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FIRST SESSION

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

9, 10, 11 September 2008

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WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Tuesday, 9 September 2008

Environment: Blackburn service station site

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr Atkinson

Raised on: 27 February 2008

REPLY:

The work required to remediate the former petrol station at 24 Blackburn Rd is continuing. EPA issues a Clean Up Notice requiring remediation and an Environmental Audit. An Environmental Auditor appointed under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* (the Act) is undertaking an environmental audit to ensure that it is suitable for its intended future use.

The site needs to be remediated to protect human health and the environment and so the Clean Up Notice cannot be lifted.

Delays in the clean up to 24 Blackburn Road have been caused by two main factors:

- Contamination discovered by EPA at nearby 21 Blackburn Road led to a lengthy investigation to identify the party responsible for clean up. EPA has now negotiated for Caltex to include remediation of this site as part of their work at 24 Blackburn Road, without accepting liability for the original contamination.
- The auditor was not satisfied with a report on a remediation trial. This report has now been revised and was provided to the auditor in early July 2008.

The auditor is now reviewing this revised report and, if satisfactory, the remediation plan can then be completed. The remediation plan will also need to be reviewed by the auditor before works can begin. This is expected to be around the end of August 2008.

EPA remains in contact with all parties, and is committed to ensuring that both sites are cleaned up to meet Victoria's standards for protecting the environment and community. Due to the nature of the contamination, remediation is expected to take at least a year but may take longer.

Energy: low-emission technology

Raised with: Energy and Resources

Raised by: Mr Eideh

Raised on: 12 March 2008

REPLY:

The Brumby Government is committed to carbon capture and storage (CCS) to enable continuing utilisation of Victoria's abundant brown coal reserves while also achieving deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

Victoria is fortunate to have the Latrobe Valley's brown coal resource located close to Bass Strait, which is an ideal site for carbon storage. A report published in late 2006 for the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) by the

Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technology (CO2CRC) confirmed that the offshore Gippsland Basin appears to be a world class site for the storage of greenhouse gases based on fifteen criteria, including size, geological stability and accessibility.

To facilitate the commercial availability of CCS, the Government is currently developing a strategic policy framework and a regulatory framework for onshore storage of carbon dioxide within the Victorian jurisdiction.

In the 2008–09 State Budget, the Brumby Government committed additional funds to position Victoria as a leader in CCS, including:

- \$110 million fund to establish a new large-scale, pre-commercial CCS demonstration program;
- \$5.2 million for investigating carbon storage sites in the Gippsland Basin, to better understand carbon storage potential through research and modelling of the region’s geology; and
- \$3.6 million as Victoria’s share to extend the CO2CRC for another seven year term. This will also enable further support to be provided to the Otway Basin Pilot Project for ongoing research and understanding about carbon dioxide storage deep underground.

This funding builds on previous Government commitments, which include:

- \$6 million in support for the CCS trial in the Otway Basin;
- \$5.8 million in research and development grants for carbon dioxide capture technologies; and
- support for the \$5 billion Monash Energy coal to diesel project, which will include CCS.

On 16 April 2008, the Premier signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the William J. Clinton Foundation’s Clinton Climate Initiative to further the shared goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Part of the initial program under this MoU will focus on clean energy technology demonstrations including CCS. The MoU will help to position Victoria as a global CCS leader by:

- utilising global networks to promote the CCS policy, regulatory and technology development initiatives being pursued by the Government, as outlined in the strategic policy framework; and
- investigating the creation of a CCS hub, centred on the Latrobe Valley.

The Government has a number of initiatives to help Victorians reduce their carbon footprint, including the introduction of the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target (VEET) scheme from 1 January 2009, which will be targeted exclusively at Victorian households. Other actions include:

- the “You have the Power. Save energy” “black balloons” advertising campaign;
- the roll out of smart meters, which will provide customers with more accurate information regarding their electricity usage;
- a commitment to more effective energy bill benchmarking; and
- support for initiatives such as “Earth Hour”, “Change the Globe” and the take up of GreenPower.

The Sustainability Victoria website (www.sustainability.vic.gov.au) also provides information to Victorians on renewable energy rebates, energy efficiency and other practical ways for households to reduce their carbon footprint.

