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FIRST SESSION

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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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, 9 October 2007

Environment and climate change: Wombat State Forest

328. MR VOGELS — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Environment and Climate Change): What are the details of all costs dispersed under the umbrella of the Wombat Community Management Program, prior to the closure of the Wombat State Forest.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) estimates that \$161,465 was expended on the Wombat Community Forest Management (CFM) trial in its first year (2002/2003).

Subsequently the expenditure was \$187,045 for 2003/04; \$299,200 for 2004/05; \$217,058 for 2005/06. In 2006/07, the Wombat CFM project was absorbed into other community engagement projects.

Public transport: truck drivers

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

- (1) How many tow truck drivers were licensed in Victoria as at 30 April 2007.
- (2) In relation to the demerit points register for tow truck drivers, in each category from 0 to 12, how many drivers had demerit points as at 30 April 2007.

ANSWER:

As at 30 April 2007, the answer is:

- (1) The number of Accident Towing Driver Authority (ATDA) drivers authorised to drive accident attending tow trucks was 1,771. Accident attending drivers are required to be the holder of an ATDA as they are in direct contact with accident victims and take possession of their vehicles and possessions at the accident scene. Drivers of non-accident (trade towing) licensed vehicles are not required to be the holder of an ATDA.
- (2) Tow Truck Demerit Points are attributed to drivers who have committed towing related offences and these demerit points are separate from driver licence demerit points. The following table details the number of tow truck drivers who have tow truck demerit points on the Accident Tow Truck Demerits Register:

| Number of Demerit Points | Number of Tow Truck Drivers |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 14 |

| Number of Demerit Points | Number of Tow Truck Drivers |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5 | 0 |
| 6 | 2 |
| 7 | 1 |
| 8 | 2 |
| 9 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 |
| 12 | 0 |

Public transport: complaints staff — counselling

353. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to staff in the Minister’s Office responsible for dealing with complaints related to the public transport system:

- (1) Has counselling been provided to these staff and, if so:
 - (a) How many have received counselling.
 - (b) Who provided the counselling.
 - (c) What was the cost incurred.
- (2) Is there a contract for the provision of ongoing counselling services to staff and, if so:
 - (a) With whom is the contract.
 - (b) What is the overall value of the contract.
 - (c) What are the start and end dates of the contract.
- (3) How many staff have taken stress leave as a result of work related issues.
- (4) How many staff are currently on leave or WorkCover as a result of stress related issues.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) (a) As far as I’m aware, none. Obviously, there are privacy issues relating to the question and it is not appropriate for me to investigate further.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Not applicable.
- (2) (a) Not applicable.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Not applicable.
- (3) None.
- (4) None.

Treasurer: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

365. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Treasurer: In relation to channel deepening:

- (1) Why was all information regarding the expected increase in shipping trade through the Port of Melbourne for the purposes of economic and cost/benefit analysis of the channel deepening proposal provided to Price, Waterhouse, Coopers (PWC) by the project proponent — the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) — and not independently verified.
- (2) How accurate are these estimations.

ANSWER:

As at the date the question was asked, I am informed that:

The shipping trade forecasts used in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers study were originally prepared by an independent consultant specialising in the transport sector. They were developed using protocols consistent with international industry standards.

Treasurer: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

366. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Treasurer: In relation to the channel deepening proposal:

- (1) What is the rationale for excluding costs incurred to date from the assessment of costs and benefits of the proposal.
- (2) If those costs to date are not considered to be costs of this project, against which expenditure item in the Budget Papers have these costs been attributed.

ANSWER:

As at the date the question was asked, I am informed that:

- (1) The exclusion of costs incurred to date from the assessment of the costs and benefits is consistent with standard modelling.
- (2) Costs incurred to-date are considered costs of the project.

Treasurer: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

369. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Treasurer: If the channel deepening project is to receive government capital investment, against what criteria is it considered more worthy of scarce capital expenditure than other transport, water, or social infrastructure-related community needs.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Any potential Government contribution would be considered as part of the Government's budgetary process, which prioritises Government funding initiatives.

