximately 90 per cent of episodes of HEWS do not progress to bypass.
- The current system of HEWS and bypass is supported by health services and clinicians who recognise its value in managing emergency demand.
- HEWS is not considered to be a performance indicator, therefore data on HEWS usage is not collected by the department.

Health: hospital early warning system

480. MR D. M. DAVIS — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): Could the Minister provide details of the advice referred to on page 40 of the Auditor General's Report on *Follow-up of Selected Performance Audits Tabled in 2003 and 2004*, given by DHS to hospitals on determining HEWS triggers and hospital and ambulance service roles and responsibilities during a Hospital Early Warning System (HEWS) episode in March 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The Hospital Early Warning System (HEWS) was introduced in September 2002 as a tool to help hospitals manage their workload. It is a standardised approach to identifying increasing pressure in a given emergency department where there is a high likelihood that bypass criteria will be reached within the next hour.
- The main focus of HEWS is on internal hospital processes, enabling hospitals to facilitate discharges, free up resources and relieve pressure on the emergency department.
- In March 2006, the Department of Human Services issued a hospital circular to metropolitan health services and ambulance services to ensure consistent HEWS practice during periods of peak demand or high workloads in the emergency department. The purpose of the circular was to:

- provide a clear outline of the respective roles and responsibilities of hospital and ambulance services during HEWS
- confirm the authorisation process for notifying ambulance services of a HEWS episode
- factors to be considered when assessing the need for HEWS.

Health: Williamstown Hospital — gynaecology services

483. MR D. M. DAVIS — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): In relation to the planned closure of gynaecology services at Williamstown Hospital: Which hospital will now be responsible for the provision of these services and what additional resources have been allocated to enable them to do so.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Gynaecological services currently provided by Western Health at Williamstown Hospital will be transferred to Sunshine Hospital. The women’s and children’s services at Sunshine Hospital will be strengthened through this move. Western Health received an additional \$1.7 million to provide additional elective surgery and specialist services in the 2007–08 budget.

Health: weighted inlier equivalent separations

484. MR D. M. DAVIS — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): In relation to the hospitals running in excess of 102 per cent of their WEIS allocation as at 31 May 2007:

- (1) What is the financial position of each of the hospitals in this situation.
- (2) What action is planned to deal with their excess activity.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

1) what is the financial position of each of the hospitals in this situation.

Audited financial results for 2006–07 for these hospitals will be available in accordance with the legislative time frame for submitting annual reports to Parliament (October 2007).

2) what actions are planned to deal with their excess activity?

Where health services are experiencing unanticipated additional demand, options available are:

- Health services support additional services from within their own financial resources
- DHS supports additional services from within its financial reserves
- Non-essential service activity is reduced and redirected to urgent activity

Water, environment and climate change: contaminated public land

485. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): When will the Government establish a funding stream to clean up publicly held land that is contaminated.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Approximately one-third of all land in Victoria is public land. The majority of this land (about 7.4 million hectares) comprises parks, forests and conservation reserves, with a further 600,000 hectares of public land being managed for a diverse range of purposes under a variety of management regimes.

Over time, some public land has become contaminated through its use for industrial, transport, primary production, health and education services and public utility purposes. The nature of contamination, its location, severity and significance to current and future land use varies considerably.

Contaminated public land sites are treated on a case by case basis where the contamination is likely to have an impact on current or future land uses or environmental integrity.

It is not intended to establish a separate funding stream to clean up publicly held land that is contaminated. Contaminated land will continue to be treated on a case by case basis where clean-up is provided from an existing funding source including, but not restricted to, programs such as Improving Public Safety on Public Land, Stewardship in Action and the Coastal Risk Mitigation Program. In some cases, a discrete budget may be provided for the clean up of contamination as part of a specific project on public land.

Water, environment and climate change: contaminated public land

486. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change). When will the Government establish a funding stream to clear up the contaminated Gasworks Site in Port Melbourne.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The question relates to Gasworks Park on the corner of Graham and Pickles Streets, Albert Park. Gasworks Park comprises both Crown land reserved for Recreation and Public Park purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, managed by the City of Port Phillip (the Council) as Committee of Management, plus freehold land owned by the Council. This site is the former South Melbourne Gasworks site, which ceased producing gas in 1959 and has been used as an arts precinct and public park since the early 1990's.