Sale Primary School: Japanese program

Raised with: Education

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 9 April 2008

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Sale Primary School enrolment numbers are being monitored continuously with the current enrolment being 577 students and a projected enrolment of 582 students for the start of Term Four, 2008.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development instigated a 5-mod (two classrooms) to be transported to the site at the end of term three. Bendigo Relocatable have been conferring with the Acting School Principal last week on siting the building.

This will bring, based upon Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Facilities Schedule, a capacity within the school to accommodate 625 students.

The Department takes a consistent approach to all State schools in the provision of buildings.

Schools: Monash closures

Raised with: Education

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 10 April 2008

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has been working with the Monash City Council to ensure that the most appropriate zoning is applied to each of the sites.

It is proposed that the sites will be rezoned through the usual local council process to allow for the community's views and input to be taken into account in the future planning of the sites.

Consultation and negotiation is taking place with Monash City Council to ensure that the most efficient provision of open space for the local community is achieved in the long term.

Volunteers: government support

Raised with: Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs

Raised by: Ms Pulford

Raised on: 7 May 2008

REPLY:

The Government is funding regional mentoring coordination projects in Gippsland, Grampians and metropolitan Melbourne. We also have a partnership with the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust that funds an additional three

regional coordination projects in Hume, Loddon Mallee and Barwon South West regions, completing state-wide coverage. These projects:

- coordinate effective regional delivery of new and existing mentoring programs and related activities;
- identify, document and share best practice mentoring models; and
- strengthen community collaboration and capacity for the delivery of mentoring programs to develop cross-sectoral and whole of community approaches to mentoring.

In addition to the regional support provided across Western Victoria Region, the Government has funded the Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative for the Kalay Wartee (Sister Brother) Mentoring Program for the past two years. This project provides mentoring to indigenous young people in Warrnambool through an indigenous and non-indigenous partnership, creating links back with their culture and heritage. Though the support of the Office for Youth, this program has successfully gained an additional two years funding through the Department of Justice, Indigenous Issues Unit.

As a consequence of Gunditjmara finding alternative funding, this now presents an exciting opportunity for new and existing mentoring programs to be considered for funding options to maximise mentoring opportunities for young people.

The Government is also developing the capacity and leadership of the newly formed Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance. This Alliance is establishing a state-wide role in promotion and recognition of volunteer mentors contribution in partnership with communities.

Schools: boundary marking

Raised with: Education

Raised by: Mrs Kronberg

Raised on: 8 May 2008

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

The portfolio of responsibility for Melbourne 2030 belongs to the Minister for Planning.

Mental health: early intervention

Raised with: Mental Health

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 8 May 2008

REPLY:

Thank you for raising the issue on 8 May 2008 of the engagement of rural and regional Victorians in the consultation process for the *Because mental health matters* consultation paper.

The voices of rural and regional Victoria are crucial in the development of a new mental health strategy and consultations in rural and regional areas are a key part of the overall consultation process. Consultation sessions are being held in Benalla, Geelong, Traralgon, Bendigo and Ballarat, and in some instances, regional Department of Human Services' offices are organising additional local consultation sessions to cater for people in specific localities.

In the development of a new mental health strategy for Victoria, it is vital that we hear input from all stakeholders. The participation of rural and regional Victorians in the consultation process to date has been highly valued and their continued participation is encouraged and welcomed.

Active Girls Breakfast program: funding

Raised with: Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs

Raised by: Ms Darveniza

Raised on: 12 June 2008

REPLY:

The Active Girls Breakfasts are part of the Victorian Government's commitment to encouraging school girls to be active and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

These breakfasts are held in Melbourne and there is at least one breakfast held in each Victorian rural region each year. The Melbourne breakfast attracts approximately 800 school girls, while more than 800 schools participate in the program aims across rural Victoria.

The Victorian Government will support the continuation and anticipated expansion of this successful program in both Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Bulleen Heights School: funding

Raised with: Education

Raised by: Mr Tee

Raised on: 25 June 2008

REPLY:

I am informed as follows:

Since 1999 the Victorian Government has spent \$2.9 billion on capital investment in schools, including the renovation or rebuilding of over 400 schools. While this is a remarkable achievement it was recognised that there was more to do.