Treasurer: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

370. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Treasurer: In relation to the channel deepening proposal, and given the several million dollars already spent on assessment processes, panel hearings, public meetings and a trial dredging project:

- (1) How did the Government determine the net economic benefit of the proposal to the Victorian community.
- (2) How much will the project cost.
- (3) Who is going to pay that cost and in what form.
- (4) How is the reliability of the forecast shipping activity with or without deepening to be assessed.
- (5) To what extent will any savings be passed on to consumers.
- (6) What level of compensation will be payable to other industry and recreational users of the Bay that may be negatively impacted by the project and its legacy.
- (7) Which entity will be responsible for meeting any compensation payments.
- (8) What will be the impact on local manufacturers of making imported goods cheaper and more available.
- (9) How reliable are forecasts of international economic activity beyond 2010 given the cultural and economic changes under way as a result of the escalation in awareness of climate change.

ANSWER:

As at the date the question was asked, I am informed that:

- (1) PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) were commissioned to assess the economic contribution to the Victorian and Australian economies of the Port of Melbourne.
- (2) The project cost will not be finalised until assessment of the proposal has been concluded under the Environment Effects Act and Government has considered PoMC's application for project approvals.
- (3) The details regarding the recovery of costs associated with the CDP have yet to be finalised by Government and are subject to project financial approval, which is conditional on environmental approvals.
- (4) The shipping trade forecasts used in the SEES and the PwC study were originally prepared by an independent consultant specialising in the transport sector. They were developed using protocols consistent with international industry standards and, therefore, are considered relevant and accurate.
- (5) Low port costs benefit all port trade (import and export), and lower shipping unit costs translate to constraining the cost of goods.
- (6) In accordance with the Environment Effects Act 1978, the Minister for Planning has established an Inquiry to consider the Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement (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.
- (7) See question (6)
- (8) Low port costs benefit all port trade (import and export) and should also assist local manufacturers' competitiveness in international markets.
- (9) The SEES notes that there are no authoritative predictions of longer-term economic growth and has therefore taken a conservative approach to assumed economic world economic growth post 2010.

Senior Victorians: seniors cards

385. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Senior Victorians): In relation to the inability of Victorian Seniors' Card holders to use their cards in other Australian States and Territories:

- (1) Has Victoria previously endeavoured to permit seniors to utilise their cards throughout Australia; if so, in what way.

- (2) What work will be done in the future to permit this service.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) Due to the population differences between the States and Territories, the movement of seniors across the country, and the different levels of concessions offered by States and Territories, it is difficult to envisage how reciprocal arrangements could be introduced without reasonable Commonwealth financial support

In July 2005 the then Minister for Aged Care, Minister Jennings, wrote to the then Commonwealth Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Kay Patterson, urging the Commonwealth Government to bring forward an adequately funded proposal to enable seniors card holders to use their cards in other states and territories.

- (2) Given our belief that reciprocal arrangements make good sense, our Government will continue to lobby the Commonwealth and other State and Territories for an appropriately funded reciprocal transport concession arrangement for Australian seniors.

Aged care: University of the Third Age

388. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (for the Minister for Aged Care): Regarding funding for the University of the Third Age and given the additional \$1.2 million funding boost for U3As across Victoria:

- (1) Where will the 32 new U3As be located.
 (2) Which U3As will benefit from the \$400,000 for promotion within ethnic communities and disadvantaged groups.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) New U3As will be established in disadvantaged and under-represented areas throughout the State over a four year period (2006/07 – 2009/10). The Government is working closely with the U3A Network to identify suitable regions where new U3As can be established.

To date four new U3As have been established in Healesville, Kyneton, Altona and King Lake.

- (2) The Program Growth Support Fund has been developed to support and develop new U3A programs and increase access to U3As from under-represented groups. All U3As will have an opportunity to benefit from this funding over the four year period.

Senior Victorians: Office of Senior Victorians

420. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (For the Minister for Senior Victorians): In relation to the Office of Senior Victorians:

- (1) How many staff are employed by the Office of Senior Victorians and in what capacity.
 (2) Does the Office have specific services for aged people of ethnic backgrounds.
 (3) If the Office does have such services, what are they.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

- (1) As of 20 June 2007 the Office of Senior Victorians employed 16.8 EFT staff in a range of duties to support Victorian seniors and implement policies and programs.
- (2) The Office of Senior Victorians is not primarily a service delivery agency.
- (3) The Office provides the Victorian Seniors Card as a service to eligible Victorians over the age of 60 years. This includes eligible Victorians of ethnic backgrounds.