Prior to relinquishing control of the site the former Gas & Fuel Corporation rehabilitated the land in consultation with the Environment Protection Authority, and it was deemed to be safe for recreational use.

In 2006 the Council engaged environmental consultants to conduct further testing of the soils and groundwater at the site. The initial assessment found that likely risks posed by groundwater contamination on and emanating from the site were likely to be acceptable given the implementation of appropriate management controls. The Council proposed to have further discussions with the EPA regarding a long term strategy that will satisfy regulatory risk management issues associated with the site.

My colleague, the Minister for Finance, was recently asked by the Council to consider the establishment of a fund to assist in the remediation of sites being developed for community purposes that have been identified as contaminated. The Minister has advised the Council that any decision by Government to establish a specific fund for this purpose would need to be considered within the annual State Budget process and assessed against all other competing priorities, however that presently the Government is not considering the establishment of such a specific purpose fund.

Contaminated public land sites are treated on a case by case basis where the contamination is likely to have an impact on current or future land uses or environmental integrity.

Water, environment and climate change: contaminated public land

487. MRS COOTE — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): When will the Government establish a funding stream to clear up the contaminated school site on the Corner of Pickles and Richardson Streets in Port Melbourne.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

This site is Crown land. It was reserved for State School purposes in 1888 and used for that purpose until the Albert Park Primary School closed in the late 1980's. The land is now reserved for Community Purposes under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, and is managed the City of Port Phillip as Committee of Management. The Council had been leasing the site to community groups for use of the buildings as office space, however the site has been unoccupied since 2005.

The Council has been involved in discussions with the Department of Education on planning for education, child care and community use of public land in the precinct, which includes this and other sites.

Preliminary soil testing conducted on this site by the Council has indicated that further work needs to be done on potential contamination issues. Soil remediation and/or a soil management plan may be needed to determine the most appropriate future use of the site. The Council has not requested funding assistance from the Government for this work.

Contaminated public land sites are treated on a case by case basis where the contamination is likely to have an impact on current or future land uses or environmental integrity.

It is not intended to establish a separate funding stream to clean up publicly held land that is contaminated. Contaminated land will continue to be treated on a case by case basis where clean-up is provided from an existing funding source including, but not restricted to, programs such as Improving Public Safety on Public Land, Stewardship in Action and the Coastal Risk Mitigation Program. In some cases, a discrete budget may be provided for the clean up of contamination as part of a specific project on public land.

Water, environment and climate change: climate change review

488. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): What is the budget allocated for the secretariat support provided by the Bracks Government to the Federal Labor Party's Garnaut Climate Change Review.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

As the Office of Climate Change sits within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, this question should be directed to the Premier.

Premier: climate change review

489. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Education (for the Premier): What is the budget allocated for the secretariat support provided by the Bracks Government to the Federal Labor Party's Garnaut Climate Change Review.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Honourable the Premier: I am informed that the work program of the Garnaut Climate Change Review is currently under development and the support being provided by each State and Territory under negotiation. As such, the Victorian Government's budget allocation for the secretariat to the Review is yet to be finalised.

Water, environment and climate change: treated sewage effluent

490. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): Has the Government undertaken a feasibility study or any other preliminary investigation in relation to piping treated sewage effluent from Melbourne Water's treatment plant at Carrum to Cardinia Reservoir, or any other water supply reservoir; if not, does the Government have any future plans to do so.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

During the preparation of the Water Supply-Demand Strategy for Melbourne 2006-2055, Melbourne's water authorities carried out preliminary options analysis on the possibility of adding highly treated recycled water to Melbourne's water supply. This option was not progressed beyond initial analysis as the Government has no plans to introduce recycled water to Melbourne's drinking water supplies.

Whilst the Government does not support indirect potable reuse for Victoria it will continue to monitor advances in technology and international and interstate experience; however indirect potable reuse is not supported for Victoria.