In 2007 the Government, committed \$1.9 billion to renovate or rebuild a further 500 schools in four years. This is the largest school building program in the State's history, and will transform education infrastructure across the State. The Victorian Schools Plan will see the remainder of the 1600 Government schools rebuilt or renovated over the next 10 years.

The 2007–08 Budget delivered on more than one-quarter of the promised 500 schools, with 131 schools receiving funding to commence works. The 2008–09 Budget will deliver on a further 128 schools, providing over half of the schools within the first two budget years.

Discussions with Eastern Metropolitan Region have highlighted that Bulleen Heights School was originally built with a Library. The school has chosen to use this space for different purposes and is currently fundraising to re-build another library. The school is also using a system of mobile library shelving from classroom to classroom and making use of the Municipal library as a resource.

Whilst the Department is on track to rebuild or renovate the promised 500 schools, not all projects can be funded at once and the Department must balance priority projects across the State.

Ringwood: transit city

Raised with: Planning

Raised by: Mr Atkinson

Raised on: 26 June 2008

REPLY:

I refer to the request for a timetable for the government's commitment on the Ringwood Transit City project and an assurance that funds would be available in next year's budget.

Over the past five years, Government has contributed over \$9.6 million in Ringwood Transit City to:

- Establish an Advisory Committee under Section 151 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The members of this Committee include Maroonah City Council, DPCD, DOT, and Queensland Investment Corporation (owners of Eastland Shopping Centre);
- Undertake detailed design work to provide a blueprint for integrating Eastland and the proposed town square across Maroonah Highway to the station precinct and possible improvements in the station area;
- Complete detailed feasibility studies and the Ringwood Transit City Masterplan.
- Deliver public realm improvements such as streetscape improvements to Ringwood Street including new street lighting, relocation of powerlines underground, and new street trees, seating and paving;
- Complete the Eastern Gateway Precinct Plan including guidelines for residential and commercial development and open space connections.

I have asked the Department of Planning and Community Development to work closely with the new Department of Transport to refine the proposals and prepare a revised business case for investment consideration in the 2009–2010 Budget.

I will continue working with the Council and the community on the other projects that are under way to revitalise the Ringwood Transit City, building on our previous work.

Kangaroos: harvesting

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mr P. Davis

Raised on: 26 June 2008

REPLY:

Although Victoria processes meat and skins of kangaroos harvested in other states, current government policy does not support the establishment of a commercial kangaroo harvesting industry. In 2000, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee of Parliament (ENRC) considered the issue of commercial use of kangaroos taken in Victoria as part of its inquiry into the utilisation of Victorian native flora and fauna. The Committee concluded that a kangaroo industry based on the harvest of wild kangaroos in Victoria was not viable due to the:

- relatively low densities of kangaroos and the high costs of shooting and transporting kangaroos in Victoria;
- small number of kangaroos that could be culled in Victoria compared with other States;
- problems associated with uncertain supply, as a result of the above.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

Tuesday, 9 September 2008

COUNCIL

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The Victorian Government has recently permitted the off-property, non-commercial, personal use of kangaroos destroyed under an Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW). This means that landowners, and agents acting on behalf of landowners, will be able to retain and use meat and skins from animals destroyed under ATCW for their own purposes (subject to a range of conditions).

This policy was implemented recently. I have attached a series of information sheets providing further detail on this change for your information.

Kangaroos and deer destroyed under Authorities to Control Wildlife

Fact Sheet 1 – General information

Introduction

The Victorian Government recently announced a policy to allow non-commercial, off-property use of kangaroos and deer destroyed as part of damage mitigation programs.

This Fact Sheet provides general information on this initiative.

Background

The activities of many kinds of wildlife may lead to conflicts with human interests. For example, native birds may feed on various fruit and nut crops, cause significant loss or damage to rice or legume crops or foul farm dams or buildings or even damage buildings. Deer and kangaroos may damage fences, compete with stock for pasture or damage crops and young trees.

Wherever possible, DSE advocates non-lethal measures to alleviate problems caused by wildlife. However, in some situations, non-lethal methods must be supplemented with direct control of wildlife.