Senior Victorians: Office of Senior Victorians

422. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (For the Minister for Senior Victorians) In relation to the Office of Senior Victorians:

- (1) What programs have been created by the Office of Senior Victorians since February 2002, to change community attitudes to ageing.
- (2) What are the details of these programs.
- (3) What was the total cost of these programs in —
 - (a) 2003-2004;
 - (b) 2004-2005;
 - (c) 2005-2006; and
 - (d) 2006-2007.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The Positive Ageing Program seeks to maximise the quality of life and social recognition of senior Victorians. The program commenced in 2004–05.
- (2) The Positive Ageing Program has used four strategies to promote quality of life and social recognition:
 - Promoting a more ageing inclusive society
 - Promoting opportunities for participation by seniors
 - Improving access to information
 - Promoting better community understanding about population ageing
- (3) The total costs of the Positive Ageing Program since establishment have been:

| | |
|---------|---------|
| 2003–04 | N/A |
| 2004–05 | \$1.00M |
| 2005–06 | \$1.25M |
| 2006–07 | \$1.25M |

Aged care: Office of Senior Victorians

423. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Community Services (For the Minister for Aged Care): In relation to the Office of Senior Victorians:

- (1) Since February 2002 what programs has the Office of Senior Victorians established to encourage business to view seniors as economic contributors.
- (2) In what year were each of these programs established.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Since February 2002 the Office of Senior Victorians has been involved in three programs that encouraged business to view seniors as economic contributors as employees.

The Office of Senior Victorians worked in partnership with the Equal Opportunity Commission and VicHealth on the 'Working for Ages Project' between 2002–03 and 2003–04.

The Office of Senior Victorians worked in partnership with the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development in 2002–03 to support the '45 Plus Workforce Inc' project in the Eastern Region of Melbourne.

In 2004–05 the Office of Senior Victorians worked in partnership with the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry to establish the "Grey Matters" project.

Planning: medium and high-density housing

441. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning: Given the lack of restrictions on the location of medium density housing in the ResCode provisions, will the Government review the Victoria Planning Provisions in order to better target medium and high density housing around activity centres and public transport nodes.

ANSWER:

The role of ResCode is to deal with the immediate impacts on existing neighbourhood character arising from individual medium density development proposals, not to direct the location of medium density housing.

Melbourne 2030 is the Government's strategy for the management of growth. The strategy seeks to locate a substantial proportion of medium and higher density housing to activity centres, and other strategic redevelopment sites that offer good access to services and transport.

The Government has implemented a number of initiatives to implement this policy, for example:

- It has established five Regional Housing Working Groups. Each Regional Housing Working Group has prepared and adopted a Regional Housing Statement for its respective region. Regional Housing Statements provide a framework for planning for the housing needs of each region to the year 2031. These Statements will assist councils in developing their local housing strategies and activity centre structure plans to guide the location of medium density housing to preferred locations.
- The Government is assisting councils with funding and expert assistance to support structure planning for activity centres which identifies and facilitates housing redevelopment opportunities in these locations. For example, the 2007/08 State Budget provided \$3 million for an Expert Assistance Program (EAP) to help councils to drive growth and change in metropolitan activity centres. This two year program will provide specialist expert advice to assist councils finalise and implement structure plans for principal and major activity centres.
- The Transit Cities program proposes to revitalise 13 key metropolitan and regional centres to make them better places to work and live. The 2007/08 State Budget announced \$63.3 million towards urban improvement and revitalisation in central Footscray, Geelong, and Ringwood. This follows on from the \$219 million contributed to Transit Cities projects in the 2006/07 State Budget.

With sensible planning, design, investment and support, additional population can be managed in a sustainable and efficient way.