Public transport: timetable cases

493. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport):

- (1) In May 2007, how many timetable plastic covers, timetables and maps respectively were reported to the Department of Infrastructure as missing or damaged in —
 - (a) St Kilda Road, Melbourne;
 - (b) High Street, Prahran;
 - (c) High Street, Armadale;
 - (d) High Street, Glen Iris;
 - (e) Dandenong Road, Windsor;
 - (f) Dandenong Road, St Kilda East;
 - (g) Dandenong Road, Armadale;
 - (h) Dandenong Road, Malvern;
 - (i) Hawthorn Road, Caulfield North;
 - (j) Hawthorn Road, Caulfield South;
 - (k) St Kilda Road, St Kilda;
 - (l) Carlisle Street, Balaclava;
 - (m) Balaclava Road, Balaclava or Caulfield;
 - (n) Glenferrie Road, Malvern;
 - (o) Glenferrie Road, Kooyong;
 - (p) Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn;
 - (q) Whitehorse Road, Box Hill;
 - (r) Whitehorse Road, Balwyn;
 - (s) Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick;

- (t) Glenhuntly Road, Caulfield South;
 - (u) Glenhuntly Road, Glenhuntly;
 - (v) Toorak Road, South Yarra or Toorak;
 - (w) Commercial Road, South Yarra or Prahran; and
 - (x) Malvern Road, Malvern or Glen Iris.
- (2) In relation to the items and locations in (1), how many were noted by Yarra Trams staff as missing or damaged.
- (3) What is the cost to Yarra Trams (including labour) of replacing a —
- (a) timetable case; and
 - (b) timetable.
- (4) Did any individual locations on each road or street in (1) suffer multiple losses or damage to timetable cases or timetables in May 2007; if so, which stop locations were involved and how many times did this occur.
- (5) Have any persons been apprehended as a result of such alleged damage.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) None.
- (2) Yarra Trams has advised that it recorded missing or damaged tram stop related information at the nine locations listed below. Yarra Trams does not record information regarding the specific item replaced.

St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Route	Stop Number	Direction	Date Replaced at Stop
67	14	From Melbourne	28.05.2007

Balaclava Road, Balaclava or Caulfield

Route	Stop Number	Direction	Date Replaced at Stop
3	62	From Melbourne	28.05.2007
3	52	To Melbourne	28.05.2007
3	40	To Melbourne	28.05.2007

Hawthorn Road, Caulfield North

Route	Stop Number	Direction	Date Replaced at Stop
64	57	From Melbourne	28.05.2007

Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick

Route	Stop Number	Direction	Date Replaced at Stop
67	47	From Melbourne	28.05.2007
67	45	To Melbourne	28.05.2007

Glenhuntly Road, Caulfield South

Route	Stop Number	Direction	Date Replaced at Stop
67	54	To Melbourne	28.05.2007
67	57	To Melbourne	17.05.2007

- (3) Yarra Trams has advised that the maximum cost of complete replacement is approximately \$180, comprising the following items/costs: \$100 for case, \$20 for cover, \$10 for timetable and \$50 for labour when full installation is required.
- (4) Yarra Trams has advised that there were no cases of multiple damage reported during May 2007 at these locations.
- (5) Yarra Trams has advised that no persons have been apprehended for damage at the tram stops.

Planning: Growth Areas Authority

503. MR GUY — To ask the Minister for Planning: In relation to the Growth Areas Authority (GAA):

- (1) What is the budget breakdown for the GAA for the 2007–08 financial year.
- (2) What is the total funding allocation to the GAA from 1 November 2006 to 30 June 2007.
- (3) Is the GAA expected to meet, exceed or underspend its allocated budget for the 2006–07 financial year.
- (4) What is the total number of staff employed with the GAA and how many of these are at executive level.
- (5) What is the staff list of all full-time, part-time and casual staff working for the GAA as at 18 June 2007.
- (6) What are the details of all ongoing projects with which the GAA is involved.
- (7) What are the details of any performance indicators set by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or the Minister for Planning to the GAA from November 2006 to June 2007.
- (8) Will the Minister provide a copy of all strategic documentation and details of long term goals and objectives produced by or for the GAA.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

1. The budget breakdown for the 2007–08 financial year is currently under consideration by the GAA board.
2. The total funding allocation for the GAA is detailed in State Government Budget Paper No 3.
3. The information requested in questions 3 to 8 will be included in the GAAs 2006/07 Annual Report in accordance with Government annual reporting requirements.