Control of wildlife

DSE authorises the control of wildlife by issuing Authorities to Control Wildlife (ATCW). ACTW applications are considered on a case by case basis, in an attempt to strike a balance between providing protection for wildlife and landholders' ability to farm productively.

The majority of ATCWs allow the destruction of wildlife by shooting under strict conditions to ensure that control is conducted humanely and a minimum number of animals are destroyed to meet farming needs.

Under previous policy, it was required that all destroyed wildlife was retained on the property for which the authorisation was issued. However, meat from shot animals could be used on the property as a food source for humans or dogs, or be burned, buried or left to break down.

Change in Government policy

The previous policy of preventing the off-property use of wildlife was seen as a waste of an otherwise useful resource. In response, the Victorian Government announced during the 2006 election that kangaroos and deer carcasses may be taken off-property for personal, non-commercial use by permit holders or their agents.

This new policy was implemented recently. As of 4 June 2008, ATCW holders and their agents may remove deer and kangaroo carcasses from the property for which the authorisation was issued for personal use (subject to a number of strict conditions).

Features of the new arrangements

A number of restrictions apply to the off-property use of kangaroo and deer carcasses. These are designed to ensure that ATCWs are only issued when there is a demonstrated need to control problem wildlife and that the risk of meat and skins are not laundered through commercial markets. These conditions include:

- limits on the amount of kangaroo meat and skins that a person listed on the ATCW may possess
- minimum storage and labelling requirements
- a requirement to keep a record of the where the animals were destroyed and the ATCW number.

Further detail on these conditions is provided in Fact Sheet 2 "Conditions on the off-farm use of kangaroo carcasses" and Fact Sheet 3 "Conditions on the off-farm use of deer carcasses".

Kangaroos and deer destroyed under Authorities to Control Wildlife

Fact Sheet 2 – Conditions on the off-farm use of kangaroo carcasses

Introduction

Non-commercial, off-property use of kangaroo carcasses from animals destroyed under an Authority to Control Wildlife (ATCW) is now permitted.

This Fact Sheet provides information on the conditions and limitations for the off-farm use of kangaroo products taken by holders of an ATCW and agents listed on their ATCW.

No commercial utilisation

Current Government policy does not support the commercial harvesting of kangaroos in Victoria. Consistent with this policy, no part of any kangaroo destroyed under an ATCW may be given away, sold or traded in any way.

No part of any kangaroo taken may be stored or processed in any shop or commercial or business premises (excluding farms for which the ATCW was issued and licensed taxidermists).

Meat possession limits

The holder of an ATCW or their agent(s) may take a total of no more than 80kg of kangaroo meat off the property for which the ATCW was issued (ie. a total of 80kg in both physical possession and custody or control). This is the equivalent of meat from approximately 4–6 adult Eastern Grey Kangaroos. This meat may only be retained for non-commercial personal use only.

This limitation is designed to reduce the risk of animals being “laundered” into commercial outlets for kangaroo products, particularly meat for human or animal consumption.

Meat labelling requirements

All stored kangaroo meat taken off-farm must be labelled with the Authority Holder or Agent's name, the ATCW number under which the animal was destroyed and the date when the animal was destroyed.

If kangaroo meat is retained off-farm under a number of different ATCWs, the meat must be retained and labelled in separate bags or containers that allow distinction between the different authorisations.

Skin possession limits and labelling

Up to six skins per authorisation may be retained off-farm, but no more than twelve in total may be kept in his/her possession. All kangaroo skin retained off-farm under this system must be permanently marked with the number of the ATCW.

Record keeping

If any kangaroo products are removed from the property on which the ATCW was issued, the Authority Holder and the Agent must keep a record or log of the ATCW number, the Authority Holder's/Agent's name, date and number of kangaroos taken (whole or parts) from the property subject to the ATCW. This record is to be kept by the Authority Holder and the Agent for three months after the expiration of the ATCW or for one month after all meat has been consumed, whichever is the later.

A record is not required if the Authority Holder and his or her agents do not remove any products from the property for which the ATCW was issued.

Carriage of permit

Authority Holders and Agents must carry a copy of the ATCW when shooting and transporting kangaroos or parts thereof taken under the ATCW. The ATCW must be produced on demand by an Authorised Officer or member of the Victoria Police.