Planning: accessible housing

451. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning: In relation to accessible housing:

- (1) What budget allocation has been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Building Commission, or any other Government body, for the financial year 2007–08, on policy, promotion and regulation of accessible housing, and what is the detailed breakdown of the total amount.
- (2) What expenditure has there been in relation to the ‘Accessible Housing in Australia’ consultancies and in moving forward on policy and regulation of accessible housing more generally. Please provide the detailed breakdown of actual expenditure in relation to policy, promotion and regulation of accessible housing made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Building Commission, or any other Government body, for the financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06.

ANSWER:

I am informed that in relation to accessible housing.

- (1) In 2007–08 the Department of Sustainability and Environment has no specific budget allocations related to accessible housing policy, promotion and regulation. A budget of \$45,000 has been allocated in the Building Commission’s 2007–08 budget for the promotion of accessible housing and the preparation of the Homes for Life guide in association with industry. VicUrban’s Roxburgh Park Homes for Life project will showcase the *Homes for Life Guide* as part of VicUrban’s ongoing development program. VicUrban and Office for Disability programs do not identify specific budget allocations related to accessibility matters and I am therefore unable to provide further details.
- (2) The Department of Sustainability and Environment had no expenditure in relation to ‘Accessible Housing in Australia’ consultancies. A detailed breakdown of expenditure in relation to policy, promotion and regulation of accessible housing in the planning portfolio is not available as this forms part of normal business. Details of any direct expenditure by other Government bodies is not the direct responsibility of my portfolio. Therefore I am unable to provide that information.

Planning: priority development panel

501. MR GUY — To ask the Minister for Planning:

- (1) What is the annual budget expenditure of the Priority Development Panel (PDP) for the financial year 2006–07.
- (2) How many full-time, part-time and casual staff, respectively, work for the PDP.
- (3) What, if any, payments are made to full-time and part-time members of the PDP.
- (4) What is the average time frame between a Ministerial referral to the PDP and the completion of the PDP’s report to the Minister.
- (5) Was the review to establish the terms of reference of the PDP completed on time, and if not —
 - (a) when was it completed; and
 - (b) why was it not completed on time.
- (6) What current projects are under referral to the PDP.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) The PDP’s Annual Budget expenditure for the financial year 2006/07 was approximately \$550,000.00.

- (2) The PDP unit comprises one part-time (50 per cent) and 4 full-time staff.
- (3) Remuneration for part-time members of the PDP is fixed in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Appointment and Remuneration of Part-Time Non-Executive Directors of State Government Boards and Members of Statutory Bodies and Advisory Committees* (the Guidelines). The Guidelines provide for remuneration for part-time members to be fixed in the range of \$190 to \$291 per sitting day. For reasons of personal privacy of the members of the PDP it would not be appropriate to disclose the actual amount paid to each member.
- (4) The time frame between a Ministerial referral to the PDP and the completion of the PDP's report of advice to the Minister varies depending on the nature of the matter referred.
- (5) The initial Terms of Reference guided the early months of the PDP's operations.
 - (a) Following the appointment of the full-time Chair in July 2005, these Terms of Reference were refined in light of experience gained from the early referrals. No time frame was set for this refinement.
 - (b) The revised Terms of Reference were approved by the then Minister for Planning in February 2006.
- (6) Current projects under referral to the PDP are:
 - Frankston Transit City Structure Plan.
 - Melbourne Wholesale Market relocation.
 - Doncaster Hill Strategy Review.

Roads and ports: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

- 505. MS PENNICUIK** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Roads and Ports): In relation to possible injury or material damage arising from unforeseen circumstances partially or wholly attributable to the Channel Deepening Proposal (CDP):
- (1) Is the Port of Melbourne Corporation (PoMC) the responsible authority for meeting all claims for damages, compensation and costs of remediation arising from the CDP.
 - (2) Has the PoMC made provision for, or is it insured against, potential damages, compensable claims and remediation costs, and if so —
 - (a) what is the amount of any provisions or insurance risk cover; and
 - (b) over what period of time.
 - (3) In the event that the PoMC is unable to meet the cost of all damages, compensation claims and remediation costs, will the State of Victoria bear the residual liability.