Planning: Office of Planning

504. MR GUY — To ask the Minister for Planning: In relation to the Office of Planning within the Department of Sustainability and Environment:

- (1) What is the full staff list of all full-time, part-time and casual staff working for the Office of Planning.
- (2) Of these staff, who are at executive level.
- (3) What is the total budget of the Office of Planning for the 2007–08 financial year.

- (4) What is the full breakdown of the Office of Planning budget for 2007–08.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) A statement of workforce data will be included in the Department of Sustainability and Environment's 2006/07 Annual Report, which will be published shortly in accordance with the Financial Management Act 1994.
- (2) Details on executive officers for the Office of Planning and Urban Design are incorporated in Appendix 1 of the 2005/06 DSE Annual Report. This information will be updated shortly by the publication of the 2006/07 Annual Report, in accordance with the Financial Management Act 1994.
- (3/4) The total budget for 07/08 is included in the 2007/08 Budget papers (pg 213 Budget Paper 3) as part of the Planning, Urban Design and Housing Affordability Output.

Health: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

506. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Health): In relation to possible public health problems associated with the Channel Deepening Proposal (CDP):

- (1) Will the Port of Melbourne Corporation be responsible for addressing such problems.
- (2) If not, will the Minister for Health be responsible.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Channel Deepening Project is subject to an assessment pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.
- (2) The project proponent, the Port of Melbourne Corporation, has prepared a Supplementary Environment Effects Statement (SEES). It includes an evaluation of the environmental, including human health, risks that may arise from this Project and the means to manage these risks.
- (3) In accordance with this Act, the Minister for Planning has established an Inquiry to consider the SEES. The Inquiry's report will inform the Minister's assessment.
- (4) It is not appropriate to pre-judge the Inquiry findings or the Minister for Planning's assessment, and therefore no further information can be provided at this time.

Agriculture: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

507. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for the Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to possible effects on Port Phillip Bay fish stocks caused by the Channel Deepening Project (CDP):

- (1) In the event of economic losses brought about by a reduction in stock numbers or the chemical contamination of fish stock rendering them unfit for consumption, will affected businesses and individuals be able to seek compensation from the State Government
- (2) Will the Minister be monitoring fish stocks for population changes and chemical contamination over the duration of the CDP environmental impact.

ANSWER:

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

The Port of Melbourne Corporation has prepared a Supplementary Environment Effects Statement (SEES) with regard to the proposed Channel Deepening Project. The SEES proposes means of managing environmental impacts, including effects on fish stocks. The SEES is under review by an inquiry established by the Minister for Planning.

It is not appropriate to anticipate either the findings of the inquiry or the Minister for Planning's assessment. I am therefore unable to provide further advice at this stage.

Water, environment and climate change: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

508. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): In reference to the SEES report on Channel Deepening and the testimony of Dr David Provis that the CDP would accelerate rising water levels in the Bay by the equivalent of 3.5 years, and given the Government's commitment to achieve maximum economic abatement of climate change and associated sea level rise:

- (1) Will coastal communities be required to bear local costs arising from accelerated water level rises.
- (2) Do assessments or plans exist to monitor the impact of Bay water level rises including increased salt water infiltration into streams and rivers, erosion of beach sands and mud banks, and greater salt water seepage into, and resulting damages to, the sewerage system and other bay side infrastructure.
- (3) If not, will the Government conduct these assessments and fund any resulting remedial action.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Channel Deepening Project is subject to an assessment pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The project proponent, the Port of Melbourne Corporation, has prepared a Supplementary Environment Effects Statement (SEES). It includes an evaluation of the effects of sea level changes arising from the Project, and the implications for bay side infrastructure.

In accordance with this Act, the Minister for Planning has established an Inquiry to consider the SEES. The Inquiry's report will inform the Minister's assessment.

It is not appropriate to pre-judge the Inquiry findings or the Minister for Planning's assessment, and therefore no further information can be provided at this time.