Transporting carcasses

Any kangaroo or parts of kangaroos being transported must be kept out of the view of the general public.

On-property arrangements

Possession limits (within the number specified on their permit), storage requirements and record keeping requirements do not apply if the meat and other products are not removed from the property for which the authorisation was issued. The permit holder may continue to use the carcasses on the property as a food source for humans or dogs, or be burned, buried or left to break down.

Brimbank: councillors

Raised with: Local Government

Raised by: Ms Hartland

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

If any person has evidence that a councillor may have breached the *Local Government Act 1989* in relation to conflicts of interest, they may direct their concerns to Local Government Victoria (LGV). LGV may investigate possible breaches of the Act where written evidence is provided indicating prima facie that a breach has occurred.

I note your comments on recent allegations made over the Brimbank City Council's 2008/09 budget process. An allegation of a potential conflict of interest in relation to actions of the Council's Mayor during the Council's budget deliberations was considered by LGV, which found that such actions did not constitute a breach of the Act.

I advise that the Victorian Ombudsman has commenced an investigation into the operation and governance at the Council, under section 14 of the *Ombudsman Act 1973*.

Water: Eastern Metropolitan Region

Raised with: Water

Raised by: Mr Leane

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

There are a number of water conservation opportunities in the restaurant industry in the Eastern Metropolitan Region. The water corporations for this area, Yarra Valley Water and South East Water, run information and rebate programs and also supply a range of free water saving signage.

On 7 August 2008, I announced Yarra Valley Water's new rebate scheme which offers \$1000 for business customers towards the purchase of a new waterless wok stove, and runs until 30 June 2009. Yarra Valley Water trialled these new waterless wok stoves in two restaurants which showed water savings of up to 90 per cent and dollar savings of \$3000 on water bills per stove. This amounts to a saving of 2 million litres of water a year between the two restaurants.

South East Water has advised me that it is now developing a similar rebate program for waterless wok stoves.

South East Water has also provided grants through its Business Water Grants Program for the installation of water saving appliances in restaurants. This program included a grant to the Southgate Arts and Leisure Precinct, where waterless woks and water efficient steamers were installed, resulting in a water saving of 71 per cent.

Both Yarra Valley Water and South East Water have programs to replace old pre-rinse spray nozzles in commercial kitchens with more water-efficient models, which save both water and energy.

Many hospitals, hotels and large restaurants use more than 10 million litres of water per year, meaning that they are required to prepare Water Management Action Plans, or WaterMAPs. This is a further driver to install water-efficient kitchen appliances including waterless wok stoves.

Inner South Community Health Service: resourcing health and education program

Raised with: Community Services

Raised by: Ms Pennicuik

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

I am advised that the issue raised sits within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Consumer Affairs.

Disability services: Mildura

Raised with: Community Services

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

Families of Children with a Disability Support group (FOCDSG) is a volunteer based incorporated body which for many years was funded to deliver the Strengthening Parenting Support Program across the Loddon Mallee Region.

The Strengthening Parenting Support Program offers support to families in establishing formal and informal parent support groups. These groups are seen as an important adjunct to the service system by offering mutual support for families of children with disabilities and developmental delay through the sharing of common experiences, concerns and aspirations.

FOCDSG has never been funded to deliver direct client services.

FOCDSG wound up operations at 31 June 2008. Regional Information and Advocacy Council (RIAC) was approved to deliver the same services formerly delivered by FOCDSG from 1 July 2008.

While the Strengthening Parenting Support Program does not provide direct client support services, there are direct support options available for families in Mildura:

- People requiring access to Disability Supports can contact 1800 783 783. This will put them in touch with the Disability Intake and Response Service, funded by the Department of Human Services. This service is based in Bendigo and covers the whole of the Loddon Mallee Region. Two case management positions are based in the Mildura office.
- The Department of Human Services also funds the Bendigo Health Care Group to provide case management services across the Region. Nine case managers are based in Mildura and can be contacted on telephone 5018 7301.

Additionally, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development funds Mallee Family Care to provide the following services in Mildura:

- Early Childhood Intervention Services
- Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services
- Pre School Field Officer

Environment: South Eastern Metropolitan Region street lighting

Raised with: Environment and Climate Change

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

The upgrade of street lighting to low emission technology represents an opportunity for councils to generate savings in greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.