ANSWER:

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

- (1) The PoMC is the proponent for the CDP and has prepared a Supplementary Environment Effects Statement (SEES) which is currently subject to an assessment pursuant to the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

Persons believing they have suffered loss or damage from dredging would have the usual rights available through the court process to make claims for compensation if they consider there is a legal liability in PoMC or anyone else to them. Ultimately, the court would decide whether or not there was any legal liability.
- (2) PoMC has insurance in relation to its business activities.
- (3) The *Port Services Act 1995* provides that PoMC does not represent the Crown. Accordingly, where PoMC is liable for costs associated with its activities, generally, it will be solely responsible for these.

Roads and ports: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

- 509. MS PENNICUIK** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Roads and Ports): In relation to the economic viability of the Channel Deepening Project (CDP) and having regard for the doubling of world crude oil prices between 2003 and 2007 and the predicted rise of a further 50 per cent by 2012 (World Energy Outlook 2007–IEA), and the OECD assessment that up to 20 per cent of international trade would be non-viable at \$90 per barrel:
- (1) What undertakings has the Minister received from the PoMC that they have properly factored in the impact of substantially higher fuel prices on their projections of increasing shipping volumes.
 - (2) Would the CDP still be economically viable if crude oil prices did increase to \$90 per barrel.
 - (3) At what oil price is the CDP considered to be no longer economically sustainable.

ANSWER:

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

PoMC considered the potential impact of higher fuel prices, concluding that it is unlikely that fuel price increases within the range being forecast, by informed and responsible forecasters, would have a material effect on trade volumes through the port.

I have been advised that the net economic benefits of the project tend to increase as the use of larger ships leads to less fuel consumption per unit of cargo carried. A rise in fuel prices would therefore lead to an increase in the value of fuel savings from the CDP.

Roads and ports: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

- 510. MS PENNICUIK** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Roads and Ports): Given the importance of agricultural exports (especially dairy & grain) to the PoMC business, and the current 20 per cent decrease, reported by the federal Treasurer, in primary production in South Eastern Australia resulting from climate change intensified drought, is the Minister confident that a long term downturn of 20 per cent in agricultural exports will not affect the economic viability of the Channel Deepening Proposal.

ANSWER:

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

I am advised that such a downturn would not affect the economic viability of this project.

Public transport: Anderson Street, Yarraville

- 541. MS HARTLAND** — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): Has any study been undertaken to ascertain whether a compliant pedestrian underpass or overpass may be built at the railway crossing at Anderson Street, Yarraville; if so, what body undertook the study, when was it presented and what was the result.

ANSWER:

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

I am not aware of any detailed study being undertaken to ascertain whether a compliant pedestrian underpass or overpass may be built at the railway crossing at Anderson Street, Yarraville.

The Department of Infrastructure has informed me that if the underpass was to be reinstated, it would be required to comply with the provisions of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and the associated Disability

Standards for Accessible Public Transport Guidelines 2004. Compliance with the Act would entail designing an underpass or overpass with several extended ramps on either side with gradients that are no more than 1 in 14 grade. This would be very difficult to achieve, given the lack of available space for such structures near the Anderson Street railway crossing.

Public transport: Anderson Street, Yarraville

542. MS HARTLAND — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Public Transport): Has any study been undertaken to ascertain whether a *Disability Discrimination Act 2002* compliant pedestrian underpass or overpass can be built at the railway crossing at Anderson Street, Yarraville; if so, what body undertook the study, when was it completed and what was the result.

ANSWER:

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

I am not aware of any detailed study being undertaken to ascertain whether a Disability Discrimination Act 2002 compliant pedestrian underpass or overpass can be built at the railway crossing at Anderson Street, Yarraville.

The Department of Infrastructure has informed me that if the underpass was to be reinstated, it would be required to comply with the provisions of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and the associated Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Guidelines 2004. Compliance with the Act would entail designing an underpass or overpass with several extended ramps on either side with gradients that are no more than 1 in 14 grade. This would be very difficult to achieve, given the lack of available space for such structures near the Anderson Street railway crossing.