Water, environment and climate change: alpine resort management boards

515. MR RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change): With reference to the Minister's comments on hiring an independent auditor to investigate alpine resort management boards in the article 'Senior Alpine Staff in Dubious Expense Claims: Watchdog', *The Age* (7 June 2007):

- (a) When will the audit commence.
- (b) What is the audit's expected completion date.
- (c) Who will undertake the audit.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- Three audit firms were invited to submit proposals to undertake an independent examination of expense reimbursement policies, processes and compliance of Alpine Resort Management Boards and the Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council.
- Following a review of these proposals KPMG was appointed to undertake the project commencing on 16 July 2007.
- It is anticipated that the auditors will require approximately six weeks to complete the task, reporting back to the Department at the end of August 2007.

Education: Eastwood Primary School — hearing impaired students

- 553. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: On what precise date was the decision made to change the mode of transport provided to hearing impaired students at Eastwood Primary School from a taxi service to a bus service.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education met with the Parents of Hearing Impaired Children (PHIC) who were the group dealing with the department on behalf of the parents with students attending Eastwood Primary School in mid December of 2006. At this time the group were aware of the intention to introduce the bus service to allow greater numbers of students to access transport to the school and agreed to this option. As a follow up, attempts were made by the bus company to directly contact all parents of the students at the school in mid January and at the very least information was left in the mail boxes of those unable to be contacted.

Education: Eastwood Primary School — hearing impaired students

- 554. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: Under the Government’s provision of the taxi service to hearing impaired students at Eastwood Primary School, what was the average trip time to and from the school.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education does not maintain records of travel times for students travelling in taxis.

Education: Eastwood Primary School — hearing impaired students

- 555. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: What was the precise date that taxi operators providing transport to hearing impaired Eastwood Primary School students were informed that the provision of their services were no longer required.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

As there was no contractual arrangements with the Taxi operators there was no requirement to give them any more than 24 hours notice that their services were not required. In most cases they were given a weeks notice that they were not required.

Education: Eastwood Primary School — hearing impaired students

- 556. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: What was the precise date that parents, students and the Eastwood Primary School Administration were informed of changes to the mode of the Government provided transport for hearing impaired students.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education met with the Parents of Hearing Impaired Children (PHIC) who were the group dealing with the department on behalf of the parents with students attending Eastwood Primary School in mid December of 2006. At this time the group were aware of the intention to introduce the bus service to allow greater numbers of students to access transport to the school and agreed to this option. As a follow up, attempts were made by the bus company to directly contact all parents of the students at the school in mid January and at the very least information was left in the mail boxes of those unable to be contacted.

Education: student travelling time

- 557. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: Under Departmental Guidelines, what is the maximum time allowable for a child to be travelling on a Government provided bus service.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

All school bus services operate in accordance with school bus policies which stipulate that students will not be required to travel more than two hours per trip.

The two hour limit is long standing practice and was accepted by the Special Schools Transport working party in 1994 that included eight Special School Principals and incorporated in the guidelines for the administration of transport services for students attending special schools (1995) which remain current.

Education: student travelling time

- 558. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: How is the maximum time allowable for a child travelling on a Government provided bus service determined under Departmental Guidelines.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

All school bus services operate in accordance with school bus policies which stipulate that students will not be required to travel more than two hours per trip.

The two hour limit is long standing practice and was accepted by the Special Schools Transport working party in 1994 that included eight Special School Principals and incorporated in the guidelines for the administration of transport services for students attending special schools (1995) which remain current.

Education: Eastwood Primary School — school bus service

- 559. MR P. R. DAVIS** — To ask the Minister for Education: Have the Eastwood Primary School Administration or some families and students accessing the Government provided bus service indicated dissatisfaction as to the provision of this service.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Some families who were previously receiving a taxi service to the Eastwood Primary School deaf facility have expressed some dissatisfaction with the bus service being offered mainly as a result of increased travel time.

The service being provided is, however, consistent with the bus service being provided to eligible students at all other special schools in Victoria and allows more students to access transport to the Eastwood Primary School as would have otherwise been possible without the introduction of the bus service. With that in mind there are no plans to change the service at present.