In May this year the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) convened a Public Lighting Taskforce to address issues and barriers to the implementation of low emission street lighting. The taskforce includes representatives from each of the Victorian energy distributors, the Essential Services Commission (ESC), the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Government Association.

The taskforce will work collaboratively to plan for the rollout of low emission technology by looking at:

- issues and barriers that are presented within the current policy, legislative, regulatory or market environments;
- approval, pricing, funding and implementation issues;
- the sequence of steps required to address these issues and barriers; and
- broader changes that may need to be made to expedite approval, pricing and implementation of future energy efficient technologies.

In convening the Public Lighting Taskforce, DSE will act as intermediary for discussion between local government and distributors, with input from relevant state government bodies. The outcomes of the taskforce will be reported to me later in the year.

The taskforce has been established specifically to address issues relating to the approval and implementation of energy efficient public lighting technologies on local roads. This will include a discussion on the capital costs of bulk upgrade to low emission street lighting.

The ESC recently announced a pricing review of the Twin 2 x 14W tubular fluorescent T5 street lights. This review will determine the appropriate operational, maintenance and replacement (OMR) charge for this low emission lighting alternative, providing local governments with vital information for determining the on-going costs and benefits of upgrading to energy efficient lighting.

In May this year the South Eastern Metropolitan (SEM) Councils wrote to me on this issue, and forwarded a copy of the SEM's *Sustainable Public Lighting Position Paper*. My response to this letter outlined the establishment of the Public Lighting Taskforce as a forum to address many of the issues raised within this position paper.

The focus of the taskforce is on the replacement of Mercury Vapour 80W public lighting commonly used for local roads. The Minister for Roads and Ports has responsibility for freeways and arterial roads, which utilise different lighting technologies. The taskforce includes representation from VicRoads to promote common objectives across state and local government.

I thank you for your enquiry into this important issue.

Guide and Scout Water Activities Centre: rescue vessel

Raised with: Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs

Raised by: Mrs Peulich

Raised on: 31 July 2008

REPLY:

Marine Safety Victoria is the State's marine safety agency and is responsible for the Boating Safety and Facilities Grants Program. This grants program has been operating for eight years and is funded through the recreational boat operator licensing fees and vessel registration revenue.

The Boating Safety and Facilities Grants Program is open to boating, fishing and community groups. \$5 million was allocated to the Grants Program for 2008/09. A funding category within the 2008/09 Grants Program is Search and Rescue Vessels and Equipment, which closed on 15 July 2008.

The Boating Safety and Facilities Grants Program is an annual program and will be running again for 2009/10. Information about the Program is available on Marine Safety Victoria's website www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au or from the Grants administration team on freecall 1800 337 222.

The Member for South Eastern Metropolitan may like to advise the water activities centre of the contact details for Marine Safety Victoria.

Clearways: Stonnington and Port Phillip

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Mrs Coote

Raised on: 31 July 2008

REPLY:

The standardisation, extension and improved enforcement of clearway times is just one aspect of an integrated package of measures announced in the Government's *Keeping Melbourne Moving* plan to help manage and relieve road congestion in Melbourne.

The Government has, and will continue to, undertake consultation on the implementation of the changes to clearway times. This includes, where appropriate, consideration of local factors when progressing with implementation. Notwithstanding, the Government remains committed to realising the significant benefits expected for both public and private transport users from the changes.

The Government has undertaken a public submission process, and convened the Clearways Implementation Reference Group (CIRG). The CIRG includes peak-body representation of local government, the retail industry and the transport sector, as well as a representative of strip shopping centre traders, and is reviewing all submissions received through the public submissions process. I note that the *Keeping Melbourne Moving* plan has received strong support from a variety of stakeholders, including Yarra Trams, the Public Transport Users Association, the Bus Association of Victoria, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, the Victorian Transport Association and Bicycle Victoria.

Human Services: Pakenham staff

Raised with: Community Services

Raised by: Mr O'Donohue

Raised on: 31 July 2008

REPLY:

I am advised that the Department of Human Services, Southern Metropolitan Region is aware of the recent Bail Justice Hearing at Pakenham Police Station and is working with Child Protection staff to address the issues raised by Mr O'Donohue.