Roads and ports: VicRoads website

675. MR KOCH — To ask the Minister for Industry and State Development (for the Minister for Roads and Ports):

- (1) Why do searches made from the 'search' box on the left hand top of www.vicroads.vic.gov.au show results that are not then able to be clicked to obtain the actual document.
- (2) How long has this been a problem on the site.
- (3) When will it be fixed.
- (4) What is the estimated cost of fixing the problem.
- (5) Will VicRoads in-house staff, contractors or consultants undertake this work; if contractors or consultants, what is their name.

ANSWER:

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

There have been two documented issues with the search engine and both are related to a particular version of the Firefox browser that some members of the public may be using. The first issue results in users seeing a blank page when searching, and the second issue is users being directed back to the homepage. These issues were first raised in March 2007.

The first issue has been resolved by our provider and the other issue currently cannot be reproduced. We are attempting to obtain more information from users as we believe it is related to certain user settings within their Firefox browser.

Our website provider, EDS Australia is working with our search engine provider, Autonomy, to resolve the outstanding issue.

Attorney-General: Working with Children checks

- 688. MR HALL** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Attorney-General): As at 30 June 2007, how many Victorians had —
- (a) applied for a Working with Children check;
 - (b) successfully passed a Working with Children check and been given an assessment notice allowing them to work with children; and
 - (c) been given a negative or interim negative notice or whose application has been withdrawn for any reason.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

| Working with Children Checks – Applications Received, Withdrawn and Negative Notices | |
|---|---------|
| Applied for a Working with Children Check | 94, 077 |
| Successfully passed a Working with Children Check and been given an Assessment Notice allowing them to work with children | 62, 465 |
| Been given an Interim Negative Notice | 16 |
| Been given a Negative Notice | 6 |
| Application withdrawn | 12 |

The data covers the period between 3 April 2006 (when the “Working with Children” children checks became operational) and 30 June 2007. The data also includes all applications submitted to the Working with Children Check Unit, not only those made by Victorian residents. I have been advised that the significant difference between the number of applications received and those assessed is due to the large number of applications received in the last two weeks of June 2007. As of the week ending 7 September 2007 the difference in applications received and processed has been reduced to less than 10,000.

Attorney-General: Supreme Court of Victoria

- 719. MS PENNICUIK** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Attorney-General):
- (1) How much does a civil proceeding in the Supreme Court of Victoria cost the Victorian Government and taxpayers.
 - (2) What does it cost to have a judge hear a matter —
 - (a) per hour; and
 - (b) per day.
 - (3) What are the costs of having a matter before the court outside of actual hearings.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

- (1) Information for 2005/06 (and comparable information in other Australian jurisdictions) is available in the Report on Government Services 2007.
- (2) There is no available data.
- (3) There is no available data.

Public transport: seniors Sunday pass

758. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Industry and Trade (for the Minister for Public Transport): In relation to public transport for seniors and the Government’s ‘A Fairer Victoria–Progress and Next Steps’ initiative which allocated \$12.5 million to extend public transport concessions for seniors on trams, trains and buses:

- (1) How many senior Victorians applied for a Seniors’ Sunday Pass since it commenced on Sunday 27 August 2006 to 30 June 2007.
- (2) What is the expected cost for 2006–07.
- (3) What is the total output cost of this measure in the 2007–08 Budget.
- (4) How many people have been budgeted to hold a Seniors’ Sunday Pass by 30 June 2008 and how has this been estimated.

ANSWER:

The answer as at the date the question was raised is given below.

- (1) In the period from 27 August 2006 to 30 June 2007, approximately 278,000 Seniors Sunday Passes were issued.
- (2) The cost of the Seniors Sunday Pass in 2006–07 was approximately \$1 million.
- (3) The estimated cost of the Seniors Sunday Pass in 2007–08 is \$1.045 million.
- (4) It is estimated that 400,000 Victorian Seniors Card holders will hold a Seniors Sunday Pass by 30 June 2008. This estimate was based on the issue of passes during the first six months of 2007, following the initial take up period between August and December 2006.

Agriculture: VicForests — restructure

763. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Industry and Trade (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to the restructure of VicForests, as described in the Department of Sustainability and Environment media release dated 1 August 2007:

- (1) What are the position descriptions of the staff that will be cut from the Bairnsdale Department of Sustainability and Environment office.
- (2) What are the position descriptions of the staff that will be shifted from the Bairnsdale office to the Orbst and Swift Creek’s offices.
- (3) When will each position change take place.