Drought: government assistance

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Ms Lovell

Raised on: 31 July 2008

REPLY:

- The Victorian Government has made a long term commitment to provide individuals, families and communities in drought affected areas with access to appropriate services that will assist in mitigating the impact of support drought.
- One of the many ways in which we are continuing to honour this commitment is through the provision of counselling services such as the Sustaining Community Wellbeing program, which aims to prevent and reduce emotional and mental breakdown as a result of drought.
- Sustaining Community Wellbeing was allocated \$3.1 million the 2007–08 state budget and an extra \$1.95 million was announced in October 2007.
- This initiative provided additional counsellors and personal support, workforce development (including “No Bull” therapy training for support workers by the Bouverie Centre), and health promotion and service coordination.
- Under this initiative, some rural DHS regional offices will continue drought coordination positions through until the end of 2008, however funding for most of the additional drought counsellors ends on 30 September 2008.
- The Victorian Government is well aware of the value of maintaining the networks and rapport created by our support services.
- The value of these support services extends far beyond their provision in times of drought.
- Hence the Victorian Government is keen to ensure that an ongoing primary health response to drought and rural change will be integrated into the mainstream planning and development of health services.
- Continuity will be provided through ongoing counselling delivered through the mainstream community health counselling workforce based in community health organisations.

Employment: regional and rural Victoria

Raised with: Premier

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 20 August 2008

REPLY:

There has been strong growth in regional employment since the Victorian Labor Government took office. From quarter end October 1999 to quarter end July 2008, employment in regional Victoria has increased by over

133,000 persons. A significant proportion of this increase, 16,850 jobs, has been as a result of rural investment projects facilitated by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.

The Victorian Government established a statutory body in 2002, Regional Development Victoria (RDV), with the primary purpose of facilitating economic, infrastructure and community development in provincial Victoria. RDV's focus is on investment attraction, job creation and exports. It has a mandated function to facilitate across government the delivery of policies and programs to support communities and to build stronger economies in provincial Victoria. RDV itself has a number of programs to:

- promote business and industry development;
- work with local government and communities to plan and manage change;
- help new businesses establish themselves; and
- pave the way for existing industries to grow and diversify.

In November 2005, RDV led the coordination and development of the \$502 million five-year action plan for growth in provincial Victoria, *Moving Forward: Making Provincial Victoria the Best Place to Live, Work and Invest*. In June 2008, the Government marked the half-way point of *Moving Forward* with a \$68 million package of new and refocused initiatives and programs under *Moving Forward: Update—The Next Two Years 2008–2010*.

As part of the new *Moving Forward* package, \$15.9 million has been provided for a new direction in regional planning that focuses on long-term growth and development of regional Victoria, including planning for growth and development of industries and jobs.

A new Ministerial Taskforce on Regional Strategic Planning will coordinate planning that emphasises long-term:

- productivity, livability and sustainability of provincial Victoria; and
- support to communities and government to manage change, plan for growth and respond to changing environments.

Also, as part of this initiative, the Government will support regional economies identify the impacts of emerging drivers of change. Funding of \$500,000 will be provided over two years on a range of activities, including research in identifying the drivers, their regional impact and emerging global trends to support communities plan for change.

Examples of RDV programs that relate to employment include:

1. Community Regional Industry Skills Program (CRISP)

CRISP is intended to contribute to the generation of industry development, new jobs, increased skills and improved services for rural and regional communities.

The Government provided \$5 million for the period 2003–04 to 2006–07 to fund CRISP to provide targeted assistance to tackle skill shortages and create sustainable industries and jobs across country Victoria. As part of the Provincial Statement, *Moving Forward*, a further \$5.5 million has been provided for the period 2005–06 to 2009–10 to expand and extend CRISP (CRISP II). An additional \$3 million has been provided for the period 2007–08 to 2009–10 under the 2007 Bushfire Package for a further expansion of CRISP (CRISP III).

2. Make Your Career Happen in Provincial Victoria

This campaign aims to attract young professionals and their families to provincial Victoria, as well as making secondary and tertiary students and graduates aware of study, employment and lifestyle opportunities in provincial Victoria. Initial funding for this initiative was \$5.2 million.