ANSWER:

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

The Minister for Environment and Climate Change is responsible for the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), and questions regarding DSE operations should be directed to him.

Questions relating to VicForests organisational structure should be addressed to the Treasurer in his capacity as responsible minister.

Treasurer: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

765. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Treasurer: Given the revelations at the Panel Inquiry Hearings into Channel Deepening, including incomplete studies, the need for more studies, serious shipping safety

concerns and a twice revised, expanded and unfinished Environment Management Plan, does the Government have any new estimate of the total cost of Channel Deepening.

ANSWER:

As at the date the question was asked, I am informed that:

The project cost will not be finalised until assessment of the proposal has been concluded under the Environment Effects Act and Government has considered PoMC's application for project approvals.

Treasurer: Port Phillip Bay — channel deepening

766. MS PENNICUIK — To ask the Treasurer: In relation to the Government's in principle support for the Channel Deepening Project being based on the development of a sound financing strategy and page 43 of the closing submission at the Panel Inquiry Hearings into Channel Deepening where Port of Melbourne admitted that as they "have previously stated, financing for the project is not finally decided and is ultimately a matter for Government to determine":

- (1) Has Port of Melbourne provided a sound financing strategy to the Government.
- (2) What is the Government's financing strategy.
- (3) To what extent will Victorian taxpayers bear the cost.
- (4) When will Victorian taxpayers be made aware of any costs to the taxpayer.

ANSWER:

As at the date the question was asked, I am informed that:

The details regarding the recovery of costs associated with the CDP have yet to be finalised by Government and are subject to project financial approval, which is conditional on environmental approvals. Any potential Government contribution would be considered as part of the Government's budgetary process, which prioritises Government funding initiatives.

Planning: overlay requests

771. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Planning: In relation to planning overlay requests from local councils:

- (1) What is the departmental procedure to reject a planning overlay request.
- (2) Are there other external influences that determine that decision making process and what/who are these.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

As with zones, standard overlays for Statewide application are included in the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Before I authorise a council to prepare an amendment to its planning scheme, it must be demonstrated that the amendment is strategically justified and that any overlay proposed is from the suite of overlays in the Victoria Planning Provisions. Officers from the Department of Planning and Community Development provide advice and recommendations to me about the appropriateness of any proposed overlay request.

Before considering an amendment to the planning scheme to introduce an overlay control, I will consider:

- the *Planning Practice Note Strategic Assessment Guidelines for Planning Scheme Amendments*.

- whether the amendment implements State Planning Policy Framework and Local Planning Policy Framework objectives.
- whether the amendment complies with any relevant Ministerial Direction.
- whether the amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions.
- the recommendations of any panel established to hear submissions about the amendment.
- the advice and recommendations of any Advisory Committee appointed under section 151 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 or the Priority Development Panel as appropriate
- the advice and recommendations of the department

I can refuse to approve an amendment if it does not satisfy these requirements.

Environment and climate change: Warrandyte State Park

794. MR DALLA-RIVA — To ask the Minister for Environment and Climate Change: In relation to the Warrandyte State Park:

- (1) When was the last occasion that this State Park was burnt in a controlled environment, such as a fuel reduction burn.
- (2) Taking into consideration the topography and flora of the area, how often should this State Park be subject to a controlled burn.
- (3) When will be the next occasion that this State Park will be subject to a controlled burn.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (1) Since the 1991 Pound Bend wildfire a number of separate fuel reduction burns have been conducted in Warrandyte State Park.
- (2) The frequency with which this area is fuel reduced is determined by the fuel management strategies defined in the East Port Phillip Fire Protection Plan (Nov 2003). This plan assigns fuel management zones based on the strategic importance of different areas, the appropriateness of burning to manage fuels, and the natural and developed values on or adjacent to the area. There are five zones: Zone 1 Asset Protection, Zone 2 Strategic fuel reduced corridors, Zone 3 Broad-acre fuel reduced mosaic, Zone 4 Specific flora and fauna management and Zone 5 Exclusion of prescribed burning. Each zone has triggers based on overall fuel hazard that determines when fuel reduction should be undertaken.

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

Overall fuel hazard is monitored and used in conjunction with community and stakeholder input to determine when an area is next programmed for burning.

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

Industry and trade: former Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation

810. MR D. M. DAVIS — To ask the Minister for Industry and Trade: Between 25 November 2006 and 2 August, 2007, what support was provided for Mr Tony Lupton, MP and at what cost, in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Industry and Innovation for —

- (a) telephone and other communication support;
- (b) car hire and rental car access including dates, destination and purpose;
- (c) air flights, where to, on what date and how much did each flight cost;
- (d) meal and entertainment costs;
- (e) staff assisting him, their effective full time number and cost to the department; and
- (f) any other support or reimbursement provided including details of the nature and cost of the support or reimbursement.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Honourable Member has submitted a similar request pursuant to the *Freedom of Information Act* 1982 for this information. Both requests are being dealt with in tandem by the Department and responses will be provided in due course.

Agriculture: abalone aquaculture

- 811. MR BARBER** — To ask the Minister for Industry and Trade (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to the two commercial marine aquaculture leases classed as ‘Aquaculture – Crown Land – Abalone’ at Mallacoota which are outside the marine aquaculture zones recommended by the Environment Conservation Council in the *Marine, Coastal and Estuarine Investigation: Final Report, August 2000*: Does current policy permit the continued development and expansion of marine abalone aquaculture in Mallacoota.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Development and expansion of aquaculture may be permitted in Victoria, including at Mallacoota, provided it is consistent with the *Fisheries Act 1995* (the Act), all other relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, and any relevant management plan under the Act.

Agriculture: abalone aquaculture

- 812. MR BARBER** — To ask the Minister for Industry and Trade (for the Minister for Agriculture): In relation to abalone being grown in the Mallacoota aquaculture leases which were hatched at Coastal Seafarms near Portland, which is the index farm (first occurrence) of abalone viral ganglioneuritis: What was the last date on which abalone were translocated from Coastal Seafarms to the Mallacoota abalone aquaculture leases.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

I can advise that at the time of the outbreak of the abalone virus, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) investigated all translocations of abalone that could have been a conduit for the disease.

Translocations of abalone into or within Victoria are required to be undertaken in accordance with the *Fisheries Act 1999*, the Guidelines for Assessing Translocations of Live Aquatic Organisms in Victoria 2003, and the Victorian Abalone Aquaculture Translocation Protocol of 2007. Under the protocol, DPI are notified of all translocations.

Planning: Footscray Road — grade separation

859. MS HARTLAND — To the Minister for Planning: What measures are the government putting in place to replace the BP service station on Footscray Road, which presently services truck freight central to the Port, that is to close at the end of the month due to the Footscray Road grade separation project.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Road and Ports as the issue raised falls within the Ministers' portfolio responsibilities.

Planning: Footscray Road — grade separation

860. MS HARTLAND — To the Minister for Planning: What measures are the government putting in place to ensure that the Footscray Road grade separation project and associated loss of gathering place for truck freight, does not result in extra truck journeys along Buckley Street, Footscray and Francis Street and Somerville Roads, Yarraville.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Road and Ports as the issue raised falls within the Ministers' portfolio responsibilities.

Major projects: Footscray Road — grade separation

861. MS HARTLAND — To the Minister for Major Projects: What measures are the government putting in place to replace the BP service station on Footscray Road, which presently services truck freight central to the Port, that is to close at the end of the month due to the Footscray Road grade separation project.

ANSWER:

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

The question does not fall within my portfolio responsibility and I believe it has also been directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, who will provide a response.

Major projects: Footscray Road — grade separation

862. MS HARTLAND — To the Minister for Major Projects: What measures are the government putting in place to ensure that the Footscray Road grade separation project and associated loss of gathering place for truck freight, does not result in extra truck journeys along Buckley Street, Footscray and Francis Street and Somerville Roads, Yarraville.

ANSWER:

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

The question does not fall within my portfolio responsibility and I believe it has also been directed to the Minister for Roads and Ports, who will provide a response.