The *Moving Forward: Update* recently announced an additional \$3.5 million funding to implement three elements of the campaign:

- Key industry sector state-wide development — address strategic industry-sector skills shortages.
- Attracting and retaining regional skills — support targeted, localised skills initiatives across individual or groups of rural and regional councils.
- Marketing and promotion — focus on attracting skilled younger workers to regional areas.

The Government is also promoting jobs growth by ensuring that small business, the lifeblood of regional economies, has access to support services regardless of where it is located across the State. The Government has provided additional funding of \$650,000 over 3 years to the Small Business Mentoring Service to strengthen its support of regional businesses. This year's *Energise Enterprise*, Victoria's small business festival, held throughout August, offered over 100 events across regional Victoria.

The Government is also assisting regional businesses manage the skills shortage. Almost two-thirds of the businesses that have undertaken a free workforce planning diagnostic under the successful *My Business My People* program have come from regional Victoria.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSE

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

Wednesday, 10 September 2008

Water: Geelong

Raised with: Water

Raised by: Mr Koch

Raised on: 31 July 2008

REPLY:

The Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) supports water businesses that apply to access funding for viable water projects from Commonwealth water programs. In March 2008, DSE supported Barwon Water's concept proposal to the Commonwealth to access \$10 million to build a Class A water treatment plant at its Black Rock Water Reclamation Plant (BRWRP).

Barwon Water is now developing a functional design for this project. Barwon Water will make a formal submission to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in early 2009 to access the Commonwealth's \$10 million funding commitment.

DSE is working closely with Barwon Water to ensure that the functional design submission in 2009 will be successful.

The Commonwealth has also committed \$20 million to Barwon Water's Northern Water Plant that will substitute 2,000 ML of potable water used by Shell Geelong Refinery with Class A recycled water. The Victorian Government supports this project and has committed \$9.22 million to it.

WRITTEN ADJOURNMENT RESPONSES

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

Thursday, 11 September 2008

Health: Wallan super-clinic

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 30 July 2008

REPLY:

Wallan funding will be offered by the Commonwealth government through a competitive tender process. Community consultation is expected to begin in the first half of 2009. It is worth noting that this is an Australian Government initiative and decisions about the role out of the GP Super Clinics are ultimately a matter for my federal colleagues. Victoria has signalled its support for the initiative and Department of Human Services staff have worked closely with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing to ensure that the initiative complements Victorian initiatives in primary health.

Hospital: RSL visitors

Raised with: Health

Raised by: Mrs Petrovich

Raised on: 31 July 2008

REPLY:

Hospitals were made aware in 2003 of the issue of visits to veterans by ex-service organisations and many Victorian hospitals have an established process for such organisations to visit veterans in hospitals. As the number of veterans admitted varies from hospital to hospital it is not always practical to have the same process in place and hospitals should adapt to meet local needs.

Under Section 141 of the Health Services Act 1988 hospitals may not disclose identifying information about an individual who is a patient without consent. In 2003 the Department of Human Services sent out a circular advising all Victorian hospitals that under the Health Services Act 1988 it is necessary to seek the informed consent of Veterans before releasing their names to ex-service organisations. Further it was advised that if the Veteran had an extended length of stay or was transferred to a different facility that consent be confirmed to reflect the veteran's current wishes and state of health. Therefore it was suggested that the visitation process may be facilitated by the hospital designating a hospital contact person. Hospitals which have large numbers of Veteran patients, such as Austin Health and Barwon Health, have a designated Veteran Liaison Officer to manage the process.

It is not always appropriate to seek additional information at the time of admission and it may be in the interest of the veteran to wait until they are settled in a ward before asking questions about visiting rights. In cases where the patient is being admitted through the emergency department they may be in a distressed state and it would not be appropriate to seek consent for visitation at that stage. Also if patients are expected to have a very short length of stay it is not appropriate to start up a visitation process.

I will ask the Department of Human Services to remind hospitals of the excellent support provided by the Returned Services Organisations and that hospitals should be maintaining open communication with them.

Housing: Croydon

Raised with: Community Services

Raised by: Mrs Kronberg

Raised on: 19 August 2008

REPLY:

I am advised that the issue raised sits within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Housing.